

Letters to the Editor

September 19, 2017 – Letter 1

Why Would Peekskill Vote for a Pack of Deceivers?

To the Editor:

Mr Segarra and Mr Sullivan, you got what you deserved in the primary—losing by more than 3 to 1. Not only were you manipulated by Mayor Catalina to primary the Democrats, you deceived yourselves and the voters of Peekskill into thinking it was okay to seize the

Democratic line. This was Mayor Catalina's desperate attempt to win a majority on the Council. Two years ago none of his teammates won. This time, I think, will be no different. Why would the people of Peekskill vote for a pack of deceivers?

CAROLE GERSTEN

September 19, 2017 – Letter 2

Primary Attempt in Peekskill was Unethical

To the Editor,

On the morning of Peekskill's Democratic primary, campaign signs for the mayor and his slate had sprouted all over our city like toadstools after a wet summer night. A friend assured me that signs don't equal votes. That's another way of saying that money doesn't equal votes. By the end of the day that turned out to be nothing less than truth.

The attempt by local Republican candidates to hijack the Democratic ballot line and nullify the right of Peekskill's voters to an honest choice in November's general election was a new low for a party leadership that knows its way around the

low end of local politics. Even Bryan Fumagalli of the "Peekskill Post" recently admitted on public access TV that this scheme, which he did his best to excuse as a tactical choice, may have been legal but probably wasn't ethical.

Who was driving this apparently unethical attempt to force Republican candidates onto the Democratic slate? All of us who vote in November will have to think hard about this and decide who truly keeps the good of our community close to heart.

And vote accordingly.

Respectfully,

JIM KNIGHT

September 26, 2017

True Democrats Won in Peekskill Primary

To the Editor,

To the Peekskill Democrats, Thank You. You voted in the primary. Our true Democrats won. Following Trump's inauguration, the monthly meeting of the Peekskill Democratic City Committee was standing room only because Peekskill Democrats are determined to act on a grassroots level. On Sept. 12, our Democratic community came together to choose Agudelo, Fernandez and Smith, and not the two Democrats running with the mayor's Republicans.

During the next six weeks you will see and hear why your vote in the November 7 General Election will have an impact on our city and

county. There will be mail, canvassers, phone calls, lawn signs, Facebook, and newspaper articles. Please take time to read and please comment via Facebook, Twitter, letters to newspapers, and at Common Council meetings. The Democratic Party wants a return to government civility, safe/clean streets, and families first. And yes, we do want smart development and lower taxes.

Did you know that much of the city development you see today began years ago under past administrations? Did you know that development initiatives are the job of our paid economic development officer? Did you know that guiding

development is the job of our Planning and Zoning commissions and our Building Department? Did you know that the annual budget is prepared by our paid city manager? The mayor and council are supposed to work collaboratively, guided by our professional staff. Their jobs are to listen, discuss, come to a consensus, and present it at the public meetings. We desperately need transparency and civility in city government. All of the above are "We," not "I," processes.

Mark your calendar for the November 7 General Election because our choices will have a direct effect on our daily lives. Voting matters.

Linda Wildman

October 10, 2017

It Takes a Team to Build a City

To the Editor,

Responsibility is leadership with consensus.

Our city of Peekskill is governed by six city council members and a mayor. It is a "WE" body where everyone has one vote. In the past four years the Democratic majority on the City Council has worked with the Re-

publican members. This is why there have been collaborative votes to continue our ongoing progress. The Gateway, St. Mary's, Lofts on Main St., Health Center expansion, Central Firehouse, and extended Riverfront Park happened because Democrats worked with Republicans. We need a Mayor who uses the word "We" in his vocabulary

instead of "I". This is what consensus is. It takes a whole team to build our city.

When a proposal will be positive for our city, the Democrats will want to vote "yes". When a motion will negatively affect our residents, it's important for the Democrats to vote "no".

True Democrats work for you. They

will give our city fair-minded and respectful representation. Vote for the Democrats on Row A: Rainey, Agudelo, Fernandez and Smith.

Sincerely,

HON. PATRICIA RILEY
Former Councilwoman for the City
Of Peekskill

October 17, 2017

The People's Administration Runs Peekskill

To the Editor:

Over the last year I have viewed, either in person, or online, every single Committee of the Whole and Common Council meeting. In every meeting at least one, and in most of the meetings, all four, of the Democratic representatives have brought forth messages from the "People" of Peekskill; the citizens, the residents, their constituents. Investors, developers, they're the Mayor's favorites. If he speaks of a member of the citizenry, unless he's reading a proclamation, or offering prayers, he is belittling, demeaning, or criticizing. Mr. Vesce knows how to speak for

himself very well, and the Fire Department. Mr. Torres, if he speaks at all, apparently only knows police personnel.

