



Thanks for your interest in the TIF Illumination Project (www.tifreports.com) and our TIF Illumination consulting services.

I can tell you that educating and organizing around TIFs is a GREAT community-building strategy. **We've been invited to present at 78 public meetings in front of over 6,600 people since February of 2013!** Each forum was organized by a different group of citizens from that community We've Illuminated 141 TIFs across 41 wards.

The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers brought us to the Queen City in December of 2019 to help them organize against a proposed roster of 15 new TIFs. We did amazingly effective work with very little prep time – see <http://www.tifreports.com/cincinnati-organizing>.

Here's what we can do with you:

- framing and narrative coaching to lift up the issue - strategic thinking to look at short and long term goals
- data wrangling - taking what you have to tell the most impactful story
- comparing data you have to what is available elsewhere to create "data demands" - shows off bad policies
- organizing public meetings and flow
- grassroots pr, turnout & show-up
- media work, pr and spokesperson coaching
- preparing for rallies, press conferences
- public testimony at city hall, board of ed
- quickly launching web sites, online petitions
- using campaign tools to get volunteers activated and texting/contacting other folks for this work
- finding likely and unlikely allies to join your campaign and to stand with you in public
- fundraising for this work, including crowdfunding

For out-of-town consulting and planning, we ask for \$500/day plus travel and lodging. We can arrange for video conference calls to discuss and plan around this work, as well.

Watch short video testimony from people who have brought us to their communities for public TIF town meetings we call "Illuminations" at <http://tinyurl.com/TIF-Organizers-Talk>.

TIF Illuminators www.tinyurl.com/TIF-Organizers-Talk

Here are short testimonies of people who have organized TIF town meetings or Illuminations for their wards. They are all volunteers. To find out more about the TIF Illumination Project visit www.tifreports.com.

Doris Brooks Talks TIFs Marjorie Tatum Talks TIFs Maureen Sullivan Talks TIFs Don Gordon Talks TIFs



READER

Ben Joravsky - July 24, 2015

Tresser is the north-side activist who formed the TIF Illumination Project, a local watchdog group that holds public meetings where, among other things, he shows locals what the city would never show them in a million years.

Namely, how the mayor's spending tens of millions of property tax dollars, year after year, courtesy of the tax increment financing program, which, as we all know, is the mayor's **unofficial slush fund**.

Ben is one of Chicago's top political reporters and has been covering TIF abuse for over 15 years!



It was standing room only for the 2nd Ward Illumination on 9/14/14.



Our Most Popular In-Town TIF Offerings

Option 1 – “TIF 101”

"TIF 101 - Organizing for Economic Justice" – Covers these topics:

- How TIFs work
- Big Picture for Chicago, Illinois
- Public policy issues TIFs present
- Engagement/Organizing hooks

Listen to this brief interview from WGN's "Outside the Loop" program that discusses this work and the workshop: <https://soundcloud.com/civicl原因/wgn-interview-4-20-19>

This workshop takes about two hours and includes Q&A. Price: \$500.00 (payable in advance)

Option 2 – TIF Illumination

We cover one ward at a time in these TIF Illuminations.

At these meetings we cover:

- How TIFs work, how widespread they are in the city and state
- How many TIFs are in the ward and when they were created, when they will expire
- Our calculation of how much property taxes were sucked out of the ward by each of the TIFs JUST FROM INSIDE THE WARD BORDERS in latest year and since the TIF was created
- Where TIF funds were spent in the ward - what

projects, public or private, were funded

- We also research the BIGGEST TIF projects to see if there are campaign contributions from people who got TIF \$ and elected officials

- Our calculation of how many property tax dollars were sitting the accounts of those in-ward TIFs at the start of the year that CAME FROM THE WARD

- How much TIF funds were transported into or out of the TIFs

- If the TIFs in your community are carrying debt and if they paid finance charges on the debt in the latest year

- How much property tax dollars the Department of Planning and Developed siphoned FROM those TIFs for its own use (a skim INSIDE the skim!)

- A graphic handout showing all this and more is distributed (see the graphic example for the 27th Ward at http://www.tifreports.com/tif_illumination)

This information is not available from any other source, public or private.

Here's what we know about this process - The attendees at your forum are (1) going to have MANY questions that we won't be able to answer and, (2) they will be ANGRY. As an organizer you should be ready to have a follow-up meeting and offer ways to get your attendees involved IMMEDIATELY in community work and government accountability actions. Strike while the iron is hot.

