

## Democrats, Put Fanwood First Without Seeking Personal Gain

This letter is in response to the interview with Al and Phyllis Mirabella. I have been on the Fanwood Democratic Committee for over seven years now and have been on the Fanwood town council for 3.5 years so I have had to run for office twice against a member of another party.

But now, thanks to the actions of Mr. Mirabella and Senator Scutari, I and 13 other good Democrats, have to run against people in our own party to keep control of Fanwood in Fanwood. We are having to run against our own neighbors. The people on the current Fanwood committee, who are all on Column B in June with the exception of Mr. Mirabella, are long-time Fanwood residents, not politicians. They don't just support "one person," as Mr. Mirabella claims. They support the good work that is going on in Fanwood and the good people who have run for office here. They support the Mayor because she has done an excellent job and is loyal to Fanwood!

And now Mr. Mirabella wants to put out a false narrative that suggests that all these people don't have good and diverse ideas? He knows these people. Many of them used to be his friends. Ask yourself really... why is he running a campaign against Fanwood residents who have supported our community for years? What agenda is at play here?

Better question, if this is just about Mr. Mirabella reclaiming his seat on the Fanwood Democratic Committee, why is our state Senator Nick Scutari contesting 300 committee seats across Union County? It is not just Fanwood.

Mrs. Mirabella talks about having to unite as a Democratic Party. This is obviously important to all Democrats now. However, we should unite with honesty and integrity, motivated by the desire to do good, not for personal or political gain. The current Democratic Committee is and has been united with the goal of a better Fanwood. It is disingenuous to suggest these people have another political agenda or do not have Fanwood's best interest at heart.

Erin McElroy Barker  
Fanwood

## Affordable Housing Panel Endorses Reform Legislation

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Affordable Housing Advisory Committee endorsed four state legislative bills intended to reform the affordable-housing process at their monthly May meeting.

The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee supports providing affordable housing in New Jersey for low-income families, seniors, millennials, veterans, those with special needs as well as other groups. However, the current manner in which affordable housing is determined fails to consider how local communities may be affected by the construction of thousands of new units.

The bills endorsed by the Committee will end the costly, inefficient and inconsistent court-mandated process currently being imposed on municipalities by instituting a State legislative committee to evaluate and determine the need for affordable housing at the state and regional levels and require an analysis of a municipality's population, infrastructure, school class sizes and school services, before assigning affordable-housing numbers.

Below is the full list of bills endorsed by the Committee and links to the bill text:

S-2997/A-4471 – Establishes State Subcommittee on Affordable Housing Needs to make determinations concerning affordable-housing needs. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee also recommends giving nonvoting members the right to vote and give mayors the opportunity to determine the distribution of affordable-housing requirements within their county.

A-1649 – Prohibits affordable-housing obligation exemptions for urban aid municipalities.

S-2386/A-1648 – Establishes additional factors (impact on infrastructure, schools, etc.) for municipal adjustment used in calculating fair share

The truth of the matter is that Mr. Mirabella has not been actively involved in Fanwood Democratic Committee for several years, long before he was the lone Democrat who turned his back on his own mayor for county political reasons. The other truth is that Mirabella didn't just want his own committee seat. He and the county want all of the committee seats. That is why they refused to give our committee the line and promptly presented a full slate of 14 committee candidates to run against us.

This behavior has played out across the county. Is that diversity of opinion they are seeking or consolidation of power to one person? The real truth is, this primary fight is not about Fanwood at all. For Mirabella and Scutari, this is about the county taking control of committees in every town in the county.

From my perspective, this is the opposite of good government, the opposite of what it means to me to be a real Democrat. Mr. Mirabella already turned his back on the Fanwood Democratic Organization a year ago when he did not support Colleen for county chair, and actively campaigned against her. Now, he is trying to do it in Fanwood, and for what personal or political gain? Colleen isn't seeking higher office. She is not trying to climb the political ladder. She is trying to do the right thing for Fanwood. Can Al Mirabella say that is what he has been doing?

Is that what former politician Linda Stender is doing, who does not even live in Fanwood anymore but is advising him during this campaign? If he was truly Fanwood First, he would have worked with his mayor and his Democratic Committee for what is best for our town first. He has not done that in many years.

