

Thompson's Personal Attack on Poerio is Objectionable, Disrespectful

I am responding to John Thompson's letter in last week's paper. I have no quarrel with Mr. Thompson's right to object to the proposal for the community center at Scotch Hills, however I do object to his personal attack on Ray Poerio.

As a coach and member of the Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Committee and Scotch Plains Day Committee, I have had the opportunity to work with Ray for many years. In that time I have seen Ray as a loyal township employee who wants nothing more than make Scotch Plains a better place to live. Mr. Thompson's

characterization of a community center to benefit our entire community as "Poerio's Palace" is completely out of line and shows a tremendous amount of disrespect for someone who has served our community well for the past 14 years.

Thank you, Ray and your staff for putting together great recreational programs for all Scotch Plains residents. I believe that a large majority of my fellow Scotch Plains friends and neighbors feel the same way that I do.

Steve Goldberg
Scotch Plains

Scotch Plains Poorly Served By Belligerent Antics of Vastine

Councilman Vastine's letter to the editor of July 31st reveals his public character in a number of ways. He displays a hallmark total lack of respect by refusing to even address Mayor Glover as mayor in his letter. However, this passive-aggressive insult on paper pales in comparison to the pattern of personal verbal attacks and distasteful negativity that Councilman Vastine regularly publicly displays at town council meetings. If you think I'm exaggerating, pick any council video and watch Councilman Vastine's unacceptable bombastic behavior.

Know there is a better class of Republicans in this town that are capable of working as a congenial bipartisan team for the mutual benefit of our town. It's a shame that the Republican Party in this town seems to be dominated by such mean-spirited people. It also seems Councilman Vastine is not above bending the facts. With the wording he employs, he attempts to dump the SID failure on Mayor Glover's lap. But the failed SID, a Republican initiative from the beginning, was wildly unpopular among town businesses that never received any demonstrable benefit from its existence and considered it an unfair supplemental tax on Scotch Plains businesses. Indeed, the SID was terminated because it was an abject failure; even Councilman Vastine admits this in his letter. The SID ran for several years yet Councilman Vastine quotes ZERO SID accomplishments, instead referring only to some vague and intangible hypothetical future value.

The truth is Mayor Glover has won widespread support for his position on termination of the failed SID. Councilman Vastine's letter is also notable for his use of unsupported statements. He complains about how bad Mayor Glover has been for the town yet fails to offer even a single concrete example. We know from the July 22nd Town Council meeting that Councilman Vastine equates "progress" with unbridled and wasteful higher spending which inevitably triggers higher taxes. It seems being mindful of the town's budget is riding "roughshod" in Councilman Vastine's eyes. Councilman Vastine also contradicts himself when he states no one from the governing body should be involved with the Downtown Development Committee, yet then lays claim in the same letter to organizing the committee himself. The Downtown Development Committee was apparently formed by secret invitation without vetting either the idea or the secretly nominated members through the Town Council, which after all is the elected governing body of our town.

It is important to remember that Mayor Glover was elected by the largest majority of voters of any mayor in recent history. He received a whopping 57 percent of the vote in 2012, higher than President Obama's 54.8 percent in town. Only 31.7

percent of registered voters in Scotch Plains are registered Democrat. Thus, Mayor Glover is arguably the most bipartisan-popular mayor in Scotch Plains history. So in attempting to bypass the Mayor and Town Council, Councilman Vastine is also thumbing his nose at the voters of Scotch Plains and attempting to rule Scotch Plains by a hand-picked secret society.

It's hard to argue that this committee is anything but a Republican partisan activity designed to help re-elect the most invidious voice currently on the Town Council. I believe that Scotch Plains is poorly served by the belligerent antics of Councilman Vastine and look forward to a more business-like atmosphere of mutual respect in Town Council meetings when Mr. Vastine is gone.

John Thompson
Scotch Plains

Cypresses at Brookside Block View of Park

Regarding Recreation Director Ray Poerio's statement on the Brookside Park pavilion during his presentation on December 3, 2013 to the commission that metal structures are not as easily vandalized as wooden models: All of Brookside Park would be less likely to be vandalized if that ridiculous term of Leland Cypresses had not been installed two years ago blocking the street view of all that goes on in the park.

And I am not surprised that calls to Mr. Poerio went unanswered, as numerous e-mails that I have sent to him have also been ignored. I guess that's my taxpayer dollars at work!

Cathy Smith
Scotch Plains

Letters to the Editor

Scotch Plains Needs to Publicly Denounce Pilgrim Pipeline Proposal

The July 10 and July 17 issue of *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* reported the proposal by Phillips Oil Company to build a bi-directional oil pipeline from Albany to Linden. It will go through Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Westfield and other towns.

