

Dear Editor, Fellow Citizens, and Business Owners of Lincoln and Logan County, Family, and Friends:

This is my third letter to You in my series of issues and topics in my re-election candidacy for Mayor of Lincoln, IL. I strongly believe the following need to be improved and reinstated at City Hall for better accountability and transparency for everyone.

In discussing the issue of **Economic Development**, each Fall our City Council Members used to attend the IL Municipal League Convention held in Chicago, IL, for two to three days. It was a chance to attend timely seminars, meet our counterparts from other Illinois cities and villages, meet Legislators, Professionals, and participate in an Expo of the latest computer platforms, latest paving materials, water treatment systems, municipal loans and investment experts, IL Pension representatives, and many other relevant trades and products being displayed for our knowledge and possible future commitments. We met with our contracting Engineering Firm Representatives and attended specific training sessions on: economic development, accounting, and legal practices, etc. City Council Members and Department Heads attended and came back and followed up further with Vendors for possible future implementation by the City.

This is when I attended various Tax Increment Financing (TIF) seminars and learned how successful other cities had been with their programs and the importance of not proceeding with a TIF agreement without having the Recipient include a “claw-back clause” in each contract. The presenters could not express enough how important it was to have that clause in each TIF agreement to avoid the City’s ultimate monetary obligation for each TIF agreement in the event of a Recipient bankruptcy. This is what I discussed in my Letter 2 published in this section.

Some years, our City Alderpersons and I traveled to Washington, DC, to visit our Federal Legislators and to the IL State Capitol as well to attempt to secure more Federal and State funding for unfunded mandates. One year, we were fortunate to receive \$750,000.00 in a sewerage treatment plant grant and other grants to assist the city’s efficiency and reduce the cost burden to our Taxpayers and Consumers. We were always trying to capture grant dollars to help decrease the bottom line on expenses. Logan County Board Dick Logan and I met with Ray LaHood’s Staff in Springfield in the same manner for a mutual project.

When I served as City Administrator for 2½ years -- completing a four-year contract with a large reduction in salary than former City Administrators Clay Johnson and Bob Mardt, I was fortunate enough to be able to secure \$3.8 million in Federal and State COVID-19 ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) dollars of which some of it was disbursed to the City after I left the City’s employment. But while I was there -- as mentioned in my previous Letter to the Editor, I created the Lincoln Economic Development Grant Commission to help COVID-19-impacted City Business Owners obtain additional monetary assistance of \$7,500.00 per approved application to improve the structures of their buildings within the City. This Commission is still in effect but was revised recently by the City to expand farther out into the County than the city limits plus 1.5 miles perimeter.

I also worked closely with our Greater Peoria Economic Development Commission (GPEDC) in forwarding business proposals to our City and Business Owners and Local Developers in bringing more viable businesses to our Community. We are always happy to participate in Ribbon Cuts for New and Expanded Businesses in Lincoln.

While serving as a full-time Mayor of Lincoln for 4.5 of the eight consecutive years, I technically served as the “City Administrator” on a daily basis, handling my own correspondence and scheduling while meeting with anyone who came to see me with my “open-door” policy. While Mayor, the Alderpersons and I worked well with the Logan County Board and Local Developers in securing some of the following businesses for our City:

- Robert’s Sysco Foods
- Two (2) Dollar General Stores
- The entire Dollar Tree Complex
- El Mazatlán Restaurant
- Walmart Super Center and, per my request of Walmart Representatives, the City also was granted the additional 26.8 acres located directly behind the new Walmart Super Center, and the property is currently being leased for \$1.00 per year by the City to the Lincoln Futbol Club for the Community’s soccer activities.
- Heitmann Drive
- Malerich Drive
- Hampton Inn
- Culver’s Restaurant
- Downtown Specialty Shops & Restaurants

As City Administrator, from July, 2018 – April, 2021, I worked with City Staff and Local Developers for:

- Turbo Fire Pizza Restaurant
- Starbuck’s Restaurant
- Stahlhut Road for better Hospital & vicinity access
- Abraham Lincoln IL American Water Tower
- Union Street Sewer Repair and Roadway Contract
- Negotiated Comcast’s/City’s Contract
- Negotiated a revised contract for cash rent of the South/West Kickapoo Street 40 acres of farmland.
- Beck’s Oil Complex with Arby’s Restaurant
- Imo’s Restaurant
- Keokuk & Woodlawn Road Specialty Shops & Restaurants
- Worked with our Garbage Collection contract
- Fifth Street Road 17 of 18 Successful Legal Easement Contracts
- Worked w/EPA & Engineers in City Sewerage Treatment Plant Upgrade

