



HOOOF BEAT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DELANCO FORUM

There's an intriguing trend among politicians today... would we rather have someone who blunders ahead boldly without waiver than someone who is thoughtful and capable of change...resolute is more important than responsible? We see it on a national scale as the Presidential election unfolds. We also see it on a local level, where the ability to connect with the citizens directly should be a great deal easier to accomplish. Just to throw down the gauntlet... our local politicians could make greater strides to ensure that local government is INCLUSIVE. Our mayor most famously reminds us that we may attend any meeting to "hear what is going on". I think most townspeople would really prefer to influence what is going on.

One immediate recommendation is to publish meeting agendas at least three full business days in advance of meetings – in areas where the public can actually see them. All of us want to choose our topics of interest, and there are many times when the agenda is not available until the day of the meeting.

A second great way to bring about more openness in our local government is to make it a mission of the next township committee to actively ask for public input in the area where it is most greatly discouraged today: any issue regarding new taxation.

Recently, the township committee brought up the issue of a dedicated open space tax that was defeated two years ago. Before I get too much further, I spent 15 years of my life professionally dedicated to encouraging the advancement of leisure services, park development and open space preservation. To recommend against open space acquisition for me is like refusing to support Mom's apple pie! But at this juncture, again it seems to be the issue of inclusion. The open space tax has merit, in that once passed, municipalities are able to apply for grants and loans that lessen the burden of local bonding. The key here is the phrase, "lessen the burden of local bonding." This would

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THIS JUST IN!

Delanco's new Redevelopment Advisory Board has compiled a Redevelopment Survey for areas of possible redevelopment. They submitted it to the Joint Land Use Board, which submitted it to Township Committee for discussion on October 4, 2004. The extensive list includes well over two hundred properties throughout the township. Several have been classified as "stagnant, vacant, or underutilized." Taxpayers currently occupy the majority of the properties in the survey. On the south side of town, properties identified begin with The Columns on Delaware Avenue and include all the properties running west on both sides of Delaware Avenue. All of Hawk Island and the properties adjacent to it are included. (One such property is a Delaware Avenue home owned by the second generation of the same family. They have invested in an addition and shared their home with the community through the Delanco Women's Club Holiday Home Tour.) All properties along Rancocas Avenue are listed. Many properties on Burlington Avenue are listed, as are several north of Perkins Lane

The Redevelopment Advisory Board was established in June 2004. Its members were chosen by Township Committee. Three serve two-year terms and three serve three-year terms, so there will be no opportunity for other residents to volunteer to serve on this board as they do for other committees for two years at the earliest. No public meeting notice for this committee is posted on the bulletin board in Town Hall.

The one public copy of the Redevelopment Survey, which is two inches thick, is available to residents at Town Hall only during regular business hours – 9:00am – 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. No copy of this survey is available in our public library for evening access. Township Committee meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at Town Hall at 7:30pm.

Delanco planning and priorities: improvement needed.

Delanco is seeing a lot of growth and changes associated with it. The Township Committee has expanded from three to five members, a new Municipal Building will house the larger government, the Police Department is gaining expanded quarters, Public Works is being expanded, the Sewer System has been upgraded, the Fire Department and Emergency Squad are adding a new truck and ambulance, respec-

How we approach this obligation will have a direct impact on the desirability of living in Delanco and on the maintenance of resident property values.

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not be the end of increased taxation for recreation and open space; it would be the beginning. I have no doubt that our local politicians will be able to spend the money... the question ultimately is on what exactly?

The sentiment expressed by our leaders is that they "never know when a parcel of land will come up for sale" and need a pot of cash to act on it.

Seems to me, before you reach your hand into someone's pocket and take their money forever, you should have come to the public to ask them what they might like the money spent on. At the very least you should have developed a master plan that serves as a road map for future acquisition of open space and development of recreational facilities. Once the citizens of this town have reached consensus and agreement on the vision they have for the long-term future of Delanco, the purchase of land parcels from identified priorities becomes a thoughtful and intelligent process. It also robs political interests of the ability to divert the money or make purchases that may not be in the best interests of the entire town. A simple concept: no blank checks. The tax is permanent. So should be the residents' influence in the way the money is spent.

I wholeheartedly encourage this township to pursue a dedicated open space tax... AFTER an extensive, citizen-based planning process. A simple act of inclusion.

