

The Upcoming City Council Election

In the Moscow City Council election, I'm supporting Aaron Ament, Tom Lamar, and Linda Pall for the three four-year seats and Evan Holmes for the two-year seat.

As incumbents, Ament, Lamar, and Pall have proved themselves to be fair, fact-based, hard-working public officials. No one does his homework more thoroughly than Ament; and it is inconceivable that anyone in the future will be able to top Pall's exemplary service to our city, and she still has more to give.

In the short time that Lamar has been on the Council, he has come up to speed on all the pressing issues. In his many years as director of the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, Lamar has demonstrated that he can work effectively with a wide range of people across the political spectrum.

With regard to Wayne Krauss, Walter Steed, and Dan Carscallen, I'm very concerned about their lack of urgency about Moscow's water problems. I'm also hoping that Steed will take back his offer to hog farmers that we can find a place for them somewhere in the city.

I'm specially troubled by Krauss' about-face on the boarding house ordinance. I was present at the P&Z hearing in which Krauss voted in the affirmative and, in addition, declared that the provisions should be stronger.

Krauss now says he wants to revisit the issue because the language is not clear about "when a guest becomes a boarder." I believe that Krauss was informed that Moscow's foreign exchange students reside rent free and their host parents act as their guardians. As such exchange students are bona fide family members.

The situation is very different with the 12 Moscow boarding houses for which I have information. From 2000-2005 over 300 students have paid at least \$350 a month for room and board in these homes. These people were not guests; rather, they were long term rent-paying boarders.

None of these 12 landlords have applied for a conditional use permit, and none of them have given up their homeowners exemption. One of these landlords has also made his garage into an apartment in violation of R1 residential rules.

Furthermore, I suspect that none of them pay the higher garbage and sewer rates that I pay on my R4 duplex, where I claim no exemption from property taxes, and on which I report my rental income to the IRS. These illegal boarding houses may owe Uncle Sam years of back taxes and, each year, they cheat the city of \$23,184 in unpaid utilities and property taxes.

After a citizen's committee could not agree on a way forward on the boarding house issue, Linda Pall worked diligently to draft the current law. After lengthy public testimony, the Council passed it by a 4-2 margin

The new ordinance was a compromise solution, reducing the number of qualifying "family" members from six to four. Other college towns across the country limit that number to two or three.

Is it Krauss' intention, if elected, to repeal this law? Do the GMA candidates want parts of R1 zones to become essentially R4 multi-family zones, with declining property values and increasing population density?

Can these candidates really claim to be pro-growth if they do nothing to discourage R1 landlords from competing with apartment owners and property developers?

The voters of Moscow need some clarification from the GMA candidates on this essential issue.