

Westfield GOP Campaign Release

## Measures to Prevent Shoehorning Are Underway in Westfield

by Mayor Andy Skibitsky  
Candidate for Re-election

I report this week on some good news in our efforts to control overdevelopment around Westfield. In 2003, the town council recognized that our town was undergoing development at rates greater than the historical averages. At that time, as 3rd Ward Councilman, I voted to proceed with a study of the issue to determine the true extent of the situation. This year, our town planner finished a detailed study, which included as the final component, a personal visual survey of nearly all residential zones of our town.

When I first became Mayor in June, one of my three main goals was to use the results of this study to enact legislation to control overdevelopment in our town. I directed Councilman James Foerst, Chairman of the Code Review and Town Property Committee, to bring to the council solutions to this problem. I requested that any solutions balance the competing interest of homeowner's rights to improve their property and the goal of protecting the architectural integrity of our town. In essence, our solutions must preserve the classic character and charm of our town while allowing homeowners the ability to provide additional living space to meet the needs of their growing families. We have guided our actions based on this premise, which we have termed "controlled growth."

A few weeks ago, the town council unanimously passed the first of a series of ordinances geared toward this end. This ordinance was a measure to control "shoehorning" on corner lots. Shoehorning refers to the practice of subdividing a lot and building two homes where only one previously existed. Corner lots are traditionally larger than an interior lot. Therefore they

are more susceptible to subdivision requests and homes tend to be squeezed in to satisfy the setback requirements.

By increasing the minimum lot size on corner lots, we limit the ability of a developer to replace one home with two or more and require that any new construction have a look similar to a traditional home.

Our second measure is designed specifically to control the size and scope of new homes. We will be considering in the coming weeks, a reduction in the maximum height of homes in residential zones. Presently our zoning ordinances allow for new construction to be built to a height of 38 feet. We have determined through our study data that more than 95 percent of all existing homes are less than 35 feet. Many of the remaining 5 percent, which exceed the 35 feet threshold have been constructed since 1999. Therefore, we have determined that one of the most effective measures to meet our goal is to reduce the height of new construction to no more than 35 feet.

As required by New Jersey statute, we have referred this proposal to the Planning Board for their review. The Planning Board is an autonomous body of town government vested with review of development applications and future development planning and control. The board will be holding required public hearings in the next few weeks and we are hopeful that with their approval, we will be able to move forward with this important measure.

We have also referred to the Planning Board additional measures, which would change the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Lot Coverage regulations. We look forward to the board's input in the coming months as we continue to work toward the delicate balance of "controlled growth."



COPING WITH LOSS...Attendees of Center For Hope's Camp Starbright find hope after the loss of a loved one in the weeklong bereavement program.

## Gov. Employees Assist in Hurricane Relief Fund

WESTFIELD - In addition to providing financial support to the Red Cross, 14 members of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) unit were deployed to assist in the disaster relief efforts in the Louisiana, and 10 agents worked directly with local law enforcement in New Orleans.

Local employees of the ICE then donated \$1,368 to aid those who were affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Assistant Special Agent in Charge James Kaley, Special Agent Phillip Goode and Financial Analyst Paul Serson presented the check to Maureen Kaufmann of the Westfield

Mountainside Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Mr. Goode, Mr. Serson and Special Agent-in-Charge Kyle Hutchins organized the employee donation effort.

Mr. Hutchins said, "Although the wrath of Hurricane Katrina was limited to the Gulfport Region, the impact and devastation was felt by the entire nation. The tragedy also inspires the human spirit and, at a very hectic and critical time in our nation's history, the ideals of protecting and policing the community often surpass the ideal of serving the community."

Mr. Hutchins thanked the Red Cross for allowing the agents to be a part of the relief effort and for allowing them the opportunity to recapture the spirit of giving and serving the community.

The Westfield/Mountainside Chapter of the Red Cross extends a sincere "thank you" to all of the agents and employees of the United States Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement for their generous donation and for the time that they dedicated to the relief efforts in New Orleans.

