

It's time to lay down your swords

Recently I saw pictures of NOAH members holding "Who is Milstein" signs and masks. Sorry, but it looks an awful lot like a shakedown to me.

What these protesters don't seem to understand

GUEST VIEW

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is that a developer's role is to find retail, entertainment and other establishments willing to come to the Falls. They don't operate these businesses themselves. NOAH doesn't seem to realize the challenges and struggles involved with bringing development of any significant size to Niagara Falls.

Have we been frustrated at times with NFR? Yes, we have. We picketed, held rallies and did petition drives. Contracts signed

years ago were renegotiated in ways that seemed to change the original promises made to our community. It seems that NFR really didn't fully comprehend the demographic and political climate of Niagara Falls when they came here.

The important question to ask ourselves is: Have they tried? The answer, without a doubt, is: "Yes." More so, NFR isn't going anywhere. They've invested too much money, paid many years of taxes, studies and development outreach costs. They aren't all without a significant costs. And let's not forget that NFR, not only pays property taxes, but absorbs demolition, maintenance and marketing costs totaling in the millions.

Does NOAH know developers willing to take the risk in Niagara Falls? I bet not. The truth is this: rather than throw darts, we must acknowledge the challenges and struggles as

if we were sitting in NFR offices. We must communicate. Are we reaching out to NFR in a positive manner, rather than aggressive and negative tones?

We all must be salesmen for our city. Look at where we've been, and where we are?

Seems like snail's pace, but change is hard. It's time to end demonizing good people. Please leave your egos behind and work diligently to get something done.

Our neighborhoods enthusiastically supported Eddie Cogan's NFR back 1998. We were there in the beginning and have witnessed cannibalistic vultures purchasing property worth \$20,000, and asking NFR to repurchase these properties for \$500,000. It is simple extortion.

I have to admit that, despite my skepticism, NFR's NF Director of Operations Roger Trevino and his colleagues are always

willing to listen and react in a positive manner. Sometimes I didn't like the answers, but NFR executives honestly explain their side of the story. Niagara Falls is a tough place to develop. We may not like the truth, but we can't blame a developer that's secured and maintained their properties, paid their taxes, and worked hard to bring development to our community.

Everyone, politicians included, forget the past, take a breath and let's rebuild our image going forward. The scandals, corruption and placing of blame is yesterday's news. We must row the boat in the same direction or we will fail! We must all be in the fight to make Niagara Falls a city of prosperity! Let's proceed not with caution or contempt, but with enthusiasm and hope.

Roger Spurback is president of the Niagara Falls Block Club Council.