

Band-Aid tint is fitting for water tower

By JOHN SKIPPER, Globe Gazette Columnist

Well, that's a load off of my mind, and I'm sure you feel the same way.

The City Council Thursday night selected "brimstone" and "brick red" as the colors for the new water tower in south Mason City.

On the paint color chart, brimstone appears to be what I would call Band-Aid brown. How fitting for a process that started seven months ago and seemed to bleed through many meetings.

Had it gone on much longer, I would have suggested putting images of the council members on the tower and calling it Mount Rush-No-More.

As a community, we sometimes have trouble striking a balance between giving proper respect to the old and welcoming in the new.

We need more parking, yet we don't want to tear down an old building to get it.

We want a new band shell and yet we don't want to tear down the old one.

We want our roads fixed, yet we complain about street closings when repair work is being done.

What does all this have to do with painting a water tower?

The answer is that when all was said and done, "Mr. Toot" was not a part of the final design. (Incidentally, have you ever noticed that when "all is said and done" in government, it's mostly said? But I digress.)

Mr. Toot has been a symbol of Mason City's musical heritage for a long time. But Councilman Max Weaver says it has outlived its usefulness — that young people either don't know the symbolism or don't care because Mr. Toot represents the kind of music they're not interested in.

Councilmen Scott Tornquist and Al Zook wanted some representation of music in the final design and voted against the final plan. So did Weaver, even though he got his wish on Mr. Toot.

Don Nelson said nobody was going to pay any attention to the artwork as they drove by. "One glance and you're down the road," he said. Jeff Marsters said he would object to any artwork that added to the cost of the estimated \$90,000 paint job.

So there you have it. "Mason City" will be in brick red lettering on a background of brimstone brown.

How exciting was the process, which began at the meeting of March 23? Some would tell you it was like watching paint dry.

One final thought: Had the council been made up of six women, do you think it would have taken seven months to pick out the colors?

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