So, who runs the City? Not the City Manager, not the Mayor, not the Common Council, but thanks to the Democratic majority on the Council, who clearly listen to the people of Peekskill, it is the PEOPLE'S ADMINISTRATION!

On November 7, vote to strengthen that majority by casting your votes for Vanessa Agudelo, Ramon Fernandez, Colin Smith for Common Council and Andre Rainey for Mayor.

EILEEN WARMBRAND

October 24, 2017 – Letter 1

Was Peekskill Central Firehouse Penny Wise and Pound Foolish?

To the Editor,

One thing Mayor Frank Catalina can take credit for is the downsized Central Firehouse under construction in Peekskill today. Eventually we will see whether the total construction costs, including the cost to redesign the firehouse, did in fact save the city any money. It is possible that it did not, as construction costs may well be higher today than they would have been four years ago. It may turn out to have been Penny Wise and Pound Foolish (or just political grandstanding).

When Mr. Catalina became Mayor, the firehouse design was ready to proceed to construction once the city completed the purchase of the final parcel of land necessary. Mr. Catalina felt that a smaller firehouse would save the city a few million dollars. What remains to be seen is if the smaller plan required cutting out certain amenities which could well result in fewer folks wanting to join the volunteer force. If the City were to have to increase the number of paid firefighters, over time that cost would be many times greater than the savings which were hoped to be made by reducing the size of the firehouse.

Firefighters are not just folks who fight fires together. They are like a fraternity. Their entire lives are interwoven. They work together, train together, and eat together. They become extended families. The last administration, with input from firefighters of all ranks, felt it was important for our home-town heroes to have a good training facility and an event space, which would attract new volunteers. Many firefighters testified that a proper training facility would save an enormous amount of time and money on travel down county for training and possibly earn some revenue from other north county fire departments.

The new smaller firehouse is going to look beautiful, and will finally get our firefighters out of the deplorable buildings they now work in. What remains to be seen is what, if anything, the redesign saved the city taxpayers in the short term, and whether or not it will actually cost the taxpayers a lot more money in the future.

Very truly yours,

LESLIE MASSON

October 24, 2017 – Letter 2

Trump Seems to Mirror Actions of Peekskill Mayor

To the Editor,

Have you ever noticed how, over the years, local Republican election strategies have mirrored those of Republican campaigns at the state and national level? In my imagination, I see the locals going off to some summer camp for training in the dark arts of dissimulation, changing uncomfortable subjects, shrieking about fiscal crises that don't exist, and attacking an opponent's strength with repetitive untruths. They don't have a secret training camp, of course. I imagine they just pay attention to what the big boys do.

The funny thing this year, however, is the way that our new president seems to be taking cues from our very own Peekskill mayor. In the thirty years I've lived here, we've had a lot of Republican

mayors, some who were Ok, some not so OK. Never have we had a mayor who was an outright bully. Week after week Mr. Catalina has attacked citizens who come to speak at council meetings. When he disagrees with one of his constituents, he interrupts, cuts speaking time much shorter than for those with whom he agrees, or who flatter him. He's been doing this regularly for almost four years.

Does President Trump have his own special feed in the White House of the Peekskill government channel so he can sharpen his attack skills by watching our mayor pick on folks? I doubt it, but sometimes it sure does seem that way.

Sincerely,

JIM KNIGHT

October 31, 2017 – Letter 1

Join Me and Vote in Peekskill on Election Day

To the Editor:

I'm from Peekskill. I'm a Democrat. I want to see our city government continue to move upwards. The Democrats on the Common Council have been doing their best for us, but they need more than a bare majority to get big things done for us. Unfortunately, many Peekskill Democrats don't vote. Most of us vote in the presidential elections every four years, but not enough of us vote in the in-between local elections. Democrats, vote November 7th.

On Park Street, across from La Placita, is the mural "What Matters?". For me voting matters because I live in a country where I

can vote. I vote in all elections every year. I encourage you to vote too. Today put November 7th on your calendar and ask your Democratic friends and neighbors to vote in the coming election.

Candidates Andre Rainey, Vanessa Agudelo, Ramon Fernandez, and Colin Smith when elected, will rise above the fray, to reach beyond their comfort zones, and to work with others with whom they may have differences. Democrats, from 6 AM to 9 PM on Tuesday, November 7th, all of us have an opportunity to elect some new folks who will represent our values in our own city of Peekskill.

LINDA WILDMAN

October 31, 2017 – Letter 2

A New Generation of Leadership is Rising

To the Editor:

Recently, a new generation of young adults has been moving into Peekskill. They join a new generation of born and bred Peekskillians. Some haven't started families yet; others have. The sound of little kids playing can be heard once again in many neighborhoods around town, and the sounds of young men and women can be heard on Restaurant Row, Riverfront Green, at the Paramount, and the coffee houses.

