

sent to CC, RZ, CM

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April 14, 2003

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley  
Mayor of Alexandria  
301 King Street  
ste 2300  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

cc: members of city council

Dear Mayor Donley,

Every 12 to 18 months we seem to grow a fresh crop of election posters that deface the Alexandria landscape. This last month has been no exception, and indeed, seems to have produced a bumper harvest of these weed-like byproducts of the electoral process. I live near the intersection of Seminary Road and Beauregard Boulevard. The entire length of Beauregard, as well as Braddock Road, is littered with what I would estimate as more than 200 of these advertisements each blaring a candidate's name in garish colors and huge type.

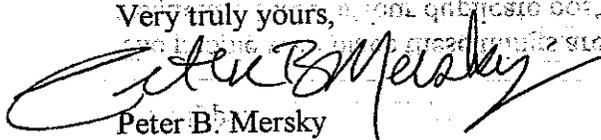
The people who place these things are not content to put down simply one. No, frequently three or four duplicate posters have been stuck in the same spot in the grass of the median that divides Beauregard. When you have 10-15 names represented, the result is a mass of names, cards and frames that clutter the public byway and often distract drivers from their task at hand, namely safely negotiating the horrendous traffic flow that afflicts our city.

After talking to the people at the Zoning Office, it seems to me that the problem is not so much with the candidates' representatives as it is with laws that permit such out-of-control displays. I also learned that the candidates have two weeks after the election to retrieve the signs. That is just too much time after the election, and certainly the staffers for the losers are not going to be inclined to take back their posters.

The signs should not be allowed up more than two weeks before the election, and not in such unlimited numbers. Seeing "Candidate Jones" four times in one spot is not going to convince me to vote for him. In fact, it is a reason not to vote for him.

I hope something can be done about this periodic blight.

Very truly yours,



Peter B. Mersky

