

1. *If you lose the Democratic primary, will you still run on in the general election on another party's line? Why or why not?*

One of the reasons I love Nyack so much is that so many of its people have followed actress/activist/writer Ruby Dee's sage advice that "the greatest gift is not being afraid to question." So thanks to the Friends of the Nyacks for providing a forum for you to ask questions of your mayoral candidates, but most of all, thanks to you for asking them.

The great English poet William Blake wrote: "without contraries [there] is no progression:" the best ideas usually emerge as a synthesis of contrary and competing ones. So if you have any comments, constructive criticisms, etc. after reading my answers, please feel free to contact me by phone, email, or in person. And keep questioning!

If I lose the Democratic primary, I will support whoever wins it. I would expect all four candidates to make this same promise; after all, we all pledged that we would support the winner of the primary when we appeared before the Nyack Democratic convention on May 26th. I've been a loyal Democrat in word and deed ever since I first registered to vote at age 18 and a proud liberal even longer than that. I was honored that our Democratic Committee endorsed me at our May 26th convention, but the ultimate decision will be – and deserves to be -- made by the voters on September 15th. I also believe that all four candidates should refuse to solicit or accept contributions from village employees or people with business before the village.

P.S. I've been very honored to have run on the Working Families Party line in the last four elections; we share many of the same core principles and priorities. This year, however, I declined the WFP endorsement, for two main reasons: 1) I'm a strong supporter of Thom Kleiner for County Executive, the WFP endorsed another candidate for County Executive, and I wouldn't want to be on the same ballot line with an opponent of Thom's and possibly take votes away from him and 2) I wouldn't want to appear on the ballot on a party line for mayor that could take votes away from the Democratic nominee for mayor in the general election and possibly help the Republicans win the election.

2. *One of my concerns regarding the problems in Nyack is that of speeding cars! It's prevalent! Just take a walk around Nyack Village any day or evening (don't forget Gedney and Midland). Make sure you stroll down North Broadway where the cars fly by at speeds well over the limit. And you won't be able to miss the BUSES that zoom by like they are above the law. I find this epidemic of speeding thru out the community to be horrendous and highly dangerous. There seems to be absolutely no police overseeing this problem, especially in Upper Nyack where the town changes into Clarkstown. There's never anyone patrolling the speed limit up there, and believe me I walk there every day. I believe that the speeding issues are highly overlooked in this town and it is dangerous, not to mention a tragedy in the making.*

Just take a look at river road running into Piermont, it has always been properly policed regarding the speed limit, and now anyone who drives down that road KNOWS automatically in the back of their head, you can't go over the 25mph speed limit! Please tell me that you will address this issue of speeding in Nyack and Upper Nyack. The BUSES need to know that they don't rule the roads in our village. Please let me know if and how you might handle this very real problem.

Our Village Board works constantly and closely with the Orangetown Police Department about the very issues you mentioned. We need to do a better job of prioritizing where and what we want the Orangetown Police Department to focus on and getting them to follow our priorities (see also question # 7).

3. How does the Comprehensive Master Plan fit into your mayoral agenda? Do you have plans for implementing the elements of the plan?

Among Nyack's official government documents, Nyack's Comprehensive Master Plan is second only to our Nyack Village Code in terms of importance. The 59 chapters of Nyack's Village Code (<http://www.ecode360.com/?custId=NY0087>) specify exactly what is and what isn't permitted in the village in terms of land use, noise, building construction, tree cutting, and dozens of other subjects (even roosters!). The CMP, while necessarily broader and less specific than the Village Code, provides detailed and comprehensive findings and recommendations that dictate the direction of Nyack's development.

Nyack's CMP is a model of its type – nationwide. From 1997 – 2007, dozens of village volunteers worked for thousands of hours, held hundreds of meetings, and spoke with countless residents, professionals, and visitors to produce this document. The villagers and consultants who produced it deserve our deepest gratitude and highest praise. Prior to voting to approve the CMP as a Village Trustee in 2007, I participated in numerous meetings of the CMP and its subcommittees and am also credited in the CMP as a photographer.

