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To the Editor:

On January 21, 2020, the Mendota Heights (MH) City Council reappointed John Mazzitello to the MH Planning Commission. This decision represents a slap in the face for all those MH residents who cherish the special character of our city, an ambiance nurtured by a sustained record of careful and prudent development over many decades.

This conclusion is prompted by a remarkably arrogant commentary offered by Mr. Mazzitello at the end of the MH Planning Commission meeting on Dec. 19, 2019. His views contradict a series of fundamental principles that have been essential to the success of MH.

The first such principle is, 'We must be in charge of our own destiny.' Yet Mr. Mazzitello brags that he has travelled the world to discover planning frameworks by other communities that MH should follow without regard to whether they are appropriate for our community.

The second principle is, 'Don't pander to developers --- it is the city's planning priorities that developers must adhere to, not vice versa.' Yet as regards a developer's proposal to build a three-story storage unit in the MH Industrial Park, Mr. Mazzitello expressed remorse that this case had been under consideration by the city for about a year. In fact, it was the developer, not the city, that kept pressing the case, a case which from the beginning was in violation of the city's zoning code.

The third, and arguably most important, principle is, 'Respect the views of other appointed or elected officials.' Yet the tenor of Mr. Mazzitello's comments on Dec. 19 was in part dismissive, in part insulting, of the views of his fellow Planning Commission members, and also of earlier action by the City Council.

On more than one occasion, Mr. Mazzitello has proclaimed himself to be some sort of wizard when it comes to city planning and development. However, his Dec. 19 tirade revealed his true colors as a devotee of density development that ignores city standards --- on the storage unit matter he voted to violate city ordinance. His planning agenda and goals clearly are at odds with the best interests of the city and its residents. Many MH residents value how development of MH has nurtured its unique characteristics. His reappointment to the MH Planning Commission represents a sad mistake that holds out little hope for a positive contribution to future planning for our city.

Thomas J. Smith
Mendota Heights