

McMinn County Libertarian Party
Position Paper
Downtown Revitalization

Summary: The McMinn County Libertarian party believes government has no responsibility to revitalize private property.

Communities all across America have attempted downtown revitalization plans, generally without success. The normal trend of development in America has been away from centralized downtown areas with their limited parking space and greater distances from where the housing markets have developed. Those who own property in the areas left vacant because of lack of demand too often go to local government to demand something be done.

Selected revitalization exemplifies the taking from one to give to another. The number of property owners in the downtown district of Athens are but a small percentage of the total number of property owners in the county. Why should businesses located on the outskirts of town be forced to subsidize those located in the downtown district of Athens; furthermore, why should businesses located in Etowah, Niota, and Calhoun be forced to make improvements to businesses in Athens. To select such a small number of property owners and their lessees to benefit from taxation of everyone in the county is unfair.

It has been suggested the City and County cooperate in revitalizing the downtown district of Athens. The feuding between these two governments over the joint venture of the Expo Center at the Athens Regional Park indicate turf battles and lack of financial cooperation could become a big problem in a joint adventure to revitalize the center of Athens.

In conclusion we believe the development of all areas should be left to the property owners themselves. Government is neither capable of anticipating what will work in the real estate marketplace nor able to treat all citizens equally when it resorts to deciding what areas will be subsidized.