Under New York State law, all development **has to** comply with the CMP. But the CMP is a policy-based document, not a zoning code that regulates land-use. For the last few years, an incredibly dedicated group of citizen volunteers has been working to create a new zoning code directly derived from the CMP. The new code will designate permitted land-uses throughout the village based on mapped zones that separate one zone from another. The current draft already improves upon the present zoning code. The village has hired one of Rockland's leading planning consultants to review our draft; the Village Board needs to approve this new zoning code by the end of the year. As Mayor, I will ensure that the CMP is the template for all future development in our village.

4. Would each candidate please express how they feel about a redevelopment plan for downtown Nyack and secondly, would they talk about their position regarding the Riverspace plan, in particular?

Riverspace - The arts are an integral part of Nyack's identity as a village. Residents and businesses alike benefit with Nyack as the arts capital of Rockland County. Ever since Riverspace presented its proposal about two years ago, I've attended many Riverspace meetings, thought about Riverspace for countless hours, discussed its pros and cons with dozens of residents, merchants, and visitors, and compared its proposals with our Comprehensive Master Plan. The Riverspace proposal has the potential to transform our village.

Here is some of the positive and negative feedback I've received about the most recent Riverspace proposal:

Pros

- It improves and enhances Nyack's arts and educational opportunities;
- It adds a mix of affordable and market level housing to our downtown;
- It provides a village green much larger than Veterans Park;

- It restores an attractive streetscape to Main St. between Franklin St. and Cedar St.;
- It connects Main St. with Depew Avenue, thus improving Nyack's walkability;
- It calls for the demolition of "the ugliest building in Nyack" (resident Bill Irwin's words);
- It has large potential for private economic development, job creation, and increasing property values.
- The buildings themselves would be "green;" this is an unbelievably visionary idea. I believe that Nyack should enact green building codes, as Orangetown, Clarkstown, and Ramapo have done.

Cons

- The most recent Riverspace drawings show a four floor, above-ground garage. I believe that this would be harmful to the residents in the surrounding buildings in terms of air quality, noise, views, and quality of life. Our Comprehensive Master Plan calls for small-scale, at-grade, decentralized solutions to downtown parking instead of a garage. Also, what would be the impact on our taxes of building, operating, and maintaining this garage?
- The size, scale, and density of the most recent proposal seem incompatible with the size, scale, and density of the rest of our downtown, as called for in the CMP. One resident recently told me: "it's just too big." "Scale it back," a business owner just told me, "it doesn't fit."
- Would the Riverspace funding model create more competition for merchants who are already hurting?
- The additional traffic and congestion in our downtown would degrade our air quality;
- The downside of increasing property values is the potential for downtown rents to increase;
- The potential additional costs for additional sidewalks, sewers, lighting, police, DPW, and fire protection could raise our taxes significantly.
- Riverspace has described its proposal as "revenue neutral" to Nyack, i.e. while significant private economic growth would be stimulated, it wouldn't do much for the village's tax base of ratables.

Additional concerns: Riverspace hasn't yet demonstrated that a project of this size would be economically feasible. As Jan Degenshein wrote: "the flip side of 'if you build it they will come' is 'what if they gave a party and nobody showed up.'" Also, is it in our interests for the village grant private development rights to four acres of prime public real estate in the heart of our downtown? How would Riverspace pay for the land? If in cash, how much? If not in cash, what kind of "in-kind considerations" would the village receive? These are very important questions that need to be asked and resolved in a feasibility study before we go forward with a project that could change our village forever.

The Riverspace project will have profound cultural, economic, social, and environmental impacts on Nyack. It is essential for Nyack, Riverspace, or whomever the village chooses to develop all or part of this land to find common ground and to reach an honorable compromise that is respectful to all members of our community, consistent with our Master Plan, and in the best interests of our entire village. I look forward to continuing to listen to and working with all groups of our community on this project.

P.S. The arts were a vital part of my life even before I attended my first performance at the old Metropolitan Opera at age 7. The Nyack Library honored me as its first-ever volunteer of the year for the music programs I offered there. I travel often to Westchester and Manhattan to see movies that I would much rather see at Riverspace. I have supported Riverspace as a supporter/donor and was instrumental (pardon the pun) in bringing the Rockland Symphony Orchestra to Riverspace for the first time.

