

Editorial

City Council endorsements

Six of the seven positions on the College Station City Council are up for election Saturday. The election comes at a crucial time for the city.

Code enforcement and prudent zoning practices are having a tough time keeping up with a growth rate that approaches 15 per cent annually. The pleasures of a small town with open spaces are being threatened by Houston-like strip development cluttered by towering signs and quick food joints. The city is also on the verge of breaking a long-standing contract with Bryan for city utilities, switching instead to independent sources.

In Place 2, incumbent obstructionist Homer Adams continues to live in an era when things were simple and the solutions were "to let it ride." In his five years on the council he has continually opposed zoning regulations and has supported the ward system and Millican Dam — positions which must be seriously questioned. Dissent is one thing, dead weight another. Adams' opponent, Lane Stephenson, has based his campaign on the zoning issue, calling for strict adherence to existing regulations. His view that too much consideration has been given to developers, and not enough to homeowners, could pave the way towards a modicum of developmental control. While Adams has refused to talk to reporters except during his business hours, Stephenson has vowed to be readily available to citizens at all times. LANE STEPHENSON would be a welcome addition to the council.

MURL BAILEY JR. is our choice for Place 3 on the council. He has demonstrated that he is well informed on the issues, particularly in the areas of utilities and zoning. His concern that the city's development plan should be updated and that building codes be enforced is evidence of the strong guidance he'd provide to the orderly growth of the city. While Jim Crawley, an A&M student, also has good views on zoning and is well informed on most issues, one can't help but feel that he's voicing the views of the Student Government leaders who support him. Crawley has said he personally would support the at-large method of election,

even though publicly he agrees with S.G. leaders that the ward method is the best option. We applaud student involvement in city government, but it is only fair that a student candidate should be more qualified than his opponent in order to win. The other candidate, Larry Ringer, does not appear to be as informed as his opponents on most issues.

We support JIM GARDNER for re-election to Place 4. As a professor of urban and regional planning, Gardner is well-qualified to make decisions on the planning and zoning issues that take up a great amount of the council's time. In two years on the council, he has demonstrated his competence and dedication in coordinating the various aspects of urban development. He has steadfastly fought strip-zoning and is a strong supporter of open spaces and off-street bike paths. Clinton Robison's major concern is the repair of streets in poor areas of town, a noble effort, but not one deserving of a council seat. His knowledge of other issues, such as utilities, the proposed ward system and Millican Dam is lacking.

For Place 6, incumbent JIM DOZIER is far and away the best choice. Dozier's six years of experience as a councilman and two years as city attorney is evidence enough. He is expertly acquainted with the city's growth, code enforcement and utilities problems. An A&M finance professor, Dozier is not afraid to take a stand on issues such as Millican Dam or the local ambulance service. We tend to believe his opponent, Bob Bell, is trying to fill another two years as a ceremonial councilman. Bell, who is active in local real estate, has refused to take concrete stands on most of the serious problems facing the city. We still question why he decided to withdraw from his council seat to run for mayor, then at the last minute drop out of the mayor's race, and chose to run for council again — against Dozier. Bell may know, but he refuses to tell.

Both ANNE HAZEN and LARRY BRAVENEC are running unopposed, for Place 5 and Mayor respectively.

SG president backs ward system

By JEFF DUNN
Student Body President

How often have students complained of a lack of response from government? The opportunity to show one's interest and desire in governmental responsiveness is election day, and this Saturday such an election will be held in College Station. Students should seriously consider voting in the College Sta-

tion city elections as local government vitally affects each student's daily activities. Such issues as utility rates, telephone rates, city parks, and traffic control affect both the on-campus and the off-campus student.