Union County GOP Campaign Release

## Why Are Taxpayers Paying Watchdog for BH Project?

by Patricia Quattrocchia  
Candidate for Union County Freeholder

In the fall of 2004, just prior to the last General Election, the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders announced the purchase of 17 acres of land on Snyder Avenue in Berkeley Heights. Newly sworn-in Freeholder Bette Jean Kowalski explained that the property had been the site of the Shaw Plastics company, as well as Barry Oil Service and Duffy Fuels, and that the county had paid \$8 million of the \$13-million purchase price and had entered into a deal with the municipality of Berkeley Heights, who had anted up the other \$5 million.

The freeholders had tapped into the Open Space Historic Preservation and Recreation Trust Fund, as the property would be used for baseball fields with Berkeley Heights building a senior-citizen center on a portion of the land. This particular piece of property had been tied up for years in litigation as the developer/owner had intended to construct 259 residential units, some of which would have been low income Mount Laurel housing, which the township wasn't exactly thrilled about.

There has been no disagreement that the soil is badly contaminated and no matter what the land is used for it must be reclaimed first, surely before the kids take to the fields or the seniors roll in.

Freeholder Kowalski was quoted in *The Westfield Leader* at that time as saying that the existing owner would be cleaning up the property - this, by the way, was a part of the deal. Obviously the owner is willing to foot the bill for remediation just to get rid of the land as it isn't fit for his original plan anyway; the clean up is expected to cost about \$1 million. Well guess what? The freeholder board just voted "yes" on resolution no. 977-2005, which calls for the

county manager to enter into an agreement with PMK Group of Cranford for the purpose of oversight services pertaining to the remediation of the Snyder Avenue property in Berkeley Heights in an amount not to exceed \$202,222 from the Open Space Trust Fund.

The contract was awarded without competitive bidding to the PMK Group which contributed \$75,500 to the Union County Democratic Committee between '00 and '04 as well as a cool grand or more to the campaigns of Assemblymen Joe Cryan, Neil Cohen and Jerry Green in '05 and a token \$300 to Assemblywoman Linda Stender - she should complain.

There are two things wrong with this picture. If the deal called for the seller to fund the remediation, why are the taxpayers picking up such a large tab? And second, a full-time engineer could be hired in the neighborhood of \$80,000 to \$95,000 a year and a trailer on site to house this person for another \$10,000 - what on earth is the other \$100,000 for? Why not have the property owner agree to hire the firm of the county's choice to do the job right in the first place instead of the taxpayers providing the funding for a "watchdog." It looks as though PMK will recoup most of their political contributions here in Union County.

Nothing can be done about this situation now. Let's just hope that the job is done right and, as the county manager explained to me, that we do indeed avoid another Meisel Field mess, which dragged on for years.

The team of Quattrocchia, Kline and Dill for Union County Freeholder want to put an end to no-bid contracts, as they are certainly a fleecing of the taxpayers. To learn more about the issues, please visit our website at [www.unioncountygop.org](http://www.unioncountygop.org) or call (908) 789-0200.

# Introducing FREE Online Banking

Access from anywhere...



No matter where you go, your Town Bank accounts are just a click away. Our FREE online banking provides easy access to information about your accounts when it's convenient for you.

- View account balances • Transfer funds between accounts
- View account history • Pay bills\* • Reconcile statements

Sign up today!

Check out our website for more information or stop by one of our branches today.

[www.townbank.com](http://www.townbank.com)

The Town Bank  
You Will Notice the Difference...

520 South Avenue • Westfield, NJ 07090  
908.301.0800

44 Elm Street • Westfield, NJ 07090  
908.518.9333

\*Free for first 3 months. After 3 months, a minimum of one bill per month must be paid using online Bill Pay feature, or a service charge of \$5 will apply. ©2005 The Town Bank. All rights reserved. Member FDIC. 7/05



## Richard J. Kaplow, Esq.

"25 Years Experience"  
Civil & Criminal Trial Lawyer

### FAMILY LAW

- Divorce • Domestic Violence
- Custody • Child Support

- DWI • Criminal Defense
- Business Disputes • Commercial Litigation

Former Assistant Union County Prosecutor

**(908) 232-8787**

24 Hours • 53 Elm Street, Westfield, NJ 07090  
rjk722@aol.com richardjkaplow.com

### WF Business Clips

WESTFIELD — Recent new business openings in the downtown of Westfield include:

Fitness Together, 222 North Avenue West, owners: Shari and Marc Kanterman.

