

Doc 9/11/06

Red flags should put stop to MCC plan



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that the dorm is needed. A main reason for the project is to enable MCC to attract more out-of-state and international students. Under state law, MCC may charge higher tuition to students from outside the state than it charges New York state residents. Thus, MCC benefits financially from increasing its enrollment of students from outside New York.

find the Monroe Community College Association (which is technically building the dorm) in MCC's audited financial statements because it is "financially accountable to the College."

We find it illogical and inappropriate that dorm design and construction have been handed to one contractor without the solicitation of any other proposals. Even if The DiMarco Group is the world's greatest construction firm, how do we know if the \$18.4 million it will be paid is a fair price? We don't.

President Flynn told the County Legislature Ways and Means Committee that an architectural firm "from Buffalo" had evaluated the price, but he refused to name the firm or make its report available. That is another problem. As a non-governmental entity, the MCC Association is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act or the Open Meetings Law. So we will never know if \$18.4 million is a fair price.

This proposed housing facil-

ity will be 40 beds (9.85 percent) smaller than the similar dorm that opened in 2003, and yet it will cost significantly more. There may well be a logical explanation, but none has been offered. In addition, maneuvering by the county administration will cost an additional \$260,000 because the association must buy the land from the state and county rather than leasing it from the county for \$1 per year, as was done for the first dorm.

Furthermore, in 1995-2005, The DiMarco Group, its principals and affiliated entities gave more than \$250,000 to the local Republican Party, \$100,000 of that in the last three years. Certainly that raises the possibility of cronyism.

In the absence of answers to these questions, this deal should not go forward. □

Haney, D-Rochester, represents the 23rd District, Monroe County Legislature; Bronson, D-Rochester, represents the 24th District.

In their Speaking Out essay April 4 ("Criticism of MCC's plan to build more student housing is unfair") Lori VanDusen, trustees chairwoman at Monroe Community College, and MCC President R. Thomas Flynn tried to make their case that the proposed MCC dorm construction is business as usual, and implied that they don't understand why the project has raised some concerns. We'd like to explain our concerns.

First, the issue is not whether the dorm should be built. We trust the MCC board's decision

Our concerns stem from the fact that MCC and Republican leadership in Monroe County are removing the project from public works designation, and thus from public oversight, accountability, prevailing wages and competitive bidding. They are handing an \$18 million project to a handpicked contractor.

For all practical purposes, the dorm construction is a "public project," although it is being manipulated in a way that escapes the legal definition of a public project. In fact, an MCC affiliate is building a dormitory on the MCC campus to be used by MCC students. In fact, you will