

Engage, Accomplish, Enjoy... Celebrate Port St. Joe

A wonderful proverb was referenced in last week's paper. This proverb, typically attributed to the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tzu, teaches, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Redevelopment is, by its nature, a long-term growth project (the fruits of which will last into lifetimes to come). The Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency is no end within itself, and we do not treat it as such. We seek to be no more than the soil that allows our redevelopment area to flower. To be successful, our bedrock must be secure enough to support growing trees *and* loose enough to allow the roots to extend deep.

It was interesting to me to consider additional teachings of Lao-Tzu, and I share a few with you now for your consideration and pleasure.

Confront the difficult while it is still easy. Accomplish the great task by a series of small acts.

Engage now in the discussion of direction before we set out. Guaranteed it will be harder to make a sharp turn when we're all going full speed ahead.

The world is not ours to take by the horns and steer. The world is ours to live in and to understand. Harmony is not born of aggressive notes, striking out on their own. It is born of humble notes, yielding confidently and quietly in accord.

Together, we will determine our course. United, we will progress.

Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Can you deal with the most vital matters, letting events take their course? Leading and not trying to control, this is the supreme virtue. A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worst when they despise him. Fail to honor people, they will fail to honor you. But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aims fulfilled, they will all say, "We did this ourselves."

For now, voices don't ring equally. The top-notch experts the PSJRA brought in seem loudest because they attempt to teach, which they cannot do silently. Instead of teaching us to fish, they attempt to teach us to create and sustain our community.

When they think they know the answers, people are difficult to guide. When they know that they don't know, people can find their own way.

There is no final design. You will have to teach the PSJRA about the specific needs and desires of your community; this is a two-way process.

Failure is an opportunity. If you blame someone else, there is no end to the blame. Therefore, fulfill your own obligations; correct your own mistakes; do what needs to be done; demand nothing of others.

We may overlook some things, but let's focus on the things we decide to do and do them right. That requires us to choose a direction. Join us now, in our collective infancy, and help us choose.

So, BE there, BE engaged, BE the voice that blends to harmony and creates the choir that will ultimately be YOUR community.

Though this long-term process, the time will never be better for each individual voice to engage, begin to harmonize and influence the quality of the community choir. Your influence on your future will be measured by your level of engagement in the present.

Be free to join us at our board meetings, every second Thursday of the month at 5 pm. The next one is tonight.