

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Susan Schwarz, Acting Chair
Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee
Phone: (914) 332-1301 / Cell: (914) 715-1539
Email: sdschwarz@aol.com
Website: www.faircampaignpractices.org



**FINDINGS IN THE POST-ELECTION COMPLAINT OF GREGORY SCHMIDT, MAYOR
schmidtMARIO TRUNZO SLIPPEN OF THE CROTON DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE,
TRUSTEE CANDIDATES & CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS**

Hartsdale, NY (November 13, 2015) – The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met on November 11, 2015, to hear the post-election complaint of Gregory Schmidt, Mayor of the Village of Croton, against Paul Rolnick, Brian Pugh, Mario Trunzo Slippin of the Croton Democratic Committee, Trustee candidates and campaign co-chairs, concerning issues that took place during the last week of the campaign. Mr. Schmidt was represented by Peter Schuyler and Roseanne Schuyler. John McBride and Leo Wiegman represented the Croton Democrats.

COMPLAINT: Mr. Schmidt complained that a mailer sent in the last week of the campaign stated, “Croton United’s Schmidt raised taxes by an average of more than 8% a year – a cumulative total of more than \$6 million in additional taxes.” A chart accompanied the copy. The statement was also put on Facebook.

FINDING: Unfair. The mayor is just one of five votes on the village board, and cannot, himself, “raise taxes.” Also, Mr. Schmidt voted against the budget in one of the four years when he was mayor. The Committee found the formula used to arrive at “more than 8% a year” questionable, and would not be how a typical voter would interpret that statement. Similarly, the calculation of “\$6 million in additional taxes” was faulty due to Schmidt’s voting against the budget one of those years.

Committee Members: Victor J. Goldberg, [Chair], Miriam Cohen [Coordinator], Paul C. Atkinson, Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Daniel S. Franklin, Jr., LaRuth Gray, Susan Guma, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, Polly Kuhn, Philip M. Maley, Harry Phillips III, Joy Rosenzweig, Susan Schwarz, Evelyn M. Stock
Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Conservative Party, Working Families Party, Independence Party, Green Party, Reform Party

WESTCHESTER COUNTY
FAIR CAMPAIGN
PRACTICES COMMITTEE

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 distorts 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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