

Comments October 22, 2007

My name is Art Stigile, and I live at 312 West Edmonston Drive.

I've attended all of the candidates forums. I've mostly been impressed by the knowledge of the candidates and the tenor of the discussion. The one exception is that I'm sick and tired of Drew Powell's mud-slinging at Susan Hoffman. I say that as a Hoffman supporter, but also as a voter who hates this kind of gutter politics. Some candidates seem to think that the best way to campaign is to go negative on your opponent, and if you can't find anything negative in your opponent's record, then make something up.

I got a taste of this kind of attack politics last April, after speaking at Citizen's Forum in favor of a once weekly trash option. I got home and found an email in my inbox from one of the leading organizers of the Real Rockville group that's been manufacturing this garbage about Hoffman's record. The email went to three members of the City Council and the reporter for the Gazette, so some of you know what I'm talking about. It charged me with being selfish, narcissistic, and a Republican. POW! POW! POW! Never mind that this person was wrong on all three counts. If anyone has the temerity to honestly disagree with your position, just slam them with anything that might stick. POW! POW! POW!

You know, I didn't get into this trash debate to play political games. I'm new to the City. I did my homework before I decided to get involved. I was impressed by the deliberative process followed by the Mayor and Council from 2004 thru 2006, the Staff analysis was first rate, and I knew from personal experience that the pilot was enormously successful. I thought we had a unique opportunity to weigh the options and come to a fact-based solution, and I was extremely disappointed to see all of this great work get sidetracked by last December 11th discussion of process. I've said before that it was a mistake not to have a public hearing, but that was 10 months ago. How long are we going to pick at that scab?

The other reason I got involved is because I have 23 years of federal budget experience, and I know waste when I see it. Twice weekly service is a waste of the public's money. Instead of spending an extra \$1.4 million per year for a second trash pickup day, let's buy something useful. Let's use it to fund another dozen cops on the street, or to improve services to seniors, or to add sidewalks and improve pedestrian safety at key intersections, or for any of the goodies that

candidates have been promising to voters. It would be very easy to redirect those savings from the Trash Fund to the General Fund to cover high priority needs.

However, if you aren't willing to spend the money on these much higher priorities, then I think I've presented a very defensible option. If twice-weekly trash pickup is more important to you than more cops on the street, then by all means, go ahead and waste your money. Buy three days or four days, if you want. But don't throw my money out with the trash. Give me a discount for once a week service, and let me figure out how to waste the 100 bucks, because I guarantee you one thing, I can waste it a whole lot better than you.