



THE FREEDOM

INFORMER

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July 2002

Krebs, Riley, Yates to run for District 9B seat

Three new candidates have joined the race for the new delegate seat in District 9B.

On June 27th School Board President Susan Krebs (R), a resident of Eldersburg, filed for the post. She was elected to the school board in 1998 running a campaign based on accountability for school officials. She swept into office gathering more votes than any other candidate in the county.

Eldersburg resident Anita Lombardi Riley (D) also filed on Friday July 5 to fill the new seat. Riley is the secretary-treasurer of a United Food and Commercial Workers local in Towson. This is her first attempt at public office.

Finally, Richard T. Yates (R) of Eldersburg, also filed at the end of the week. Mr. Yates is a former Carroll County Commissioner having served in that office from 1994 to 1998.

Competition for the seat now includes seven candidates with Krebs, Riley and Yates joining Kenneth Holniker, a Democrat and Republicans Larry Helminiak, Robert L. Tabler, Jr., and Michael D. Zimmer.

District 9B is comprised of the Freedom and Berrett election districts plus one precinct from Woolerys (Finksburg). It contains well over 30,000 residents and over 16,000 registered voters.

County imposes odd/even water restrictions on Freedom Area

Beginning on Monday July 8, users of the Freedom Water/Sewer District were required to follow new restrictions imposed by the Carroll County Board of Commissioners.

In a televised public meeting on Wednesday July 3, the commissioners passed a motion that required residents to water outdoors only on alternate days. Homeowners living in houses with odd numbered addresses will be able to water on odd numbered days and those in even numbered houses on even numbered days.

The ban reinforces restrictions set earlier by the state of Maryland. Residents in Central Maryland were under restrictions that did not allow watering lawns, gardens and shrubs except when using hand-held containers or hoses with automatic shut off valves. The restrictions imposed by the County also include car washing and filling of pools from garden hoses. Water users were encouraged to conserve water as much as possible, including watering the roots of shrubs rather than spraying the whole plant to cut down on evaporation and to do so only in the early morning or in the evening.

The restrictions passed in the public meeting also included bans on commercial haulers using water from the Freedom District for pools and dust control. However, at an afternoon session in which Director of Public Works, Doug Myers, briefed the Commission-

ers, the restrictions on commercial haulers were removed. Mr. Myers argued that of the six commercial haulers licensed in Carroll County, only two hauled significant amounts of water last year with all six hauling less than 1.7 million gallons for the whole year. Myers and his staff were instructed by the Commissioners to contact the haulers to urge them not to sell water from local water systems outside of the county.

Commissioner Frazier expressed opposition to having any controls on use of water because, she argued, the plant is still operating at less than capacity. However, she relented in both the morning and afternoon votes on this issue and the motions passed 3-0 in both cases.

Meetings of interest in the Freedom Area

July 29, 9:15 a.m.:

Subdivision Advisory Comm., County Office Bldg., Rm. 003. Luther's Garden, 8-unit res. subdivision in R-10,000 zone. East side of Oklahoma Rd., 300' South of Monroe Avenue.

July 18, 6:30 p.m.:

Freedom Area Rec. Council general membership meeting at Freedom Park. Contact: Jeff Degitz at 410-386-2103

Opinion:

Employment Campus Ordinance Flawed

Carroll County has had numerous planners and agencies at work for over a decade on an ordinance intended to attract quality employers to the County. Somewhere in the bowels of the County Office Building there is surely a closet full of draft employment campus ordinances that have been relegated to the heap by this and previous Boards of Commissioners.

Now in the final throes of their terms in office, the 56th Board is poised to adopt one more version – this one with the full recommendation of the County Planning Commission. That's too bad because the latest draft waters down many of the solid architectural and landscape elements found in earlier editions. Those early drafts provided companies the kind of assurances they are looking for when committing to a location.

One needs only take a drive through the Central MD Service and Distribution Center off Rt. 26 to see why an

employment campus law is needed and why Carroll Government's ignorance of design factors has led so many quality firms to decide to locate elsewhere. If a quality firm was considering locating say a regional insurance office similar to Frederick's State Farm, would it want to make the investment in first-class brick buildings and open space amenities for employees or in one of Carroll's typical tin-shack business ghettos where dumpsters lie in the open, body shops leave parts strewn about and vacant lots are bereft even of grass?