Satsang Yoga & Boutique, 305 South Avenue, West.

Westfield Galleries, 270 East Broad Street; owners: Sy Mayerson and Dianne Blazier-Jiosi.

GameStop, 121 East Broad Street.

HomeCare America, 317 South Avenue, West; co-owners: Tom Kriek and Rich Kantor.

Salon Visage, 230 North Avenue, West, 2nd floor; owner: John Manso.

Dahn Yoga, 241 North Avenue West.

Bikram Yoga, 361 Elm Street; owner: Jennifer Comstock.

Painter Drama School, 140 Mountain Avenue.

Coming soon: Esprit, clothing, 151 East Broad Street; Blue Mercury, 82 Elm Street; Isabella's American Bistro, 39 Elm Street; Cafe St. Charles, 235 North Avenue, West.

Other: Mojave Grill Restaurant moved to 35 Elm Street.

## ATTEND A FREE SEMINAR

### EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIVORCE

The Law Firm of Dughi & Hewit, P.C. is pleased to announce that **Mario C. Gurrieri**, chair of its Family Law Department, **Richard A. Outhwaite** and **April L. Katz**, will present to the public a Free Seminar entitled "Everything You Need To Know About Divorce" in Summit, New Jersey on Thursday, October 20, 2005 and Saturday, October 22, 2005. Mr. Gurrieri, who has specialized in matrimonial law for thirty-two years, Mr. Outhwaite, for fifteen years and Ms. Katz, for twelve years, will review the law, explain the legal process and answer your questions concerning separation, divorce, custody, visitation, alimony, division of assets and post-divorce Court review of alimony and child support as well as the law governing Domestic Partnerships.

Information will also be provided on Divorce Mediation, an alternative to the traditional contested proceeding. Divorce Mediation offers the potential for significant savings while assuring that your rights are fully protected by avoiding the expense, stress and delay involved in Court proceedings.

If you are experiencing marital difficulties, contemplating divorce, or simply curious about your rights in a separation or divorce, this Seminar will be of value to you. If you are already divorced, the Seminar may be of value in explaining post-divorce rights and obligations of former spouses.

#### DATES:

Thursday, October 20, 2005 from 7:30-9:30 p.m.  
Saturday, October 22, 2005 from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Please call for location

Convenient to both downtown Summit and Route 24

Reservations required  
(No names needed)  
(908) 272-0200

Five days that will change your nights forever. 45-60% SAVINGS

Once you've slept on a handmade Shifman, you'll never want to sleep on anything else. For comfort and quality, it's the finest handmade mattress in the world.



Savings off of manufacturer's suggested retail.

BANCROFT TWIN SIZE <b>\$119</b> Each Piece	BANCROFT FULL SIZE <b>\$119</b> Each Piece	BANCROFT QUEEN SIZE <b>\$219</b> each piece Sold in 2 Piece Sets Only	BANCROFT KING SIZE <b>\$219</b> each piece Sold in 3 Piece Sets Only
CRYSTAL TWIN SIZE <b>\$189</b> Each Piece	CRYSTAL FULL SIZE <b>\$189</b> Each Piece	CRYSTAL QUEEN SIZE <b>\$289</b> each piece Sold in 2 Piece Sets Only	CRYSTAL KING SIZE <b>\$289</b> each piece Sold in 3 Piece Sets Only



Valley Furniture Shop  
Exquisite 18th Century Reproductions

20 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069 • (908) 756-7623  
Store Hours: Monday - Saturday 10-5:30 • Thursday Eves 'til 9 • SUNDAY 1-5