Sincerely, David Suter

JFK Democratic Club of Delanco Officers

President David Suter
 Vice-President Jeffrey Maddock
 Treasurer Terry Mader
 Secretary Maureen Barrett

Committee Chair Persons

Membership Laurie Pfisterer
 Finance Jay Cohen
 Legislation Joe Solomon
 Communication Kathryn Needham
 Nomination Vera Darmo

Delanco Township Committee is currently deciding whether or not community groups like the Republican Club, Democratic Club, Women's Group, and other community organizations will be permitted to use the new municipal building for meetings. Let Mayor Vittorino know how you feel about using the building you're paying for!

Ordered and paid for by the JFK Democratic Club of Delanco, Terry Mader, Treasurer, 725 Delaware Avenue, Delanco.

WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO?

Taxes—we all pay them, but do we know where our local taxes go? In New Jersey our municipalities are the tax collectors not only for local taxes, but for the counties and the state as well. The chart below is a helpful guide to deciphering your tax bill. We hope you will find this helpful in better understanding how your tax dollars are being spent.

Tax Category	Rate per \$100	Tax Amount in dollars
Burlington County Pays for county services including health department, parks, public works, social services, county college, and county institute of technology	.514	\$ 514
County Library Operates county library. Residents of towns paying this tax have free access to all 17 participating library facilities in the county.	.044	\$ 44
County Farmland/Open Space Provides money to preserve open space and farmland in county.	.052	\$ 52
District Schools Pays for administrative costs and facility operations. Schools also receive money from the state. In Delanco, \$.35 of each operating dollar comes from the state.	2.061	\$ 2,061
Municipal Local Purpose Money to run the township including police, streets, trash, salaries of government officials and operating costs for township facilities.	.795	\$ 795
Fire District Operates the fire department	.116	\$ 116
Total Tax Paid (based on a home assessed at \$100,000)	3.582	\$ 3582

Visit the DCD's Halloween Coffee Stop

Attention parents of all ghouls and goblins who will be roaming the streets of Delanco in search of sweet treats! We offer you an opportunity to take a break from the festivities by stopping by 217 Walnut Street to refuel with some hot coffee before you continue on your haunting path. We promise no tricks-just treats as you enjoy some coffee and pleasant conversation.



October 31st 5-8 PM
217 Walnut Street

which house these programs will always be labeled “failing.”

- The state allows up to 1% of a district’s seriously handicapped students an exemption from the testing. Their teachers must compile thick binders of documentation that proves that their students are moving toward achieving the standards. This huge paperwork burden keeps them so busy they have less time for their students.

- Even if a student has just immigrated to the United States six months before the test is given and doesn’t speak English, he/she is tested. These scores count toward labeling their schools “failing.”

- In New Jersey, testing programs run about three hours per day for four days. Since the tests include so many essay-type answers, much of the scoring is done by hand, adding to the taxpayers’ expense.

- Mandated testing dominates the curriculum in most public schools. Teachers have been told to teach directly to the test at the expense of the rest of the curriculum.

- No Child Left Behind requires teachers to be “highly qualified.” Teachers are required to have a degree in the subject they are teaching, pass a test, or prove they have coursework or other experience to qualify them for their jobs. College training programs

-it will take more than money to fix this law.

have always stressed coursework in the methods of teaching subject matter, but suddenly, those courses, an education degree, and a state license don’t count. That means someone with a history degree, but no education courses or experience, is considered more “highly qualified” than a fully licensed teacher with twenty or thirty years in the classroom.

As the campaign season progresses, lawmakers and candidates will be speaking out against No Child Left Behind, though many of them voted for it. They will claim that it can be fixed if it is “fully funded.” As a career educator who has lived with shrinking budgets, I’m all for additional money for education, but anyone can see that it will take more than money to fix this law. How about a bit of common sense for starters? Maureen Barrett

The Democratic Club of Delanco encourages
you to help elect your neighbor

HERB CONAWAY FOR U.S. CONGRESS!

We also encourage you to vote for
other local Democrats

CHRIS FIFIS FOR COUNTY FREEHOLDER

PRESTON TAYLOR FOR SHERIFF

KRISTIN WALKER FOR COUNTY CLERK

PLANNING:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tively, and new parcels of land have been acquired to expand athletic and recreational facilities. All told, major financial resources have been directed to these items. Citizens have the right to ask which direction we are heading. What are our priorities?

In the area of education, for example, answers to these questions are notably lacking. If we look at planning for the educational needs of an increasing student population resulting from recent and current growth, we see scant attention at best from township leaders. This is not just an important matter for students. How we approach this obligation will have a direct impact on the desirability of living in Delanco and on the maintenance of resident property values.

