

ATTACHMENT A

COUNCILOR JANET JONES

Comments-February 17, 2026

Please allow me to provide some context. This is about money and children, so it's very important to me. Early in 2022 many of us became involved in the DRI process and did not seek accountability as the clock ran down on our 5-year, \$10 million grant.

I'm losing optimism as we approach the October 2026 deadline, unless extensions are approved by New York State. To set the record straight, DRI is a "Use it or lose it" grant ...it's reimbursed after project completion. The city was not given \$10M.

I appreciate the effort City Hall has put forth to get projects back on track, but I believe we've lost sight of our vision for the Veterans Memorial Park Upgrades.

On August 19, 2025, I attended the Common Council meeting when the "Afterburner Committee" was formed.

I'm paraphrasing slightly to keep it short, but the minutes include:

"The committee will not have the authority to spend funds", and more importantly, "Any expenditure, regardless of amount, must be approved by the Council."

Councilor Winchell emphasized that no taxpayer funds should be used for the project, with the intent that costs will be covered by fundraising and donations and that he fully supported the project, but not the use of taxpayer dollars.

I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH ROB'S POSITION.

Former Mayor Acker also emphasized that the goal is to have all costs covered by donations, sponsorships, and fundraising, not taxpayer dollars.

I ALSO COMPLETELY AGREE WITH HELEN'S POSITION,
IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT ALL COSTS ARE INTENDED TO BE PAID WITH DONATIONS.

Last week the Council received the latest draft for the Construction of Upgrade Facilities at Veterans' Memorial Park DRI Project including

- Design details for the Memorial with an estimated cost over \$600,000 due to the inclusion of the 120-foot-wide foundational portion of the Afterburner Project, which I believed would be funded through the donations, fundraising and sponsorships
- A reasonable expectation for the scope of the DRI Project enhancements and upgrades to the existing Veterans Memorial is landscaping and benches to enhance the existing granite monument. It should serve as an independent jumping off point for the Afterburner Project which