And, as for the pending **Fifth Street Road Project**, I was assigned by then Mayor Seth Goodman to handle the project after each Alderperson, Mayor Goodman, and I were each assigned one or two properties to obtain the Property Owners' renewed easement signatures and work with their warranty and quit claim deed signages paperwork, negotiate easement payments from the City and IDOT to the Property Owners, and all the other legal paperwork required to obtain the Owners' final signoffs to close each roadway easement. When the Alderpersons and Mayor weren't able to complete their assignments within the assigned two weeks, I was given the full project to complete all the pending issues with the project, organize and hold a Joint public meeting with the Logan County Board, County Engineer, Lincoln City Council, Property Owners, IDOT Engineers, ICC Railroad Engineers, Contractual Engineers, and answer the Property Owners' questions. In other words, I had to start all over where the City left off on the project 22 years before.

-I finalized the renewing of the then 17 of the 18 pending Fifth Street Road adjacent property easements for an additional two or three years for the purpose of expanding the roadway when reconstructing it. Lots of legal research and revised and renewed paperwork was required to update each plat of land. Engineering lines were redrawn in working with the property owners; and since I am a Paralegal, I was able to handle this assignment well.

-I worked with the Union Pacific Railroad Engineers and Legal Staff, IDOT Engineers, and two private engineering companies, etc., in proposed revamping of the current railroad bed, establishing better railroad signage, and completing the sewerage drainage system underneath the railbed and roadbed.

-The proposed short bike path was removed from the plans and newer lines were drawn by our contracted Design Engineer to cut some costs. I consulted and met with Property and Business Owners, Engineers, Attorneys, IDOT Teams for the procurement of the funds required and cleaned up 26½ years of this pending road and drainage construction project – still not completed with expensive, already-expired easement agreements needing to be renewed.

This project now has been in the works 29 years --1996 to 2025, and the Residents and Businesses along Fifth Street Road deserve an improved roadway. We were told in a meeting with the IDOT Liaisons and Supervising Engineer that if the City didn't follow through with the project after all these years, it would be required to pay back the funds IDOT had already bestowed to the City, as well as stand a strong chance of not receiving future grant funding from the State/Federal DOTs. I conveyed this information and other updates with the project on a weekly basis to the City Council. Mayor Tracy Welch was elected to his first 2021 term in early April, 2021, and two days later, I was dismissed from completing this project and my other duties three weeks prior to my contract deadline in order for the Mayor-Elect to get better organized for his upcoming administration. I most likely would have had the last property easement acquired as I had previously received an email to that effect from the Attorneys who oversaw the very last property. Mayor-Elect Welch told me he was going to hire a City Engineer instead of having a City Administrator as my contract was to end on April 30, 2021. The City Engineer position has yet to materialize, and the City's portion of the Fifth Street Road Project has, again, been set aside for four years, and Engineering fees are mounting. But being the fair person that I am, in viewing the Lincoln City Council Meeting on January 21, 2025 and, again, last evening, I was elated to learn the City had the Fifth Street Project back on its radar and both IDOT and the City agreed to appropriate \$6 million each to once more get the project moving forward. I also received a Freedom of Information Act response from City Clerk Bateman on January 28, 2025, indicating the project was back in good order, and would begin bid letting on March 7, 2025. I am very happy the City is back in business on this project after another four-year hiatus but, virtually, will be required to start all over with the project by reacquiring expensive, three- to four-year easements on both sides of the roadway, revised legal documents and IDOT paperwork, the Union Pacific Railroad bed upgrade, the underlying sewer drainage system, and renewed engineering costs. As explained in the City Clerk's letter to me, the plans remain the same and the \$6 million agreed upon contract amount includes a 15% contingency for the project.

