

January 23rd meeting

Jim Zell's comments.

I'm James Zell from 270 Clark Street. I've been here numerous times. Before I start off I wrote it down, because I want to make sure I kept it logical. I want to say one thing to Mr. Overstreet. I've seen you here before when you presented your case to the council and I thought you did it in a great and tactful way and polite and all like that. I just want to let you know that my prayers are with you on your term of duty and I think you're going to need it. I came here a lot of times really excited about what I had to bring and happy and all like that. I come with mixed emotions now. You'll find out shortly. It hurts when as a child we lose our faith in Santa Claus, but it hurts as an adult when we lose faith in those we have placed trust. When I arrived in Blaine January 1999, Blaine politically was suffering through some awfully bad times. A new council and city manager emerged. Things began to get better. It seems that everyone was on the same page, that is the betterment of Blaine. I became a loyal fan of our village government. I supported them 100%. I did not always agree with them, but I felt that they were doing the best they could with what they had and I knew that I couldn't do any better. We all have feet of clay at times even though our hearts may be of gold. But the hearts of our elected officials turned to their own self-serving interests when they lose the desire to serve the village good it is time to speak out. And I'm getting a little bit melodramatic here but I'm trying to do it – get a point across. There appears to be a dark and evil inner circle running city hall that even some of the council may not be aware of at this time. I know not this circle but little by little I have become aware of one. I would like to go on record as being neither for or against the airport. There's nothing wrong in the airport. But what I see as evil in this village is concentrated around the issue of the airport. In a matter of a couple of years ago this inner circle of power, whether they are the airport commission or another group, wanted to cut down trees at one end of the airport. I'm all for safety. I was in charge of safety a lot of times when I was in the airforce. But you know, a nephew of mine, flew into Blaine and then took my wife and I for a flight around the village. It was good weather. It wasn't stormy weather so – but, I am not a pilot. He is. None of us saw a safety hazard with the trees. Recently, the commission, that's the airport commission, revealed a plan to work for a \$16 million federal grant to enlarge the airport to support larger aircraft. Why we need larger aircraft, I do not know. Bellingham is large enough. The true colors are at last revealed in this. They are not interested in the safety. They want to build an empire unto themselves. How much did it cost us taxpayers to cut down all those trees, buy the land. I think it's a few hundred thousand dollars. I'm not sure. They say the airport is paying for itself and it's good for us. Why do we have to bale them out to a tune of, I believe, around \$50,000 just a few months ago. Prior to the last election a group of citizens in this village wanted to be heard. They raised a petition for the village to vote whether they want the airport closed or not. It's the democratic way to go. Was it this evil inner circle speaking to the village lawyer when he said something to the effect as recorded in our newspaper, and I'm just paraphrasing it, this is the impression I got – the voice of the people are meaningless. The village council can only speak wisdom. We had no say so. We shouldn't even put the thing to a vote. Are our elected officials, the village manager, the village lawyer, god's unto themselves. There's one on the council that could teach them government if they could humble themselves to listen to him. If not Blaine's school district has the ability to conduct such a course. And here's a statement – from what I remember from 1952 in civics class all elected officials serve by the pleasure and by the will of the people. For one this means they are servants of the people they lead. They can be held accountable to the people they serve. I feel the city manager and the council need to apologize to the citizens of Blaine for the statement by that lawyer or, I'm not saying this, but could it also be that they share the same contempt for us that the lawyer does. I question the timely but bloody coup in replacing the mayor. Why was it not done before the election. Maybe it could be thought that the voice of the people would be heard and the inner circle would not get their people elected. Third this leads me to the opinion that any committee this council selects to review the airport will be bed fellows with the airport inner circle. In conclusion my approval rating of the village government in Blaine has gone from 100% to about 35%. The minority on the council have a hard job keeping Blaine on the straight and moral path. Right now, I feel shame bordering on contempt for the majority of our city leaders. It's up to you to prove me wrong. If you can prove me wrong, I will get up on the empire state building and say, I was wrong. But I hope I am wrong. Thank you.