

## Local Letters to the Editor

### Garwood GOP Chair Neglected to Endorse Council Candidate

The Garwood Republican Party Chairman, Jim Mathieu, wrote a long, detailed endorsement in last week's paper of his hand-picked mayoral candidate, but failed to even mention the name of the Republican woman, Carol Kearney, who is running for a seat on the Garwood Council. He should have noted that Republican Carol Kearney continues to be the business and industry liaison to the Garwood Council; that Carol Kearney revitalized the Chamber of Commerce and brought Garwood businesses together; that Carol Kearney is the first vice-president and board of director member of the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce; that Carol Kearney has owned a business in Garwood for the past 14 years;

and that Carol Kearney was the event creator and event director for Garwood Rocks, that highly successful Garwood street festival that brought thousands of visitors to Garwood.

Carol Kearney received an award from the Borough of Garwood for her Garwood Rocks efforts and Carol presented a check from the GWACC for \$1,000 to the Garwood Council to help pay for new Welcome to Garwood pole banners. Carol also is the Republican District One District Leader. Now that is what you would expect the Garwood Republican Party chairman to be writing about.

**Gene Jannotti, Garwood  
Republican District Leader**

### Borough Representatives Need to Start Listening to Taxpayers

As we are all hopefully enjoying the summer with friends and family, it has been politics as usual for Garwood's leadership. On July 23, I attended the Planning and Development Board meeting where, yet again, borough officials made decisions against the best interests of the taxpayers.

Two issues stood out that will have a big impact on the borough and its residents. First, is the re-development of the property on South Avenue, across from, and next to, Borough Hall. I give the Planning Board and the Council credit for trying to get something done because there is a tremendous opportunity here to move our town in the right direction. The problem is that the Planning Board approved the flawed resolution passed by the

Borough Council, which allowed for eminent domain to be used in what is supposed to be a private project on private property. Even though the approving Planning Board members virtually guaranteed eminent domain would not be used, they still passed a resolution allowing for it. If they don't intend to use it, why approve a resolution allowing for it? The answer is quite simple, as one Planning Board member so articulately put it, "We (the board) dictate what we want."

Eminent domain was never intended to be used to forcefully take property from one private owner and give it to another private owner, but that is exactly what it would do in this situation. Now, the Planning Board and the

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### Garwood Planning Board Member Explains His Eminent Domain Views and Commuter Parking Goals

The *Westfield Leader* editor's July 31 editorial entitled 'Local Towns Should not Use Eminent Domain to Seize Land' showed me that I had not explained well enough the purpose behind the Garwood Boro Council's decision to retain eminent domain powers that all government bodies have. I hope that this letter does better.

First off, something the Mathieu/Piarulli team may not understand; I agree with every eminent domain statement the editor wrote. Especially the last one, "taking land from one private entity and giving to another can never be a good thing in a civilized society. A bit strong, and I have a problem with 'never',

but I do agree with the concept.

Government taking (paying for with just compensation) private property for a public purpose, however, is a different story. Governments have purchased private property to build firehouses, schools, police stations, parks, libraries, and other public uses many times. This is legal and is continually upheld in courts. I, and even Councilman Mathieu, agree with that government use of eminent domain.

Five members of the Council have listened to Boro residents along Willow Avenue tell us many times that there is inadequate parking in the area. Especially after winter snows when resi-

dents have to remove their autos from the street. Indeed this past winter, Mayor Quattrocchi fostered an agreement with the owner of the Casale parking lot (oh my God - That's the potential redevelopment site itself!) to allow residents to park there after the snow. We have listened to residents along Second Avenue tell us that train/bus commuters park in front of their homes because there is inadequate commuter parking near the transit stops. We have listened to NJ Transit advise us that they will not provide additional Garwood train stops until there is more commuter parking.

Acting responsibly, and in response to Boro resident concerns, 5 Council members decided to retain eminent domain power because the Boro may have to purchase privately owned Casale/Petro property land in order to provide much needed public parking. Parking for residents and commuters. Hopefully, through the plan that the Planning Board develops if the Council finds the area in need of redevelopment, the developer will provide public parking. If not, the Boro can through a land purchase. That's why we retained the power. Just in case.

Boro Council has NO intent whatsoever of buying private property and selling or giving it to another private property owner. But a smart player doesn't give away leverage before the process starts. Mathieu/Piarulli may not want to listen to Boro resident needs, and they may want a developer to prepare their own redevelopment plan for the Boro, but thankfully five elected Council members prefer to provide for resident and commuter needs and continue our quest for more Garwood train stops.

**Councilman Bill Nierstedt  
Garwood Planning Bd. member**

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### Asm. Bramnick, Please Introduce Bill to District County Freeholders

Assemblyman Bramnick, I read your latest "News from District 21" missive to your constituents. Thanks for keeping us apprised.

Your hallmark in the missive is that you are creating bipartisan legislative panels and one initiative is to revisit state districting of the legislative districts.

In your re-districting push, can you also introduce the idea of an easier process for attaining counties to be from at-large to district? Our Union County government's budget is over \$half-billion dollars, and there is minimal accountability to show for that huge expenditure for all of the county's constituents.

Union County has veered away from the true purpose of what county government is supposed to do, and now has so many costly yet ineffectual tepid social programs one has to wonder if they are a county government at all. County movies, catering halls, parade donations and music fests? Meanwhile, the freeholders' county budget transferred

\$1 million out of the county paving program to create a redundant new division for a connected politician Fanwood Mayor Mahr that just happens to be the county level political boss overseeing their freeholder campaigns. So potholes from the worst winter in 20 years don't get filled on the county roads just because she was out of work for eight out of 10 years. One of her tasks is to interface financially with grants to the 21 towns. Note that since she is a county level Democrat political boss, Republicans are her mortal enemy. So how attentive will she really be to say a GOP Summit or Westfield, or even Kenilworth and Garwood?

Districting of counties would put our freeholders' accountability directly to certain areas of the county, would have them be more directly responsive to that district's towns constituents as to proper expenditures, and would create some oversight by having one district's freeholder