

TEANECK PROGRESS

THE TREES THAT ARE SLOW TO GROW BEAR THE SWEETEST FRUIT - MOLIERE



TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2007

Pay-to-Play in Teaneck?

During the Pay-to-Play section of the forum a member of the audience made a long speech about how he was against Pay-to-Play in principle, but that it was irrelevant to Teaneck as Teaneck has been immune to Pay-to-Play. After reviewing the following, you can decide whether Pay-to-Play came to Teaneck with last year's election.

On July 1st of last year, a new council was sworn in. Newly elected council member Rudolph wasted no time in recruiting Birdsall Engineering to be Teaneck's new planner. There was some controversy over whether it was ethical or appropriate for Rudolph to give Birdsall a tour and perhaps put the other firms at a disadvantage. Rudolph's response included, *"I voluntarily took Birdsall around to show them the lack of growth and development in Teaneck during the era of Jackie Kates as council member, mayor and a member of the planning board."* According to an October 25th letter in the Suburbanite, Rudolph had contacted Birdsall within 5 days of taking office. In addition to these events more was happening away from public scrutiny.

On October 16th, 2006, shortly after the Teaneck council voted to hire Birdsall Engineering, three reports were received by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission. One was filed by the "Committee to elect Charles Gonzalez, Jr.". This showed a June 1 contribution of \$8,239 by the Bergen County Young Democrats. The other two reports were from the Bergen County Young Democrats. The first of these was the July 2006 report (filed three months late) showing the same contribution to the Gonzalez campaign. The second more interesting report, was for October 2006, This report listed \$7,700 in contributions listed as received on July 10th 2006. Of these nine, for \$300 each, are directly attributable to Birdsall. The nine \$300 contributions were not reportable and it is likely these were never meant to be seen by the public.

As can be seen in the June 7th Gonzalez report, the bulk of the traceable money, \$16,114, spent on the successful Rudolph/Gussen campaign was filtered as in-kind contributions through the "Committee to Elect Charles Gonzalez, Jr." The Gonzalez committee itself was financed by various arms of the Bergen County Democratic Organization through groups like the Bergen County Young Democrats. The financing of the Rudolph/Gussen campaign was kept completely hidden till after the election.

All the referenced reports can be viewed on the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission. Information on the contributors connections to Birdsall can be found via simple web searches. To make it easy to see the reports and other information, I've created a small [Teaneck Pay-to-Play](#) website where the listed reports and additional information can be viewed.

[Deleted comment list:

1. off topic, partial truth, personal attack
2. off topic about new police officers
3. personal attack
4. subtle suggestion that I am dishonest]

35 COMMENTS:



swurgle said...

Tom - Let me give you some advice from personal experience - it's generally not worth the trouble to censor comments. It discourages people from participating which, to me, defeats the purpose of the whole blogging experience.

A better approach is to let the discussions go where they may and to point out or challenge comments that you believe to be misleading.

That said, sometimes a commenter pushes my buttons in the right way and I have no choice but to hit the delete button. For me, it's unflattering comments about an individual's physical appearance and/or egregious and superfluous racism and anti-semitism (as opposed to essential and subtle racism and anti-semitism.) (insert emoticon to connote sarcasm here)

JULY 17, 2007 AT 10:14 PM



Tom Abbott said...

Needless to say I disagree. As I've suggested in the past there are plenty of other places to post. I don't wish to pursue this subject here as it is off topic, but numbers of people have told me they won't participate in the blogging experience because they feel they will be viciously attacked. I will continue to delete any anonymous post I feel is inappropriate.

JULY 17, 2007 AT 10:52 PM 



swurgle said...

Tom - Do what you want. People who want to submit odious, hateful and misleading comments will have to do so under my posts, since I'm a tad more forgiving.

Now onto the topic at hand. Your website about Teaneck Pay-to-Play is very interesting, although as I am a novice in election law, it was very difficult for me to understand the incriminating information. Can you provide a bit of a primer for newbies like me?

For example, what does "in-kind" mean? How is it significant?

Also, can you spell out the significance of the nine \$300 contributions on one day from Birdsall associates. Is \$300 or some type of maximum amount of donation that doesn't raise scrutiny? Is it a common practice for companies to break down bigger contributions into chunks and have them submitted under different names?

What about Charlie Gonzales? Was he some kind of dupe in this whole enterprise?