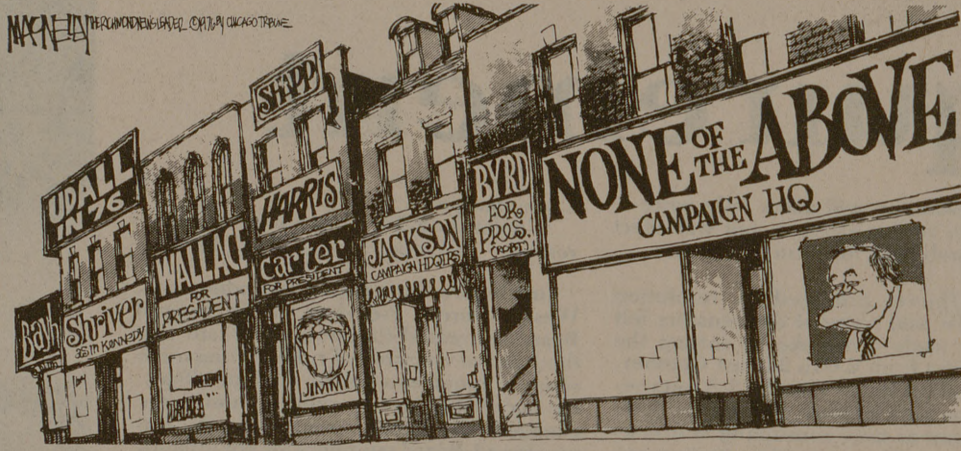
On the ballot this Saturday is a Charter Revision that would provide for the election of city councilmen by wards. Such a system will not deny

student representation on the city council. Students pump millions of dollars into the local economy each year and should be represented. The Student Senate has endorsed the revisions on grounds that such a change would not only benefit the students, but also the entire community, by promoting neighborhood representation throughout the city. While no one expects dramatic

change from the implementation of wards, this plan should increase responsiveness of the city councilmen. Dominant interests within the city have a much easier time controlling the policy of a dominating group, including the potential of student take-over. During viewpoints, however, should be heard on the council, and should not have to resort to passive lobbying, which at best is a disastage.

Contrary to many critics, students are not concerned with student control over city affairs, but only the input on an equal level with other councilmen. Citizens of the community should realize that students at A&M are citizens as well as students who are capable and able to provide constructive input into the growth of College Station in a fashion compatible with a large university.

Take interest and vote this Saturday, because if you don't, the city must be willing to accept the consequences.



Listen Up Local parents support school bond proposal

The purpose of this letter is to issue an urgent plea to the A&M students who are registered to vote in College Station.

On Saturday, along with the city council, ward system, and school board elections, there will also be a school bond election. It has been determined by the local school board, a seventeen-member Citizens Advisory Committee, and a local P.T.A. group, that the passage of this bond election is crucial to the education of the children of College Station. My wife and I have two children in the school system and we also agree that the bonds must pass.

Frankly, we need your help in this important matter because there is a large, very well organized group of middle-aged voters in College Station whose children are already grown. Their main concern is property taxes and they were recently successful in defeating a similar bond proposal.

Please help us to make this a better community. Please take the time and trouble to vote on April 3. As parents, tax-payers, and your fellow citizens, we would greatly appreciate your support on this bond proposal. Mr. and Mrs. Julian McMurrey and Sons

Vote no on charter revision

Analysis

By JERRY NEEDHAM
Battalion Staff Writer

The ward system of representation is not a reasonable proposal for College Station, nor does it offer outstanding benefits for Texas A&M students.

The various arguments for a ward system in other cities are not valid here because of the city's size, growth rate and lack of ethnic blocs.

Under the proposed ward system, councilmen would be responsible for redistricting. With the rapid growth of College Station, redistricting would be a continuing problem. It could become a political tool.

One of the primary arguments for the ward system is that it would provide representation for minority groups. Such is not the case in College Station.

The university students in College Station cannot be termed a minority group. 40 to 50 per cent of the estimated population of 39,000 are students. The fact that students have not yet had a student representative on the city council does not mean they are a minority group. It means they have not organized behind a responsible student candidate.

The real minorities in College Station, the blacks and Chicanos, would not be assured of a representative on the council under the ward system. These minorities are not concentrated in any particular area of town, but are scattered over several areas.

Another major argument for the ward system is that it would provide a closer relationship between neighborhoods and their councilman.