Spending wastefulness and playing politics in government is so rampant anymore, and we need to stop it in Lincoln, IL, right now. If we had stayed the course with the established Committee Structure the City Council established prior to the last 15 years, we wouldn't be going through all these extra expenses with negative or non-existent outcomes. herefore, as I mentioned in my Letter 2 to the Editors, I am proposing the City Council return to the structured Committee set-up to move the City forward and achieve more accountability and transparency for all:

Suggested City Council Structured Committees (by Alphabet):

- Building, Coding, Planning, and Zoning Committee
- Economic Development Committee
- Finance and Policy and Procedures Committee
- Information Technology (IT), Broadband, and Forms Committee (set up while City Administrator)
- Police, Fire, Water, and EMA Committee
- Public Grounds and Buildings Committee
- Sewerage Treatment Plant and Sewerages and Drainages Committee
- Streets, Alleys, Sidewalks, Forestry, and Lighting Committee

Other Committees Established While I Served as Mayor and Later as City Administrator: (Two Alderpersons and the appropriate Department Heads will serve on each of these Committees in their Liaison Capacities.):

- Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, Minorities, Seniors, Veterans, and Youth (Meets monthly.)
- Historic Homes and Buildings Commission (Meets monthly.)
- Heritage Days Committee (predecessor of Third Fridays) (set up while Mayor after our Sesquicentennial Ten-day Celebration in August of 2003.)
- Management and Employees' Review Insurance Committee (established while City Administrator) (Meets as needed.)
- Lincoln Economic Development Grant Commission (LEDGC) (established while City Administrator.)
- Civil Service Commission (established while Mayor) (Meets monthly or as needed.)
- Citizens' to Improve Lincoln Commission (to be established) (Meets monthly or as needed.)
- Department Heads' Weekly Committee (established while Mayor)
- Fire and Police Pension Committees
- Fire, Police, and Street Departments Union Negotiations Committees

This City has serious issues and concerns to be addressed as soon as possible. And the City Council needs to be pro-active rather than reactive. As I mentioned in my first Letter to the Editor under the "Where They Stand" column in the Lincoln Daily News publication, we all have to work together as a team, collectively as a Community, to achieve our goals for a better future for our Children, Seniors, Disabled, and most Vulnerable. There are approximate 300 new State laws the City and State are required to adopt and maintain which went into effect January 1, 2025. We need better attitudes about the important work we do, we need curtailed favoritism, not allow bullying and harassment of employees or anyone addressing the City, and work strongly together to return Lincoln to a better economic plane.

I am open to holding **Public Debates with all the Mayoral Candidates prior to February 25, 2025's Primary Election**, and, if needed, prior to the final April 1, 2025, General Election to get these issues out in the open and to encourage Citizens to become more involved. We will need an independent Judge/Mediator s to ask the Candidates questions.

Can you honestly say that Lincoln, IL, has moved forward these last 15 years with all the business losses, declined population, and increased crime? With Lincoln University/aka Lincoln College's and Lincoln Christian University's closings several years ago, our Community has suffered greatly. If we didn't have Heartland Community College here, the loss would be even more dramatic for our Citizens. Thank goodness the Open Arms Church Corporation is purchasing all the former Lincoln Christian University Campus and utilizing it for positive, healthy means. I am hoping we can get further outreach support for our mentally challenged and substance-dependent Citizens and their families in cooperation with other services offered elsewhere within the City for our Senior, Veterans, Youth, and Indigent, and expand our Church and Medical Facility outreach programs, etc. The new Veterans' facility on Fifth Street is a wonderful concept and is a great asset for our city. This is a Thank You Shout Out for all of You who are working towards providing higher education and opportunity, and an overall better quality of life for our Citizens.

Please think strongly about who you believe your next Mayor and elected Alderpersons should be and how you, as concerned Citizens, Business Owners, and Developers, can help all of us function more fairly, more openly, with kindness and respect, and using common sense. Our Alderpersons need to be allowed to properly do their jobs as stipulated by law and to provide and receive better communications with their Ward Residents, and the courage to speak out with their positive/helpful thoughts and suggestions in our weekly City Council Meetings. No one person serving on the City Council or working for the City is more important than another, and especially no more important than our Citizens and Business Owners whom are to be served.

I'll be happy to talk with anyone with constructive suggestions by telephoning, texting, or emailing me at 217.816.0865 or bethkavelman.for.mayor@gmail.com. It is time we put away the immature antics and do what is right for the Citizens rather than what we believe is right for us. Everyone involved with serving government needs to take Ethics and Citizens with Disabilities Training. I want fairness and respect for all and that is why I am running for Mayor for a third term.

Thank you for reading my letter, and I am respectfully asking you for your vote in the upcoming Republican Primary Election to be held on February 25, 2025, and the General Election on April 1, 2025.

Have a Happy and Prosperous 2025! God Bless Lincoln, Logan County, and You!

Beth Davis-Kavelman, Re-Election Candidate for Mayor of Lincoln, IL

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