It would be helpful also to spell out how the money flowed. How much appears to have come from Birdsall? What was the value of the payback that they received?

JULY 17, 2007 AT 11:11 PM

Tom Abbott said...

Too many questions! Trying to be concise and objective, I've manage to just raise more questions. I'd try answering everything, but it would take days (weeks might be more honest) even if I had all the answers. Fortunately, NJ provides all the information at the [New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission](#) site. Every candidate for New Jersey public office is required to follow the rules set forth in the [Compliance Manual for Campaign Reporting](#). The state provides all the information a candidate needs to comply with the law to each candidate who files a petition. The rules and forms are not difficult to follow. Especially in small campaigns. There is a separate [Compliance Manual for Political Committees](#). I have only skimmed the latter as it have not need it to fill out forms. Much of the information is common to both as it concerns interactions between the candidate and political committees.

In a nutshell the rules require candidates and political committees to report on campaign contributions and expenses according to a schedule that should allow the public to have the bulk of this information before they vote. All contributions over \$300 must be listed with pertinent information about the donor. The \$300 limit is aggregate. One can't skirt it by making ten \$100 donations to stay unlisted. In addition, all expenses must be paid for out of an official bank depository or via credit card and listed with considerable detail. The last pre-election report is due 11 days before the election and should cover everything through that day. Between that and the election itself any expense or contribution over \$1000 must be reported within 48 hours. For a better understanding read the manual. It's shorter than it looks.

As for your questions, first, "An "in-kind" contribution is a contribution of goods or services contributed to a candidate or committee." (Manual page 13) If these were not counted, one could get around the \$300 limit by purchasing supplies for a candidate effectively hiding a contribution. In last years elections, the Gonzalez campaign spent \$24,171.00 on the printing and postage for three campaign mailings (reported after the election on June 7). The mailings were in support of the candidacies of Gonzalez, Rudolph and Gussen. The Gonzalez report listed two-thirds of this cost as an in-kind contribution to Rudolph and Gussen. Initially Rudolph and Gussen chose not to report it despite the fact that it was the bulk of the money spent on their campaign. Their reports did not acknowledge it until a correction was filed around February of this year. (The numbers are still wrong.) In fact, as of the election, the Rudolph/Gussen campaign, one of the most expensive in Teaneck history, showed total contributions of \$100.

What made the in-kind contribution "significant" is that it traces the financing of the Rudolph/Gussen campaign through the Gonzalez campaign back to the

Bergen County Democratic Organization. This is seen in various contributions to the Gonzalez campaign. The most significant of these in terms of pay-to-play being the \$8,239 from the Bergen County Young Democrats. The Young Democrats had received at least \$2,700 from Birdsall.

The size of each Birdsall contributions, \$300, is significant because they are not reportable. There was no requirement to list them. I can't tell you from first hand experience whether it is "common practice for companies to break down bigger contributions into chunks and have them submitted under different names." I believe it is very common. Only most are not foolish enough to get caught. It is also not a violation of the current Pay-to-Play laws. The \$2,700 wheeled into the Teaneck campaign does not disqualify Birdsall from being Teaneck's planner.

As for how the money flowed, it is not really important. In Pay-to-Play the idea is to keep it within the law and hide the flow of money. Who knows how many other contributions Birdsall and associates may have made to other campaigns and committees. According to the [Fairlawn Pay-to-Play](#) site Birdsall made over \$35,000 in contributions to The Bergen County Democratic Committee in 2004 alone. In a county organization a company can contribute to one candidate and be rewarded with a job in another town where the council members owe their election to the same county organization.

Continuing with your litany of questions. Any thing I said about Gonzalez's role would be speculative. Whether or not he was aware of what was going on is unimportant. It was done in his name.

I don't know how much has come from Birdsall to the Bergen County Democrats. For 2007, I only have evidence of the \$2,700 that I've presented. To date I believe they have received well over \$100,000 in contracts. One can only speculate on how much more they will get in the future, but one can be sure that when figuring their bills the cost of the contributions will be passed to their customers.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 2:16 AM 

WOW said...

All this time I thought based on comments made by members of the public that Birdsall had some how funneled tens of thousands of dollars through Gonzalez to Gussen & Rudolph and now I just learned from your post that it was only \$2,700. That's amazing that you are making an accusation over \$2,700. Tom, who else was interviewed by the Council. How do you know that Birdsall wasn't the best.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 9:22 AM

wham said...

wow said...

