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A Guide To the Candidates

New Castle Board Candidates Lay Out Plans for the Future

By Martin Wilbur

Typically, there is no shortage of candidates for a New Castle Town Board election. This year is no exception, with a full slate for both major parties.

There are four candidates vying for two council seats: incumbent Democratic Councilman Jeremy Saland and running mate Jason Lichtenthal opposed by first-time candidates Lauren Levin and Sean Maraynes for the Republicans.

Lauren Levin

Helping downtown Chappaqua was a major impetus for Levin to run for Town Board. She had served as vice president of the Millwood-Chappaqua Chamber of Commerce and has been a member of the Downtown Streetscape Committee.

A former buyer for Lord & Taylor before staying home to raise her two children, Levin, 37, said the town needs to have a thriving hamlet.

"I just saw that there was a need for more marketing for our merchants because they offer such great services and products and they don't get enough support," she said.

Levin said she would like to form a committee that has regular and formal communication with Town Hall on merchants' issues. There also needs to be pursuit of the types of businesses the town would like to see in its hamlets and to entice owners on the advantages of Chappaqua.

"People have seen that the town has the need for these services, especially restaurants and a family diner, and it's important to reach out to these business owners because there are plenty of them in our neighborhood," she said.

Differentiation of services between Chappaqua Crossing and the downtown is needed, Levin said. Kiosks at both locations would be helpful to cross-promote. She would support a parking structure downtown if it was needed.

As Millwood has evolved into the recreational center of the town, Levin said more community events should be hosted at its venues to attract more people for its merchants.

Levin said working with the county and the FAA is needed to get relief from the airplane noise from landings at Westchester County Airport. She said concentrating on addressing changes in flight patterns would go a long way to alleviating some of the problems.

While Levin understands the clamor for leaf blower regulations, she would be in favor of sensible restrictions. She opposes any exemptions, as all entities should abide by the same rules. Town officials also failed to get the stakeholders to reach consensus but if there is to be legislation, it has to have buy-in from residents and landscapers, Levin said.

If elected, Levin is confident she would



Jason Lichtenthal

work well with others regardless of the board's composition.

"It's not about me, either," Levin said. "It's about making our town a better place for our community and our kids. If that's our common goal, then we'll be fine."

Jason Lichtenthal

Since 2016, Lichtenthal has served on the Millwood Board of Fire Commissioners, originally appointed to succeed Hala Makowska when she made the jump to the Town Board.

It was a comment from his wife about four years ago that sparked his interest in public service. You can sit on the sidelines and complain or you can do something about it and help your community, he reasoned.

"I'm really intelligent, I know my stuff, I'm a quick study," said Lichtenthal, 47, a vice president at an insurance company. "I also go in as best I can with an open mind."

Lichtenthal is bullish on his slate's proposed Chappaqua Hamlet Investment Act, a four-part program that would launch a façade grant program to help merchants and landlords pay for exterior improvements; maintain a vacant storefront registry; approve a local preference law; and update the Discover Chappaqua guide and website.

The money for the grant program would come from the \$1.5 million Summit/Greenfield paid the town as a condition of its approval.

A Millwood resident for the past 15 years, Lichtenthal is keenly aware of the deficiencies in that hamlet. A lack of access to sewers not only clamps development but makes hookups to the communities of Random Farms, Riverwoods and Yeshiva, identified as needing sewers, exceedingly difficult and expensive.

Lichtenthal said impressing county, New York City and state officials to find the funding and political will for the sewer hookup is most prudent for the health and environment.

"Hooking up to the county trunk line is the way to go," he said. "I think our county Board of Legislators and our county executive can be amenable to help us figure out how to make that happen."



Lauren Levin

Lichtenthal supports strong environmental laws including a solution to the stalemate over the proposed electric leaf blower ban. The climate crisis calls for bold action everywhere and New Castle should not be left behind.

He agreed with the recent Town Board decision to engage an expert that will help the town wade through the complex issue of airplane noise from landings at the airport.

Lichtenthal said he would make sure residents' issues, large and small, are heard without minimizing their problems.

"I think I will bring that mentality to Town Hall, to make sure people have an ear, that Town Hall has an ear to what their concerns might be without having a concern about getting yelled at," he said.

