



The Change We Need... The Strength to Lead

Statement on Cobo Center Regional Authority
Before Detroit City Council
Neighborhood and Community Services Committee
Thursday, July 16, 2009

STATEMENT FROM TOM BARROW:

“Thank you, Councilwoman Watson, for the opportunity to address your committee on the fate of our city and its invaluable assets, including Cobo Center.

I don’t need to tell you that Cobo Center is one of our city’s crown jewels. It is for that reason that the insidious campaign to take it from the people of Detroit must not succeed.

The legislature has craftily written a Bill to take Cobo Center by providing that it only remains with the people of Detroit if your body “disapproves” the deal by Aug. 1, 2009. Silence takes Cobo Hall away.

In anticipation of a possible “No” vote, the legislature disregarded the people of Detroit’s Charter and the City’s independent status and illegally provided that any tie vote or “No” vote by your body can be vetoed by the Interim Mayor. Not only does this legislative shenanigan violate our City’s Charter, it is both illegal and unconstitutional.

Interim Mayor Dave Bing, having been told that no action by your body forfeits Cobo Center, naively tipped his hand weeks ago when he told the news media that “he has no plans to submit a resolution [to] the Detroit City Council” knowing that in the absence of action, Cobo Hall is taken from the people of the City of Detroit and given to outside interests. Thus the people lose either way. This legislation is palpably unconstitutional and violates the rights of Detroiters.

-more-

Barrow Statement/p.2

Under the 10th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, a home rule city's charter cannot be overruled by the state legislature. Only the people can change the charter. Specifically, Detroit City Charter Sec. 4-112. Titled *Control of Property* simply states:

Except as otherwise provided by this Charter, the City may not sell or in any way dispose of any property without approval by resolution of the City Council.

If allowed, this slick disrespectful grab of our jewel will devastate our city financially. The cunning Oakland County Executive and his out-state friends do this now while we have a leadership that is weak and a Council under duress and our citizens uninformed. In short, they display a heart thumping disregard for the people of Detroit.

We cannot let this happen!

What's at stake with a shrinking North American International Auto Show at Cobo Center is the \$600 million that goes into our local economy and the 16,000 jobs cited by Governor Granholm.

Mayor Coleman Young would have seen this slick scheme coming from miles away and would have beaten back these diabolical plans to destroy our Detroit as the center of the SE Michigan economy and transfer our status to a private business in a suburban Novi making it a de facto novo central city by starving Detroit of its assets, its tax base, its reputation and its future.

As a people, we have lost the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Historical Museum and the Detroit Zoo. The Detroit Water Department, Public Lighting and yes, Belle Isle itself will be taken using this same unconstitutional legislative scheme coupled with weak leadership.

Detroit, it is time that we fight for ourselves and for our very survival.

I am a life-long Detroiter, and the Barrow family celebrates four generations as Detroiters. I am also a candidate for Mayor. I promise you Madam Chair: if I am elected to be your Mayor, on January 1st, I will instruct the City's Law department to stop this theft of our assets and challenge the constitutionality of these efforts in federal court. I will fight to maintain control of our facility and ensure Detroiters get the benefits and the jobs at Cobo Center.

I thank you for this opportunity and good morning."

###

MEDIA CONTACT: Colleen Robar, 313-207-5960, crobar231@aol.com