Please don't claim the moral high ground in this fight. The current Democratic Committee members have always put Fanwood First without seeking personal or political gain. Please come out to support them and our Mayor and council on Column B on June 4.

## Letters to the Editor

### Cranford Edu Reimagine Devolved Into Where Individual Egos Prevail

For some, Monday October 8, 2018 was a day off from work commemorating the arrival of Christopher Columbus to our country, but for Cranford, this was the introduction of the word Reimagine.

The introduction of Reimagine by our non-paid elected school board, though introduced with good intentions, quickly devolved into a situation, where individuals were guided by their egos, which isn't consistent with the hopes and dreams of the common Cranford citizen.

Whether it was the hours of meetings that I attended in person, watched on TV35, or speaking to parents and seniors- the standard response was: "let's invest our tax dollars into infrastructure and directly into the classroom." Unfortunately, the Cranford BOE continues to push educational policies that divert taxes to a busing policy. Only one member, Maria Liokith, stood up against busing! Some members of the Cranford School Board went as far as telling parents that change is hard.

As a grandson of educators, son of educators, and a husband of an educator, I have heard change is extremely hard. Educators have changed their teaching methods continuously to ensure the academic success of students.

Change was hard for my wife and I, when we uprooted our sons from the only place we ever called home, Brooklyn, N.Y. to settle in Cranford. Even with all of the unknowns, we made this change because it offered the ability to thrive for years to come. Our change has been amazing!

In my opinion, the majority of voters do not see the change proposed in

the policies that contain busing as an opportunity to thrive. As I write, the school survey results haven't been released to the community, so maybe my opinion will be proven wrong. My position from the start of Reimagine is the following: every dollar spent on a bus, is a dollar out of the classroom or the pocket of a taxpayer. The failure of the school board to listen has now placed our neighborhood schools at risk and left our residents in an unfamiliar place- a state of disharmony amongst our neighbors and friends.

To ensure a fiscally-responsible re-investment of our taxes into our schools for long-term academic success, the school board should take the following measures:

Public announcement by mid-June of the elimination of busing plans 1 thru 7

Citizen Referendum Committee, representing taxpayers who are parents and non-parents. To eliminate the busing agenda of the BOE, it should report directly into School Superintendent, Dr. Scott Rubin.

Independent analysis to develop a five-year plan (Curriculum and legislation, Infrastructure).

Funding of a grant writer to capture both government and private sector dollars to position for the 4th Industrial Revolution, but not on the backs of the Cranford taxpayer.

Cranford School Board, please finally join the walk that the voters started months ago to ensure our neighborhood schools are positioned for academic success, while striving towards academic excellence. Walk with me.

Kevin Comer  
Cranford



REDICATING MEMORIAL PARK...On May 19, the Garwood Historical Committee rededicated Memorial Park, first installed in 1959, as the rock bearing a plaque was recently relocated to a more prominent spot at the Garwood Recreation Complex. Pictured, from left to right, are: former Mayor Charles Lombardo; Alex Kettles, Mayor George Casabona's grandson; former Mayor George Casabona, who is the only living member among the mayor and borough council who dedicated Memorial Park; Mayor Sara Todisco, Councilman Russ Graham, Ann Kettles, Mayor Casabona's daughter, and Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock.



MEETING WITH RESIDENTS...Garwood Council President Marc Lazarov and Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock speak with residents at an open house hosted by the Garwood Volunteer First Aid Squad on Sunday.

## Lions Club Holds White Cane Day at ShopRite

WESTFIELD — The Lions Club of Westfield held its annual White Cane Day at the ShopRite in Clark this past Sunday.

Donations help support Lions charities such as sight conservation and aiding the blind.

The club also arranges for vision exams for needy Westfield/Clark adults and children and provides eyeglasses as needed. It also collects food and volunteers for the Cranford-

Elmora soup kitchen.

The Westfield Lions can be contacted at P.O. Box 572, Westfield, N.J. 07091.

Lions International is the largest service club in the world, the Westfield chapter now celebrating its 96th year. Its president is Lois Schembs.

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