Downtown revitalization - Nyack has multiple priorities in terms of infrastructure improvement. We need a long-term capital-improvement plan that prioritizes the work that we need to do on our streets,

sidewalks, parks, lighting, sewers, and water system. However, I agree with the Streetscape Committee that Main St. between Franklin St. and Broadway deserves top consideration in terms of renovating our downtown.

I recently joined my colleagues on the Village Board to vote to begin the design work. After the design work has been approved, we should undertake the actual improvements when the village has eliminated its parking-related deficit, regained its financial footing, and determined how the bonding costs will be covered without raising taxes.

With all of the attention that we've paid to Riverspace and the downtown revitalization, other areas of the village have not received enough attention. In particular, I believe that we can do more to revitalize upper Main Street and the gateway to our village. A pocket parking lot on Upper Main Street would do wonders to revitalize that area. The CMP calls for the business and not-for-profit community to promote the creation of a Business Improvement District. I agree.

5. There are a lot of empty stores in Nyack and the village seems to be taking a downward turn. What does each candidate propose to do that would bring visitors and merchants back into Nyack and fill these empty stores? (Note: I combined my answers to two very similar questions into one answer).

All of us need to work together to make Nyack a destination. Here are a few of the many ideas from the many people I consulted on this issue: implementing the Streetscape Plan; a true village green in the heart of our downtown; more varied and better arts offerings; allow B&B's to encourage stayovers; a pro-active Chamber of Commerce that promotes and markets Nyack by developing brochures for display racks at popular destinations in the metropolitan New York City area; bring more ratables to the village from outside the downtown but within the village; an active waterfront with boat rentals, kayaks, a fishing pier, and bike rentals; "user-friendly" parking enforcement; and lower rents from landlords. If you have any more ideas, please let me know at 353-1935 or email me at richard77@optonline.net

6. Nyack is a great Village in a state of struggle. It needs a leader who is decisive and active. What have you actually accomplished in your period of political activity that will convince us that you are the one who will get things done and make big change in a positive direction?

A recent letter to the New York Times put it very well: "difficult times require strong leaders willing to act with courage and conviction – in short to lead."

Nyack isn't a "reality set in stone" – it's a diverse, dynamic, and changing village that needs a Mayor who is decisive and active. Equally important, Nyack needs a Mayor who has a proven record of getting results, an open-minded listener, a hard worker, a collegial team player, a clear communicator, and a competent manager who leads by example. Nyack also needs a Mayor who is not afraid to make tough, unpopular decisions that are in the best interest of the village and who will maintain open and effective lines of communication with the dedicated department heads and village employees who work hard every day to make Nyack a special place to live.

I believe that I demonstrated many these skills during my eight years on the Village Board, my three years as the village's Community Development Block Grant Coordinator, in my role in the passage of Nyack's affordable housing law, as the former Chair of our Nyack Democratic Committee, in the everyday job of constituent service, as a business leader for more than 20 years, and as a public school teacher for the last eight years.

