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Letters to the Editor

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Zoning In Dranesville

Editor, the SUN:

To what extent should a political organization assume responsibility of the caliber and philosophy of candidates it sponsors for public office, and for their actions subsequent to election? Does that responsibility come to an end once the work of promoting a campaign has been successfully concluded? Or should it continue? These are questions which are raised by recent publicity given to the pronouncements of individual members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

The board has representatives from seven separate districts. Elected last Fall were 5 Democrats, 1 Republican, and 1 Independent. The Independent, Harriet Bradley, represents Dranesville District in which both McLean and Great Falls are located.

She was selected as a candidate because of her convictions and voting record displayed during five years' service on the County Planning Commission. We who helped to elect her feel responsible to the public for what she does. We have noted with satisfaction the fact that she has worked to promote the interests of our residents regardless of political affiliation

and to progress the views of a majority of our citizens. We are also pleased that hers has not been a parochial approach; she has shown as much concern for the welfare of the entire county as for that of her own district. But we now have reason to wonder what her colleagues have in store for us.

The matter of zoning and resultant population density has long been a burning issue in our McLean area community. The Merrywood zoning dispute was the best known, but by no means the only rallying point for community sentiment which favors growth — but along certain lines. The desire for relatively low density, graceful development is a strong one, and it persists. It persists among Democrats, Republicans and people who are neither.

The newspapers, however, quote one supervisor, a Democrat, as stating that the better place for apartments and other high density development is McLean, close to the entrance to Washington and next to the river. This view, of course, contradicts the "Year 2000 Plan" developed by the National Capital Planning Commission and supported in principle by our County Board.

Another Democrat describes us as "vulnerable," and is reported to state that because other areas have been subjected to high density development, so should McLean. Interestingly enough, his district is Mt. Vernon which shares with us common problems and characteristics.

A third Democrat has a twelve year record of voting in favor of virtually every zoning application placed before him. In our

district his record is a pure one. He has voted for them all — good and bad.

The Republican is reported to acknowledge that Fairfax County is already overzoned for apartments but suggests that since, in his view, development will not take place in outlying areas during the next five years perhaps McLean is appropriate for still additional interim overzoning.

Ignored is the statistical data in the "Multiple Family Housing Study" recently published by the county which shows that of 1,873 acres already zoned for apartments in Fairfax County, 278 acres (14.8 per cent) are in the McLean "Planning District." In the high rise category — the most dense use — 154 of the 253 acres so zoned to date are located in the McLean community. Of 50.6 acres zoned for town or row houses in Fairfax County, 30.9 are in McLean. This certainly is our "fair share" which one supervisor has contended we do not yet have.

Still further, we already have planned and under way the largest industrial - commercial complex in the county at Tyson's Corner adjacent to still another substantial existing commercial development at the center of McLean. And at Langley we have the C.I.A. building, the second

largest office structure in the state of Virginia.

We now must ask what course a majority of the board proposes to follow in guiding future growth in our area. If it is the intention of Democrats, or Republicans for that matter, from other districts to force upon us a changed pattern of growth against the wishes of our citizenry, then the party organization which put them in office should accept a share of the blame. The selection and election of public officials is serious business. It is not a game which once won can be forgotten until the next time. The party organization should be willing to be held accountable for the responsiveness of and the record compiled by the people it sponsors for public office.

Moreover, the next Dranesville District candidate for supervisor sponsored by the same political organization should be expected not to reject what his fellows may have done. He, too, should shoulder a measure of the responsibility. To do less is to admit that the party, its power structure, and its political philosophy have no sense of program or meaning at the local level.

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