



Westchester County Legislator **BERNICE SPRECKMAN**

Proudly Serving the 14th District



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Please share your concerns and suggestions.



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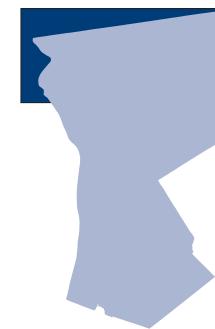
Please know you are encouraged and welcome to attend our board and committee meetings at the Westchester County Office Building.

Progress on Affordable Housing Settlement



The terms outlined in the 2009 Affordable Housing Settlement continue to be dutifully fulfilled by the Astorino administration. The requirement to build 750 units is currently ahead-of-schedule.

While the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has looked to go beyond the “four corners” of the original agreement, both the county executive and I have remained steadfast in opposing any federal government overreach. HUD’s claim that Westchester’s zoning is discriminatory, is simply baseless, as has been concluded by third-party, non-partisan professionals. HUD’s “grand experiment” to dismantle local zoning would potentially create a situation where high-rise, high-density structures could be built in absolutely any neighborhood. Rest assured, County Executive Astorino and I will continue to work tirelessly to protect our local communities by ensuring that the federal government does not irresponsibly overreach on the original settlement terms.



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS



Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2013 Newsletter

Bernice Spreckman

District 14 ~ Yonkers, Mount Vernon



Bipartisan Budget With No Tax Increase

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to report that the 2013 budget, which was approved by the Board of Legislators and signed into law by County Executive Robert P. Astorino on December 7, 2012, once again carries a zero percent tax increase in the county portion of your taxes. This is third consecutive budget passed in Westchester without a tax increase.

The finalized budget was ultimately a compromise between both political parties and both branches of government. No one party, individual or branch of government received all of their initial requests. The final result was a responsible, balanced coalition spending plan. Unfortunately, when it came time to vote on the budget bill itself, eight legislators decided to walk out of the Board’s chambers, refusing to compromise; however, two courageous Legislators chose to act independently of their party, stay in the Board chambers, and helped to finalize the plan. In the end, the 2013 budget still provides residents with an optimal number of services, many of which County taxpayers have rightfully come to expect, in a most responsible way. Going into negotiations, I never wavered from my belief that both raising taxes and irresponsibly raiding reserve funds were wrong for Westchester and those items objectives were non-negotiable for me. I am glad that the 2013 budget conforms to these two essential tenets.

The County continues to face ongoing fiscal challenges, such as the rising costs of unfunded state mandates, and spending and the unsettled contract with the county’s largest union. Because of the latter issue in particular, some very difficult cuts had to be made, many of which could have been avoided had the CSEA union and the County been able to arrive at a mutually agreeable contract, particularly as it related to the rates for healthcare contributions. For the 2014 budget, I believe layoffs can, potentially, be avoided if such an agreement is reached. Ideally, negotiations must take place now rather than during the upcoming election season. Overall, it is my hope that there will be an agreement in place which incorporates concepts similar to the contracts reached with three of the County’s other unions. The solution to these expired contracts can be achieved if we work together, as evidenced by the 2013 budget process.

Sincerely,

Highlights of the 2013 budget include:

- Subsidized day care will be funded with a 27% parent share, instead of the 35% initially proposed by the county executive but above the 20% proposed by the Democratic majority.
- Public safety, emergency services, probation, and the DA’s office will receive additional funding. Parks will see the restoration of four positions, including three curators, and the Department of Public Works will see the return of five engineering positions. In all, the coalition budget restores 30 positions (25 filled and five vacant).
- ArtsWestchester will receive \$1.25 million and Cornell Cooperative will receive \$800,000. In both cases, more than initially proposed but less than what the majority of Democrats had sought.
- Funding was added for three programs included in the County Office for Women related to Small Business Training, Domestic Violence Training and Tot Drop & Human Trafficking. Community Capital Resources that helps small businesses throughout the county received restored funding. Key senior citizen services for Elder Abuse Legal Services and training received funding.

THE HOLIDAY SENIOR SHOW

On December 6, 2012 over 200 people attended my Holiday Senior Show "Crusin Thru The Holidays"; this was the 30th show I have directed and performed in. This was the first time the show was held at the Ukrainian Youth Center.

We are always looking for more people to join our cast. If you, or someone you know, would like to join our singing and/or dancing practice sessions or for information on attending one of our shows, please contact me at 914-995-2815.

We remain under the direction and choreography of Judy Ayres, the additional choreography of Barbara Gallo and the musical expertise of Noel Hart.



Serving Our Seniors

Last year, I was honored to accept two appointments by County Executive Robert P. Astorino as Chairperson of the Westchester County Council for Seniors and its federal counterpart, the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council; The term of the appointments run through 2015.

I am honored and humbled by the County Executive's request that I continue my service to our County's seniors in these new positions. Advocacy for seniors has been a hallmark of my public service for decades and I believe I will be able to do more now than ever because of my partnership with the administration through the Council for Seniors and the Aging Advisory Council.



Keeping Our Streets Safe

Earlier this month, Mayor Ernie Davis and County Executive Rob Astorino announced a joint effort between the Westchester County Department of Public Safety and the Mt. Vernon Police Department to increase the number of uniformed officers patrolling critical gang locations in the city during weekend nights throughout the summer when crime tends to increase. I am hopeful that this increased presence will help to deter criminal activity and improve the quality of life for residents.



Events



► On Friday, June 7, 2013, I hosted the 5th grade students from International Studies, School 30, Mrs. Ribeiro and Ms. Pavelchak classes, for a mock legislature. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to come and learn about the role of a County Legislator and about legislative procedures. They get to spend time in the Legislative Chambers and take on the role of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Legislators.



On Sunday, June 2, 2013, I had the pleasure of joining Mayor Mike Spano in celebrating those City of Yonkers couples who have been married for 50 years or more. There were over 67 couples in attendance with the longest married couple celebrating their 71st anniversary. ►