

May 19, 2011

To ALL who have contacted me regarding the Vikings' stadium:

Thank you so very much for sharing with me your comments, thoughts, insights, opinions and passion regarding the proposed Vikings Stadium at Arden Hills and the proposed Ramsey County involvement.

I am sending this letter to everyone as an update.

By resolution (2-15-11) (vote 6-1), Ramsey County became an active player in the effort to finance and construct a new stadium for the Minnesota Vikings professional football team. The current bill(s) in the legislature provides for a number of options under which the state and local governmental partner could finance their portions of the cost.

Two members of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners have been negotiating with the owners of the Vikings and have proposed that the local portion be paid with a .5% general sales tax.

While this may be an easy way, I believe there are **additional options** for both the state and the county that are being taken out of discussion or granted to the Vikings without the benefit of public review. Equally I believe that **Benefit-Based Financing Options offer a better financing option than the 1/2 percent Ramsey County only sales tax.**

In other words I believe that those who use it pay for it. Those who benefit pay for it.

Some of the benefit-based options I have looked at include **parking revenue, advertising, parking lot naming rights, and a stadium food and beverage surcharge**. I believe these options help create the benefit-based financing plan the governor and many citizens have sought and I whole-heartedly agree with. They also could provide sufficient revenue to pay for the county's portion without a sales tax. **However, these options are currently NOT in the "Pay Playbook" at the legislature nor in the Ramsey County and Vikings proposals. For example, all of the parking revenue right now will be in the Vikings financial score sheet.** (See Charlie Walters "Don't Print That" from the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, May 15,2011).

I am strongly in favor of the Vikings staying in Minnesota. I also believe the Vikings should pay for one half of the financing including infrastructure improvements. In addition, any contract or term agreement sheets must include language that all jobs created and retained, including construction and service jobs at the stadium, must pay prevailing wages and benefits.

My request is that you encourage decision makers to keep these mechanisms in or amend any legislative bill(s) to include them as the stadium plan moves through the process. Specifically, for example, Ramsey County should be permitted to collect all revenue from stadium parking facilities which is much of the "new money" in the move to Arden Hills. With the inclusion of these financing items we can have a thoughtful and thorough discussion at the local level before choosing the best revenue source for Ramsey County citizens should the location be at Arden Hills.

Thank you again.

Janice Rettman  
Ramsey County Commissioner, District 3