

Reader's View: Separating Myth from Fact in the Eagle Mayoral Runoff

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Date: November 30, 2007

Status: The Statesman chose not to publish this...

Forwarded to NACFA network and placed on NACFA website December 2, 2007

The truth and ethics are both taking a beating in Eagle politics. As an unfortunate side effect of a hotly contested mayor's race, various myths have emerged about Sandra McDavid, the Preserve Eagle campaign, and the issues facing Eagle residents.

I am writing this editorial as a response to those myths and direct it to all Eagle residents, our friends, both those who support and do not support Ms. McDavid and the Preserve Eagle campaign.

Myth #1: Sandra McDavid and Preserve Eagle Favor "No Growth"

Response #1: Not true. The Preserve Eagle campaign bases its platform on three issues: (1) a better plan to manage growth; (2) more open and responsive City government; and, (3) preservation and enhancement of Eagle's quality of life. Preserve Eagle's two primary concerns regarding growth are increased density development and development which does not pay its way. For example, in West Eagle during the last two years, many higher density subdivisions representing hundreds of homes have been approved in areas that have traditionally been low density. The City Council approved these subdivisions despite opposition from hundreds of local residents who were the most affected by these decisions. The residents were dismissed as a vocal minority who did not truly represent the sentiment of Eagle. The results of the November 6 election indicate otherwise.

Myth #2: Sandra McDavid and Preserve Eagle Oppose Private Property Owners' Rights to Develop in the Foothills

Response #2: Not true. Ms. McDavid has advocated that Eagle should be involved in the planning process in the Foothills. Again, the concerns are (1) density and (2) growth which does not pay its way. The developer M3 is currently requesting to build over 7,000 homes in the Foothills. If the other developers who are currently interested in developing in the Foothills are given similar density allowances, the total buildout of the Foothills would be approximately 25,000 units, twice the amount recommended by the Eagle citizens' committee. In addition, because of loopholes currently existing in Idaho law, developers such as M3 are not bound to pay for their impact to roads outside of their development. So, while we are adding thousands of cars to the already overly crowded rural highways and streets of Eagle, M3 will not be required to make any improvements to Highway 16, Highway 55, Willow Creek Road, Linder Road, Beacon Light Road, Floating Feather, nor any of the other Eagle streets it impacts. In the upcoming State legislative session, at least one bill will be proposed to create a funding mechanism to help resolve this problem. Would it not be wise, thoughtful, responsible and better managed growth to allow that to occur first rather than approve developments without these commitments to improve road infrastructure? Sandra McDavid and the Preserve Eagle platform want to make sure developers pay their fair share. I would hope those in the real estate business in Eagle, in their desire to be a good neighbor and member of our community, would embrace this concept as well.

Myth #3: Saundra McDavid and Preserve Eagle Will Always Vote as a Bloc

Response #3: Not true. A variety of issues will arise before the City Council on which we are sure to have different opinions. As to development, we share the same philosophy, but have no pre-arranged conspiracy to vote the same on every single development application. This is a misguided and misleading allegation as the current City Council has voted 4-0, in essence as a bloc, by unanimously approving almost every development application in the last two years.

Myth #4: Saundra McDavid and Preserve Eagle Have Only Negative Things to Say About Eagle

Response #4: Not true. We love Eagle. That's why we moved here and want to continue living here and serving our community. We also appreciate the effort and hard work of the current Mayor and City Council to try to make Eagle a great place to live. Our candidacy and platform is not based upon any personal attacks on the character or devotion of our current City leaders, but rather our concerns that their growth agenda (1) could be better managed and (2) favors developers rather than the current residents of the City of Eagle.

Myth #5: Saundra McDavid and Preserve Eagle Have a Secret Agenda to Dismiss Current City Staff Employees

Response #5: Not true. This has never been expressed or intended by any of the Preserve Eagle team. We admire the excellent work and dedication of the City staff and look forward to learning from them and working with them. It is very disappointing that this rumor was not only started, but then was spread throughout City Hall, and was given further credence by publication in the Statesman.

Other myths and misinformation have been spread by independent groups via illegal push polls, but these deserve no response. My friends, I appeal to everyone to discontinue the personal attacks, inflammatory rhetoric, and diversionary tactics. We are above this type of politics and must immediately put it behind us. I urge Eagle voters to carefully consider the candidates' stances on the issues. I am voting for Saundra McDavid because I believe her vision of Eagle's future is best for Eagle and represents the voice of the people of Eagle.

Michael Huffaker
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