

From: Councilman Kramer
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2011
To: drakestraw@fwwatch.org
Cc: Councilwoman Sherman

Mr. Rakestraw:

I have read the press release <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/pressreleases/franklin-township-rejects-united-water-privatization-proposal/> written by Wenonah Hauter and I must take exception with it on several points. The article distorts facts.

First the comment "Council members also cited the role that Food & Water Watch played in their decision making process; ..." is extremely misleading. In the context of the article the uninformed reader would assume the citations were favorable. In fact uniformly Council members that spoke of FWW did so in a negative manner. Below you will find the comments that I read at the meeting. They speak for themselves. Second is the petition. It did not impress me because the information on it was misleading. While it was an effective tool for you to spread misinformation, its inaccuracies forced me to disregard it in my decision making process.

Finally was the articles conclusion, "Communities across the country can learn from the example set by Franklin Township's council who carefully evaluated the privatization deal with public input, concluding that water privatization does not make sense." That was not our conclusion. Privatization was not the issue, the issue was the financials of this particular contract at this time. We may consider privatization in the future and if we did I would gladly invite United Water to bid.

This article unfortunately further discredits your organization and I ask you to not misrepresent Franklin Township in this way. At the very least you should post this as a rebuttal.

Lastly kindly remove your signs illegally placed in our town, especially those place on open space property. I find it disgraceful behavior for an organization that purports to be protecting the planet. The excuse that you just provided the signs and others put them up is no excuse at all.

During the months that Council has reviewed this situation we have been applauded for being open to both sides of the argument. I myself did not make a final decision until last week. In order to keep ourselves open minded we have neither advocated a position nor extensively disputed misinformation.

I have however been troubled by the flood of misinformation surrounding this project. I believe the people of food and water watch sincerely believe in their cause and I have carefully listened to them. I find however that they are a group that is unencumbered by the truth.

I have long been a proponent of free speech and when some disapproved of food and water watch soliciting petitions in front of the library I defended the practice.

I cannot however defend their use of scare tactics, exaggerations and outright distortions.

I need now to dispel some rumors, and remember I voted against privatizing. We never intended to privatize, sell or otherwise lose control of the water system. We considered privatizing the workforce and only the workforce in part to attempt to mitigate the raising personnel costs we face. Analysis convinces me that not going with United Water is more likely to result in a water rate increase than had we gone with them.

The safety of our water was never in question. We currently receive the water already processed and would have continued to do so afterwards. I have very little doubt that had we gone with United Water it would have gone entirely unnoticed at the tap.

My decision was based entirely on the facts and although I considered everything food and water watch said I found little of it reliable and it had very little influence over me.

Freedom of speech is argued to be our most important right. We should be careful to honor it with honesty because if we don't we jeopardize its existence.