

## PUBLIC SERVANT OR DICTATOR?

On Sunday May 8th 2011, (mothers day) the Minneapolis Star and Tribune "crafted" an article to fit their "whistle blower" section trying to demonize my actions of volunteering after the City of Oak Grove, MN was left without a City Administrator. This story is simple, my name is Mark Korin and I was elected Mayor in 2010, and at the same time our City administrator quit. Knowing that the new City Council had a strong conservative direction and was looking for ways to restructure, cut costs and identify actual staffing requirements, what better way to get a first hand look but to immerse myself into daily operations as the City Administrator and report back to the entire City Council with suggestions of how private sector business values of management, staffing, budgeting and operations would allow us as council to restructure in a more cost efficient way while planning long term and still get the most value for our residents. But wait, I'm the Mayor, an elected official and I can't be a paid, **full time** employee.... so I did the work for free, spending on average 30 to 36 hrs. a week at the city's offices. Why would I do that? Because of the great opportunity to manage the city staff and observe the operations first hand. Running a design and engineering company as the CEO in my business life, solving problems, managing staff, coordinating the daily operation is what I've done my entire career. I made a promise, if elected as Mayor; I would be a leader, not a politician, and would bring private sector skills to the residents of my city. Being the Mayor and at the same time stepping in to fill the role as the City Administrator had never been done before. I had a feeling that the nay-sayers, main stream media would do exactly that, work at discrediting and belittling any effort for us to get an understanding of the actual current function of city operations. But as any elected official worth his or her weight in gold will tell you, it's completely different being on the "inside" than being told from the "outside". It was much more than the \$160,000.00 in savings, it was my opportunity to work directly with the staff, to get them to realize that there is a new direction and they can help us on council make it a success..... AND THEY DID! We need good dedicated, but the right number of staff, working within a budget, compensated fairly with salaries and benefits in line with private sector opportunities. Let me say that again, **private sector compensations**. We cannot keep spending in government operations just because we as elected officials have the legal right to stick our hands in your pockets as deep as we desire and grab as much as we wish. At the same time, we in the private economy operate within a budget and are relentlessly vigilant at finding the most cost effective way to achieve the best value for products, purchases or services. Over the next year, our City Council evaluated all suggestions, eliminated or outsourced departments and looked at actual equipment depreciation replacement needs, right sized staffing levels while planning long term. I'm very proud to be part of many significant accomplishments for our residents and setting a conservative example for other elected officials across this country to show that it can and does work extremely well. How well you ask? **WELL, DOES CUTTING THE LEVY OVER 33% IN 4 YEARS SAY THAT WE WERE SUCCESSFUL?** Let's just say, I kept my promise! We cut the spending while we increased essential expenditures for the CIP (capital improvement plan) by redirecting the way in which we prioritize the needs and the wants of the city. To those that constantly say that "government doesn't run like a business", they're just plain lying because a government operation is a "governmental big business". There needs to be a constant voice reminding everyone that the government works for us, not the other way around.

I'll embrace being called a dictator by any group that refuses to recognize individual freedoms first. It's not the role of government to dictate over burdensome controls and take our earnings for redistribution to those who they chose. Our government must work for us, period. So hear me loud and clear, our founding fathers created a firm foundation that we must fight anyone that wants to destroy what our constitution stands for. I love this country, we need leaders that will lead and earn

our respect by standing up to those politicians that are destroying the essence of this country's greatness. My name is Mayor Mark Korin and I approve this message.... Will you?