

David L. Corliss

From: Steve Butland [srbutl@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 7:58 PM
To: aroncromwell@gmail.com; schumm@sunflower.com; mdever@sunflower.com;
hughcarter@sunflower.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; David L. Corliss;
tkern@lawrencechamber.com; hbooth@lawrencechamber.com; dholiday@biggsribs.com;
matt@brew23.com
Subject: Olive Garden @ 27th & Iowa Tax Subsidies

Hello,

My name is Steve Butland, I am the Operator/Owner of Paisano's Ristorante at 25th & Iowa here in Lawrence. My reason for writing is I understand that the City of Lawrence is considering providing tax subsidies and or abatements to the Darden Group, as they consider building an Olive Garden in Lawrence at 27th & Iowa, since this area is considered "blighted."

My interests in this are admittedly self serving...an Olive garden across the street from my restaurant will certainly damage our position in the marketplacebut I am equally puzzled as to why the City of Lawrence would provide a Corporation the size of Darden such benefits.....Darden is the largest full service restaurant chain in the WORLD..they operate Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Longhorn Steak House, Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze, and several other concepts as well....why would we provide Darden with possible tax relief, how does this make a level playing field for small business people who are in the restaurant business to compete?

It is also my belief that there will be no new net/net jobs created...all this will do is cannibalize the market...jobs gained at Olive Garden will be lost at other restaurants, including Paisano's. The market share pie is only so big...the pie will remain the same size, with Olive Garden in town, they will now share a slice, while the loyal to Lawrence small restaurateurs becomes smaller.

Paisano's has been in Lawrence since 1994, and we have enjoyed serving the local community. Our money stays in Lawrence, and we do business with a great many other businesses in town. If Olive Garden comes to town, we will street fight them from open until close 365 days a year, I hope they don't build here...but if they do, please consider what Milton and Rose Friedman wrote in their book "Free To Choose"...that is provide business with "equality of opportunity"..providing tax benefits to the Darden Group gives them an unequal advantage...Paisano's has never received a nickel in tax abatements/ subsidies...provide that level playing field so we have a chance to survive.

Thank you,

Steve Butland
Operator/Owner
Paisano's Ristorante

David L. Corliss

From: Doug Holiday [dholiday@biggsribs.com]**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 7:27 PM**To:** David L. Corliss; aroncromwell@gmail.com; hughcarter@sunflower.com; mdever@sunflower.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; 'Tom Kern'**Subject:** 27th and Iowa

To: The Lawrence City Commission

From: Doug Holiday, President of The Lawrence Originals

Subject: Tax incentives for national chain restaurants/brokers for those chains

I am writing this letter in regards to possible tax incentives to be offered to the developer of the land at 27th and Iowa. I understand that there is a plan to “redevelop” the land for a restaurant, that being Olive Garden. As the founder and current owner of Bigg’s BBQ and President of the Lawrence Originals, a group of 20+locally owned restaurants here in Lawrence, I have a number of concerns with this proposal. These concerns represent the collective concerns of all the owners of the Lawrence Originals.

Unless you are a small business owner, it is difficult to imagine the challenges we face each and every day trying to compete with the national chains. Chain restaurants have name recognition, enormous national advertising budgets, national buying power etc. What we offer is a hometown commitment to the Lawrence community, with a desire to offer a unique dining experience unlike that of chain restaurants, with on site local management. We believe this is what sets Lawrence apart, and what attracts many visitors to our city.

There is currently a locally owned Italian restaurant across the street from the proposed location. Paisano’s, owned by Steve Butland, has a loyal following, but it would have difficulty competing with an Olive Garden. To offer tax incentives to any national chain in any location in Lawrence, creates an unfair advantage for the national chain, and is unfair to the small business owner. There are only so many dollars spent on dining in Lawrence. New jobs might be created by a national chain, like an OG, but an equal number of jobs would be lost by Paisano’s and other established restaurants. It has been mentioned that the OG would be a destination restaurant. I personally think from my experience in the restaurant business of thirty years, OG is a not a destination restaurant.

We all agree that this location is somewhat run down and blighted, and we would like to see this area improved upon. However we do not believe providing tax incentives to a national chain is the answer. If they do come without incentives, there is nothing we can do about this. To offer incentives to them or their developers is unfair to the established small business owners. Clarence Otis (CEO of Darden restaurants) will probably never darken the doorway of an OG in Lawrence, but everyday you can see the CEO of a locally owned restaurant, either helping with guests or perhaps even making their food. We will always be here, as long as we are supported by Lawrence and their elected officials. We might improve on one blighted area, but if this results in closing other restaurants, we simply create a new problem. This property has been vacant for a number of years, the reason being, the owners are waiting for a sweetheart deal to be made by the city of Lawrence. The property owners don’t live here and they don’t care. We are all committed to Lawrence, and want Lawrence to thrive by offering unique dining experiences unlike those of the cookie cutter chains.

I would ask that you carefully evaluate this proposal, and give every consideration to protecting your local business owners who have invested their lives in the betterment of the Lawrence community.

Sincerely,

Doug Holiday
785-423-0669 cell
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5/26/2011