Colonies' campaign donations paid off

The Colonies developers must have studied well the art of transforming campaign contributions to local officials into favorable votes on matters in which they have an interest. You have to admire their skill, as this time they were able to get a "tweeter."

In addition to getting a majority vote on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors to give them $100 million dollars, they got the supervisors to agree that the city of Upland would also give them $2 million dollars. What is amazing about this is that the Upland City Council has never officially considered such a grant. How do the developers figure they can speak for the Upland City Council?

The settlement agreement was approved during a one-hour closed session where the supervisors handled five items, three of which related to the Colonies settlement. The proposal was contained in an 80-page document. They must be speed readers. Fortunately for them there was no staff analysis of the proposal to read, or they might not have been able to give the proposal the intense study warranted by the expenditure of such a large sum of money.

The urgency in rushing it through is that they will lose Supervisor Postmus' vote at the end of December, thus losing the majority needed to pass the proposal. If voted on in January it would fail.

The governor has already explained to us how it works: "Money comes in, favors go out." The Colonies developers through huge contributions to several members of the Board of Supervisors not only were able to catch their ear on their proposal, the were also able to capture their vote.

In addition, the developers were able to gather the support of Upland's Mayor Pomierski, who was also a recipient of the Colonies' largess. Did the developers get the understanding that Upland would contribute $2 million dollars to the settlement from some private discussion with any city officials?

The Colonies developers can get the ear of the supervisors as a result of their campaign contributions. While I, who did not make a contribution to Supervisor Biane, can't get him to reply to my repeated e-mails.

I am fully aware that the developers can spend their money any way they like. They are within their rights in making the contributions. However, there is no constitutional mandate that requires candidates to accept the contribution. When the amount is so grossly out of proportion to the average contribution, the candidate should exercise some ethical discretion and return it. It's easier to say no to a $500 dollar contributor than it is to one who gives in the thousands.

If they can't say no to a huge contribution, they are unlikely to say no to a request for help from that contributor.

- HOWARD MCGRAW, Upland