

Don't fall prey to political games and soundbites.

About that 20%...



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My challengers for Chatham Township Committee, Flynn and Rubino, like to blast political soundbites. Their favorite is to claim the Democratic majority was responsible for a 20% municipal tax increase over 2 years. That is **false**.

Flynn/Rubino spend a lot of money and effort on finger pointing yet provide NO ideas for reducing the tax rate. Their mailers express shock and dismay at the increased rate, but **it's the same tax rate** their Republican Committee members approved this year. No efforts to cut services, no renegotiated contracts, no savings identified, no attempts to restore the lower tax rate.

Interestingly, residents haven't mentioned the 20% increase at the 100's of doors I've knocked on over the past 10 weeks. Then, I realized why. Because Township residents already knew **the truth**.

I was fully transparent and warned residents during my 2019 election campaign that the 2018 Affordable Housing (AH) Agreement mandate was unfunded. I warned residents that this unfunded AH agreement and other factors would increase the municipal tax rate.

I told them this at the doors, in my candidate statements and, in my Chatham Patch Take 5 response dated October 2019:

Excerpt: "Our other big challenge is an anticipated increase in taxes due to the lack of strategic and financial planning around several known matters. These include an estimated \$3mm to \$4mm in upcoming affordable housing costs, a large balloon interest payment that's coming due, and several million to fix deteriorating facilities and to comply with State requirements for our police station. To date, the Township Committee has been the beneficiary of a windfall surplus from the knock-downs and rebuilds in our town. That cushion is diminishing as ratables and the related tax revenue are contracting, and we've lost non-recurring revenues like the temporary cell tower rental income."

My political opponents are **wrong** to claim the tax rate increase was driven by the Democratic majority. Those problems were there before we arrived. The **Democratic majority fixed the problems** working across party lines with our moderate Republican counterparts. Our actions created the healthy coffers that allowed for a 0% tax rate increase in 2022. Here's how we did it:

We rejected the arguments of our conservative counterparts and **saved \$1 million** in taxpayer money over 18 months by collecting developer fees for the first time since the ordinance was enacted back in 2008.

We **saved \$350k** in taxpayer money by finalizing our 3rd round affordable housing litigation.

We saved **\$400k** in debt service by laying the groundwork, with a bi-partisan Finance Committee, for the April 2022 debt restructure.

We rejected the arguments of our conservative counterparts and generated \$635k annually for our parks and fields and playgrounds by returning the Open Space Tax to the voter-approved 2 cents.

Here are the **positive results of our actions** - replenished surplus, reaffirmed AAA bond rating, stabilized financials, including a zero tax rate increase in 2022 and, investment in our community.

Our Republican challengers would like you to believe their party took the majority in January 2022 and turned everything around in a couple of months. Our residents are too smart for this. Our residents know better.

Vote Stacey Ewald and Mike Choi on November 8th for financial managers who know how to get the job done.

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