All this time I thought based on comments made by members of the public that

Birdsall had some how funneled tens of thousands of dollars through Gonzalez to Gussen & Rudolph and now I just learned from your post that it was only \$2,700. That's amazing that you are making an accusation over \$2,700.

Don't forget about Rudolph's \$95,000 a year job with the county. Is he the best man for that job?

JULY 18, 2007 AT 9:30 AM

Wiley Romo said...

Wait a minute..... You are saying that Birdsall Engineering gave money to the Bergen County Young Democrats and they in turn gave money to Charlie Gonzalez and this helped Rudolph how? Seems like a stretch to me.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 10:16 AM

Tom Abbott said...

It may seem like a stretch, but that's how pay-to-play works. The term "wheeling" is used to describe it. Money is passed from committee to committee so that when it reaches the candidate who benefits, it can not be traced to the source. The bulk of the money, over \$16,000 spent on the Rudolph/Gussen campaign came from the Gonzalez campaign.

Does anyone actually believe that on July 10th, within days after meeting with Mr. Rudolph, various factions at Birdsall just spontaneously chose to give nine \$300 checks to the Bergen County Young Democrats? Or considering Birdsall's history, that these were the only contributions from Birdsall to the Bergen County Democratic Organization that year. Keep in mind they gave over \$35,000 in 2004.

In a normal interview process, the applicants come in on an equal basis. In this case, one applicant had access to a council member. Just by coincidence that applicant was a well known contributor to the Bergen County Democratic Organization.

For those who are under the delusion that it's only \$2,700, aren't you embarrassed to believe that our council can be bought so cheaply.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 10:47 AM 🗑️

Apoplectic said...

"Continuing with your litany of questions."

"For those who are under the delusion that it's only \$2,700, aren't you embarrassed to believe that our council can be bought so cheaply."

It seems from your post that after meeting with Rudolph, the company may have gotten the impression that they would have contracts coming their way in the future.

Why was this bad, per se?

What I don't see in your post, is any evidence that the impression was based on anything other than the fact that they (Birdsall) provide a service that Rudolph was looking for. Is it out of the question that they wanted to support a candidate that had views in line with their goals? Show me that these are contributions intended to sway a member of the Council one way or another. That's something I can get behind. But even then, I wouldn't say that the situation called for Pay to Play legislation.....just impeachment!

I'll go a step further and ask if it's bad that a company has goals in line with a councilmembers views? If anyone on the council expresses a viewpoint and tells the voters what they believe in, should we only allow political contributions from companies that DO NOT agree with those views?

When you enact legislation regarding campaign financing (no matter what it is), it doesn't only affect an isolated incident, it affect every possible instance of an individual (and yes, a corporation) giving to a campaign.

If there is indeed a problem with "Pay to Play" (even though Councilmember Kates said that to her knowledge there is non in Teaneck), the voters will not re-elect those councilmembers during the next election.

As I had mentioned in a previous post...just because there is a possibility of, or the appearance of illicit activity (bribery), doesnt mean that we should start restricting the free speech rights of the collective voting public.

When there is a question regarding free speech, as the Supreme Court stated very recently....the tie goes to the speaker, not the **ensor**.

[JULY 18, 2007 AT 11:47 AM](#)

Anonymous said...

I think that the problem here is that it's just too hard to find enough evidence to prosecute those that deal in Pay to Play.

Let's just lower the standard, so we can convict them more easily?

[JULY 18, 2007 AT 11:51 AM](#)

[Tom Abbott](#) said...

If council member Kates had indeed said that to her knowledge there was no pay-to-play problem in Teaneck, that would not mean there was none.

The contributions that Birdsall made were made within the rules and did not disqualify Birdsall from receiving the planning contract. In that sense one could say there was no pay-to-play problem.

I happen to believe that the pay-to-play system that encourages bribes in the form of contributions should be stopped. Those who feel otherwise are free to

vote for those who benefit from those bribes.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 12:15 PM 

Anonymous said...

WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY (\$3,000.00) THE TEANECK POLICE UNION GAVE TO NEW BEGINNINGS? WHY ISN'T ANYBODY BITCHING ABOUT THAT?