- As the village's Community Development Block Grant Coordinator for three years, I assembled teams that were representative of Nyack in all of its diversity; conducted many public meetings – often outside of Village Hall -- where various proposals were discussed and weighed; publicized these meetings in the media; took the minutes and distributed them to all members; invited outsiders and county officials to attend them; and presented our findings to the Village Board. The results – Nyack received \$80,000 in federal funding for the handicapped-accessible bathrooms in Memorial Park; \$25,000 to build new sidewalks on Waldron Avenue, and \$80,000 to improve drainage on South Broadway. As Mayor, I will continue this collaborative and results-oriented management style.
- Nyack's affordable housing law, requiring 20% of all new residential construction of 5 units or more to be "affordable," was the first of its type in Rockland County. I'm always looking for ways to learn from other communities, and it was a similar ordinance in the Town of Greenburgh that inspired me to propose Nyack's law. Although it took a long time to pass the legislation in its final form, it was worth it: the law passed unanimously, the first 10 such units on South Broadway are a model for all of Rockland County, and I can think of no other law on our books that says more about our inclusivity and conscience as a village than this one.
- The most gratifying part of my job is constituent service. Over the years, I've helped countless residents with issues related to nighttime rowdiness, the striping of parking spaces, trees, bus idling, zoning questions, – you name it. Many years ago (after a visit to Tarrytown) I even came up with idea of purchasing and installing those fixtures in our crosswalks that say: "State Law - Yield to Pedestrians." I'm also the only member of the Village Board whose home telephone number is listed on our website. My years in private business trained me to provide the fastest and best customer service that I can, and I'm always glad to help any citizen who needs help, whether by phone, fax, email, or in-person. No problem is too small or too big for me; I'm always glad to help.
- As the Director of International Operations for Matrix Corporation, I was responsible for managing our department's expenses and revenues, setting its goals, motivating and managing employees on three continents, working with colleagues from all departments at the home office, and supporting customers on six continents. Our department consistently led Matrix in profitability because our first goal was always customer satisfaction. Our customers knew that I regarded my first job as representing their interests and the team that reported to me always knew that I "had their back."
- Nyack is full of passionate, intelligent, and strong-willed people, and our Nyack Democratic Committee is no exception. During my six years at its chair, our previously fractious committee became much more unified, we worked together very well, and we won every election.
- During my eight years teaching in the Bronx, two of my three principals have asked me to serve as a member of the School Leadership Team; the faculty at the other elected me as its UFT representative. Both of these positions place(d) a premium on communication and collaboration.

P.S. A complete résumé of mine is available at Nyack News and Views:

<http://www.nyacknewsandviews.com/2009elections/richardkavesh4mayor/>

7. Some bars have always attracted a less than favorable crowd that seems to spill out onto the streets during the weekends. How do you feel that you can help keep Nyack safe and clean?

One shopkeeper just told me: "Night time Nyack is a nightmare on wheels." I'm appalled by the anti-social behavior of some of our patrons. As I said in my answer to question #2, we as a Village Board need to do a better job of conveying problems to the Orangetown Police Department, prioritizing our concerns, and getting the police to focus their efforts on enforcing what we need them to do. Laws against rowdiness, public intoxication, idling, breaking windows, vandalism, public urination, violations of our

noise ordinance – and more – need to be enforced or people will continue to disrespect our laws. Keeping our village clean is a collective effort. Government is part of the solution, but a lot is up to us as citizens. Imagine how much cleaner Nyack would be if each of us picked up just one small piece of litter each time we walked around our village (or if people just didn't litter). Cleanliness is contagious!

8. There are many dog owners in this village, who care about the health and longevity of their pets. Dogs, like people, need plenty of exercise in order to be healthy. A walk on a leash for a four legged animal is barely a work out. Many of us try to find whatever fields we can to run our dogs in, and then end up feeling like criminals because it's illegal everywhere in the village. How do you feel about an early morning "off leash" dog park, at Memorial Park? This is done in many communities around our vicinity; in which, like Nyack, people don't have large yards.

Here's how the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals states the reasons for leash laws:

“Pet owners who allow their pets to roam unattended are putting the animals' welfare in jeopardy and creating a nuisance to neighbors, other domestic pets and wildlife. Allowing dogs to run off leash in inappropriate places is dangerous for the dog, puts people and other animals at risk and, in many towns and cities, and is illegal. Leash laws exist to protect animals and people and we urge you, as a responsible pet owner, to abide by them.”

You're not alone in asking us to change our village code. It's tough, though, if not impossible, for six-acre Memorial Park to be all things to all people at all times. Earlier this year, and in response to many health and safety concerns in the park, I joined my colleagues on the Board to support the Parks Commission's recommendation to keep the leash law in effect at all times during the day. There's a dog park in South Nyack for pet owners who want to give their dogs a workout without a leash, but if this still isn't satisfactory and if you have any ideas in this area, I'd be glad to hear them. Also, if you'd like to comment on the proposed Memorial Park redesign, please come to our workshop on September 24th.

9. How do you feel about initiating a "leaf blower" ordinance? Our village is getting out of control with these terribly noisy, polluting devices. There is no reason why landscapers have to blow dirt and leaves around with them. Raking leaves and grass never killed anybody.

