

# CRUSHED BY HYPE

## *How Greed, Ego and Ignorance Combine to Con Santa Clara Residents*

*by J. Byron Fleck & Karen Hardy<sup>1</sup>*

Authors Note:

In our previous Reports we focused on presenting facts, duly footnoted to their source, about the billionaire Yorks subsidy request from your money. We will continue those reports.<sup>2</sup>

Many of you have asked how a few “insider” residents and many special interests outside Santa Clara, could lead our City Council to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of our money, to consider the feasibility of the obviously unfeasible. It is an important question.

It is important, if for no other reason, as a reminder.

Just because a person occupies a position of responsibility, is no assurance they will act responsibly.

So, today, we begin the first in an occasional series we call, “Crushed By Hype.”

All facts stated are footnoted to their source.

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<sup>1</sup> Byron Fleck is a resident, attorney and former City of Santa Clara Planning Commissioner. Karen Hardy is a teacher, community volunteer and City Planning Commissioner. The views expressed by Ms. Hardy are her own. They not intended to reflect the views of the Commission or the views any other member of the City of Santa Clara Planning Commission.

<sup>2</sup> This report is another in a series prepared by the authors. Both oppose giving any subsidy to billionaires. If you wish to receive any of our prior reports, simply request to [jfleck@covad.net](mailto:jfleck@covad.net)

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he perfect storm originated with a self-important County Assessor's 2005 "confidential" letter appeal for secrecy and tickets. It ends crashing under the illogic of its own weight. This is a tragic-comedy. Greed, ego and ignorance are themes, often written, and, just as often, forgotten.

This is a true story of how a City comes close to being the "mark."

The 115,000 residents of the City of Santa Clara never mattered. Greed, ego and ignorance trumped all, due to a too cosey City Council, who suffered from, or were seduced by, the above.

This is what happened.

# CHAPTER I

## THE BEGINNING

*"I'm invited to suites because I'm an elected official. Tough luck.  
That's just the way it is"*

- Larry Stone, Santa Clara County Assessor<sup>3</sup>

Larry Stone is the current Santa Clara County Assessor. An otherwise unremarkable job, charged with assessing and collecting property taxes. Then, and, now, he is also a developer. He believes he is a major player in the local and national political scene.<sup>4</sup>

Stone is a nice enough fellow. In our opinion, not bright, but nice.

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<sup>3</sup> *San Jose Mercury News*, Internal Affairs: Greater S.J. gets even, uh, greater, 04/15/2007

<sup>4</sup> See, [http://www.mercurynews.com/localnewsheadlines/ci\\_5898858](http://www.mercurynews.com/localnewsheadlines/ci_5898858)

On October 5, 2005, Stone sent a letter marked “**CONFIDENTIAL**” to Larry MacNeil, VP and CFO of the San Francisco 49ers.<sup>5</sup>

In his letter, written on County of Santa Clara official letterhead, “Office of the County Assessor,” Stone wrote:

Re: 94.[sic] Project

Dear Larry:

I thought the meetings were productive and informative. After you and John (York?) review your notes [I] would suggest that we schedule, separate, confidential meetings... As a follow up, thank you for your offer for the game on October 30. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend that day. I will be in San Francisco this Sunday, however, and could take you up on your kind offer if it’s not too late...

In addition, I am hoping to be in Seattle (my hometown) for the Seattle game on December 11<sup>th</sup>. If you could arrange a couple of tickets and let me know the cost I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Larry

What Stone, York and 49ers CFO MacNeil discussed in those “**CONFIDENTIAL**” discussions, is unknown. Ask Larry Stone at <http://www.scc-assessor.org>

After all, if he has time to ask for football tickets on official time, he must have time to respond to your email.

[Next: The Best City Council Money Can Buy...for not Very Much]

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<sup>5</sup> See, <http://www.nbc11.com/download/2006/1130/10434973.pdf> p1 & p2.