

OUR VIEW

Council needs to correct irresponsible Kwik Trip vote

At their final meeting of 2021, Sun Prairie alders on Dec. 21 voted against a conditional use permit for Kwik Trip to remodel the existing Stop'n Go store at the corner of Broadway Drive and Windsor Street.

A few neighbors showed up to the council meeting and complained about the 24-hour nature of the store, as well as

the potential for increased traffic. So the council voted the CUP down.

The funny thing is, the council was told by city staff that a change in state law required them to approve the CUP unless a substantial reason existed for them to vote it down. The reason should have been presented at the Sun Prairie Plan

Commission meeting or been a substantial departure from the commission's findings that the council had to vote it down.

Neither action occurred. Instead, the council arrogantly voted against the CUP, and exposed the city to legal action from Kwik Trip. A company representative agreed the Windsor-Broadway store

wanted to be a good neighbor and review the CUP in a year if problems occurred.

Regardless of how the neighbors feel about the new store, the council needs to act responsibly and approve the CUP.

Failing to act, or allowing the vote to stand, will most certainly result in a lawsuit that the city will lose based on existing state

law. Any responsible judge will admonish the city council for its irresponsible behavior, and could assess penalties against the city for the council's action.

The time is right for a motion to reconsider the vote and for alders to take the correct legal action -- before a Dane County Circuit Court takes the action on the city's behalf.

THE RICH LOWRY COLUMN

The child vaccine mandate idiocy

The old legal maxim is that everything which is not forbidden is permitted. Many public-health experts apparently have their own version of this rule -- whatever is not forbidden must be mandated.

It was less than three months ago that the Food and Drug Administration approved the COVID-19 vaccine for children on an emergency basis, and already there are debates whether schools should mandate it and jurisdictions prohibit unvaccinated kids from engaging in activities.

California, Louisiana and Washington, D.C., have scheduled mandates to take effect when the FDA fully approves the vaccine for kids. Los Angeles and Oakland have mandates, although they've been delayed.

New York City mayor Eric Adams says he's weighing a mandate, and bills in the New York State legislature would implement one statewide.

When the FDA advisory panel met last October, several experts said they hoped the move wouldn't lead to mandates. FDA official Peter Marks pooh-poohed the possibility, evidently underestimating the irresistible urge of officialdom in blue areas toward pandemic coercion.

The decision whether kids get vaccinated or not properly belongs to parents. Yes, other vaccinations are a condition of attending school, but COVID vaccinations aren't going to eliminate COVID, the way, say, Jonas Salk's miraculous innovation eliminated polio.

With the advent of omicron, it's not even clear childhood vaccinations will do much to dent the spread. On top of this, COVID is relatively mild in children, whereas polio was a dread childhood disease.

If the case for adults getting vaccinated is extraordinarily strong, it is much less so for minors, especially for healthy younger kids who tend to be at the least risk. Why, parents might think, take any chances with a new vaccine if it is protecting from a minimal threat (or their kids already had the virus)? Even if you believe this is the wrong call, it's not obviously unreasonable.

The medical news outlet Stat reported on an FDA model that looked at the risk to boys ages 5-11 from myocarditis, a heart condition that can affect boys in particular after getting vaccinated.

According to Stat, the FDA analysts concluded that although "the vaccine might trigger slightly more



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myocarditis-related hospitalizations in boys than COVID-19 hospitalizations it would prevent in the same population, the benefits still might outweigh the risks, given that Covid cases that require hospitalization are generally more severe than myocarditis cases."

Rather than trust parents to weigh such considerations on their own, places like Los Angeles want to bring down the hammer. The school board there wanted students 12 and older to be vaccinated by Jan. 10.

Then, unvaccinated kids would be relegated to remote learning. When the school board realized that 30,000 students weren't vaccinated, a number that would overwhelm whatever dubious capacity the district has for remote learning, it backed off.

The calculus here makes no sense. To avoid an unlikely harm -- unvaccinated kids getting a serious case of COVID -- the schools wanted to impose an almost-guaranteed harm by excluding thousands of students from the classroom, kneecapping their education. At best, this is playing chicken with the well-being of children; at worst, it is thoughtless and cruel policy in stubborn pursuit of the goal of substituting the judgment of public-school mandarins for parents.

Already, roughly 40,000 students have dropped out or disengaged from L.A. schools this year, and the school board wanted effectively to match that via ham-handed enforcement of its mandate.