You're the second person in the last week who suggested this. The noise from these devices is already governed by Section 35-4-H of our village code, which says: “The operation of any mechanically powered saw, sander, drill, grinder, lawn or garden tool, lawnmower or similar device used outdoors in residential areas between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. of the following day.” Adding leaf blowers to the list of these devices is a good idea. Or do you want them banned altogether (please let me know)?

10. School taxes account for the largest part of residents' tax bill. Although Nyack Schools are sensitive to the needs of parents with children, the schools' Board of Education largely ignores the interests of taxpayers and other stakeholders. Because the spring school board election and budget vote is never publicized, it has a historically local turnout (this year below 10%) and doesn't represent the interests of most citizens. Would you be in favor of abolishing annual school board elections and replacing that process with appointments to the school board by the mayor of each village to better serve the needs of all residents in Nyack, South Nyack, Upper Nyack and Valley Cottage?

No, I wouldn't. As a public school teacher in the Bronx, I agree with my UFT leadership that New York City students are better served when the overall responsibility, authority, and accountability for the school system are in one place. However, I don't support transferring this model to Rockland's eight school districts. I believe that independent and independently elected school boards can manage our schools much more effectively than we politicians could.

11. Do you favor the construction of a parking garage behind Depew Manor Senior housing, when cars going in and out of such a construction may negatively impact the quality of air which seniors must breathe?

There are several reasons why I have opposed the construction of a parking garage behind Depew Manor since 1997:

- Depew Manor, Nyack Plaza, and 90 Depew Avenue are home to many of Nyack's oldest, neediest, and most vulnerable people. Many of them have very low or fixed incomes and/or are in poor health; some of them are asthmatics and/or need oxygen. I wouldn't want a four-story garage forty feet from my own back door, so I don't think it's fair to put a four-floor garage – with its attendant congestion, pollution, noise and destruction of sight lines -- in the backyard of the people who live behind Depew Manor.
- A garage behind Depew Manor would likely cost a small fortune to build and maintain; I doubt that it could ever become economically viable or profitable unless the village (or a private operator) were to charge exorbitant rates, which might actually keep people out of the garage and render it empty and useless.
- I believe that a garage behind Depew Manor is not compatible with the section of our Comprehensive Master Plan that calls for more pocket-parking “before going to more expensive and draconian strategies such as garages.”
- Nyack's recent Parking Study concluded: “there is no need for a significant increase in parking supply in downtown Nyack at present, and that implementing modifications to parking management will improve conditions.” However, it went on to say that “if parking demand increases significantly as a result of new development of other factors, the village should consider the addition of a parking deck.”

Our parking consultant referred us to an architecturally-attractive and environmentally-sensitive parking garage in Princeton, New Jersey as a model. Should the village decide that it needs such a garage and that it would be economically viable and eco-friendly, I agree with the parking experts who have told me that the best location would be at the intersection of Main St. and Franklin St., where the M & T bank and its parking lot are located – not behind Depew Manor.

12. How will the village prepare to respond to the final report of the TZ bridge commission...in terms of traffic, access, noise, and related issues?

I fought against Tappan Zee II for many years as a member of Concerned Citizens for Riverspace Development for fear that all it would bring us would be more traffic, congestion, and pollution without getting enough people out of their cars and into mass transit. It now appears that the construction of TZII is a fait accompli and that all our years of protesting to the New York State Thruway Authority and two different governors have been ignored. TZ II will obviously be a huge project that will have a tremendous impact on all of Rockland County, not just the river villages.

Much of the sales pitch for TZII centered on its commuter rail and bus options – who wouldn't support getting thousands of people a day out of their cars and onto mass transit? My concern is that the Thruway will design and build a bridge that includes mass transit, that the market and funds for mass transit will never appear, that the Thruway will then replace these lanes with lanes for more cars and buses, and that all we Rocklanders will be stuck with is all the additional noise and pollution.

It's been said that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Citizens and leaders alike – from the County Executive to town and village leaders – need to make sure that the mass transit becomes a reality and that we are not victimized by bait and switch tactics. Rockland's communities and its leaders need to work together to mitigate the effects of this mega-project and to hold the Thruway accountable for its promises, particularly that it will not acquire any adjacent properties through condemnation.