If Delanco proceeds without integrating school planning with township planning, we’re almost assured to spend more for education while getting less. If we do plan, available state funding for our schools may be secure. But local leadership here has been lacking.

The JFK Democratic Club of Delanco wants more public discussion focussed on response to growth, planning for growth, and prioritizing of needs in general. Delanco needs a plan and the plan needs to be developed with citizen participation. Township officials must not be allowed to forget that citizen input, say, at town meetings is to be encouraged - not just tolerated.

- Ed Devinney

WHO IS REALLY LEFT BEHIND?

No Child Left Behind, the federal government’s educational initiative, is one of those laws that sounds great on paper. By the year 2014, every child is expected to meet academic standards established by their state. Each state is required to test students on a regular basis. In New Jersey, students are tested in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. If students don’t pass the tests, the school is labeled “failing.” As with many of the Bush programs, the reality doesn’t match the rhetoric.

- It’s almost a given that our public schools will be labeled “failing.” Think about what a goal of 100% means. Is it realistic to expect that all students will be able to meet the highest standards? Since the seventies, federal and state governments have required districts to establish special education programs to meet the needs of students whose mental, physical, or social disabilities, through no fault of their own, keep them from achieving the same goals as their peers. Through no lack of effort on their part or on that of their teachers, their skills are several years below the reading and math levels of the test. State test items are unnecessarily lengthy and convoluted, which adds difficulty for students with learning disabilities. Since about 10% -15% of all students have learning disabilities, how can any school achieve a 100% passing score? Where special education students are clustered to provide better services, the schools

WHY SHOULD I VOTE FOR JOHN KERRY ?

OPEN SPACES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

We need to challenge the “lesser of two evils” idea that has crept into politics over the last decade or so. With the evening news cherry-picking mean-spirited sound bites and reporting rumors as truth, Americans are not provided with the facts that allow us to make a decision that we can be proud of. The case for John Kerry has been blurred by swift boats and ungrounded accusations of “flip-flops” which are never really challenged by the mainstream media. Here are some of the ways John Kerry will make America stronger. Hopefully, these facts will give you a reason to vote for a candidate instead of voting against one.

John Kerry will not raise your taxes, unless you make over \$200,000 per year.

John Kerry will not raise your taxes, unless you make over \$200,000 per year. 99% of Americans and 99% of American businesses will get a tax cut under the Kerry-Edwards Plan. This is a plan similar to the one we saw in the 1990's under President Clinton. Whether you like Bill Clinton or not, there is no argument that he was a master with our economy. This plan strengthens the middle-class, but as we saw through the 1990's, it will elevate all economic classes. If you make \$200,000, by all means vote for Bush; if not, then you should consider John Kerry.

John Kerry will use the targeted tax cuts to provide 95% of all Americans-including all American children-with quality health insurance. His plan will take some of the burden off of small businesses who spend too much on health insurance by helping to cover catastrophic-illness claims, the expensive claims which can strangle these businesses. In exchange for this coverage, small businesses will have to provide health care for all employees, including part timers. The more price competitive plan will also drive down premiums by about 10% for those Americans already paying too much for

health care according to two independent analyses. If you would like to see a forward thinking plan on health care that helps both business and 95% of Americans, then you should consider John Kerry.

John Kerry will keep us safe at home. Three years after 9/11, we need to hold the line in the United States. Miles of unpatrolled borders, thousands of untranslated tapes of terrorist chatter, and numerous firehouse closings in our major cities bring to mind the Kerry mantra, “We can do better.” John Kerry has stated that he will follow all of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations to keep Americans safer at

home. He has promised to reverse the trends of closing firehouses and taking police off the streets thereby strengthening our first response teams all over our nation. If you want a President who is committed to the 9/11 recommendations to keep us safer at home and has the endorsement of the International Association of Firefighters and the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, then you should vote for John Kerry.

Some other facts about John Kerry:

- Favors reimportation of drugs from Canada so Americans can save on expensive prescriptions
- Favors technology over Middle Eastern oil to work towards energy independence
- Favors government funded stem-cell research to move towards finding cures for a wide range of diseases including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's
- Favors a Conservation Covenant with Americans to ensure balanced protection of our public lands and cleaner rivers and streams

Americans do not need to hold their noses when they go into the voting booths this November. We do not need to have a “lesser of two evils” debate. We do have a choice that is better than “Anybody but Bush.” We have John Kerry. -Jeffrey Maddock

business is still operating here. The August 2004 *Beverly Bee* reports a tax abatement agreement between a housing developer and Beverly which excludes the developer from paying any local school taxes for a period of thirty years. Arrangements like this create imbalances in the local community tax system by omitting a select few and passing that tax burden on to the rest of us who do not have the luxury of saying what taxes we'll pay and which ones we won't.

