

Patriot

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ONS

Don't to be like every place and end up no place

To the Editor:

I was disappointed by a letter to the editor I read in the Patriot a couple weeks ago. I recall the context of it being in response to the solicitation of funds from the Friends of Cuba Architecture to replace a roof on a building downtown. The author of the letter was taken aback by this donation request, branding it a waste of money. I believe his argument was to the belief that the money would be better spent on researching the cure for a disease.

Similar to the author, I have lost not one loved one prematurely, but two as a result of an unfortunate onset of disease that claimed family members way before their time. To suggest that those who want to save a building are somehow missing the point about what is truly an important allocation of funds, is "failing to see the forest through the trees."

In fact, I am going to present the case to you that the opposite reasoning may in fact be contributing to the prevalence of disease. That building on Main Street stands as a microcosm of a dangerous blight

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that continues to rear its ugly head: abandonment, leapfrog development, urban decay, gentrification, sprawl. Big city concepts you say, hardly, look no further than our own front yards. The ironic part of it is, who is the driving force behind it, you and me?

Well sadly, yes. Or should I clarify, you and me in the form of our government. Who was the first one to step off Main Street, the Post Office (you and me and our government)? We continue to finance infrastructure outside the urban core eating up open space with steel buildings surrounded by nothing more than asphalt, then light it up at night to look like a prison. Isn't it lovely?

When thought of in this light, that investment in an old building's roof may not be as wasteful as originally thought. In fact those not concerned about the preservation of the urban core, may in fact be driving the perpetuation of disease through the collateral spillover of air, water and visual pollution.

Those communities, who choose to preserve their historic urban core and surrounding greenspace, are the ones who will benefit from our region's greatest potential revenue source, cultural tourism. Those communities that choose to let their landscape sprawl out to look like "every place" will be destined to become just another "no place."

Maybe it is time for us to readjust the scope, whether it is the microscope or the shotgun scope. Commit yourself to a broader view of place and focus on the cause, not just the result.

Mark M. McGovern
Cuba