13. Are there alternatives to a major Riverspace operation that might be done with the village and individual organizations rather than a clearly too expensive approach?

Yes, and one alternative that many residents favor is for an artist/developer to buy the existing building from Millbrook Properties, renovate it, make it attractive, and construct – within the current footprint – a modular, 2 or 3 auditorium arts center/movie theatre along the lines of the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, perhaps adding some commercial and residential property as part of the same parcel. Imagine how wonderful it would be for Nyack to have an in-scale, modular, state-of-the-art cinema/arts center showing the movies that we now have to travel to Pleasantville, Greenburgh, or even to Greenwich Village to see and with room for other performing arts. I am convinced that such a theatre would be successful here in Nyack and could draw visitors to Nyack from far and wide.

When the Jacob Burns Film Center was constructed, its founder asked the Village of Pleasantville for only one variance. Having corresponded with the Mayor of Pleasantville and met with the founder of the Jacob Burns Center, I believe that one very important advantage of this alternative is that would require few if any variances here in Nyack and absolutely no transfer of village land into private hands – the new arts center/cinema could be renovated and reconstructed right where Riverspace currently is. And imagine how great it would be to have a Nyack Film Festival featuring the work of our talented local artists and students!

14. During discussion of the Riverspace initiative there have been suggestions that the Village makes significant concessions such as freezing taxes and immunity from Village land use requirements such as approval from Village Boards. What concessions would you support?

Riverspace has never asked for exemptions from approval from the village's land-use boards. No applicant is exempt from these reviews, and even the village itself goes before our own land-use boards when we want to modify the use or appearance of village land. Riverspace hasn't yet presented formal "plans" to any of our land-use boards to support its concept, but it will certainly have to if it decides to make a formal land-use application.

Perhaps the biggest concerns that I've heard from village residents about development of the "superblock" are the strong opposition to transferring the development of four acres of prime, downtown real estate into private hands and the concern that the "in-kind exchange" and PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) that Riverspace presented to the Village Board on August 28th, 2008 would be insufficient to cover the village's increased costs, i.e. a net loss of income to the village and much higher taxes.

All of us on the Village Board take our fiduciary duties to all citizens very seriously. Every concession on tax income from a new development shifts that burden to our taxpayers and needs to be very carefully scrutinized.

15. While we realize the parking meters and parking tickets create considerable revenue, the parking machines are unfriendly, confusing and expensive. What measures would you support to make them more palatable to residents and visitors?

In walking the village from east to west and north to south, I've found no subject that gets more people angrier than our muni-meters. Most people just hate 'em! To quote again from our CMP (p. 29): "There is (and always will be) both justified and unreasonable grouching with regard to issues such as enforcement, hours of meters, convenience of parking, and landscaping of parking lots."

The purchase of the new muni-meters was one of the few areas of parking policy where the Village Board was unanimous in its approval. However, I believe that the reason that so many people were and are so angry about the muni-meters is that we on the Village Board did a very poor job of educating the public about when, where, and why these meters were going to be installed and how to use them.

Our parking consultant outlined many of the benefits of the new muni-meters (see page 31 of the parking study). I believe that the plusses of these benefits outweigh the drawbacks (and if I'm missing anything, I know you'll let me know):

- The former meters just took quarters. The new meters take nickels, dimes, quarters, dollar bills, and credit cards.
- The new meters allow you to pay once and then take your receipt to multiple locations. If you have to drive instead of walk into town, you can buy your receipt when you go to Herb Lack, keep your receipt when you go to the library, and use that same receipt for as long as it is valid – anywhere in the village.
- The new meters actually expand our parking stock, as it is no longer one meter for one space.
- The new meters reduce sidewalk clutter.
- The new meters are much more reliable than the old ones.
- On the down side, it is inconvenient to go running from your car to the meter and back when it is raining or snowing or if you are accompanied by a young child.