The development and tax situation here in Delanco is economically stressful and can be detrimental to the community. Allowing residential and commercial development, which is not supported by current infrastructure, shoulders the community with a financial burden to provide roads, schools, fire and police services, public works, etc. In Delanco, we've seen first-hand how “chasing ratables” has created demands for additional infrastructure and has strained township resources.

The open space ballot question comes at a difficult time for Delanco residents. Taxes, school referendums, and upcoming assessments are weighing on us all. That may be why a previous local open space tax of .025 cents /\$100 was defeated in 2002. You can't ask people for their hard-earned money without presenting a plan to the community for approval. Carefully planned open space acquisitions could greatly enhance the quality of life in our community and restore balance in the face of continuing development. While open space projects are not free, they have been shown to have much less economic impact than new residential and commercial development. And open space projects do not cause the future problems of escalating tax bills to play catch-up with services and deal with congestion long after the “New Homes” signs are gone. Before you cast your vote in November, see the following resources for further information:

- New Jersey DEP Green Acres**
www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**
www.dvrpc.org
- Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions**
www.anjec.org -Mike Templeton

VOTE NOV 2ND! VOTE NOV 2ND! VOTE NOV 2ND!**Civilian Absentee ballots are available to voters who will not be able to vote in person on election day due to the following reasons:**

- Expect to be absent from the state of New Jersey on election day
- Illness or temporary physical disability
- Permanently and totally disabled
- Resident attendance at a school, college or university on election day
- Nature and hours of employment on election day

A voter may apply for an absentee ballot by completing an Absentee Ballot Application and mailing the application to the County Clerk, Hon. Philip Haines, Court Complex, P.O. Box 6000, 49 Rancocas Road, Mount Holly, NJ 08060-1397 on or before October 26th.

A voter may also apply in person to the County Clerk until 3:00 PM Monday, November 1st. The County Clerk cannot accept faxed copies of an Application since an original signature is required.

**Applications are available at:
www.njelections.org/absentee**

Democrat voters who are in need of transportation assistance on election day can call Laurie at 764-3511 prior to November 2nd to arrange for a ride.

THE DANGERS OF A 'WHAT THE HECK' VOTE

Published on Tuesday, September 28, 2004 by the Los Angeles Times
by Robert Scheer

Don't say you weren't warned. Yes, you, that otherwise reasonable centrist voter who might be tempted to cast a "what the heck" vote for George W. Bush. Don't kid yourself that the Cheneys, Ashcrofts and Rumsfelds who mold Bush's thoughts will suddenly moderate their radical vision for remaking the world or dampen their attacks on our treasury and civil liberties. It won't happen: Reward their rampage of the last four years with a new mandate to rule and they will only be emboldened.

Four more years of the Bush administration threaten two essential ingredients of our system of government: checks and balances on the president's exercise of power by Congress and the judiciary; and an informed citizenry alert to the attempts by a president to play fast and loose with the people's future.

On the latter point, it is dangerous to reward rather than punish a president who exploited the tragedy of 9/11 to justify a costly war in Iraq. A vote for Bush is a vote for the doctrine of pre-

emptive war based on distorted evidence and the rule of fear. If the GOP wins in November, why shouldn't a victorious Bush administration feel empowered in its second term to invade another country on the basis of flimsy ties to Al Qaeda?

What is to stop the administration from expanding attacks on our civil liberties or reinstating a military draft in order to wage an ill-defined war on terror? Nothing, because Bush's reelection would erase the doubts raised by his first dubious victory and validate his post 9/11 strategy of stoking our fears while robbing us of the information and logic needed to make rational policy choices.

A Bush victory would mean the dominance of that unholy alliance of the so-called Christian right and the adventurist neoconservatives over all three branches of government. Moderate Republicans in Congress are an endangered species no longer willing to challenge even the more extreme elements of their party. And with the Democrats frozen into a minority party posture, Americans can forget about any check on the hubris of the Bush administration.