The proposed Pilgrim Pipeline represents a real danger to the residents of Scotch Plains and other Union County towns. The Bakken crude oil, which would go in the pipeline from Albany to Linden, is highly corrosive, and it is the most explosive of all crude oils, according to a February 23 article in *The Wall Street Journal*. Also, the refined products going back from Linden to Albany would include gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, and aviation fuel. This is too risky!

Phillips 66 has been vague about the exact path of the pipeline. Moreover, as reported in *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, the company met

behind closed doors with the mayors of Union County on June 18. Vagueness, secrecy. This does not bode well for the safety of residents in densely populated communities. Thus, the political leaders of Parsippany-Troy Hills have passed a resolution stating that they do not want the pipeline going through their communities.

On July 22 I went before the Scotch Plains Township Council and requested that the members pass a similar resolution. No definite answer was given at that time.

If our Township Council says and does nothing, Phillips 66 will probably proceed quietly with its dangerous project. I hope our Township Council protects us residents by publicly decreeing the Pilgrim Pipeline is not wanted in Scotch Plains.

Otto Picard
Scotch Plains

Local Politics Created A Parallel Universe In Scotch Plains

A delusion is a "belief held with strong conviction despite superior evidence to the contrary."

This year, the municipal portion of property taxes went up \$11 on the average home. That is the lowest increase in over a decade while maintaining financial prudence and more than fully funding the library!

This year the capital bond ordinance was the lowest proposed in almost half a decade at \$1.5 million.

Reforming Legislative Re-Districting

TRENTON - Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield) on Monday introduced legislation (ACR-183) to make legislative elections more competitive by reforming the re-districting process.

"We need legislators who appeal to the middle ground and are problem solvers," Mr. Bramnick said. "The current legislative map makes it harder for bipartisan ship. In competitive districts, parties will be forced to work together."

The bill asks voters to approve a constitutional amendment that would make the state's legislative districts more competitive. Mr. Bramnick believes this would result in more lawmakers willing to find common ground on important issues.

It included very important items for progress and safety in Scotch Plains including upgrading the township's financial accounting software from a DOS-based system to a more modern system, new HVAC equipment for the library and improved leaf pickup, pot-hole repair and snow removal equipment. It also included money for the replacement of antiquated and broken down township equipment and vital upgrades to police and fire technology.

When compared with last year's budget increase — which cut the library budget and last year's bond ordinance which was \$3.7 million — how can anyone be under such delusion to say that this year's budget and bond ordinance are "bloated" and last year's was perfectly fine?

Local politics has indeed created a parallel universe in Scotch Plains.

Councilman Bo Vastine
Scotch Plains

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 re-vitalized 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

SP Mgr. Should Put Forward Capital Budget of Compromise, Not His Own

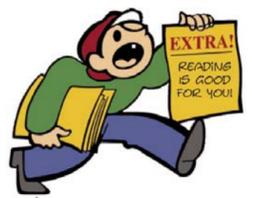
When Scotch Plains Republican Party partisan politics is allowed to rule with the support of Township Manager Jerry Giaimis, we all lose.

Mr. Giaimis' refusal to support a compromise on the municipalities 2014 capital ordinance proposed by Mayor Glover and Councilwoman Gialanella shows a blatant disregard for the public safety by rejecting important purchases for our police and fire departments, long neglected recreational improvements at Brookside Park and the former Terry Lou Zoo property, the long overdue replacements of the libraries problem with central air conditioning units and finally, providing adequate funding to begin the preservation of the Shady Rest club house that was and continues to shamefully fall into disrepair.

Mr. Giaimis said recently, "you can't cherry pick," well of course you can Mr. Giaimis, it's called compromise, and with the entire council in agreement on several significant matters that promote public safety, our parks and the library. Why wouldn't you or the Republicans stop the gridlock and move on their passage. Your refusal to put forth such a compromise brings into question a

lack of professionalism, experience and reaks of partisan politics. Maybe you need to be reminded that you are to work to implement policies and not make them. Your statement that this year's plan is "dead" clearly indicates that you have lost sight of your responsibility to community, which if not altered, should result in a formal rebuke of your job performance by the entire governing body. You cannot and should not use your position to promote your own agenda at the expense of holding hostage public safety essentials, recreational needs and improvements to the public library. Therefore, let me suggest that you immediately put forth a capital plan that reflects areas of agreement, and not your own.

Michael Brien
Scotch Plains



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