

MEMO
TO: PET
FROM: ISAAC
RE: WORCESTER

The Telgram/Gazette has sponsored a series of forums called This is Worcester (material attached). Beyond the obvious boosterism that may be part of an effort of this type, there may be a hidden agenda. Alex Drapos thinks that this is part of a larger strategy by Steele and the Telgram, to prepare to the city manager's retirement. When Mc Grath retires (and given his age and length of service, that may be soon) there may be a move to change the form og government. Alex feels that the Telgram is setting up and supporting the forums, etc. to be able to maintain political influence in whatever the new form of government is.

The biggest local issue in Worcester is the future of the Civic Center. The Telegram has been running a series of reports on the history of the center under the 'spotlight' label. According to the series, the whole civic center project has been shaky from the start. It is a joint development between the city and a consortium of local and out of state interests. The difficult lies largely with the various members of the consortium who feel that their contractual arrangements with each other have not been satisfactory.

The present status is a serious dispute over the quality of the work in the project. The consortium memberspulled out recently because of unsafe working conditions because of the shoddy steel work. It should be noted that some of the steel work is performed by Jackson Steel, a minority subcontractor, and that is a below the surface issue. While three independent engineering firms test the design and quality of the steel work, there is a complete shutdown of work.

You might ask Steele what he thinks the future of the project is. It is funded with \$5million from the EDA, \$2 million from local businesses, and the rest by bond issue to a total of \$14.9 million. If the delays and litigation seem to be protracted, you may mention to Steele that you could help with the EDA to keep their commitments. However, the locals, both the city (as owner) and the others (as developers) have to come to some meeting of the minds and soon or there may be no project at all.