

WESTCHESTER COUNTY FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES COMMITTEE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Finding by the Committee

in the matter of the Democratic candidates for Village of Mamaroneck Trustees
vs. Village of Mamaroneck Republican Committee

The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met on October 25, 2012, to hear a complaint submitted by the Democratic Candidates for Village of Mamaroneck Trustees against the Village of Mamaroneck Republican Committee. The Democratic candidates were represented by candidates Andres Jose Bermudez Hallstrom and Leon Potok. The Republican Committee was represented by Mayor Norman Rosenblum and Deputy Mayor Louis Santoro.

COMPLAINT:

The Democratic candidates complained that, in a taped "Meet the Candidates" program on Larchmont-Mamaroneck Cable Television, the Republicans made the claim that the Democrats "want to cut the police department by 30 percent," when that was untrue.

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE.

The Committee determined that the statement was false because the three Democratic candidates had never said the Mamaroneck Police Department should be reduced by 30 percent. One of the Democratic candidates, Mr. Potok, in his role of chairman of the Village of Mamaroneck's volunteer Budget Committee, had recommended that "the Board should look carefully at any possibilities of reducing staffing and the impact of such reduced staffing." However, there was no mention of reducing the staffing 30 per cent by Mr. Potok or any of the other Democratic candidates.

If a candidate or campaign wishes to quote from a Finding, the Committee requires that it be quoted in its entirety. The Committee regards selective quotation of its Findings as a violation of fair campaign practices.

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Committee Members: Susan Schwarz, [Chair], Miriam Cohen [Coordinator], Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Daniel S. Franklin, Jr., Victor Goldberg, LaRuth Gray, Susan Guma, Milton Hoffman, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, Polly Kuhn, Eileen Santiago, Evelyn M. Stock, Lorelei A. Vargas
Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Conservative Party, Working Families Party, Independence Party

The purpose of the Westchester Fair Campaign Committee is to promote a climate in which candidates conduct honest and fair campaigns. The Committee encourages candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to discuss issues, to refrain from dishonest and defamatory attacks, and not to use campaign materials that distort the facts.

The Committee does not sit as a censor of political discussion nor as a body to enforce election law or make legal decisions. Its task is to accept written complaints about alleged unfair campaign practices and to determine whether the action complained about is indeed unfair. Among other things, the Committee will consider to be unfair any campaign practice that is a misstatement of a material fact or that misleads the public.

The Committee has no power to compel anyone to stop doing what it has found to be unfair. If the Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. The Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are notified.

Statement of Principles of the Committee, as stated in its Manual, is available at www.faircampaignpractices.org. The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee believes that candidates should conduct their campaigns in accordance with the following principles:

- ✓ The candidate will conduct a campaign for public office openly and fairly. The candidate will discuss the issues and participate in fair debate with respect to her/his views and qualifications.
- ✓ The candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with unfair or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor will the candidate engage in invasions of personal privacy unrelated to fitness for office.

- ✓ The candidate will not participate in or condone an appeal to prejudice.
- ✓ The candidate will neither use nor be involved with the use of any campaign material or advertisements that misrepresent or distort the facts.
- ✓ The candidate will clearly identify by name the source of all advertisements and campaign literature published and distributed.
- ✓ The candidate will not abuse the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee process in order to obtain political advantage.

The candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions from any individual or group that would violate the Statement of Principles.

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