Sean Maraynes

Maraynes said he is running to be a voice for residents. As a former Democrat, current Republican and soon-to-be independent, he hasn't felt like he belongs in either major party.

"I look at it not as a political role for me, I'm looking at it as strictly, number one, being a steward for the town and a voice for all 18,000 people," Maraynes said.

The 36-year-old attorney, whose family has Chappaqua roots dating to his grandparents, said he wants to help the town locate merchants and activities that would enliven the downtown hamlet, such as restaurants, niche stores or a community center along with hosting events.

Any plans for the train station lot should also be put on the back burner so the hamlet can recover from two-plus years of construction.

"I've very skeptical about additional apartments," Maraynes said. "Everybody wants to have this mixed use, we do at (the old) Whispering Pines. Let's see how the units do at Chappaqua Crossing."

If something were to eventually be done at the train station, Maraynes said he would lean toward some retail with a parking structure.

Maraynes supports the Chap Line as a way to help bring foot traffic downtown if it can be done affordably.

For Millwood, Maraynes said he would be best suited to be a "squeaky



Jeremy Saland



Sean Maraynes

wheel" in dealing with county and state representatives to get sewers. Without sewers, there won't be significant development, but Maraynes said holding events, such as food truck and beer festivals in the space by the old train station depot will bring people to the area. Sidewalks, once installed, should also assist the hamlet.

Maraynes has also been skeptical about the leaf blower legislation, saying that the benefits would be negligible other than reducing noise for those impacted.

"I'm kind of against anything that has to do with any sort of public policy that people do just to make themselves feel better," he said.

Jeremy Saland

The only incumbent in the four-candidate council race, Saland has touted his ability to work with all his colleagues, particularly after a rocky 2015 campaign with outgoing Supervisor Robert Greenstein.

This year, there are myriad projects to be addressed – the hamlets, the airport issue, Millwood sewers and smaller issues – that he wants to contribute to.

"There's so much going on and I think we've done a good job over the past four years," Saland said. "It doesn't mean we can't do better, but I'd like to continue and I think we can continue to be successful."

In Chappaqua, Saland said he is awaiting the results of the form-based code for its downtown district which will help the town position itself to pursue the best uses for properties. Future decisions will have to conform to the Comprehensive Plan, he said, and engaging the landlords and Planning Board to come up with compatible uses, including how to make best use of town-owned property, is essential.

"If you want it to stay the way it is, empty stores is not the answer," Saland said. "With the form-based code we can provide some degree of consistency."

He is open to the Chap Line provided the project's cost is reasonable and the town can navigate the issues with neighboring residents.

In Millwood, Saland said the town has to play to the strengths of what's

continued on page S4

Pool Looks to Make Jump From Council Seat to Supervisor

By Martin Wilbur

In 2017, Ivy Pool entered the town's political scene, winning a close election to gain a council seat on the New Castle Town Board.

With outgoing Supervisor Robert Greenstein declining to run for re-election after leading the town the past six years, this year there is an open seat for the post. Pool said her two years on the board has given her commanding knowledge of the town's issues, and combined with her professional experience, would serve the town well.

Pool, 41, worked in the administrations of former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and Gov. Andrew Cuomo, having managed and led projects in excess of \$100 million. She said she has the skills and the availability to devote to the town, since she now works as a consultant from home while raising her children.

"I thought it was really important that we had a supervisor that could make the kind of commitment that Rob has shown to this community and having kind of shadowed him for two years I felt I was the most qualified candidate to do that," Pool said.

While there is no shortage of issues to tackle, perhaps the biggest challenge facing the town in the foreseeable future

is implementing the types of changes needed to help reinvigorate downtown Chappaqua. The town is now completing the hamlet's infrastructure and streetscape project as it awaits the new proposed form-based zoning code for the downtown commercial district, which will propose uses based on the form of the property, rather than according to use.

That could lead to greater flexibility for the empty and underutilized storefronts and parcels.

Pool said she wants to see diversification of the town's housing stock, with more opportunities for young families to come to New Castle and empty-nesters to remain. That could be helped with some mixed-use development downtown. There are no plans to change the residential neighborhoods, she said.

"We're trying to make sure that we have the zoning that allows for the kind of development of the downtown hamlet that we want to see happen within the existing property and property owners, but also creates the conditions to plan



Ivy Pool

for the future and to allow for the kind of community the people told us they want in the Comprehensive Plan," Pool said.

