

Lot J Statement "No"

Over the last month, as the Lot J debate raged on, one thing stood out. Thousands of Jacksonville taxpayers told City Council members they opposed the deal negotiated by the mayor and his administration.

- Two public polls showed overwhelming opposition to Lot J;
- Daily letters to The Florida Times-Union denounced the Lot J proposal; and
- Council members received over 8,000 emails urging them to vote "No" on Lot J.

Citizens wanted to be included in the conversation. But, like the JEA sale attempt, the people's voice was left out.

Fortunately for taxpayers, seven Council members remained steadfast Tuesday in the face of incredible pressure to approve Lot J. Council President Tommy Hazouri and members Matt Carlucci, Joyce Morgan, Randy DeFoor, Danny Becton, Garrett Dennis, and Al Ferraro deserve thanks from a grateful citizenry. Their collective commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability in the expenditure of public money defeated an ill conceived Lot J development agreement.

OurJax recognizes their commitment, and joins the community in thanking them for protecting Jacksonville's taxpayers and daring to question the norm-breaking details of what would have been the largest single taxpayer subsidy of private development in the city's history.

After the JEA debacle, OurJax hoped our city leadership had learned a lesson. Lot J showed many have not.

OurJax has been clear from the beginning. We are not opposed to the Jaguars, nor are we against a Lot J development. We simply want the city's business to be conducted in public so that when decisions are made, they will be trusted. And we want the city to follow established practices and procedures that apply to all publicly subsidized developments if they are not. Over time, exceptions to the rules become the rules.

Hopefully, the city and the developer will start over, and this time, do it right by following the rules and negotiating a deal that is fair to taxpayers.