



TOWN OF BRANFORD

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN

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Tabor Drive Court Decision

I am not surprised at the Court's decision relating to Tabor Drive. Unfortunately, from the Town's vantage point, neither the DaRos nor Opie Administrations were realistic relating to the evaluation of the property during the process of condemnation. DaRos utilized appraisals that were below the assessed value of the property, and clearly below the market value, in order to justify the amount the property was ultimately condemned for, which was \$1,167,800. Given a proposed purchase price of \$4,750,000 back in May 1, 2001, it was always obvious that the Town's had an uphill battle. The clear fact that the Town issued bonds far in excess of the condemnation price (\$2,500,000) indicated an awareness on the part of the DaRos and Opie Administrations that there would be additional monies to be paid as the result of court action. The only real open question was the amount of money to be paid.

My administration retained lawyers, the lead counsel being originally retained by the Opie Administration, highly qualified both in condemnation and in environmental law. They did the best they could with the cards that were dealt them; namely, the damage caused to the Town by the ineptness of basically the DaRos Administration and their then Town Counsel who mishandled this matter from its beginning.

The verdict of \$4.6 million, if it is sustained by the Appellate Court or if an appeal is taken, is substantial and the Town will have to issue additional bonds to avoid any further budgetary impact.

The lesson learned by Tabor Drive to date is that First Select people must at all times be guided by logic and the facts as opposed to emotion in attempting to think in terms of passing a problem off to future administrations and in effect hiding from the public what the real impact of a condemnation action may be. This, unfortunately for the taxpayers of Branford, is precisely what the DaRos Administration did without any further heads up to the public from the Opie Administration.

For people who talk in terms of "open government" Tabor Drive is an outstanding and glaring example of how at the time of condemnation they attempted to hide the facts, namely, how much this property was going to cost, the taxpayers of Branford. There now is a price to be paid for what DaRos and Opie have created.

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