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People or Profits

Testimony over the City Council's action over the Beauregard Plan Docket no. 12

May 12, 2012

I rise in opposition to the current Beauregard Small Area Plan. The various defects have been aptly described in the previous testimony.

I will touch on a few points.

It is the sign of a responsible, mature and caring government by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. There are approximately 10,000 people who occupy affordable housing in the Beauregard area. The decisions you make on this Beauregard Small Area plan directly affects these 10,000 persons. How will your action be viewed?

Boiled down to the basic ingredients the development action involving Beauregard involves just two things, People or profits. Which of these two does the Council wish to emphasize? If you take the plan as it is, it is definitely profits.

In the recent debates and discussions by the candidates for City Council I heard one candidate proudly state that she was able to obtain 800 units of affordable housing. Meaning that of the 2,300+ units currently in existence 1,500 would be lost, throwing at least 5,000 citizens of modest means in the streets. Is this something to be proud of? The appropriate word to describe

this action is shameful. I would resign my position in protest rather than be involved in an action that displaced these loyal citizens. This is the type of action that I would expect of a Republican not a Democrat.

This is a watershed moment for the Council. Will they bow to the profit motive of the developers or to the needs of the people, its most vulnerable citizens? Over the past years Alexandria has lost thousands of units of affordable housing. Some officials use the figure, 10,000 units. This means almost 40,000 people have had to move elsewhere. This could be called the Alexandria tenants trail of tears. If the Council approves this plan they would be adding an additional 5,000 persons to this trail of tears. Not a comforting thought.

But actions have consequences. The primary for City Council candidates is to be held in 31 days. How each Council member votes will be watched carefully. The consequence of his/her vote may determine his/her political future. You should know that the Tenants and Workers United have been engaged in a strong voter registration drive.

Which shall it be People or Profits?

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