

By C.J. Cote, The StarPhoenix March 19, 2012

Demonstrations have occurred over the federal Robocalls issue, while in our backyard the Mendel controversy is causing as much public upset as did the proposal for a downtown casino in 2003.

Media polls and letters to the editor indicate strong opposition to the Mendel closure, the lack of transparency of city officials, and the amount to be spent on the Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan - initially quoted at \$54 million and now exceeding \$71 million. However, you can't have RAGS without parking, so including the \$13 million underground parkade, the total cost is well over \$84 million.

And while RAGS is promoted as a gallery, it's more of a community event centre and will compete with TCU Place.

SP columnist Gerry Klein (Feb. 23) suggested the public perception was that "the switch from the expansion to the new project was a devious act - for political rather than community reasons." He said the city should provide a "detailed report laying out what happened to the Mendel expansion (and) should include any letters, background reports and communications."

Council watchdog Joe Kuchta couldn't find a paper trail for the city's claim the feds wouldn't back the expansion. Could this be why Klein's suggested report hasn't surfaced?

Coun. Randy Donauer, who flexed his moral muscle as a leader of the group that forced a referendum on the downtown casino, now endorses the dubious RAGS project and doesn't think a "cleaning the air" report or plebiscite is required. Has his moral muscle atrophied on council?

Where are the protesters for the devious acts perpetrated here?

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