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Date: Mon, Oct 10, 2011 at 8:27 AM

Subject: [PBCEC] Talkin' strategy for fundamental grassroots change in Lake Worth... to vote or to occupy

To: [pbce-environmental-coalition@googlegroups.com](mailto:pbce-environmental-coalition@googlegroups.com)

[please pass this on to whoever you think would appreciate it...

Thanks, —panagioti]

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To vote or to occupy... Shouldn't that be the question?

So, election time is rolling around again in Lake Worth. I'm not around to be directly involved on this one. But I figure I might as well throw in my two cents from over here in Greece.

Those who know me, or anything about me, know that I have an agenda (if you're curious about what that is, I included it as a footnote, so as not to distract from my main points here and now.\*) I should hope we all have agendas, otherwise the damn meetings could go on forever! Besides, you gotta have goals and shoot for what you really want. Then, if you're serious, you have to take real steps towards your goals, usually with other people who you share some basic values with along the route. I tend to hope that those of us who choose to work together come to share some common visions so that we can keep moving forward together as long as possible.

All that said, I'd like to see us attempt to rebuild some fractured alliances with a broader base of support for moving the city beyond the century of greed and shortsightedness that has characterized its history (well, most all of civilized history.)

I don't feel a particular investment in who gets elected this round. Although, I think we should steer clear of being co-opted by sleazy politics-as-usual, I'd rather have someone Tom Ramiccio-esque in office than have Democratic Party elite, aka Burt Aaronson's people, pulling the strings in our town. Better that we know our enemies. I'm serious.

More than choosing a side, I'd like to see the following few issues/goals come up for discussion in the midst of the political dialogues surrounding election time, in hopes that whoever wins, these things get traction:

- 1) Expose SWS, help get them out of the Osborne community's backyard.

This is a fundamental issue of addressing a historic injustice (and it represents the longstanding racial divide in town.) If there's not a real effort to continue on the City's current path towards accomplishing this, it makes much of the other work we've done seem shallow and meaningless.

2) Figure out what it would take to get support on voting rights for undocumented residents. For example, there are 6 municipalities in Maryland that have done this, see the link for background: <http://www.immigrantvoting.org/statescurrent/maryland.html>. This could very well change the face of elections for decades to come in this town.

3) Get further cuts to the PBSO contract. And in the process, educate people on the fact that they live in what can only be explained as a "police state." This is the cause, above and beyond all other issues, for the city's budget crisis. If we can't stop the police's mafia-esque control over more than half the entire budget, everything else is pretty much a waste of time. Let's start by shooting to get it down to a quarter of the budget. That frees up over \$10 million towards public spending to prevent poverty and boredom, rather than punish the "criminals" who suffer under it.

4) Decriminalizing pot. This would certainly lighten the workload of the cops, and get them to back off from the people who get harassed, illegally searched and arrested for petty drug charges on a regular basis... And it would vastly broaden to support from people across age and class barriers who agree that smoking pot should not be a crime.

5) Decriminalize chickens too. This is not really a campaign issue. But since it has been brought up so much, I think the best approach may be just to scratch 'chickens' from the books altogether (the same way iguanas and beta fish aren't listed as prohibited nor allowed pets.) Perhaps there's no need for a special ordinance about this, at least not right now.. It's not a problem. Let the city stay out of it, and let local food activists do their thing. If it becomes a problem—which is highly unlikely, since cities all over the country allow it without issue—revisit it then.

6) The Park of Commerce... I actually think Rachel Waterman was on the right track in proposing agricultural use for that land, during the debates over the summer (as awkward as it came across at the time.) Local agriculture won't make the city rich, but it is the most stable and long-lasting form of "commerce" (I hate that word) that the human species has managed to figure out. While I'd personally rather see all that land become a wild forest.. I think a plan that prioritizes

organic gardens, fruit orchards, free range animals for eggs and dairy, bee apiaries, etc., is the next best thing. We need to figure out a way to promote a real transition away from the current model of concrete-obsessed development. Putting some sort of stupid venture capitalist biotech "business incubator" bullshit there would be the worst idea. And it would have to happen over my dead body.