The same impulse to punish kids whose parents don't want to go along is seen in vaccine passport policies, like that in New York City, that exclude unvaccinated children from a swath of activities in public places and from after-school programs. It's as if public officials got together and decided children hadn't experienced enough social isolation already during the pandemic. One can only hope there's enough pushback from parents who value their judgment and authority over that of the politicians and administrators whose default is mandates over persuasion.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review; opinions are his own.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Biden slogan should be 'Make Hate Great Again'

Our Divider-In-Chief, Joe Biden, recently asked, "Do you want to be the side of Dr. King or George Wallace?" and "Do you want to be on the side of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis?"

Jefferson Davis and George Wallace were both Democrats.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln were Republicans.

It's gobsmackingly stupid for Biden to use the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to attack Republicans. The whole point of MLK's work was to create a country where we're judged based on the content of our character, ... NOT the color of our skin.

That's exactly what Conservatives believe, and it's the exact opposite of what today's

Progressives believe.

Why do Progressives continue to promote segregation? When will they ever denounce their racist, segregationist history of George Wallace, Lester Maddox and Bull Connor and finally join us in a post-racial 21st Century?

Rather than "Build Back Better", Biden's slogan should be: "Make Hate Great Again."

Robert Rittman
Sun Prairie

WISPOLITICS CAPITOL REPORT

Vos wants Gableman's report by end of February

Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos says he wants Michael Gableman's review of the 2020 election to be complete with a final report by the end of February.

"I've been very clear with Justice Gableman," the Rochester Republican said on WISN's "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com. "I want to have legislation on the floor to be able to pass no later than the end of our session which concludes in March. So, that means I really need his report by the end of February for us to be able to utilize that as part of the evidence we present to the people of Wisconsin as to why we need to make the changes that are necessary."

Vos said he routinely updates former President Donald Trump on the investigation.

"Oh yeah, I've talked to him," Vos said. "I wouldn't say on a regular basis, but half-a-dozen times just to keep him up-to-date to make sure he understands what's happening but to know we are doing our very best."

Vos also weighed in on several new legislative proposals, including one that would dissolve the Wisconsin Elections Commission and put the secretary of state in charge of election administration.

Vos said he doesn't support the idea. "I don't like the idea of saying we're going to have a partisan elected official in charge of elections," he said.

Meanwhile, Vos and Gableman have reached a verbal agreement to extend the former justice's contract. Their offices in early January added there is no written agreement that includes an end date for the probe, which was originally supposed to wrap up Oct. 31.

Still, Vos said in a statement

he's requested recommendations from Gableman by February so they can be worked into legislation the Assembly passes before the two-year session ends in March. He also again sought to blame the delay on lawsuits filed challenging Gableman's tactics.

Among other things, Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul has filed an action arguing against Gableman's attempt to depose Elections Commission Administrator Meagan Wolfe in private rather than publicly before a legislative committee. Gableman has also sought to have the mayors of Madison and Green Bay jailed unless they comply with his subpoenas; that issue is pending before a Waukesha judge. And Green Bay Mayor Eric Genrich has asked for sanctions against Gableman over the request.

"As mentioned previously, we never anticipated the number of lawsuits from Democrats to stall progress of this investigation," Vos said.

Outgoing Assembly Minority Leader Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh, ripped the lack of a written amendment extending the probe. He said it is indicative of a lack of transparency and accountability with the effort from the outset and again called it a waste of taxpayer funds. Hintz also said he doubts it will wrap up by February.

"It's pretty clear it's not about what this investigation produces. It's about continuing to promote the 'Big Lie' and have an endless investigation that implies that there was wrongdoing and to fan the flames and to make insinuations that have flat-out been proven wrong," Hintz said.

The amendment Gableman signed with Vos in August to the original contract included a document laying out the \$676,000

budget for the review. That included a note that the budget was to cover Aug. 1 through Dec. 31. Still, the language in the amendment otherwise didn't include an end date.

A Gableman spokesman said the former justice and Vos were able to extend the contract via verbal agreement due to a provision in the original deal from late June. That provision stated the contract was in effect until Oct. 31 "unless altered or extended by mutual agreement." The provision doesn't mention a written contract being needed.

Vos has faced questions over the past week on whether he would extend the contract with Gableman, particularly after the former justice said he may seek additional funds for his probe.

The budget attached to the August amendment included \$325,000 for a data analysis contractor.

The Gableman spokesman said the bulk of that remains unspent as the office has continued to look for a qualified, non-partisan contractor. The spokesman didn't immediately have an updated accounting of how much of the original budget was still left. At a Dec. 1 Assembly committee hearing, Gableman said he had spent about a quarter of his original budget. Since then, he has indicated he may seek additional funds to cover the costs of the review.

"We have not approached the speaker's office for more money," the spokesman said.

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