Pool and her running mates, Councilman Jeremy Saland and Millwood Fire Commissioner Jason Lichtenthal, have proposed a Chappaqua Hamlet Investment Act, one of four steps to help the downtown.

Pool proposes using a portion of the \$1.5 million from Chappaqua Crossing developer Summit/Greenfield for a façade improvement grant program where merchants and property owners can apply for matching funds for exterior improvements. Summit/Greenfield's contribution is specifically earmarked to help offset any negative impacts to the downtown as a result of Chappaqua Crossing.

That would help draw interest in the downtown hamlet and enable it to compete with Chappaqua Crossing, which Pool said should be for larger footprint stores.

While Pool said she is not opposed

to the Chap Line, a proposed 1.5-mile pedestrian and bike path connecting the downtown hamlet to the Chappaqua Crossing area, a project that the Summit/Greenfield money could help fund, she believes the grant program would have a more direct impact on the downtown.

"I don't know that the Chap Line is going to solve the pedestrian access between the hamlet and Chappaqua Crossing," Pool said. "I think it's one part of the solution but it won't be the answer."

Also part of the downtown equation is the nearly 10 acres of town-owned parking at the train station. Pool said the general direction of the town is that it is likely in the future some of that acreage will be used for development, including a parking structure to offset parking losses. However, she would want any sale of that property to be decided by voters in a referendum.

In Millwood, some upgrades are already in the works, with the town committed to the sidewalk project, which was delayed until next year, and the planned improvements to Millwood Park.

While the hamlet does not currently have access to sewers, which limits development potential, Pool said she would like to see the hamlet used for more events, such as food truck days,

continued on page S4

Smith Excited About Prospects of Tackling New Castle's Issues

By Martin Wilbur

For several years, Jim Smith has been part of a think tank that examines security issues.

A consultant who has spent most of his time helping governments address challenges to their energy supply and working on intellectual property matters, Smith has often consorted with groups from varied political backgrounds, which made it all the more rewarding to solve problems.

More recently, that model has started to break down with hyper-partisanship. As a result, Smith began to look more locally to utilize his interests and expertise.

The eight-year Chappaqua resident, who has served on the Town of Fremont Planning Board in Sullivan County for the last 12 years, began attending town meetings and was tabbed to become the New Castle Republican Committee's nominee for supervisor this year.

"Everyone needs to focus locally," said Smith, 45, who would resign from the Fremont Planning Board if victorious next week. "So it was sort of a realization that, yeah, if we want things to be better, we have to really engage. That's where the change is happening, that's where our lives are."

There will be no shortage of issues. The future of downtown Chappaqua is

what the town will spend much of its time on in the next year or two, he said. During this next phase, following the 2017 update of the Comprehensive Plan and the nearly completed infrastructure and streetscape project, is when the next board will get a chance to amend its zoning to bring in the types of development and uses that would be beneficial to the hamlet, Smith said.

"I think that making the downtown work is not something that requires an enormous amount of budget but it requires a lot of effort," he said. "It's getting the zoning right and there are some reasons for that. That's a big deal."

Smith said the downtown zoning comes down to two main issues: the height and appearance of the structures and the future of the town-owned parking lot at the train station. First, the town must get an accurate pulse for what the community wants. Smith's preference would be to consider buildings as high as four to five stories, in appropriate sites, while in other locations it can be shorter.

While not opposed to the idea of adding residential units downtown, Smith said he would want that confined to private property, not land currently owned by the town. The more residential units that are downtown, the greater the likelihood parking would have to be addressed, potentially in the form of a parking

structure.

"I'd rather focus on activities that bring people into our town from other towns into our downtown," Smith said. "Residential is not going to attract anybody from outside our town to come in. I'd rather bring people in to participate in the town. I think that's better for residents."

Improving restaurant choices, including having a diner, and eventually more activities to attract visitors would increase the foot traffic. It would also retain the character of the town, he said.

Another way to increase activity would be to use \$1.5 million from Summit/Greenfield toward constructing the Chap Line, Smith said. The 1.5-mile pedestrian and bike path would extend from near Chappaqua Crossing to downtown. With several hundred residents living near the path, it would be more effective than the Democrats' proposed façade grant program, he said.

"(The program) gets complicated and merchants aren't ever asking for it," Smith said. "Bring foot traffic. The Chap



Jim Smith

Line is one example."