We have been warned about the danger-

ous excesses of the Bush White House by veterans of other GOP administrations, beginning with John Dean, who was President Nixon's White House counsel and who has condemned the unprecedented misuse of secrecy and national security as "worse than Watergate." The warnings from former key players in the current administration, such as Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and counter-terrorism czar Richard Clarke, document a dangerous pattern of deceit and manipulation.

This is the time to decide whether this country and, by logical extension, the fate of the world should be in the hands of a leader whose essential mode of governance mocks the ideals of a free society.

This is too dangerous a time for voters to be blinded by the extra bucks in those tax breaks that are bankrupting our future economy or to indulge in some comic book fantasy about zapping the bad guys in those foreign countries. It is a time to think hard about the unbridled power of a second Bush term and whether you want Bush, Cheney & Co. to decide, on a political whim, to send your kid, or the one next door, to war.

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KEEPING OPEN SPACES OPEN

Some believe open space impedes progress and limits business opportunities. Others see open space as a positive step for the future. Carefully planned open space can add greatly to a community while reducing the economic and growth stresses brought on by residential and commercial development. Land acquisitions for open space may be dedicated parks and recreation areas or farmland permanently preserved. Open space areas may be buffer zones between residential and industrial areas or transportation corridors to reduce the noise or visual impact to adjacent homes, schools, and the community. Acquired lands near wetlands, creeks, and rivers lessen the risk for damaging floods. Smaller parcels may be connected over time to create larger greenways.

In years past most of the money for open space came from the federal budget through the Land and Water Conservation Fund which provided for land additions to the Pinelands and four National Wildlife Refuges in New Jersey. As federal budget deficits rose in the 1980's, Congressional funding of this program was reduced by some 80%. Since 1961, New Jersey has op-

erated the Green Acres and Farmland Preservation programs through which Burlington County's Department of Resource Conservation coordinates the plans of local communities with available funding. Burlington County voters approved a dedicated tax for open space in 1996 which was subsequently increased to the current .04 cents / \$100. Additionally, direct grants or low interest loans may be obtained through non-profit conservation organizations for acquiring lands. In these cases, the lands usually contain a rare or endangered species, or a unique habitat in need of permanent protection.

You can't ask people for their hard-earned money without presenting a plan to the community for approval.

In August, the Delanco Township Committee approved a question for this November's ballot. Voters will decide on whether to approve a tax

of two cents per \$100 assessed value (\$20 per year for a home assessed at \$100,000) for farmland / recreation / open space / historic preservation in Delanco. At current total assessments in Delanco, this is expected to bring in about \$36,000 annually. By having a local open space tax, Delanco is then eligible for higher levels (50% of the purchase price) of matching grants from the state and county. Currently over a dozen communities in Burlington County have their own open space taxes as do 180 out of 566 New Jersey municipalities.

Preserving land in some form of open space is less expensive than allowing the land to be developed for residential use. Several studies across New Jersey, including one in Burlington County, show that new residential development costs a community more than the taxes those same new homes bring in. For example, in Mansfield Township, for every one dollar collected in taxes on new homes, the community paid out nearly \$1.50 in services. In

comparison, every dollar paid in taxes on farmland only cost the community twenty-seven cents in services. (*Draft Strategic Plan 1996*, Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program)

Adding commercial enterprises and business by "chasing ratables" does not lessen the tax burden on residential taxpayers. In a 1992 Morris County survey, its thirty-nine communities did not see a reduction in taxes to residential owners even after \$4.2 billion dollars in commercial ratables were added over a twenty-year period. One reason among many for this is that commercial real estate is depreciated while residential values increase over time, which changes the balance of property tax assessments. (*Open Space is a Good Investment*, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions.) In Delanco, new businesses are being given substantial tax breaks as an inducement to locate here and as part of the effort by the state and county to reinvigorate the Route 130 corridor. One new business starts out paying only 20% of its assessed taxes: it will only pay its full assessed taxes after fifteen years- if the

Myths about voting:

- FALSE- If I am registered to vote with one party I have to vote for that party.
- FALSE-If I vote I will be selected for jury duty.
- TRUE-40 million women don't vote.
- FALSE-My vote doesn't count. In 2000 George W. Bush won by only 537 votes in Florida.

Hopefully something in this newsletter will encourage you to join our ranks. The JFK-DCD holds regular meetings. **New faces are welcome. Upcoming meetings are scheduled on October 26 and November 23.** For information or questions about the club, please e-mail us at delancodemocrats@yahoo.com