Muni-meters have been successfully implemented in many of the world's most innovative communities. I'm sure that villagers will regard them as much less offensive as they get more used to them. Two related notes:

- To quote again from the parking study: "The parking officers should be trained to enforce the regulations in a professional and diplomatic manner. This would bring a more user friendly policy to the parking enforcement." I fully agree.
- One of the reasons I love Nyack so much is that it is such a great walking village - you can take a walking tour of Nyack with me by clicking on:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=90937&id=530393532&l=418495d600>

Imagine the improvement to our parking, congestion, and air quality if all of us could give our car just one day of complete rest a week, every two weeks, or even just once a month. Try it, you'll like it!

16. Do you support a ferry stop? The ferry at Haverstraw seems to have given the town new life. There is a lot of building and renewal going on. Nyack certainly could benefit from a ferry in many ways if the major concerns are dealt with.

I think we all support getting commuters out of their cars and into car pools and/or mass transit. Unfortunately, the Haverstraw ferry is now out of business for lack of ridership. I got involved with Nyack politics back in 1996 because of my opposition to a commuter ferry from Nyack to New York City with a stop on Gedney St., for several reasons:

- I believe it would have turned Nyack into a commuter hub like Weehawken or Secaucus;
- It would have required a garage on the last remaining piece of undeveloped waterfront property in Nyack, which we would have had to turn over to the New York Thruway Authority;
- It would have resulted in an enormous amount of traffic on our narrow village streets during morning and evening rush hours. In particular, High Avenue would have become a highway.
- I believe that the marginal economic benefits would have been outweighed by the significant social and environmental costs to our village.

P.S. I am a very strong environmentalist, a long-time member of the Sierra Club, and was the first mayoral candidate to put “green building codes” into his/her platform.

17. Property values are down but our taxes and many other costs are up. Shouldn't taxes be adjusted to reflect the lower values?

A county-wide reassessment is the best way for all property owners in Nyack – and the county – to have an equitable basis on which to be taxed. If you feel, as an individual, that the assessed value of your property is too high, you can challenge your current assessment with the Orangetown Receiver of Taxes once a year.

Your property taxes, of course, are based on your assessed value and on the village tax rate. Like all other villages and towns, Nyack sets its tax rate once a year, when we consider and adopt our budget (by law, by the end of April). Although we held six public meetings on the budget, I was dissatisfied with the result – a 9.48% tax increase – and was the only village board member to vote against the increase.

Sadly, most of these meetings were held with about 5 members in the audience. By putting village board meetings on television, streaming them live on the internet, improving our website, and bringing village board meetings to different locations around the village, more villagers can be involved in the budgetary process and they can express their opinions while we’re deliberating rather than just getting “sticker-shock” when they see their huge tax increases on their tax bill. And huge tax increases can be avoided altogether when we implement zero-based budgeting (see below, question #21).

18. Do you support health insurance reform? What will Nyack do to help its uninsured?

Every western, industrialized democracy from Austria to Australia provides health care to its residents as a fundamental right and provides these services with per capita healthcare expenses that are much lower than ours. As a recent letter writer to the Rockland Journal News wrote: “we already have versions of government-run, universal, single-payer medical care for people over 65 called Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security along with veteran’s health care, which have been working well and very efficiently.” And as former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously asked: “why not Medicare for all?”

Unfortunately, many opponents of health care reform have resorted to downright lying and even comparing President Obama to Adolf Hitler. Such tactics are revolting and insulting to both our president and all Holocaust victims.

I recently participated in a counter-demonstration against opponents of health care reform in front of the Nyack Post Office and was very gratified that our Congressman, Elliot Engel, strongly supports the public option. I believe that the best thing we can do to help our uninsured is to Organize for America and keep up the public pressure for the public option.

19. I am an Orangetown resident for over 40 years and have owned in Nyack for over 20 years. I am greatly concerned that the Oak Hill cemetery will be able to have graves on land adjacent to where people live at village gate way. We have 54 homes here on the mountain. Please consider that this should never be zoned like this. The cutting of trees will also lead to more erosion on the mountain and the water table will allow us to have more flooding here at village gate. How can you make this matter safe for the voting residents here?

Village Gate is truly one of Nyack's hidden treasures; it's a warm and wonderful community and a great place to live. I share your concern about the cemetery expansion and have spoken and met with many members of the Village Gate community to discuss it.

