

## Coming Soon to Carroll County, An Unnecessary Entertainment Venue

There are plans for expansion of the Town Mall in Westminster to include an eSports Arena. The articles in the Times newspaper do not include details of what gaming is being offered. Is this console gaming or PC gaming? Either way there is a hardware problem. For console gaming, the latest hardware is not available to the general public; the PS5 is still a phantom product that cannot be purchased in Carroll County. PC gaming hardware is elusive in Carroll County as well; no department store or Staples sells equivalent hardware. PC development has waned while everyone buys mobile devices (tablets or smartphones). Where is this group obtaining their hardware?

Why are the common citizens still having no choice in available products and no option but to 'make do' while larger organizations and corporations gain access to all available products. Is this why the general public can't purchase the hardware in department stores around the county, someone else already bought them all up?

Who is this group pushing for an unwanted venue? The mall in Westminster has tried online gaming three times. First, with a small local business that attracted no players. Second time was a larger presence (and still no players), but then corona-virus hit and they replaced the video gaming with hight-touch; DnD, Magic or Warhammer games. Now MAGIC, a collaborative group wants to try for a third time to bring a service Carroll County clearly does not want.

MAGIC's focus is on how to use the non-existent fiber-optic network for automation and so-called SMARTtechnology. They have no plan to bring forth their only pie-in-the-sky dream of self-driving public transit in Carroll County. One of their partner sites linked from their site is a cookie-cutter site with stock photos of a worksite not even located in downtown Westminster (as they claim). The plans for a eSports Arena in Westminster aren't even discussed on their own sites. Most of their agenda from the Times article isn't even listed on their site.

They want to use half the mall and want the City of Westminster to pay for about \$6 million dollars of the project.

This is no different than the major sport teams who build a new stadium and get the local government to fund 80% of the costs. This is how Mark Cuban got his new stadium for the Mavericks. Corporations spend none of their own money and expect local governments, your tax dollars, to fund their private enterprises.

How is Westminster to pay for this project? Are they to use bonds funding by the LIBOR rate like they did for Ting's non-disruptive fiber project. The same financial service that was discovered to be fraudulent and stole local governments money.

Carroll County lacks broadband support for this type of online gaming in a large capacity. There is no county-wide plan for fiber-optic or other cabling; no provider can give us consistent low latency service such a facility would require. Network services needed for internet-based play are not available in Carroll County and those services that are available are not priced were the average citizen can afford them. The services offered by Ting were promised to be disruptive in cost and have turned out to be inline with competitors for a lower quality product.

This is hardly the best use of broadband internet. There are better reasons to implement high-speed fiber-optic networks than just entertainment. First, every business now expects high-speed internet for access to their services or the use of their apps, rather than commonly available software. Broadband internet would also help small local business offer services to compete with larger corporations. We discovered during the Corona-virus epidemic that we need broadband for telecommuting and telecommunications. There is more to broadband than just streaming games, movies or music. Is this facility expecting to have some sort of dedicated broadband connection the rest of us aren't allowed to possess ?

The plans for eSports in Carroll County would devolve into a private corporation showcasing products you cannot enjoy in your own home and maintain the status quo of the rich elite throwing their wealth in the face of the lower classes. The intended audience for this arena is not the citizens of Carroll County. The video game industry is already rife with fraud and theft masquerading as micro-transactions; while using gambling to entice children to raid their parent's bank accounts. Social behavior is on the decline as players bully and terrorize other players for not being to afford or not purchasing costumes/items so that their gaming characters are not defaults. Being 'default' is now a new label to discriminate against. Google's efforts for streaming games have stalled and will most likely be another project that suffers from Google's patented 'Nail in the Coffin', resulting in a loss of funds and property of the consumer.

The video game industry itself is becoming the new Catholic Church/Boy Scout scandal with rampage sex abuse, rape, assaults or other forms of worker abuse. Ubisoft now has the practice of transferring executives to other facilities like they were priests abusing altar boys. Digipen teaches students to expect abuse and work long hours for little to no pay. The video game industry has entered the blue collar workforce in regards to making their employees wage-slaves.

A facility to pander to industry elite and encourage this behavior is not a good thing to have in an area that is already rural and not part of a metropolitan urban district. We are not Baltimore or Montgomery County and we shouldn't be expected to be like them. There shouldn't be an exception that Carroll County will pander to private corporations that will rape and plunder just so we can watch some pretty colors flash on the screen. This is a case of some distorted viewpoint that we are not like our richer neighbors unless we have the same toys. Despite the fact that our richer neighbors are undergoing right now some the the harshest crime and social unrest. Do we really want to be more like them ?

These plans for eSports in Carroll County make no sense. Our area lacks hardware and network support. The industry supported by such a facility is corrupt and abusive. Financial instruments to fund such a project are rigged against local interests that are already suffering economic damage from epidemics, poor employment opportunities and disparate social classes.

Partnership for this project is offered by a group with no successful track record. They have created no products or services that are available and their previous events of conferences for technology at Carroll Community College have been lacking in technical know-how or demonstration of any technology available to the general public of Carroll County.

If you really want to support eSports and streaming games in Carroll County; then build that damn county-wide fiber-optic network already at a price we can afford and let us buy the gaming hardware for ourselves and we'll play in the comfort of our own homes. Until the banks call in our mortgages that is.