

Statement to New Castle Residents from Michael Wolfensohn

As many of you know, I've served on the Town Board before. So, I'm not surprised when I hear the question, "Why do you want to do this again?" But I smile and say, "I love this town, and being part of the process to make New Castle the best it can be is worth it. It may sound simple, but that is how I truly feel. This is a wonderful place to live and has given my children a strong sense of *community* upon which to build their lives.

For those of you who know me even just a little, you already know that giving back is very important to me and that I am passionate about helping others and serving in any way I can. For those of you who don't know me yet, I hope that as you learn more about me through our Listening Tours, walking around Town, or through our Facebook conversations on "New Castle Community Concerns" that you will gain a better sense of how much I value being part of this community and my desire to make it even better. I recently found a statement that I prepared before my last term expired in 2011 and still feel every bit of it today:

"Four years ago I was elected to serve as Town Board Member -- a job I took very seriously. I have learned a great deal about how government really works and, as much as some say government is broken at the local level, I would disagree."

During my time on the Board, I answered all questions asked of me in a timely and truthful manner and am proud to say I never ducked any questions. I was more than happy to listen to other points of view, while promoting a respectful dialogue. During my last tenure on the Board, we reduced the Town's spending and workforce in such a responsible way that there was relatively little loss of service, while we maintained our Aaa bond rating. This was most certainly a feat that I'm very proud of in our tough economy. We took steps that weren't always popular at the time with some residents, but look at us now: new stores and growth in both Chappaqua and Millwood, and the ability to embark on new projects for all of our citizens.

Back then, I stressed that one of the benefits of working in local government was the ability to make a change and see how a new policy or other improvement could have a positive impact on residents. Sometimes, it takes a while for a new policy or program's impact to be felt. Other times, even the smallest change can have an immediate and positive result. Part of the process – and one I enjoy - is hearing from residents with a variety of opinions. I recognized then, as I do now, that none of these things gets done without the help of an incredible staff of workers and a sense of commitment from everyone involved.

When I last served, I approached the job with blunt honesty that I felt was extremely important in today's political climate. Although sometimes the challenges were daunting and came at

great personal expense, I wouldn't have traded the experience for anything. It was a privilege to serve the Town and its residents then, and it would be again.

My principles haven't changed. I will make thoughtful decisions that I think are in the best interest of the Town and be comfortable with them. As I felt four years ago, "If you're not comfortable, it might not have been the best decision. Never be afraid to be wrong or say you have made a mistake. Make promises to no one and work hard every day." Then and even more now, I live by the tenet, "What's best for the Town as a whole comes first."

I look forward to seeing and saying hello to those of you I know over the coming weeks and months and to meeting those of you who are new to our community or whom I haven't met yet. And, I am always happy to hear from you through Facebook, email or phone at any time.