

## CANDIDATE FOR BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

### VOTE FOR ONE

The BAA consists of 3 elected members whose term of office is 4 years with no more than 2 members of the same political party. Currently remaining members on the Board are 2 Democrats. The BAA has all the powers and duties conferred or imposed by law on Boards of Assessment Appeals. At least 3 sessions are required by State law to hear residential and commercial property appeals for the Grand List that is filed by the Westport Assessor. The Board continues to meet until all appeals are reviewed and notices are mailed to all applicants. This enables the Board to file the Final Board of Assessment Appeals Approved Grand List which is required prior to the Board of Finance meeting to set the mill rate.

**LWV Question: How will you ensure that the taxpayers know their rights and responsibilities under the assessment appeals process?**



#### **GARSON HELLER, JR., Republican**

Member - Board of Assessment Appeals ("BAA") for 25 years. Have spoken to groups of taxpayers on how to prepare for their assessment appeal, and am willing to answer individual's questions over the phone. At the appeals hearing, members of the BAA are willing to answer questions and help with an appeal. Before making an appeal, the property owner should have a good idea of their property's 100% market value on the most recent assessment date, currently 10/1/2005. Reason for the appeal is important. Reasonable "comps" should be included, if available. This information is available online, or at the Assessor's office in Town Hall.

Westport resident 43 years; graduate of Yale; retired after a career in engineering and computers; member RTM 14 years. All three children graduated from Westport Schools and wife, Velma

Heller, retired from Westport School System, is running in District 9 for her 4th term in RTM.

## CANDIDATES FOR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

### VOTE FOR THREE

The ZBA consists of 5 elected members; no more than 3 may be members of the same political party. Currently remaining members on the Board are 2 Democrats and no Republicans. In addition, there are 3 alternate members of the ZBA; no more than 2 may be members of the same political party. The ZBA has all the powers and duties conferred or imposed by law on Zoning Boards of Appeal.

**LWV Question: How can the decisions of the ZBA preserve the character of the town and address environmental issues within the context of the new Westport 2007 Plan for Conservation and Development?**



#### **ELIZABETH WONG, Republican**

Variations must be consistent with the principles and underlying philosophy of Westport's Town Plan. Analysis of the short and long-term effect of variations on the conservation, preservation, and restoration of Westport's resources is vital when accommodating the needs of our thriving community. Consideration of the regulations and resolutions of other government entities pertaining to an application, such as the Conservation Commission, Flood and Erosion Control Board, State DEP, CAM, FEMA, Health Department, Historic Commission, and Architectural Review Board ensures an informed, cohesive and harmonious decision.

Background: Current ZBA Vice-Chairman (8 yrs.), Member (10 yrs.); Land-Use Paralegal, Maslan Associates, P.C.; Neighborhood

Preservation and Housing Policy, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal. League of Women Voters. Former PTA Executive Board - KHS and BMS. M.S. Urban Planning, Columbia University. 26-year Westport resident. Husband, James Wong, M.D.; daughter, Alicia.



#### **WILLIAM R. HARRIS, JR., Republican**

I have a keen personal interest in preserving the character of the town I moved to over 50 years ago. As a former commercial oysterman working Westport waters I directly felt the impact of poor environmental practices. However, the ZBA is strictly defined as "an administrative agency which exercises quasi-judicial functions to provide relief in cases where literal application of the Zoning Regulations...produce(s) undue hardship..." The ZBA's job is to provide a fair, neutral, and open forum for residents to make their case for extraordinary circumstances that could not otherwise be addressed. As a quasi-judicial body, the personal biases of those who sit upon it should not pre-determine their decisions. The key is that variances are granted fairly and the decisions perceived to be so by all our citizens. In short, capricious decisions can destroy the town. Well reasoned and fair decisions can preserve it.



#### **JAMES EZZES, Democrat**

When an application for a variance is reviewed, all pertinent zoning regulations and ordinances are considered. The request is evaluated and comments considered from town departments, including Conservation and Engineering, and a decision is made as to whether a "hardship" exists as defined by the local zoning regulations and state statutes. The Town Plan for Conservation and Development is an important component. As a community we are trying to maintain a small town, residential "feel". Although architecture/ aesthetics cannot be part of a decision, the ZBA can make an evaluation as to the size and bulk of a building; whether it is in harmony with the neighborhood and doesn't adversely affect the surrounding area environmentally.

James C. Ezzes has been a member of the ZBA for 12 years; ten years as Chairman. A former entertainment industry executive, Mr. Ezzes, a residential contractor, is a fifty-four year resident of Westport.

