

OUR VIEW

Amazon HQ2: Please, oh please, don't pick us

Dear Jeff Bezos:

We understand from all the headlines, you've received 238 bids for your second U.S. headquarters.

Wow! Big time. Really impressive. A \$5 billion headquarters. Promising as many as 50,000 jobs.

Everybody wants to be an Amazon city, right?

After all, you're taking over the world — what with your biggest-department-store-in-the-universe selection of anything anyone could possibly want at a competitive price, the quick delivery thanks to your (paid) Prime system, your streaming music and video service, your Amazon Studios TV production company (overlooking the producer bounced recently in the sex harassment scandal), your leap into the grocery business with Whole Foods. More to come.

Who wouldn't want to be home to your second big headquarters?

Us.

Honestly. Not really.

That's why we're asking you to keep the application from Sarasota County on the bottom of the pile. Give us a pass.

We understand why the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County chose to join the mad stampede for HQ2.

Why not? Everybody else was doing it. Why not take a flier on a 50-plus page application and see if you can hit 0 on the roulette wheel? Three times in a row.

As EDC Executive Director Mark Huey told the *Sun* last week, "We believe our community would be an incredible host. We're the kind of community with the talent they want."

Compared to Denver, or New York City, or Atlanta, or Austin, or Boston, or Dallas, or Washington, D.C.? Dream big, EDC. Drop the chip on "0" and spin the wheel.

In its application, Sarasota's EDC proposed building HQ2 on 225 acres

at the Lakewood Ranch business park, which is east of Interstate 75 near the new University Parkway interchange, the nice new mall and the Benderson rowing park.

An alternate site in the EDC package was a 600-acre tract in West Villages, off U.S. 41 and River Road in North Port. Both places have plenty of room for new homes; both expect to see thousands more built in the next 10-20 years.

And no knock on economic development. We've supported incentives for business development — at least during the past recession, when building and development became as dry as the Gobi. We're excited about the new spring training stadium and the Atlanta Braves coming to West Villages. We like the idea of Allegiant Air building the Sunseeker Resort in Charlotte Harbor. We like the idea of a new hotel at the Venice Municipal Airport.

Fact is, a cutting-edge, high-tech, 2,000- or 5,000-employee industry would be welcomed with wide-open arms around here.

But 50,000? The Amazon of the internet?

Transformative, but probably not for the better, at least for those of us who call this home or home away from home.

Too big. Too much. Too fast.

We can just imagine the impact on housing prices, roads, traffic, public transportation, schools, libraries, police and fire services. And that is unsettling.

The big-time metropolis cities — St. Louis, Chicago, Denver, Dallas — might be able to absorb the impacts of King Kong in the park. It may be tough for them, too. Just as it has been for Seattle, in many ways.

Take the EDC's gesture on good faith. We like being perceived as players, but we're hoping against a hit.

Give us five stars but put us in the trash bin, Mr. Bezos. Thanks, but not really.

My head is not there. Wife wanted 2nd opinion.



Joe Giorgianni

excluding the long waits before the throne in the middle of the night, and exercise as much and as often as I feel the urge to exercise.

Admittedly, I don't "work-out" as often as perhaps I should, but then who does? But I do get ample amounts of exercise. For example, when the mood hits me, I jump to conclusions, drag my heels and climb the walls.

This last one is an easy one considering the current climate within our federal government. I also push my luck, make mountains out of molehills, put my foot in my mouth and run in circles.

I am, however, often interrupted in these last exercises, after being told that I should consider other methods of improving my health, as I might be walking on thin ice, which, I would opine, is another form of exercise.

Oh yeah ... I also go over the edge and beat around the bush. Now if that's not enough exercise to keep me slim and trim, I don't know what is.

When I retired, I found myself wondering what I would do with all my free time. Then, I found out. I go to doctors. My Rolodex, once filled with the names and numbers of good friends, restaurants and such, is now filled with the names of doctors, most of whom are specialists.

Next week, for example, I have a colonoscopy scheduled. The last time I had this procedure, I asked the doc to tell my wife that my head wasn't up there. The next day, my wife told me to get a second opinion.

Exercise? There are only so many heartbeats in my chest. It would be a shame to waste them sweating. As I age, I have come to the conclusion that if God had wanted me to touch my toes, he would've put them on my knees.

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SHOULD NEW, LARGE BUILDINGS BE GIVEN INITIAL TAX CUTS IF THEY AGREE TO BUILD TO HURRICANE SHELTER STANDARDS AND AGREE TO BE A SHELTER? CALL US AT 941-207-1111.

*Editor's Note: The number for the Let 'em Have It Line is 941-207-1111.*

*Also, please keep your comments to 200-250 words. Some people are talking several minutes, and we cannot run those comments. They literally would take up half the page you are holding.*

**Fire Hazards.** I know they are doing their best, but there is a growing fire hazard in front of many yards in the city right now. I'm just hoping this is a very high priority for pick-up. I really think it should be.

**Show Your Protest.** A suggestion for everyone offended by the conduct of the NFL players: State your own protest. Throw away your paraphernalia. Stop watching the games on TV. Boycott the products of the sponsors. Otherwise ... be quiet!

**Puerto Rico Problems.** I'm calling about Puerto Rico. It is a local issue in that when I went to Puerto Rico at least four times, what I would see would be starving dogs running on the beach. That's the way they treated their infrastructure, how they managed their resources and how they managed their homes. Now they're in the same position. I think a lot of this they've brought on themselves.

**Put Lines Underground.** Regarding no electricity: Can anyone tell me why FPL has not, and can, put their electric underground. With the terrible hurricanes in the last 50 years, they still do not put power



**Let 'em Have It**

lines underground. I have been living in Florida for 21 years now, and as I left Indiana, they were already, for years, putting lines underground.

I just talked with a friend in Illinois, and she said her area and around have all underground lines. Of course, it takes money, but in the long run, isn't that better than having people out of electricity. Are they so greedy they have to have all the money for themselves? More money for the rich in Florida. I guess life will always be that way. Stupid ... absolutely stupid to go on repairing these tiny, dinky little poles. They need to put the electric underground.

**So-Called Progress.** I had to laugh when I saw the paper today about people

complaining about the Braves stadium. One person said they were from Island Walk and that they didn't want all the crowds and confusion. I find it funny. How do you think a longtime resident of Venice felt when they developed that area? We were a nice little quaint town until overdevelopment happened. The progress is as it is.

**Monuments.** To the person who thought moving the monuments was a goofy argument, and the holocaust was a little negative, maybe we could put all the monuments in a museum. Nobody would ever move that, and nobody would ever think about that.

**Why there?** Who do you think you're kidding when you put a politically charged piece by Mark Seiden in the sports section?

**No Guns.** We are all victims of Las Vegas. Get the guns off the streets. What is wrong with these people that they can't figure this out and do something?

**Not Good Etiquette.** The mayor had submitted a name to be appointed to the MPO board at the City Council and when they were to vote on it, Bob Daniels slandered this gentleman's good name. He was a taxpayer in Venice, a man recommended, and it was in very poor taste by Bob Daniels. It just wasn't appropriate to do to a volunteer who was giving up his time to the city of Venice.

He was a bully. Then there was the issue of giving a million dollars to the library system. We've got to learn to get along with Sarasota County. There are a lot of things we can't do, such as animal control and even the libraries. The libraries are run by Sarasota County. We use the Sheriff's helicopter. We can't do it by ourselves. These personal attacks on agencies are not appropriate. That's not good leadership.

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