The ordinance now under consideration addresses some of these concerns but in addition to its watered-down weaknesses it has one tragic flaw – it's illegal. It attempts to circumvent the Commissioners' right to rezone land by using the misnomer "Planned Unit Development," a term frequently used in residential zoning to increase densities where land is already zoned residential.

The difficulty here is two-fold. For starters, the Planning Commission is not authorized by Article 66B to rezone properties. New enabling leg-

islation would be required for them to usurp those duties. More importantly, no matter what you may feel about the current Board of Commissioners, the public deserves no less than having its elected, accountable officials make these major decisions, not an appointed body. Since the Employment Campus Zone (ECZ) could be "dropped" into any of the existing zoned lands – say the Agricultural or the oxymoron Conservation Zone – at the whim of the developer, it would in essence be a rezoning of the property. There is no parallel to residential PUD zoning no matter how you dress this turkey.

We need to step back and look at the earlier drafts of an ECZ and then decide on properties on which it would be appropriate ahead of time, not allowing it to float above the zoning ordinance like a vapor no one knows what to do with.

This is one draft ECZ that belongs in the landfill, not on a shelf in the bowels of the county office building.

*Neil Ridgely
Candidate for County Commissioner*

Editorial:

It's the growth, stupid!

THE issue in the upcoming elections in Carroll County is growth. Every other issue of importance to local voters and taxpayers comes back to growth. Overcrowded schools. Overcrowded roads. Water. Piney Run. Everything depends on whether residential growth in Carroll County is managed or unmanaged.

It will certainly be the issue in the general elections when the survivors of the Republican primaries meet the already identified Democratic candidates. But just as importantly, it must be the issue in what is expected to be hotly contested Republican primaries. And there are Republicans on different sides of the is-

sue. They range from candidates that are sensible on the issue to Johnny-come-lately candidates whose views have recently changed to property-rights candidates whose views will never change despite mounting evidence of gross misunderstanding and incompetence.

The previous set of commissioners passed an ordinance that was supposed to control growth so that adequate public facilities were available before residential subdivisions were built. Part of that ordinance was an overall constraint of not more than 6000 new residential permits in the ensuing six years.

Well, guess what. Nobody was watching the store or, in this case, the number of permits. So the six-year limit was busted in less than five years.

Rather than be accountable for their mismanagement, the majority of this board has attempted in recent weeks first to rectify the situation with band-aid fixes, then to shift the blame to the county's municipalities. They have, throughout their term, ignored the only measure designed to manage growth.

So, growth is the issue. I urge you to examine carefully the positions of the candidates for county commissioner on growth and to reject any candidate whose position is based on the presumption that any control on growth is tantamount to a no-growth policy. It's not true and it's a stupid argument aimed at those people who do not take the time to learn the facts.

*Phil Bennett
Editor*

Opinion:

Concurrency Management Ordinance needs to be replaced

Each of the eight towns in Carroll County has its own planning and zoning staff or commission. These groups develop a master plan, track development, and review town facilities.

The county is responsible for growth management outside of the towns. In 1998 Commissioners Dell, Yates and Brown adopted the Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Management Ordinance. This ordinance was supposed to permit “planned residential growth to proceed at a rate that will not unduly strain public facilities, especially schools, roads, water, and sewer facilities, and police, fire, and emergency medical services.”

However, of the 3,844 permits issued outside the towns since the ordinance was enacted, 2,608 (68%) were exempt from the requirements of the ordinance. In the same period, the total number of permits from all of the

towns in Carroll County was 1829 or 32 percent of all permits in the county.

The ordinance requires that a database be developed to collect information on current development and projects in the pipeline to ensure that public facilities and the budget are adequate to meet the needs of the residents. The reason for the database is so that the county planning department can analyze all information pertaining to growth and report to the commissioners yearly. This report allows the commissioners to set threshold levels for development based on existing building and development in the pipeline.

The county government has never managed to develop the database--because the required information has never been collected. The result is that the yearly concurrency management report is a collection of incomplete data and charts without the critical analysis needed to manage growth.

The process by which growth is managed in the county must be changed. We need to go back to basics and develop a new managed growth policy

that includes all building permits in the county including those in towns, those in planned growth areas outside of towns, developments outside of planned growth areas (sprawl) and the hard-to-quantify off-conveyance lots on farms all over the county.