They are also being heard on the School Board, at City Hall, at local charities, and in our business community. I'm not so young any more, and I'm encouraged that so many of these new players have been getting involved in civic life. Some are

volunteering at schools, others at local charities, or youth programs. Others are getting into local politics. In all these places they bring optimism and a fresh approach.

A new generation of leadership is rising in our city. The Democratic candidates for local office reflect this new wave. Some were born and bred here; some chose Peekskill as adults. All are successful professionals. With such fine young folks getting involved, I am confident that Peekskill will have a bright future.

Kathleen Barthelmes

Peekskill

October 31, 2017 – Letter 3

Peekskill Voters Have a Clear-Cut Choice on Nov. 7

To The Editor,

Good governance, good leadership, is effective only if it is catalytic, synergistic, and connects people to services, to products, and other people. An effective leader knows how to affect, create and foster connections, through a strong character and an approachable demeanor of cooperation, listening and sound judgment. They recognize that an authority and responsibility was granted to them and they respect and honor that.

Some feel Peekskill should be run as a business by a leader with business acumen. Managing a business is not the same as governing, but managing a city's economy is where business and governing coalesce. A city's economic focus should not be from its commodity, but for the commodity, the citizens. People are an irregular commodity, different, separate and unequal. A Mayor is the

representative leader of a municipality, its citizens, not its budget. Good governance embraces and manages the differences utilizing the strengths of different perspectives, attitudes, and approaches. It doesn't seek to divide, or combine, it seeks to delegate and coordinate, distinguish and cooperate.

The business of governing makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts. It brings people together, working and growing as one thriving community in which all are welcomed and served, whose leadership is an example to all city staff. The people of Peekskill have a clear-cut choice. They can choose business as usual, or governance for all. Vote Vanessa Agudelo, Ramon Fernandez, Colin Smith for Council, and Andre Rainey for Mayor on November 7.

EILEEN WARMBRAND

October 31, 2017 – Letter 4

Catalina Makes False Claims

To the Editor:

Soon, the people of Peekskill and I will have the opportunity to vote for a new Mayor and three new Council Members. As November 7th approaches, these are some of the things I've been thinking about.

I served on the City Council for two years before and two years after Conservative / Republican Mayor Frank Catalina became Mayor. He did not become Mayor when we were in a recession, when people were losing their homes and jobs across our country. He was elected after the recovery and did not have to manage a city in dire straits. And no one man single-handedly transforms a local economy.

He claims to have kept taxes low, but actually helped the Republican candidate, Robert Sullivan sue the City of Peekskill. The suit was over a procedural matter but the ultimate outcome was that it raised taxes to almost 6% - which was Mayor Catalina and Robert Sullivan's goal.

Frank claims that during the 4 years before he took office only a Walgreens was built. There was much

more. Multi-million dollar projects included the Holiday Inn Express, expansion of White Plains Linen, Nutley Heating and Cooling, and River Pointe apartments. This development also included the restoration of the Kurzhall Building, 21 North Division St (Quiet Man Pub and Art Lofts), and the 2nd and 3rd floors of several other downtown buildings into artist live/work spaces.

He also claims he brought businesses, such as Westchester Tools Company to Peekskill. In reality, he did not even vote for it. Frank recused himself because he was the attorney for the seller and gained financially from the transaction. Why does he try to take credit for other people's hard work and investment?

We need to look to new people, with fresh new ideas to keep making Peekskill stronger with smart growth and investment. On November 7th, please vote Row A - Democrats all the way. Andre Rainey as our new Mayor. Vanessa Agudelo, Ramon Fernandez and Colin Smith as our new Council members.

Sincerely,

DARREN RIGGER

November 14, 2017 – Letter 4

It's a New Day in Peekskill

To the Editor:

Thank you, Peekskill, for coming out to vote on November 7. Our city really turned out to vote and now will have a young, exciting mayor, Andrew Rainey, leading a Common Council of rational people who will put our city ahead of their own ambitions: Vanessa Agudelo, Ramon Fernandez and Colin Smith joining veteran Councilwomen Kathy Talbot and Vivian McKenzie.

This was a tough campaign. The local Republicans clearly had money to burn, and used a lot of it to send multiple

fliers out that were filled with lies and offensive photos of the Democratic candidates. I hope we never get so used to this kind of campaigning that we begin to see it as normal. It's not.

The election may be over, but the tougher job of governing is just beginning. Please remember that our Common Council is indeed ours and needs our feedback and support all through the year. Pay attention, speak your mind and offer your ideas. This new administration will welcome your input, listen, respond, and respect you.

JIM KNIGHT