Not to be doom-and-gloom, but things are not looking up in the world of conventional economics. As I write this from the olive-laden hills of Kalamata, the European Union is on the verge of crumbling. The writing is literally on the walls of every city I've been through (usually with black or red spraypaint...) And despite the state of the EU, the exchange rate for the dollar gets lower by the day. Which is another way of saying, things are worse here in the US. Globally, things are worse than we are admitting... Surely you've noticed some signs of this yourself. Anyone else notice that Wall Street has been "occupied" all month?! Nearly 1000 people arrested in NYC amidst the growing rebellion against the dictatorship of the market. I hear the "occupy everything" fever might even be coming to Lake Worth...

I'm not a pessimist. I happen to think the impending collapse is all for the better. I think of it as the alarm clock that rings to get you up for a big day, or a hot date, or a new job—one that doesn't suck, etc.

And I guess the round-about point I'm getting at is that any form of new commercial activity in Lake Worth that doesn't result directly in something you can eat is another step in the direction towards the abyss that this civilization dug for itself. And just because it can't be saved (at least, I believe it can't, and even if it could, by any ethical standard, should not be) doesn't mean we all have to follow it down. If elections don't get real about these sort of things, than they are more irrelevant than ever before—which is pretty bad, since only 10-20% percent of eligible people usually bother voting on average in Lake Worth anyway.

Ok. Well that's all for now... No wait. I'll leave you with a particularly poignant letter-to-the-editor, printed in the PB Post a few month back. I think it gives a good kick in the ass to those of us engaging the political process as grassroots activists and visionaries:

“Lake Worth selling out, losing its earthy charm

What's going on in Lake Worth? An over-the-top noise ordinance, metered parking and now the banning of smoking at the beach and all parks ("Lake Worth moves to ban smoking at beach," Wednesday story).

I moved to Lake Worth from Homestead in 1985 to get away from narrow-minded people and their meddling tendencies, settling here mainly because of the high tolerance/population of hippies, students, gays and active, tranquil retirees. As the years went by I watched a covey of lawyers, Realtors and big-money good ol' boys milk the city for their own profitable ends.

But we started taking our city back. We had a couple of mayors and city commissioners who actually cared for Lake Worth and its residents. I guess with the economy going to hell it's left us with a political vacuum, which has been filled by anal-retentive, politically correct yuppies. Where are the anarchists when you really need them?  
—BEN POGUE, Lake Worth, April 22, 2011”

the letter is also online at this page:

[http://www.palmbeachpost.com/opinion/letters/letters-placard-was-about-hitler-not-holocaust-1426458.html?cxttype=rss\\_letters](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/opinion/letters/letters-placard-was-about-hitler-not-holocaust-1426458.html?cxttype=rss_letters)

If you're reading this, than yes, he's probably talking about you too, whether you call yourself an anarchist or not. I think Ben, whoever he is, represents a familiar sentiment in town. We'd be idiots to ignore it and let our political movement slide towards status quo. We've come this far...

Your for the rev,  
—panagiotis evangellos nasios tsolkas

PBC Environmental Coalition, co-chair  
Night Heron, steering committee member  
Earth First! Journal, editorial collective  
Everglades Earth First!, agitator  
Sierra Club, Loxahatchee, ExCom member  
Lake Worth Community Relations Board, chair  
etc.

p.s. Rachel Waterman's things about selling the utility to FPL, that was a joke right?!?

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\*To put it succinctly, my agenda is putting an end to industrial civilization as soon as possible, and creating complete freedom and a society based on mutual aid rather than money: anarchy. Some people believe in heaven. I believe making here and now better. Is that so hard to swallow?

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