A vision for long-term growth needs to be developed with the full participation of town officials, county planners, fire departments, police, the Board of Education, business and industry, and citizens.

We need an ordinance that is sensible, that will manage growth over the whole county, and that has benchmarks and follow-up procedures to measure success. Most of all, we need commissioners who will enforce the ordinance and manage growth so that our taxes don't go through the roof. We need commissioners who will serve all of the people, not just the development community. Finally, both sides need to realize that a managed growth policy is not a no-growth strategy.

*Jeannie Nichols
Candidate for County Commissioner*

Opinion:

What happened to accountability?

Watching public officials scrambling before an election is always interesting. Apologies being made, excuses being offered and Band-Aid remedies for critical issues seem to have become part of the political agenda.

After allowing thousands of homes to be built over the last four years, a number, this board suddenly decides that a mistake was made. While not abiding any zoning restrictions, thus adding to the crumbling of our [infrastructure], this board believes that a simple apology is sufficient. What happened to accountability?

While drought continues, our govern-

ment continues to build houses, refuses to sign the watershed agreement, refuses to put all usable wells on line, and refuses to stop wasting millions on unapproved projects. What happened to accountability?

We are still second from the bottom in the state in economic development, while the county continues to build strip malls and box stores. While citizens run into other counties to work, our leaders sit idly by instead of marketing to viable companies, and working on intelligent zoning solutions. What happened to accountability?

Our board sits by while redistricting becomes a household word, and portable classrooms become the norm, not the exception. The number of houses built continues to out-weigh our ability to provide classrooms, and

teachers, while much needed money from the state is waning. What happened to accountability?

While citizens clamor to be part of the decision-making process, hearings are held at unreasonable hours, last-minute agenda changes are made, and closed meetings continue. The responsibility of government officials is to reflect the attitudes and concern of the people. What happened to accountability?

Simple apologies are not enough. Excuses are unacceptable. It is time to stop the rhetoric and institute a vision for the future, and to provide a voice for the people. When will citizens demand accountability? Maybe in the next election.

*Betty Smith
Candidate for County Commissioner*

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**Next FACC meeting:
7 p.m. Tues. Aug. 20, 2002
Carrolltown Center**

No meeting in July

Minutes of the FACC Meeting, June 18th, 2002

The FACC met on June 18, 2002 at the Freedom Christian Church. Chairman Ross Dangel opened the meeting at about 7:05 p.m.

Chairman introduced the principal speaker, Dr. Charles Ecker, Superintendent of Schools for Carroll County. Dr. Ecker responded to a number of questions.

Thornton Law: Under this law enacted in the last State legislative session, Carroll County will receive additional funds for operation and improvements in the public school system. These funds are over and above what the State would normally provide. However, they may be delayed because of budgeting problems. The legislation also mandates certain improvements such as all-day kindergarten. This will require additional classrooms, teachers and staff. In

order to meet these requirements, adjustments in the school budget will need to be made. These changes include withholding negotiated step increases. The contract with teachers was negotiated conditioned on the county having money to pay for increases; if money is not available, the contract will be renegotiated.

Estimating school populations: The CCPSS is making changes to the Cohort-Survivor method. A process that estimates student yield for each subdivision will be used to modify the Cohort-Survival process.

Comparison of forms of county government: Dr. Ecker commented that he did not see a difference in the way that school systems operate based on whether a charter or commissioner form of government is used in the county. He did acknowledge that it was a little bit easier in charter government counties because the school system then had only one executive to work with rather than

three commissioners. He also noted that charter governments can pass local laws without having to go to the state legislature.

Increase in impact fees: Dr. Ecker commented that he did not believe impact fees should be increased but that a transfer tax of about 1 percent would raise substantial money that could be used for schools.

Colleen Hoffmeister advised FACC that approximately 100 acres on the north side of Mineral Hill Road at Oklahoma Road was under contract for development. That portion of the property adjacent to Mineral Hill Road is served by water and sewer and is zoned R-20. The remaining portion is zoned Conservation. No information was available regarding time schedule. Mrs. Hoffmeister stressed that the time to effect the development of this property was now, before the developer enters the property into the county's development review process.