On the other side of town, Smith said while Millwood won't become a major downtown because of its layout and lack of sewers, it should be featured as a recreational hub. The North County Trailway runs through the hamlet while Gedney and Amsterdam parks are close by.

Smith said he would like to explore connecting the trailway with Gedney Park, which are separated by about 800 feet.

An issue that Smith has tirelessly delved into are the factors behind the increase in airplane noise from landings at Westchester County Airport. He said he has researched the issue back to 2007 and found that flight patterns have been changing. Aircraft are now being directed to drop to 2,000 feet in altitude about 12 miles from the airport, as opposed to a previous altitude of 4,000 feet at the point.

While it's the county's facility, the town must take the initiative to approach the FAA with real data and solutions.

"We just need to take this one on,"

continued on page S4

Pool Looks to Make Jump From Council Seat to Supervisor

continued from page 3

fairs and a 5K to bring more people to the hamlet.

She also pledged to find a resolution to the sewer stalemate. Most importantly, the communities of Random Farms, Riverwoods and Yeshiva need hookups.

"It's one of the things that I'm really committed to focusing on," Pool said. "I think you need a town supervisor that's really going to prioritize this."

Pool is optimistic that there will be help for residents whose quality of life has been degraded by the explosion of airplane noise. She supported the town hiring its own consultant to advise the board on Westchester County Airport-related issues as well as recently sending a stern letter from the Town Board to County Executive George Latimer pushing the county to take a stronger approach in its dealings with the FAA.

However, Pool opposes the town embarking on potential litigation on its own.

"I believe it needs to be a concentrated effort by neighboring communities within the county," she said.

An issue still to be resolved is the proposed regulations on leaf blowers. Pool said she supports limitations despite running into opposition from landscapers and some residents. Unfortunately, she said, there has not been clear consensus,

but the town should continue to use nearby communities that have passed leaf blower legislation as a guide for an enforceable, yet workable solution.

Pool also supports a green building

Smith Excited About Prospects of Tackling New Castle's Issues

continued from page 3

Smith said. "There are probably five things we can convince the FAA to do that they might be willing to do because there's a groundswell. We've got to go to them with smart analysis."

Smith was critical of the current Town Board's handling of the proposed leaf blower legislation to regulate and eventually prohibit the gas-powered machines. The Town Board made the mistake of waiting for the Sustainability Advisory Board to present them with a proposal rather than taking the lead, he said. Also, the Planning Department, police chief, school district and Recreation Department should have been engaged at the start of the process.

"If you start with a ban, you're satisfying 30 percent of the town, maybe less, but you're trading off two-thirds of the town and if you want to accomplish something on an environmental agenda, you need those two-thirds," he said.

Smith said to limit the machines' use, it should establish noise and time guidelines

code, which would require specific energy-saving designs for new buildings.

She said under her leadership the town would continue to have a steady hand on its finances. The town has been under the

tax cap for nine consecutive years.

"The fact is I think this town needs and deserves the best possible person serving in this role," Pool said.

and equipment standards, then create an educational program.

New Castle is in an outstanding fiscal situation, which Smith gave the current board credit for, but said he would employ more of a zero-based budgeting to justify every expense. He would also be open to borrowing to more quickly catch up with road paving since the interest rates remain historically low.

Smith said he is excited at the prospects of tackling the town's issues. If elected, he would work toward finding an identity for New Castle.

"I think we're looking at what is our brand as a town?" Smith said. "The schools have always defined our brand and brings us to town in the first place. What else defines our brand?"

New Castle Board Candidates Lay Out Plans for the Future

continued from page 2

there – its recreation opportunities. The extended sidewalks next year and Millwood Park renovations will help.

The future of Millwood is partially determined by potential sewer hookups. Keeping after the county and the state for more money is needed. Continuing to exist with failing septs is untenable.

Saland supported a recent letter to

send to the county executive that laid out its expectations that Westchester play a more active role in addressing the airport noise levels and related issues.

"People in this town have higher expectations and the high the expectations you have the more motivation you have to do better," he said.

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Two Mt. Pleasant Board Seats Up for Grabs in Next Week's Election

By Joan Gaylord

With four candidates vying for two open seats on the Mount Pleasant Town Board, the Democrats are looking to retain a presence in town government.