When the cemetery expansion process began, the owners/operators of the cemetery did not even want to go before our Planning Board to review their plans. The Village insisted that they do so, and the Planning Board approved their site plans after extensive review and an independent review of the proposed drainage plan by our Village Engineer. Under New York State law, the Village Board can't overrule a Planning Board decision, as this would politicize land use issues and might lead to devastatingly expensive lawsuits against the village (such as what happened in the Magee case in Orangetown some years ago)

There is now a lawsuit between Village Gate and the cemetery. Lawsuits are inherently adversarial and often expensive. If the Village Gate community believes that I can play a constructive role/mediate this matter, I would be glad to do so.

20. There's a story today in Nyack News and Views about building a bike path on the new Tappan Zee Bridge. This could make Nyack and Tarrytown a major tourist destination and provide a big boost to local merchants. Are you in favor of building this path and advocating for this recreational opportunity on behalf of our local businesses?

I'm a recreational hiker and walker. If a new Tappan Zee Bridge is going to be built, the bike/walking path is a truly visionary idea. My big concern is that the Thruway may "pitch" a bike path and then change it into another lane of traffic. I will continue to advocate on behalf of this great idea.

21. Nyack needed to raise taxes over 9 percent this year to make up for the budget shortfall --principally caused by declining mortgage registration fees. The real estate market remains sluggish, so it's reasonable to expect we will have budget challenges next year, too. Name three initiatives you would consider to raise revenues for the Village of Nyack.

Not only did village taxes go up by 9.48% this year, they have gone up nine years in a row. In fact, village taxes have increased 48.45% since 2003 – well above the rate of inflation. I voted against four of these last

six budgets because of excessive spending or unrealistic revenue estimates. This past budget – where taxes were raised by 9.48 percent – was particularly onerous. Not only did the village raise your taxes, it cut your services: the popular sidewalk repair program was eliminated, as were funds for repaving village streets.

In walking around our village, I was surprised by the number of village residents who knew that our parking rates had gone up but who didn't know that their property taxes had gone up. A tax increase of 9.48% for a home with an assessed value of \$180,000 equals a tax increase of \$133 – that's a whole lot of quarters! And it comes on top of the tax increases from the county, the town, and the school district.

To some, \$133 might not sound like a lot of money, but it does to me and also to people who have seen their property values and pension plans plummet, their wages cut or frozen, and even lost their homes and/or their jobs during this two-year recession. While it's true that school taxes are by far the most burdensome on Nyack tax payers, \$133 more in village taxes is \$133 less than could be spent on prescription drugs, school supplies, clothing, groceries, or to keep one's home a few degrees warmer in the winter.

The most effective and important way to tighten the village budget long-term is to move away from "incremental budgeting" and towards "zero-based budgeting." Zero-based budgeting is a planning and budgeting process that requires each and every budgetary line-item to be justified from the basis of zero, not merely from what was spent the year before, and in which all activities and operations are evaluated, ranked in order of importance, and funded accordingly.

ZBB was proven to work right here in Nyack under Mayor Kieran Quinn. Other ways for the village budget to be tightened without raising taxes are by decreasing expenses; improving our efficiencies; restricting overtime; not re-filling non-essential vacancies, increasing revenues from government grants and additional ratables, and sharing the costs of certain services and/or projects with other communities. I would also consult with and learn from mayors from nearby, similarly-sized communities such as Piermont, which recently passed a budget with a tax increase of less than .4%.

Home is where the heart is. Even though I've traveled to many places, my home and my heart are here in Nyack, where I've lived since 1981. Over the past few months I've rediscovered our village by walking each and every one of its streets, roads, avenues, places, and lanes, and I love Nyack more than ever. I'm running for Mayor of Nyack and asking for your vote on September 15th because I believe that village government has the most important and direct effects on those of us who are fortunate to live here and because I want to make Nyack an even better place to live, work, visit, and raise a family.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and special thanks to the hundreds of villagers who have welcomed me into their homes since the campaign began. Working for the people of Nyack is a privilege that I'll always be grateful for, and I thank you for having hired me to work for you for these last eight years. See you around the village.

Richard Kavesh