

# Ending 8 Years on Council, Baggerman Reflects on Job

By JUDY BOCKLAGE  
Staff writer

William Baggerman was afraid that after eight years as a City Councilman he was tending toward becoming a "professional public official" rather than a "citizen public official." So this year he decided not to run for another term.

Baggerman, 20 Briarwood, put in his last Tuesday as a representative for Ward Two on the City Council this week, then took a look back on the past eight years he has served.

All in all, Baggerman is proud of his service to the city through the council post.

"Most people think serving is drudgery," he said, "but if the public knew what a rewarding experience it is, there would be a lot more people filing."

"No matter what age a person might be," he added, "it's a very maturing experience."

Baggerman is most proud of several pieces of legislation he helped get on the city books. At the top of that list is an ordinance setting regulations for subdivision developers to follow, one setting standards for service stations, and a parking standards ordinance which requires a certain number of parking places per institution.

Baggerman believes that one was especially helpful in that it provided a means for keeping fast-food restaurants out of the Historical District.

Obviously, he said, the city would not let anyone tear down an historically valuable building just to build a parking lot.

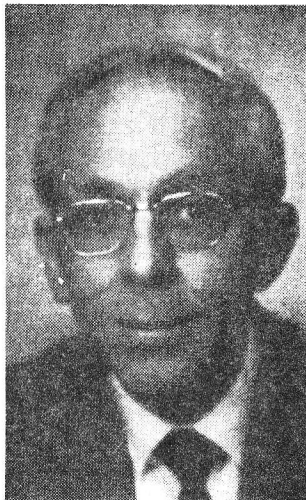
Baggerman recalls with a smile one ordinance that almost got him into trouble. He introduced a bill prohibiting tractor-trailer trucks from parking in residential neighborhoods. Shortly after that one evening a man came to his house, a man who also happened to be a driver of such a truck, and who also happened to habitually park that truck in his driveway.

While the gentleman was busy threatening Baggerman in the living room, warning him "I've got an itchy trigger finger," Baggerman's wife was in the kitchen busily calling the police. Thankfully, the police arrived to escort the truck driver away as he was threatening to "stick (Baggerman's) head in a snowdrift."

But Baggerman said that is the only hostile experience he can remember during his tenure as councilman.

Incidentally, Baggerman noted, that particular ordinance was passed and is still on the books.

One of the things for which Baggerman is grateful for his position as councilman is that it provided him with the credentials several years ago to allow him and his wife to attend the International League of Local Authorities in Stockholm, Sweden. There the Baggermans visited with the



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lord mayor of London and traveled throughout Europe with a group of mayors from all over the world.

In reminiscing over the past near-decade of service in St. Charles city government Baggerman sees a definite and ominous pattern emerging, a pattern of yearly enormous increases in city expenditures.

"Eight years ago, the city annual budget was only \$500,000. Now it is over \$2 million," Baggerman admitted that increases in expenditures are necessary to match the ever-increasing public demand for services.

"But I don't think the population has increased that much," he said, "I question whether or not we are spending too much."

He warned that the city council will have a "tough problem" in the next years to keep spending in line.

As an example, he noted that eight years ago the city's dog catching system consisted of a shack on the river where animals caught were shot, then dumped into a ditch. Now, partly at his urging, the city has a \$40,000 dog pound and is thinking of adding more personnel to the one-man dog catching staff.

Another example is the public's recent demand for more sophisticated snow removal equipment. He remembers that it was only eight years ago that the city's snow removal system consisted of two men on the back of a dump truck spreading cinders.

Although he believes the public demand for services must be responded to, he also believes the accelerating amounts of expenditures "will have to come to a slowdown soon."

"I'll be interested to see how the city deals with that problem," he said, and added, "I'm glad I won't be there for another eight years to wrestle with it."

Baggerman believes the present city structure—with one mayor and two councilmen to represent each ward, is adequate. This system provides for one person to be responsible, and disallows the possibility of sidestepping responsibility to a city manager, as some other

growing cities have done, he pointed out.

He agrees that city councilmen who work all day at a full-time job, then have to come to city hall to govern the city at night, have a heavy workload. But he believes it is preferable to having full-time councilmen.

"As long as they are part-time citizen officials," he said, "I believe we will have a better and cleaner government."

He added, "If you like what you're doing, it is not an onerous task, but quite satisfying."

Furthermore, he said, that satisfaction is almost immediate. A councilman's accomplishments—and mistakes—are made in public view.

Baggerman found that out again very recently when an ordinance he introduced prohibiting massage parlors in the city met with smirks and outright guffaws by some of his fellow councilmen and citizens in the audience. The ordinance was quietly withdrawn and did not appear on the council floor again.

But Baggerman said that kind of immediate feedback was not totally without value.

He said, smilingly, "I like living dangerously."

If Baggerman's immediate plans for the future come to fruition, he will have more opportunities to serve the public. He has filed as a Republican candidate for state senator in the second district.