

Statements

One-Year Term (One Seat)

Brad Garton

As many of you are now aware, I am running as a write-in candidate for the 1-year term Borough Council seat. My opponent is Peter Warren. I have lived with my wife, Jill Lipoti, at 17 Pine Drive here in Roosevelt for the past five years. We have one three-year-old daughter, Lian. I serve as a full-time member on the Faculty of Columbia University, and one of my greatest joys is when I leave New York to return home, to Roosevelt.

Although most of you have read my reasons for running and my views about the future of Roosevelt in the leaflets Henry John-Alder and I have been distributing around town, I think it is important that I answer the questions given to the candidates in past Borough Bulletins. I'm hoping this will give you a chance to do some "comparative shopping" and to assess how Peter and I differ in our viewpoints and in our willingness to share information with you.

1. Why are you running for Borough Council?

I am running because I am worried. I am worried about our town's future, and I am worried about the local institutions which create that future. Roosevelt is facing some difficult decisions. My fear is that in the heat of "cost-effectiveness", concerns for the quality of our living environment will be forgotten. Make no mistake, I certainly support the most financially prudent approach to our problems. I would hate to see a short-term "cost-effective" solution in place of a long-term civic gain, however. Peter's past actions have shown him to consistently ignore a long-term view (such as the Roosevelt Master Plan, or construction specifications designed over a period of many months) in favor of the "cost-effective *plan-du-jour*". Perhaps there is some bizarre political gain to be had by promoting your own ideas. But to promote them without consideration of opposing viewpoints is not only politically unwise, it can also lead to ill-formulated courses of action. In any

case, it will do nothing to halt the ridiculous factionalism which is destroying our town's ability to act.

It is this concern that really motivated me to run for the Council. We must stop the internal feuding if we are ever to address any crisis. The best way to prevent accusations of "factionalism" or "political motivations" is to be absolutely sure that everyone has total access to the decision-making process. The conversational innuendoes, the secret meetings, the phone calls to a select "in-group" is not acting in the public trust. Yes, I am worried. I fear for the future of open political discourse—in our town, our state, and in our country. Honesty has to begin at home.

2. What qualifications do you feel you have for office?

To tell you the truth, I'm not sure anything truly prepares someone for political service. I do have a few biographical items I can throw into the

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"credential war", if it makes a difference. My most relevant experience has been my three year employment with the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns (roughly equivalent to the League of New Jersey Municipalities). I was able to observe the innermost workings of municipal government and gain first-hand experience in solving local problems. The Indiana Association of Cities and Towns also gave me invaluable insight into the grantsmanship game (I was working under a Federal grant). I have used these lessons as Director of the Computer Music Facility at Columbia University to secure several hundred thousand dollars in equipment grants and funding during the past three years. As a graduate student (and subsequent Ph.D.) at Princeton University, I did consulting work for a variety of businesses, including a number of large financial houses in New York City. (In fact, if you are in the habit of calling an automated system for stock quotes, chances are that you are using software I developed).

I also have a long personal involvement with politics. My father has served as President of the Indiana Senate longer than any individual in Indiana history. It is from my father—author of the first "sunshine" legislation in Indiana—that I learned the importance of an open public policy. My commitment to communication runs deep.

3. Why should people vote for you?

This is a tough question. I feel odd asking people to vote for me—it seems a strange human transaction. I would prefer that people compare my views with Peter's and make an independent

decision to vote for me. My views: *total* openness in public policy-making; aggressive pursuit of outside funding to ease our financial burden; local control over our children's education (but this control must be well-managed!); and prudent, financially sound development within the guidelines of a well-thought-out Master Plan. Finally, I would hope that people vote for me because I represent a change from the feud-driven political shenanigans of the past decade. It is time to change the pattern.

4. How would the Roosevelt of five years from now be different from the Roosevelt of today?

The Roosevelt I see five years from now would be financially, structurally, and politically healthy. The obvious route to financial health is outside funding. No amount of financial planning or auditing will make our obligations go away. I guarantee that our State and Federal lawmakers will be aware of Roosevelt's plight. It is imperative that Roosevelt be high on the list for monetary aid.

After our financial house is in order, we must install a system of periodic inspection, maintenance, and upgrades to prevent Roosevelt from ever again becoming entangled in the problems we currently have. I envision an objective system which will be difficult to politicize—this in recognition of the fact that many of our Borough decisions tend to get mired in political considerations.

I also want to change the way business is done at Borough Hall. I'm a relative newcomer to town, and I find the political situation to be incredible.

The time has come to bury all the hatchets and do what has to be done. By involving *all* members of the public as much as possible, my hope is that the blueprint for a more cooperative political future will be put into effect.

Ultimately, the future of our town is in your hands. I ask you to compare Peter and myself, look at what we have said (or not said!) about our vision of Roosevelt's future. I also ask you to compare how we've conducted our campaigns—that is the most immediate basis for making a choice. Since deciding to run, I have done my utmost to present you with my reasons for running, my ideas about our town, and my priorities for the future. What has my opponent said of his "clear ideas" for our town's future? Henry John-Alder and I have worked hard to put together a Candidates' Night to give *you* a chance to discuss viewpoints with each of us in a public forum. Peter not only refused to participate, he hung up the phone on me! This is how opposing views are heard? In a small town like this an action like that is just plain silly. I promise to listen to all views, especially when I disagree.

I believe that Peter has the best interests of town at heart and that he has some ideas that should be heard (thus far I don't think they have...). But Peter *knows* what is best for Roosevelt, and that frightens me. What happens when you don't agree with him? No one should be locked out of decisions concerning how public money is spent. It is *our* money, after all. If you have any concerns or comments, please don't hesitate to call me at 448-9214. I won't hang up.