This argument is effective only in very large cities. In a city the size of College Station, citizens can easily contact and relate to a councilman whether he lives across town, across campus or next door. The council might find it difficult to define six specific neighborhoods in College Station.

Another point frequently brought out in support of the ward system is that most councilmen live in one area of the city.

This is not a reasonable argument for adopting a ward system. Conversely, this fact should indicate that qualified and interested candidates are not coming from other areas of the city (assuming a qualified and intelligent electorate).

Although students would be reasonably sure of a representative under the ward system, that does not mean they'd be assured of responsible representation. Thus far, most students have never taken an active interest in city politics. Viable student candidates are hard to find.

Student support of the ward system would be an admission that they could not offer a candidate who was capable of competing city-wide. Acceptance of the single representative would be a testimony to their apathy.

If the students cannot become involved and organize behind deserving candidates, then they don't deserve a token council position just to placate their frustrations. The fault lies with the students, not with the electoral system.

Texas A&M Student Body President Jeff Dunn is actively campaigning for the ward system.

A member of the city's Charter Revision Commission which proposed placing the ward system before the public for a vote, Dunn did not support the ward system during commission meetings. He was in favor of a more moderate, combination ward-at-large system.

Dunn said his major consideration is to get student representation on the council. He supports the ward system because it is the only choice offered on the Saturday ballot which will achieve this goal as soon as possible.

All the candidates for council positions are against the full-ward system except incumbent Homer Adams and A&M student James Crawley.

Adams has said he supports the ward system because he fears a possible student takeover of city government.

Crawley supports the ward system because it would provide representation on a neighborhood basis.

M. L. Cashion, chairman of the Charter Revision Commission, emphasized that the commission does not recommend approval of the ward system or any other system, only that the question be put before the public for a vote.

A strong point that is made for student support of the ward system is that the election of a student to the city council might jolt the apathetic students into a political awareness. But what would students do with this awareness if they had already given away their chance to have more representation on the council?

Dunn says the ward system will not deny students representation on the council. He is not taking into consideration the council's prerogative to establish districts within the city. There is no assurance that the council would, in the process of drawing up districts, make the A&M campus a single district.

In fact, taking into account the present city population figures and the districting ideal of one man — one vote, part of the campus would have to be in another district. The campus population of 7,900 would be too large to fit in one of six equal districts in a city of 39,000 persons.

The students' best chance for immediate representation while still leaving the options open for more representation in the future, is the combination ward-at-large system.

This would require active involvement by students in pushing for a charter revision establishing the combination system. At the same time students would have to become actively involved in city government.



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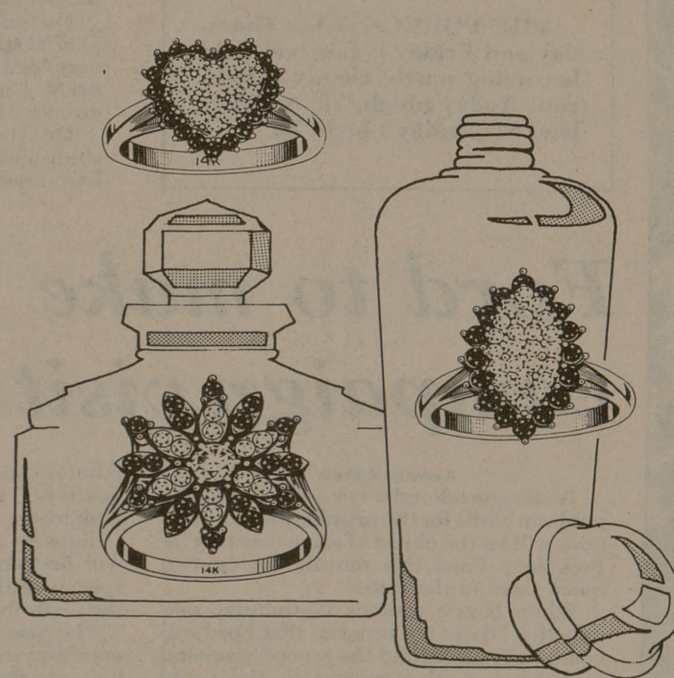
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