This year, Laura DiVenere joins incumbent Francesca Hagadus-McHale on the Democratic slate. They face Jerry Schulman and Danielle Zaino, both of whom are running on the Republican, Conservative and Independent ballot lines.

Laura DiVenere

In her first run for public office, DiVenere, 58, said one of her priorities would be more effective communication and to involve as many residents as possible in decision-making.

"I'm a regular person. I'm a mom. I work," said DiVenere, a realtor. "I can't make decisions for everybody. I want them to be included."

Though updates are regularly posted to the town's website, DiVenere said many residents, especially seniors, don't get their information online. Information needs to be more accessible including through newspaper postings, town bulletin boards and other historically traditional means, she said.

"Social media is important but sometimes being simple is better," DiVenere said.

She cited the need for affordable housing, particularly for seniors so they may continue to live in the area after their children are grown. When exploring ways to revitalize the hamlets, DiVenere wants attention paid to businesses that would appeal to seniors, such as restaurants and mom and pop stores.

"We moved here for the charm of the town and I want to keep that," she said.

Weighing impact when evaluating proposed development is critical, DiVenere said. For example, mixed-use proposals must be scrutinized for sufficient parking. DiVenere said the North 60 project, which appears good on paper, must be carefully vetted to ensure it's beneficial to the town.

As for sharing services, it is a concept that DiVenere supports.

"I would do my due diligence for the town," she said. "I'd ask questions and then bring it to the people. Everyone who lives here needs to know."

Francesca Hagadus-McHale

When Hagadus-McHale won last year's special election to fill the unexpired term of Mark Rubeo, who was appointed town justice, she became the first Democrat in 30 years to win a seat on the Mount Pleasant Town Board. This year, she returns to the campaign trail seeking a full four-year term.

"I'm bringing the change I promised," said Hagadus-McHale, a Pleasantville

resident.

Among the changes she has sought is to make the board's activity more transparent and to be more responsive to residents. In addition to wanting to make all agendas public, including work sessions, Hagadus-McHale believes the first 20 to 30 minutes of work sessions that is available for presentations should include residents' comments.

"There are real issues that need confronting," she said. "But they don't get discussed."

Hagadus-McHale referred to the Comprehensive Plan update efforts as "a mystery." She noted there had been much input and a contract with the Pace Land Use Law Center, but it has been about a year since meaningful progress has been made.

The need to revitalize Mount Pleasant's hamlets is a priority for Hagadus-McHale, particularly filling empty storefronts. She supports efforts to bring mixed uses to buildings in the hamlets, zoning that would allow commercial or office on the ground floor and residential space upstairs. Sufficient parking, however, must be part of any plan.

She also supports the North 60 project, the proposed three million-square-foot multi-use development adjacent to Westchester Medical Center and New York Medical College.

While Hagadus-McHale notes that the town is doing well financially, she said it is vital to continue searching for cost-saving measures. This includes looking for opportunities to share services, such as the successful shared dispatching of the Pleasantville and Mount Pleasant police departments. Additional opportunities such as sharing municipal day camps should be explored, she said.

Hagadus-McHale has been a big proponent of bringing the hamlets and villages together. In one instance, she invited students from Sleepy Hollow High School to receive a proclamation from the board as recipients of the Metro Award, a recognition of their school theater work.

Hagadus-McHale spoke out against the activities of the Coalition for a Safe Mount Pleasant, an organization formed in response to safety concerns at Pleasantville Cottage School. The residential school, run by the JCCA, meets the child welfare and mental health needs of some of the area's most vulnerable and troubled students, she said.

"The activities of the coalition imply we are not safe," Hagadus-McHale said.

She said she has reached out to state Sen. Peter Harkham for help, including requests for funding to recruit and train personnel and retain a qualified supervisory staff. Hagadus-McHale pointed to recent security improvements on the campus and said she would like to see more community involvement on the issue.



Danielle Zaino



Francesca Hagadus-McHale



Laura DiVenere



Jerry Schulman

Her perspective comes from not only being a Town Board member, but the parent of a special needs child and a teacher. Hagadus-McHale, 66, taught foreign languages in the Chappaqua School District for 32 years.

Jerry Schulman

Though a newcomer to town elections, Schulman, 62, is known to many residents from his years as a Westlake educator and administrator. He retired in 2015.

