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by **Duke Skorich**

Anyone old enough to have watched a holiday television special knows about the relationship between Charlie Brown and his nemesis Lucy Van Pelt. Lucy continually takes advantage of Charlie Brown's naïve belief that she will do the right thing. There are countless times she has promised to hold the football for him, only to snap it out of reach just as he kicks with all his might. He never learns.

I'm feeling a bit like old Charlie Brown, staring up at the sky after being knocked off balance when the football wasn't there. I thought he meant it. Okay, we all know I didn't think he really meant it. I did think he'd wait a while to pull the football away. I really thought he'd let us get a few practice kicks in. You know, just enough to make us feel a part of the old ball game.

The Duluth Economic Summit has to be considered a success in at least one area: it did seem to energize people. Many residents were eager to begin making changes to start moving our city in the direction required to ensure a promising future.

The Honorable Gary L. Doty, our mayor, got the message. He heard national experts talk about the essential need to embrace all views in the community. Gary Doty responded; at the close of the Summit, he offered at least a portion of an olive branch. He acknowledged his administration might have played a part in leaving most of us out. He pledged to change. If nothing else, it seems evident the Honorable mayor of Duluth wants a glowing record of achievement when he mercifully leaves office in two years.

How can it be that in just a matter of days Mike Conlan, the power behind the throne, announced the firing of the comprehensive planning consultants? How can it be that virtually no one involved in the Comprehensive Planning Process knew the administration was going to fire the consultants? How could inclusion have such a short life span?

Suddenly, we're to believe Mike Conlan will hold the football so we can play the Comprehensive Planning Process game with him. Even the Duluth News Tribune was bold enough to finally point out Mr. Conlan's lack of formal training for this task. The process is also hindered by the absence of a planning staff in City Hall. They said it, I just read it.

"Rats!" As Charlie Brown would say, we thought we had something here, but it appears there is something about planning that offends the mayor.

As I considered these recent events, the reasoning behind his decision, which could essentially halt the planning process, became clear: Gary Doty feels he needs the freedom to create a lasting memorial to his years as mayor. When you're building a legacy, the last thing you need are rules.

That's when I got my idea to create a legacy to end all legacies. I have Charlie Brown to thank for the inspiration. St. Paul has seen record tourism numbers since they started scattering Snoopy and Charlie Brown statues around town. I am appointing myself chief fundraiser for the Gary L. Doty Monument Committee. My plan is to raise enough money to have several statues of His Honor cast in bronze and planted around town to highlight his career of service. I've come up with a few proposed locations, but I'm sure the right Task Force could expand my list.

Location 1: A statue of Gary Doty on the corner of Lake Avenue and Superior Street. He'd be looking up at the vast Technology Village in awe. He could be holding the rental agreement for DEDA. As a bonus, it would appear that someone is out on Superior Street in the evening.

Location 2: A statue of Doty in the Civic Center. Just for fun, we could cast a John Fedo statue too, and show the two men standing on the steps of City Hall. The Doty statue could be pointing north -- toward Hibbing. The Fedo statue could be holding the plans for the Canal Park improvements and the Lakewalk.

Location 3: A statue of Gary Doty seated in City Council chambers. Who said these statues had be accurate reflections of actual historical events?

Location 4: For those sticklers who insist on realism. A statue of Gary Doty in Bayfront Park handing the keys to the city, and the license for a Bayfront restaurant, to Jen Paulucci.

Location 5: A Gary Doty statue teeing off from the first tee at Spirit Ridge. That way, no matter how the controversy is decided, Gary would have his dream fulfilled.

Location 6: A statue of the mayor at the Duluth International Airport. No other mayor in memory has used the office as an excuse for International travel. I think a statue of Gary Doty, permanently on queue in the "Checked Baggage Only" line would be a nice way of remembering what he did as our mayor.

Location 7: A statue of Gary Doty in the Great Lakes Aquarium, they could include the statue in their daily head count of visitors, just to help boost their numbers.

I can only imagine what the Doty monuments could mean for Duluth. Now His Honor, our mayor, can stop fretting about his legacy. This is a chance to honor Gary Doty as so many of us believe he deserves to be honored. Once this is done, we can get back to a real comprehensive plan. I think this is a winner.

*Duke*