

October 5, 2021

Dear Editor:

The recent attacks levied against Suffolk County Legislative Candidate, Stephanie Bontempi by Councilman Mark Cuthbertson are not only false but are patently offensive to me both as a resident of Huntington and a Woman.

For 38 years it was an honor to serve the Residents of Huntington as your Town Clerk. During my tenure I have seen a lot of candidates come and go and I have witnessed my fair share of political slanders. Although I always considered negative campaigns to be unhealthy for the political process, I understood the temptation, if not the necessity for some candidates when they are down in the polls and the voters are calling for a real change.

Falsifying Ms. Bontempi's facial features and inferring financial dependency on her husband in over 7 campaign mailers are personal attacks that serve no legitimate campaign purpose and only add to the public's contempt for our current political environment.

As your Town Clerk, one of my many functions was to serve as the Secretary to the Town Board. For 38 years, I personally recorded every Town Board Member's votes during Town Board meetings and I have witnessed Councilman Cuthbertson recuse himself dozens of times over nearly a quarter century on critical development votes

that have made Huntington what it is today, both the good and more importantly the bad when Councilman Cuthbertson's vote could have made a difference. One needs to just search Town Board meeting minutes to see a very common statement from him, "I have to recuse myself from this vote due to a business relationship with the applicant." One also needs to just search Mr. Cuthbertson's campaign contributions to see a direct correlation between his votes, or "non votes" and developers and their attorneys in the Town.

This behavior is wholly unbecoming of someone in Councilman Cuthbertson's position, I am sure his parents taught him the "Golden Rule" and that age old expression "People in glass houses should not throw stones." He should be ashamed of himself and apologize. After nearly a quarter century in public office, you would think he would have more decency than to doctor the picture of a woman and insinuate that women need to rely on our husbands to achieve our dreams, but I guess Mr. Cuthbertson has forgotten that we are living in the 21st Century.

Sincerely

Jo-Ann Raia
Huntington Town Clerk (Ret)