THE POLICE OBVIOUSLY FELT THAT THESE CANDIDATES WOULD GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT AT CONTRACT TIME OR OTHER PERKS THEY MAY BE LOOKING FOR.

ISN'T IT FUNNY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPERIOR OFFICERS UNION, STEVE LIBRIE, (ALSO THE VOICE OF THE PBA) WENT TO KISS ELIE KATZ'S ASS THE MORNING AFTER THE ELECTION WHEN THE POLICE BACKED SLATE LOST? ISN'T IT FUNNY THAT THE POLICE HAVE NOT BEEN BITCHING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS SINCE THE ELECTION?

JULY 18, 2007 AT 12:36 PM

Apoplectic said...

"If council member Kates had indeed said that to her knowledge there was no pay-to-play problem in Teaneck, that would not mean there was none."

Mr. Abbott, just because Birdsall gave a political contribution doesn't mean that there was a bribe.

I think that there are some aspects of politics that are getting a bad name:

1) It's natural for people (and businesses) to support candidates that have opinions that are in line with their own goals.

2) Just because a candidate does something that benefits me (or a company) DOES NOT mean that (s)he is doing it because I (or the company) supported them.

It is much more likely that they were supported because of their views - than to think that anyone is awarding contracts because they are taking bribes.

Something has infected our collective consciousness when it comes to politics and because of it - we just to the conclusion that bribes are occurring....simply because well, (s)he's a politician after all.....

JULY 18, 2007 AT 12:57 PM

What Lola Wants said...

When is the next Town Council Meeting? I want to either get a babysitter early or get my TV revved up for the action!!!

JULY 18, 2007 AT 1:34 PM

swurgle said...

apoplectic said:

"...just because there is a possibility of, or the appearance of illicit activity (bribery), doesnt mean that we should start restricting the free speech rights of the collective voting public."

Without going into detail, here are a few of the ways that political corruption is bad for Teaneck:

- * It raises the costs of doing business
- * It increases the risks and uncertainties of doing business
- * It discourages and reduces investment in general and capital investment in particular
- * It creates unfair competition
- * It diverts resources away from productive investment
- * It disempowers people and encourages their sense of alienation.
- * It undermines respect for authority and increases cynicism about leaders at all levels of society.
- * It discourages participation in civil society and elevates self-interest as a guide to conduct.
- * It substitutes personal gain for ideology and principle.
- * It prevents or makes it more difficult for governments to implement laws and policies.
- * It damages the reputation of politicians and encourages people to go into politics for the wrong reasons.
- * It undermines public trust in politicians and in political institutions and processes.
- * It encourages cynicism and discourages political participation.
- * It perverts the conduct and results of elections.
- * It consolidates political power and reduces political competition.
- * It delays and distorts political development and sustains political activity based on patronage, clientelism and money.
- * It limits political access to the advantage of the rich.
- * It reduces the transparency of political decision-making.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 1:40 PM

swurgle said...

BTW, credit for the above goes to FAQs: Causes & consequences of corruption (<http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/faq/faqs1.cfm#30>)

JULY 18, 2007 AT 1:42 PM

Apoplectic said...

"Without going into detail, here are a few of the ways that political corruption is bad for Teaneck: "

Swurgle, I completely agree with you that almost everything on your list is a true possible consequence of a Pay to Play scheme. I just can't agree that the

answer is Pay to Play legislation.

Many things have consequences!

As a parable --

Releasing convicts from jail creates a slew of issues for society as well (I trust that I don't need to list them). Does that mean that a bill to never release people from jail would be the right thing to do?? - even though it would get rid of the issues in one fell swoop.

I'm not saying that I'm against Pay to Play legislation because I think that you are wrong. To the contrary, you have excellent points that deserve open discussion.

- 1) The contracts that are awarded should be put under a microscope.
- 2) The money given to candidates should be monitored in a way in which it's not confusing to the average person.

Those are the things I'd like legislation to tackle. Preventing people from supporting candidates solely on the possibility of impropriety is abridging their rights of free speech and free association (not to mention the rights of their spouses, children and anyone else under their roof).

JULY 18, 2007 AT 2:22 PM

Wiley Romo said...

I am going to try to respond point by point to what swurgle wrote here. It seems like you have posted several vague statements about corruption here and since the supposed corruption we are debating is pay to play, I will respond accordingly.

* It raises the costs of doing business: How so?

