

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS  
ABOUT THEIR VOTE TO APPROVIE THE MAPLE LEAF MUSIC VENUE**

**As of 14 November 2017**

**A. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

1. Maple Leaf will be owned by the county and managed by government appointees and elected officials. What expertise do these individuals have regarding owning and managing a MUSIC venue?
2. Why is the government competing with the private sector? What attempts have been made to market this project to private developers?
3. The 12.5 million dollar loan will not obligate taxpayers in the event the venue is not as successful as planned. Will there be a stipulation in the agreement signed by county officials that states that future elected leaders will NEVER be able to take over the payments for the loan regardless of the circumstances?
4. Little Nashville Opry was given a 10-year tax abatement (with no time requirement) from the county and the owner identified that they would start construction in 2018.
  - a. Is this still a valid project and offer?
  - b. Why not add a requirement that construction must start in 2018 to retain the tax abatement?
5. If Maple Leaf results in adverse effects for the Playhouse, Bill Monroe Music Park, Mike's Dance and Music Barn, and Little Red Barn should these owners receive compensation from the county government?

**B. TRANSPARENCY**

1. [The project timeline](#) that was not shared with the public identifies that the Commissioners will vote to pass a resolution requesting Council approval at their meeting November 15. The Council votes to pass a resolution on November 20 to enter into an installment purchase contract. Why isn't this contract available for at least a 30-day public review before it is approved by the Council?

2. Why wasn't there any public meetings held by the commissioners or council to ask citizens for their input and feedback regarding the type of investment, (music venue vs. other options), size, scope, cost, and location?
6. Why wasn't the county Redevelopment Commission (RDC) involved in coordinating the vetting of this project through all government offices on behalf of county citizens?
7. Councilman Keith Baker and commissioner Diana Biddle were early advocates of this project. How did they arrive at their decision to support this project without the benefit of soliciting input and feedback from citizens at public meetings?
8. Who maintains all the documents, contracts, agreements, plans, etc. associated with this project?

#### **C. PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OPTION – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Regarding the financial feasibility of the project, Maple Leaf project leader Barry Herring remarked that “ ... “he’s never seen numbers this good” and “I will stake my reputation on it,” ... “I wish I was doing this personally.”

1. If this project is “too good to fail”, then why not market it to private developers? This will free up the excess innkeeper’s revenue for other desired projects in the county.

#### **D. OBJECTIVITY – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Maple Leaf project leaders include innkeepers whose establishments will benefit from more overnight stays and will increase the asset value of their properties. This situation can compromise their objectivity and present a conflict of interest regarding their expectations for the venue.

1. Has the proposal for this county-owned music venue been reviewed by an objective and independent consultant to confirm that the venue, location, and operating model would appear to be reasonable for a county with our demographics, location, and relative proximity to cities with competing venues?
2. The ownership and oversight of a music venue is typically not considered a government function or core competency. What risks have been identified regarding elected leader responsibilities? (Project risk is defined as "an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on a project's objectives.")

3. Given that county, taxpayers ARE NOT at risk for the loan, has any consideration been given to situations that may arise where future elected leaders may decide to take over payments and management of the venue?

## **MANAGEMENT**

1. The Innkeepers Tax statute requires the county council to review and approve the CVC/CVB budget. How detailed is this budget? Does the process include a review of audited financial statements and the completed IRS form 990 - Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax?
2. Do elected leaders have a documented policy that identifies how profits will be distributed? What government office will maintain this policy?
3. What are the details regarding management of the venue and financial oversight by elected leaders – such as the auditor, treasurer, county council?
4. What is the management plan? Who is responsible for running the facility? Hiring?
5. What are the other responsibilities of the elected leaders regarding oversight of the venue?
6. Will the county comprehensive plan be updated to identify community support for future developments that might emerge as a result of Maple Leaf?

## **OTHER IMPACTS**

1. Brown County is limited by two-lane roads. Has a traffic study been completed to help to identify dates and times where there may be significant traffic back-ups?
2. When the Indiana Department of Transportation concluded that the Hawthorne Drive option was not acceptable, were they also informed that the Big Woods/Hard Truth Hills development would be adding additional traffic congestion in this area? This development will also be adding to the congestion on old 46 (Snyder Road) to include the access across from the North entrance to the State Park.
3. Will events be scheduled to recognize the impact on traffic from competing events such as an IU sporting event, fall foliage, Hard Truth Hills, semi-state cross country event, etc.?
4. If more hotels and restaurants and bars are anticipated, where will these be located?

5. Given the likelihood of more hotels, bars, restaurants, will the town's noise ordinance need to be rescinded to accommodate more tourists and longer hours?
6. Given the approximate \$145K per acre selling price for the acquisition of the land, what impact will this have on assessed values of other commercial properties in Nashville and the County? What is the expected increase in property tax revenue? When can this revenue be expected?

## **FACILITY**

1. Since the zoning hearing, what additional features have been made to the venue? For instance, is there now an outside gathering space that can contribute to more outside noise?
2. Who certifies that the acoustic and sound design will meet industry standards?
3. Under the new arrangement, Hawthorne Hills and Willow Manor will be spared the extra traffic and commotion during construction. What is being done for the Community Care Center to shelter the patients from late night traffic noise?