Schulman views serving on the Town Board as a way to give back to the community.

"You don't really know what campaigning is like until you do it," Schulman said. "I was a school administrator but now I'm meeting people in many other parts of our town."

A 34-year Pleasantville resident, Schulman shares concern for Mount Pleasant's hamlets. Changes should include improved sidewalks and lighting. He would also like to see rezoning that would allow landlords to have greater flexibility regarding their properties' uses, including residential units above businesses within the hamlets. However, any mixed-use plan must have adequate

parking.

"You can't build without identifying parking," he said.

Schulman also wants to learn from other towns about how to effectively attract millennials. Many younger residents might prefer residences that would allow them to walk to the train station, he said.

The North 60 project now under review carries benefits for the town. He noted that the plan is to be implemented in phases, an approach he supports.

Traffic and efforts to mitigate its impact must be assessed, he said. Schulman wants to evaluate town spending and avoiding tax increases is a priority. As a school administrator, Schulman said he was accustomed to a "zero-base budget," justifying every expense. It is an approach he thinks would work well for the Town Board, especially since he does not see significant savings in shared services.

While Schulman is open to exploring alternative energy sources such as installation of more solar panels, those efforts should not be overdone and consume green space.

Improved town communication is a matter Schulman wants to address. The

continued on page 6

Covill Seeks Second Term on BOL Against Somers Candidate

By Martin Wilbur

Two years ago, Democrat Kitley Covill was able to defeat then-incumbent Francis Corcoran for the Board for Legislators' District 2 seat, which includes Mount Kisco and other northeastern Westchester communities.

Seeking re-election this year, Covill is the incumbent, faced by Republican Gina Arena of Somers.

"Fascinating, eye-opening, a lot of work and a lot of joy," responded Covill, 64, an attorney from Katonah, when asked about the past 22 months on the board.

Arena, running for public office for the first time, has been involved in various efforts, from Midnight Runs, to advocating for those with autism and opioid addictions, which she has had personal experience with. The mother of eight children, one daughter is autistic, another has struggled with opioids.

Arena, 53, who works in the county medical examiner's office, wants to make sure that those populations as well as seniors have adequate services while making sure families aren't priced out of Westchester.

"We can do better and give better services than what we're doing, and that includes the elderly, all the things that are important to the county and keeping people here," said Arena. "We need to work on it, we need to pull together and figure it out."

For Covill, one step toward improving the county's fiscal situation was approving the increase in sales tax from



Kitley Covill



Gina Arena

7.375 to 8.375 percent. While Covill said she had committed herself to adhering to the tax cap, no amount of cutting would increase the fund balance, restore the bond rating to AAA and address the infrastructure and other concerns. It also supplies a portion of money to the municipalities and school districts.

The sales tax supplies the county with an extra \$90 million, as opposed to raising taxes 2 percent, which provides about \$11 million, she said.

"I feel good about that," Covill said. "I feel like the budget is finally getting itself to a good place with more added to the saving account, the reserve fund. But I also think it's the time to look at what investments we want to make, repairs that we still need to do, then maybe – maybe – some projects that are new."

Covill said she would like to see more attention paid to park infrastructure, including at Muscote Farm. Covill said

the county is also awaiting word from the state Supreme Court about whether the county will be granted relief from the limitations placed on its operation of Merestead.

Arena said since the Latimer administration took over nearly two years ago, she has seen little changes in the function of county government. One of the few changes, the increase in sales tax, wasn't for the better, Arena said.

"I really don't want to raise taxes on people anymore. That's the only topic in this county that we ever hear about," she said. "Tell me what I'm getting for what I've giving. That's what I hear when I'm knocking on doors."

Arena said service sharing among emergency service department for people with special needs should be explored.

"There's no crisis intervention team for that kind of situation," she said. "So I would like to see mental health get

involved with that and really let's put together something that works for the whole county, that works for everyone."

Arena gives credit to the county for a successful year at Playland but said the facility must be privatized as soon as possible. She also questioned what the county is doing with the airport.

With five county parks in the district, making sure those facilities are viable is critical, Arena said. She said the county needs to address the deteriorating condition of structures at Muscote Farm and was critical of the county trying to change some of the permitted uses at Merestead.

"When someone gives you an estate, you don't take them to court to try and change what the wishes were," Arena said.

