

Jaeckle, challenger battle for board seat

They've been at odds since Fausz entered race in Chesterfield

BY ZACHARY REID
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The lack of nuance in the race for the Bermuda District seat on the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors was on bold display at the last board meeting in September.

From her seat in the front of the room, the incumbent, Dorothy A. Jaeckle, insisted on a slight change in a pending county policy. With the camera rolling, she pushed through a Chester Village-specific exception to the way the county was proposing to deal with electronic message signs.

In the back row, out of sight of the camera used to broadcast the meeting live on the Internet, Jaeckle's opponent, Mark Fausz, was visibly agitated as the supervisors voted in support of Jaeckle's "friendly amendment" to the sign policy.

"Chester takes a back seat again," Fausz said to no one in particular as he got up to leave.

The two have been bickering ever since Fausz, much to the surprise of everyone, himself included, decided to enter the race as an independent. He filed his paperwork on Aug. 23, the deadline to declare for the November election.

Theirs has not been a race based on personalities or party politics. It's a simple challenge between two people who think they know what's best for their community.



Jaeckle



Fausz

RTD Sunday Oct 2, 2011

Jaeckle, who became active in community issues years ago when her children began attending county schools — all four graduated from Thomas Dale High School — said she ran four years ago because then-incumbent R.M. "Dickie" King Jr. was aloof and out of touch with his constituents.

Fausz, who has promoted community activism in the past 14 years as he has run the weekly Village News newspaper with his wife, Linda, said he's running because now-incumbent Jaeckle is aloof and out of touch with her constituents.

"This is my community, and I've helped make it what it is," said Fausz, who helped found the Chester Community Association and has been instrumental in the creation and running of the annual Ches-

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erFest and in the creation of a farmers market.

The sign vote, he said, was an affront to everything he has worked for.

"People in the community were crushed by that," he said.

The policy does not mean the electronic signs will start popping up, but it does open the possibility that merchants can apply for the necessary conditional use permits. The signs are prohibited in the county's other historic villages, such as Bon Air, Etrick and Midlothian.

The signs, which will have lighted messages that can change every 30 seconds, do not fit in with the historic look of the area, Fausz said.

Jaeckle said times have changed and that nostalgia for old-style villages is misplaced.

"People's shopping pat-

terns have changed," she said. "It used to be, everyone lived near the village and knew what was there. No one knows what's there anymore. There's a five-lane road, and a Walmart a mile down the road."

Fausz, whose newspaper office is on the edge of the historic village, across state Route 10 from Chester Village Green — the likely site of the area's first electronic message sign — said pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and stoplights, not signs, were what was needed. He has taken issue with a variety of Jaeckle's other stands.

She has taken issue with his forum. "It's hard to run against a guy with a newspaper," she said.

While Fausz has taken a leave of absence from the paper, Jaeckle said his absence isn't far enough.

"There are subtle things he can do," she said, reeling off a list that ranged from ad placement — "His are always next to

positive stories" — to editorial coverage.

Fausz insists he has distanced himself from the paper but doesn't hide the fact that the paper is what allowed him to push his agenda for years. His dislike for Jaeckle's approach to governing, he said, is his sole issue with her.

"I have worked tirelessly to make Chester and surrounding areas cohesive, giving residents a sense of place and improved quality of life. I have watched Ms. Jaeckle's actions, which do not contribute to my efforts and will eventually undo what I have tried to accomplish through the (paper) and my work in the community," he wrote in an email late last month.

Jaeckle said she's trying to avoid having to respond to every criticism.

"I want to run on my record," she said.

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