

Garry and Terri Petersen

**179 S. Home Ave.
Franklin, IN 46131**

Daily Journal
Scarlett Syse
Editor
2575 N. Morton St
Franklin, IN 46131

Letter to the Editor

RE: Downtown Streetscape

Recently, Terri and I had a lengthy conversation about the City of Franklin's proposed streetscape with Kenneth Remenschneider, President of Remenschneider Associates, Inc. Ken is an extremist. His philosophy of urban design is anti-traditional traffic, safety and engineering design principles. Ken is a social populist who believes we should walk everywhere and believes that by restricting urban spaces into walkable places he can create economic development. Remenschneider Associates is considered by a number of professionals here in Indiana as an organization that draws design pictures based on philosophy, not practicality. The firm's designs and suggestions for Franklin's courthouse and Monroe Avenue are not based on economic reality, sound traffic engineering or sound traffic flow theory.

Remenschneider's ideas for Franklin are to restrict and limit traffic and to force his philosophy of urban design on the community. Ken has no data or rationale to back up his suggestions for downtown Franklin. Ken's designs create a streetscape that restricts the ability of the community to provide fire protection, trash removal, emergency accessibility and snow removal. His designs are disrespectful of historic neighborhoods and the property rights of home owners within these neighborhoods.

Back in 1987, Citizens Organized for Franklin's Future (COFF) began the development of a streetscape for downtown Franklin. As part of this planning process, an oral history about the downtown area was conducted. This oral history interviewed Franklin citizens such as Jack Throckmorton, Margie and Katie Beeson, Francis Cheek and Gyenth Fredbeck to determine a baseline of Franklin's past. This information was then tied to a realistic expectation of Franklin's future within the context of design parameters that enhance economic development. Ken's design approach misinterprets and disregards the community's history and instead substitutes his "opportunity planning matrix" onto the community. For some time, the citizens of Franklin have seen unrealistic and irrational drawings presented by Remenschneider Associates, supposedly promoting Franklin's future. These concepts are heavily flawed and are riddled with impractical design elements that do not take into account the realities of our urban space.

Citizens Organized for Franklin's Future was a volunteer organization that did not pay hefty salaries to consultants or to professionals to run the organization. COFF helped lay the foundation for the Greenway Trail program, a number of pocket parks in the community, the city's first street tree ordinance and the North Main Street streetscape at a fraction of the costs of what is proposed today by the Remenschneider Redevelopment Commission Plan.

A quick back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that the current Remenschneider plan being discussed would cost the citizens of Franklin almost \$17,000 per additional parking space. A hidden tragedy within the Remenschneider plan is how the plan tries to create greenspace. The plan being discussed today disregards the physical limitations of what can and cannot be planted on a state highway and puts in place an infrastructure that will not sustain a long-term urban forest while negatively impacting the community. The islands of greenery proposed in the plan are only heatsinks that would lead to the death of the trees planted in them and represent a misstep in Franklin's future.

The leaders of our community need to stop, look and listen to the impracticalities of this plan before spending taxpayer's dollars. As presently proposed, the Remenschneider plan is detrimental to the economic growth of Franklin.

Travel safe,

Garry and Terri Petersen