Covill said there should be more environmental awareness in the county. While a Styrofoam ban will take effect by Jan. 1, there are other issues such as an expansion of the septic repair program that's been successful in Katonah, she said.

In a second term, Covill wants to have greater involvement with the county police and the Department of Community Mental Health to help combat the opioid crisis.

Covill said she also enjoys helping constituents with small problems that are not necessarily the county's purview, such as getting a Route 117 road sign in Bedford replaced. She urged the state DOT for its replacement.

"It's easy to say 'not my problem,'" Covill said. "Not everything is doable but at least you can have a conversation about it."

Two Mt. Pleasant Board Seats Up for Grabs in Next Week's Election

continued from page 5

extensive road paving and the disruptions they have caused is one example where better communication between the town and its residents would have been beneficial.

"Put it in the water and tax bills," Schulman said of the updates. "Alerts can go online. We also need an opportunity to give feedback."

The town has been doing an excellent job with senior programming, which he called "phenomenal." Still needed, however, are more affordable housing units for seniors. Schulman said he hopes to discuss the issue with local developers and explore options.

Danielle Zaino

A lifelong town resident, this is Zaino's first run for elected office as well. Asked by local residents to run, it's an opportunity to "help Mount Pleasant be what we want," she said.

Maintaining Mount Pleasant's suburban identity in one of Zaino's priorities. She said she approves the Town

Board's handling of the Comprehensive Plan process, including holding a series of meetings with residents and the ongoing work on a draft update, which would be the first in nearly 50 years.

"We need to be with the times," said Zaino, 42, a Valhalla resident, who has three children and works for a construction company. "The needs of people are very different now than they were in 1970."

Zaino called North 60 an "exciting" project but welcomes the opportunity to assess each stage to ensure its impacts are properly managed, particularly traffic.

There should be opportunities for more service sharing. Zaino said she would support efforts for shared highway services and equipment with other municipalities, but that should not include police services. Zaino said the town maintaining its own department is a comfort to residents since Mount Pleasant covers a broad geographic area.

"You don't want to combine departments and then have an emergency where it takes five or 10 minutes for them to get there," Zaino said.

Improved communication in town is also a priority for

Zaino. She cited social media as an effective tool but noted that many residents are not online regularly. Targeted mailings on key issues could be effective but said officials would have to regularly evaluate that strategy.

"There's a fine line between letting people know but you don't want to kill five forests to get the word out," Zaino said.

The challenges to the community posed by safety and security issues at Pleasantville Cottage School, the residential treatment center for youths, has been a focus for Zaino. She is a co-founder of Coalition for a Safe Mount Pleasant.

"Our goal when we started was to make the community safe and the campus safe for those kids," said Zaino, who has been pleased with the progress made.

She noted changes in therapeutic models and staff retraining as two improvements the coalition has supported. She also noted upgraded on-campus security, including enhanced lighting and cameras.

"It is not fair to the taxpayers when the local police are there daily and [the facility] is tax-exempt," Zaino said.



Yorktown's Gashi, Grace Vie to Replace Void on County Board

By Martin Wilbur

Michael Grace or Vedat Gashi will have big shoes to fill in January. For the first time in 22 years, the District 4 seat on the Board of Legislators is up for grabs with the approaching retirement of County Legislator Michael Kaplowitz.

Grace, a Republican, is a former three-term Yorktown supervisor, while fellow Yorktown resident, Democrat Vedat Gashi, came up short in his first political campaign last year for state Assembly. The district also includes New Castle and portions of Somers.

Grace, 63, who has his own law practice, said he wouldn't have tried for the seat had Kaplowitz decided to run again.

"I think I have a lot to offer on the county level, given all my years of experience in both government and the law. That makes it possible where I can have an impact on the county as well," said Grace who years earlier served as Yorktown Town Attorney.

Gashi, 41, also an attorney, fled with his family to the United States from what is present-day Kosovo when he was four years old. He found his run for the 94th Assembly District seat last year inspiring and was energized by the political process and how so many people care about the issues and who

represents them.

"I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't feel there was a real job to be done and that it was important," Gashi said. "So I'm excited to be part of it."

Westchester County remained on the state comptroller's fiscal stress list that was released in September. Grace said the sales tax increase from 7.375 to 8.375 percent was unnecessary, hitting people who can least afford it. A \$70 million fund balance is sufficient even if the bond rating falls below AAA because the county should limit borrowing, he said.

