



February 19, 2010

## Old Bridge leaders are an embarrassment

An open letter to Mayor Phillips and the Township Council Members of Old Bridge: I attended last night's township council meeting, and I can now say I am embarrassed to be a resident of Old Bridge.

As a registered independent, I have voted Democrat and voted Republican... and to be honest, have probably voted the Democratic line more often than the Republican line.

However, after last night, I am seriously considering registering as a Republican.

I now understand what caused the state of Massachusetts to elect a Republican to the seat held by Senator Kennedy for so many years. The behavior of some of the Democratic representatives on the Township Council was disgraceful and destructive — Councilman Testino with his snide little digs and Councilman Gillespie demanding the public audience calm down when they expressed their views with applause.

I applaud the Republicans. In many votes, they were voting with their hearts and not voting the party line. Only in one instance did a Democrat not vote the party line, and it was Councilman Butler.

I must say that both Councilman Butler and Councilman Volker seem to be able to demonstrate leadership qualities that our residents expect from public officials; it's a shame that the rest of the Democrats can't.

And, President Calogera took the cake last night. He made a complete buffoon of himself and of the party. He should seriously consider resigning if he cannot change his behavior, conduct himself with some dignity and treat other members of the council with respect.

And to be honest, Mr. Mayor, you and Mr. Shah don't have much to be proud about either after last night. You speak in a condescending tone to the individuals that your community elected, when council members ask questions that I would like to know the answer to as well. And Shah smirks when little digs are thrown across the dais.

Residents expect much more from our elected and appointed officials. And if some of our Township Council members, our mayor and our director of finance can't exhibit the qualities required, then perhaps our township residents will have to exercise their right to vote in upcoming elections. I'm only sorry that if it comes to that we have to wait so long.

At the end of the day, we are in a mess, and to be honest, the mayor and the Democratic Township Council have been in place long enough to own a lot of the responsibility for that. All of them need to remember that they are working for all of us... Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Conservatives and all township residents. It is a shame that a township resident who has attended two council meetings needs to remind them of this, but they need to put their petty issues aside and get to work for the people of Old Bridge.

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