As an organizer you know how hard it is to get people to come to a public meeting. As a civic educator I know it's my responsibility to deliver powerful and actionable information to your neighbors when they show up. I can GUARANTEE that will happen. What happens AFTER the meeting is up to you and your allies.

We ask an honorarium of \$1,000.00 for this service (mailed to 1643 N. Larrabee Street, Suite i, 60614 in advance of the event).

Once we agree on a date and time and we receive payment, I can create a Facebook page with the details supplied by you (see <http://tinyurl.com/Talking-TIFs-Hermosa> for example). I need the name of the sponsoring organization(s), the name of the event, some text explaining the event and why people should come, the place and time, the agenda (who is the emcee), and a name with contact info/email address.

The format of the meeting is up to you. Typically, as the host, you welcome the people to the hall and explain why the meeting was called and then introduce me (see <http://wearenotbroke.org/about-the-authors.html> for a bio). My portion of the meeting is a little over two hours. After I'm done the host manages the Q&A part of the meeting. The typical Illumination is 2 1/2 hours to 3 hours.

We can bring an LCD projector and a portable sound system if needed. Let me know if the space is equipped with anything - if it has this gear, it saves us some hassle. The space must have a screen or large clean wall to project onto. **The CivicLab must be allowed to place a sign-in sheet at the check-in table.**

Finally, we can help you and your allies with free pr.

Testimony from people who have brought us to their communities:

From Kyle Sneed, President of the Wicker Park Committee: "Tom did a great job! He clearly articulated how tax increment financing ("TIF") works, where districts are located in the 1st, 2nd, and 32nd wards, and issues with TIF. TIF isn't necessarily the most "exciting" topic but our nearly two-hour meeting flew by because of Tom's presentation and audience engagement. Feedback from our meeting was very positive and folks walked away feeling educated and empowered to talk to others about the issues associated with TIF."

"This is a critical time in our country's history and now, more than ever, we need our voters to be able to make informed decisions. That's where CivicLab's TIF Illumination Project comes in. Tom will bring your community the undisputed facts about the TIFs in your area, their values and any projects that are funded by those TIFs. As I learned in my TIF Illumination, the information Tom provides passes any scrutiny from the Machine and can turn a small meeting into enlightening discussion of civic affairs. This is a resource I invite you to take advantage of and share with your community. You wouldn't lead an army into battle unarmed. Don't lead voters to the polls uninformed." – [William L. Smith](#) – Organizer of 34th Ward TIF Town Meeting.

Here's what Asiaha Butler of the [Resident Association of Greater Englewood](#) (RAGE) said about "TIF 101" video – *"The Resident Association of Greater Englewood, also known as RAGE, has been work diligently to unwrap and understand the impact TIF districts has on our community, specifically the Englewood Neighborhood TIF. Although many of our members are knowledgeable, there is still a vast majority of residents who simply do not get it...Our thanks to the TIF Illumination Project who presented us with their analysis of the this TIF. We appreciate the "TIF 101" video, as well. The video is a great visual tool we can use to help educate residents in Englewood of how TIFs currently work and how it's supposed to work. We hope to use this video as a learning tool as we launch our public awareness campaign around the Englewood Neighborhood TIF."*

"Tom Tresser does the work the City Council won't. He reports back to the taxpayers where our cash has been going — disappearing into the pockets of wealthy developers and business owners with no

strings attached. Tom's a treasure." – Maureen Sullivan, [candidate for Alderman](#), Chicago's 11th Ward.

"Thank you [Thomas Tresser](#) (CivicLab) and [Daniel Eugene Pugh-Barnett](#) for the eye-opening experience regarding TIFs in the 11th Ward. Unbelievable and still in awe." – From an attendee of the 11th Ward Illumination.

"You are the definition of a true Servant Leader for the city of Chicago. You shed light on the complex issue of TIFs and continue to push for more transparency to inform taxpayers where their tax dollars are being underutilized for those in most need is simply remarkable. Citizens of Chicago are fortunate to have people like you. Best wishes!" – From the organizer of the 23rd Ward Illumination.

"You have my profound thanks for all of your work on this project; some Alderman have served decades in the City Council managing to perform far less public service than you have in spearheading this project." – From an organizer of the 49th Ward Illumination.



These two super-TIFs were rushed through Chicago City Council in the last days of the Emanuel Administration and include \$800 million in finance fees – total gravy for Wall Street!

Tom Tresser – tom@civiclub.us – 312-804-3230 – www.tifreports.com – www.endtifsnow.org – www.tresser.com