## CANDIDATES FOR PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

### VOTE FOR ANY FOUR

The P&Z has 7 members serving staggered 4 year terms with no more than 4 members of the same political party. Currently remaining members on the Board are 3 Democrats and no Republicans. There are 3 alternate members whose term of office is 2 years; no more than 2 alternates may be members of the same political party. In addition to the powers and duties conferred or imposed by state law on Planning and Zoning Commissions, the Commission is required to update the Town Plan of Conservation and Development at least every 10 years, and determines the manner in which zoning regulations are enforced. They hold an average of 2 public hearings every month to review subdivision, special permit, and zoning amendment applications; site plan applications are also reviewed at these meetings.

**LWV Question: Which aspects of the new Westport 2007 Town Plan of Conservation and Development would you consider a priority for immediate action?**



#### **TIM WETMORE, Republican**

Timothy Wetmore is an architect, Member Westport Planning & Zoning Commission since 2005, Member School Building Committee, Staples/Long Lots Subcommittees, Westport resident since 2007, Married-Lorraine, father, of three, Parishioner Assumption Church.

I would consider our most urgent priority is to strengthen existing protections found in the Zoning regulations to safeguard residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of unwanted commercial activities and, high density multi-family developments.

Westport isn't alone in its struggle to maintain control over our community's identity in the face of state mandated mechanisms (8-30g) that allow developers to bypass local regulations. We must join with other communities to combat these efforts in

Hartford. We must employ new strategies to regain control by strengthening special permit criteria, investigate sewer allocation plans which will limit the size of possible developments, perform comprehensive reviews of established residential zones, while establishing viable mixed use/ multi-family zones along appropriate commercial corridors.



#### **DAVID PRESS, Republican**

Incumbent - Four years, 22 year Westport resident; Married (Martha) with 3 adult children (Elizabeth, Dan and Kathryn) who attended Westport schools, Portfolio Manager with Strategic Partners Investment Advisors; MBA (Columbia) and CFA, Westport local history researcher and writer, Member of Westport Historical Society and Friends of the Westport Library.

Immediate action is needed to repair Westport's infrastructure. Decades of deferring stream improvements, culvert replacements, and storm drainage upgrades means major and repeated road flooding in Westport during storms. Flooding damages businesses and homes, cracks roadways and erodes shoulders, enters septic fields, and harms trees, shrubs and lawns. The investment

Westporters make in their homes and businesses needs to be complimented by the Town's timely infrastructure investment. Delay only increases the cost and damage. This is within the power of the Town and where there is a will there is a way.



#### **MIKE KRAWIEC, Republican**

Director Commercial Mortgage Acquisitions - Allianz of America Married (Sharon) with 2 children attending Kings Highway School, Coach - Westport Little League

I will immediately work to address the needs of Westport's residents for affordable housing while limiting the increase in density and maintaining the integrity of our single family neighborhoods.

The town's infrastructure and facilities are at capacity. Further increases in density will only reduce the quality of life for Westport residents. Slow progress in creating viable affordable housing has resulted in single family neighborhoods being threatened by developers seeking to build high density condominium and apartment complexes under state statute 8-30g.

The Planning and Zoning Commission must display leadership and enact regulations encouraging development of a limited number of affordable multi-family units in appropriate areas of town that maintain the community's character, maintain the integrity of our single family neighborhoods and do not further increase traffic congestion.



#### **HELEN BLOCK, Republican**

A key aspect of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development must be to preserve and enhance our environment. It is the underlying need relevant to the quality of life in our community. One immediate action is to enact a septic management ordinance. This measure will assist with protecting our water and recharge areas, will prevent unnecessary dependence on sewers and may have a positive impact on overdevelopment. We must take the lead to create zoning, which addresses some of the challenges of our demographics but uses available infrastructure in areas best served by public transportation and services. We must collaborate with other town departments to deed restrict the numerous existing apartments to reach a moratorium so we may plan in ways that do not erode town character and focus on town wide needs. Lastly, maintaining single-family residential zones is an

immediate priority, which I will continue to champion.



#### **ELEANOR LOWENSTEIN, Democrat**

For the first time, the Westport Town Plan calls for an Implementation Committee. Creating this committee, with representatives from appropriate town commissions and departments, is the No.1 priority, as the committee can ensure that the plan is followed in a timely manner.

The most immediate Plan actions to take are:

Reduce traffic and ameliorate congestion; Address housing needs of the workforce and long-time residents, considering traffic, transportation availability and demand on municipal facilities; Stepped-up open-space preservation, both public and private; Revise storm-water controls to reduce flooding, control rainwater flow and improve water quality for our rivers and LI Sound.

Background: Since 1996, chair (and co-chair) of the Planning and Zoning Commission; managed the development of the 1997 and 2007 Town Plans. Non-profit elderly housing, board member. Past president, Westport League of Women Voters and Long Lots PTA. Past board of Staples PTA, PTA Council.