He predicted at some point in the future a 9 or 10 percent sales tax unless lawmakers control spending. High taxes also negatively impact property values, said Grace.

"It's the governmental culture that is poisonous," Grace said. "The county has surplus but their complaint is they just don't have enough of a surplus, so they like to have a \$140 million of taxpayer money."

Gashi said money had to be found somewhere because not only had the county's reserve funds been depleted because of repeated 0 percent tax increases but critical infrastructure, including roads, had been neglected. The AAA bond rating allows for the lowest borrowing rates when necessary,

he said.

Along with shoring up the county's reserves and providing the promises percentages to municipalities and schools infrastructure shortcomings must be addressed, Gashi said.

Among the biggest issues facing constituents in each one of the district's towns are sewer hookups. Gashi said county officials must convince New York City DEP and representatives from other levels of government that the projects are critical and need state and federal funds.

"I think there's a benefit for the people of the town but also a benefit for the residents of New York City," Gashi said. "We should be able to get residents greater support."

While Grace agreed more money from Albany and Washington is needed to properly fund projects, more regional solutions should be sought. As supervisor, he welcomed the Somers' communities of Lincolndale and Shenorock into Yorktown's Hallock's Mill Sewer Plant, similar to what New Castle and Mount Kisco are discussing for Riverwoods and Yeshiva, but the plan was blocked.

Gashi said he is quite aware that not only many New Castle residents have seen their quality of life deteriorate from escalating Westchester County Airport

noise but portions of Yorktown as well. Solutions include convincing the FAA to make changes but the county must be more vigilant in future agreements with private carriers.

He also opposes any airport expansion.

Grace said the county should privatize facilities like the airport and Playland.

On other issues, Grace said he strongly opposed passage of the Immigrant Protection Act, which prevents county resources from being used toward federal investigations. He cited a couple of instances in southern Westchester where undocumented immigrants committed felonies, including rapes of minors. He added that he is unapologetically pro-life.

"There has to be checks and balances and there needs to be someone with experience to cut through the bureaucratic morasses and find pragmatic solutions to things," Grace said.

Gashi said he's been disappointed on the focus on national issues in a county race when there are plenty of county issues to tackle and help residents.

"The impact you could have on not only the government, but the overall situation, is something that is always at a premium," he said.

VOTE NOVEMBER 5TH

ROBERT PRISCO

FOR WESTCHESTER COUNTY COURT JUDGE

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Robert Prisco

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- Westchester County Assistant District Attorney for 32 years
- Chief of Local Criminal Courts and Grand Jury Division
- Chief of Major Case Bureau
- Deputy Chief of Homicide Bureau
- Tried to verdict: murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, assault and weapons possession cases.
- Violent Felony Coordinator
- Mental Health Court Coordinator
- Member of Criminal Justice Advisory Board
- Member of the Raise the Age Committee

EDUCATION:

- Albany Law School, Juris Doctor, 1986
- Villanova University, B.A. Economics, 1983

BAR ADMISSIONS:

- New York State
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of NY

ENDORSED BY:

- Westchester County Democratic Party
- Westchester County Conservative Party
- Westchester County Independence Party
- Westchester County Working Families Party
- Serving America Movement (SAM) Party
- Affiliated Police Association of Westchester, Inc.
- Westchester County Detectives Association
- Yonkers Captains, Lieutenants & Sergeants Association
- Yonkers PBA
- Westchester Hispanic Law Enforcement Association (WHLEA)
- Westchester County DA Investigators PBA
- Westchester Corrections Superior Officers Association
- Westchester Corrections Officers Benevolent Association
- Westchester Probation Officers Association
- IAFF Local 628, Yonkers Firefighters Union
- Yonkers Uniformed Fire Officers Association
- Hispanic Democrats of Westchester
- Hudson Valley Stonewall Democrats (LGBTQ)
- Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body AFL-CIO
- Building & Construction Trades Council of Westchester and Putnam
- MPACnow (Mediterranean Political Action Committee)
- Up 2 Us
- Rated 100% Pro-Choice by WCLA - Choice Matters
- Rated "Well Qualified" by the Westchester County Bar Association
- Rated "Well Qualified" by the Westchester Women's Bar Association

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