

Arnold for Alder

Fitchburg District 4 Seat 7

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Backgrounder 1: How Steve Arnold came to public service

Fitchburg, 5-Jan-2005--When Steve Arnold first started looking at acreage in the Town of Springdale a few years ago, little did he suspect where it would lead. The research and introspection Steve and his wife Nancy went through while planning a new house in the country led Steve to become first an activist for sustainable land use and, most recently, a candidate for local political office.

Learning that rural zoning requires 35 acres per dwelling unit, the Arnolds discussed many options for using the land not needed for the building site. After much study, they concluded that the kind of rural development they planned was not only expensive, but an irresponsible use of land. They instead resolved to invest further in the home they built in the Byrnewood subdivision of Fitchburg in 1994. In 2003, they finished the lower level to create more living space without using more land, and subsequently built two rain gardens for their environmental benefits.

Also in 2003, Steve was elected vice president of the Byrnewood Neighborhood Association, just in time to be challenged by the changes to the north, as local developer Sveum Enterprises proposed Oak Meadow, a new, mixed-use neighborhood. Steve tracked the progress of the proposal, and one for the included Nobel Ridge Condominiums, through Plan and Parks Commission and City Council meetings for over a year. The Association influenced significant changes to the developments, including increased parkland and a better arrangement of the condominiums.

Turmoil continued in 2004, as Madison Gas & Electric Company proposed to site an electrical distribution substation just to the south of Byrnewood. Neighborhood protests that other substations were located in industrial areas and other objections induced MG&E to investigate a location in an office park. The Association also worked with the Fitchburg Department of Public Works to solve a traffic problem by constructing a safety island at the corner of Richardson and Byrneland Streets in 2004.

In November 2003, Steve's church became a founding member of Dane County United (DCU), a citizens lobby. Steve subsequently became a leader in DCU's land use action team. The team has undertaken a pilot project to assist member organizations in promoting sustainable land use in McFarland and the Town of Dunn. Steve also

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Paid for by Arnold for Alder, Jeanie Sieling, Treasurer

represents DCU on the Dane County Council of Governments (COG) working group. The COG is expected to continue the water quality management role previously held by the Dane County Regional Planning Commission. The working group is developing consensus state legislation to create the COG.

Steve has attended many workshops for the Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan and future urban development area planning processes.

Steve was nominated and confirmed in December as a citizen member of Fitchburg's new Transportation and Transit Commission. Steve wants an activist commission, one that balances transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation options with the dominant automobile. He sees a role for the commission in helping to solve the regional transportation problem of commuters driving through Fitchburg to reach jobs in Madison: from Oregon on Fish Hatchery Road and from McFarland and Dunn on County Highway MM.

A fixture around City Hall for the last year, Steve was approached many times to run for council. Last fall, he resolved to make the effort, sitting through seemingly endless budget meetings and trying to visit every commission and committee to begin learning the basics of the rest of the City's business.

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