~In what way can you guarantee that business would be cheaper if there is "pay to play" reform?

* It increases the risks and uncertainties of doing business

~Again, how can you say that with any certainty? Some may believe that what we are discussing is corruption but I see the "pay to play" debate in Teaneck to be factionalism. It increases the risks for opponents to the governing majority but I say that as long as the law is obeyed, the majority on the council gets to pick and hire who they please. Who would New Beginnings have hired or appointed to the various positions available? Most likely their friends. How is that not unethical?

* It discourages and reduces investment in general and capital investment in particular

~More vague statements. Your argument is a potemkin village, all face and no

structure.

- * It creates unfair competition

~If pay to play is legal, then what is the scale to which we measure fairness? Is Teaneck supposed to be setting up an "Independent Fairness Council?" And if so, how fair would it be to have the Cramers and all of Ron Schwartz's allies run their version of checks and balances? The township council is supposed to govern, not show weekly screenings of Fahrenheit 911.

- * It diverts resources away from productive investment

~You are getting redundant here. You will need to elaborate instead of throwing these vague statements sans facts all over the place.

- * It disempowers people and encourages their sense of alienation.

~What are you talking about?

- * It undermines respect for authority and increases cynicism about leaders at all levels of society.

~What does? Governing within the confines of the law? Wow. I wonder what the outcome is when laws are broken.

- * It discourages participation in civil society and elevates self-interest as a guide to conduct.

~I get the sense that you see the township of Teaneck in its current form as some sort of dystopia where corruption has run amok. I am sorry if you feel that way, but I would like to see evidence that laws have been broken before we start hanging folks. Evidence being a little more than tracing 2700 bucks through its wheels.

- * It substitutes personal gain for ideology and principle.

~I know that under the previous administration there was patronage. Are we proposing that it is the current council that is corrupt or do we agree that the previous council was no less corrupt?

- * It prevents or makes it more difficult for governments to implement laws and policies.

~How does allowing an administration to hire and appoint folks who will implement their agenda prevent governments from implementing laws and policies ie. agenda?

- * It damages the reputation of politicians and encourages people to go into politics for the wrong reasons.

~I think people pointing fingers and backing up their accusations with conjecture and conspiracy theories damages the reputation of politicians.

- * It undermines public trust in politicians and in political institutions and processes.

~So does this blog. (Just kidding)

- * It encourages cynicism and discourages political participation.

~It could be argued that pay to play can be used to describe a multitude of things. All of which are political participation.

- * It perverts the conduct and results of elections.

~Huh?

- * It consolidates political power and reduces political competition.

~I think 16 candidates running for office is pretty competitive.

- * It delays and distorts political development and sustains political activity based on patronage, clientelism and money.

~Sounds like the Council while Kates was Mayor.

- * It limits political access to the advantage of the rich.

~I guess, or....wait, what?

- * It reduces the transparency of political decision-making.

~I think plenty of people get to see the decisions made in Teaneck. In fact, what town has as high a turnout at meetings? The main problem is that the same people show up to the meetings complaining about the same things from the same point of view. The folks making the most noise represent an agenda that was rejected at the polls by citizens who are too busy to go to every meeting and cause a stink. They elected a new council to defend them from the unproductive agenda of New Beginnings.

The folks who are railing against corruption in Teaneck are only opposed to corruption when it is not their own brand of it. The folks who call for diversity in Teaneck are only tolerant of certain groups of people. (We've all heard some of the rhetoric)

JULY 18, 2007 AT 2:28 PM

Anonymous said...

Wiley,

Rather than bash the last administration and others who ran but lost, could you base your argument on facts that stand alone by themselves? It's not about what was or could have been, it's about what is, and what could be.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 2:40 PM

Wiley Romo said...

you are right. I am just trying to point out that there is a lot of talk going around with no facts backing it up. I was trying to make a point, not trying to get into details about the last administration

JULY 18, 2007 AT 2:43 PM

Stacy said...

Tom --

In one of your initial comments here you wrote, "The \$300 limit is aggregate. One can't skirt it by making ten \$100 donations to stay unlisted."

In a subsequent paragraph within that comment you wrote that "[t]he size of each Birdsall contributions, \$300, is significant because they are not reportable. There was no requirement to list them."

These two statements do not add up. Either the operative rules require aggregate donations above \$300 to be reported or they do not. If the rules do, indeed, require aggregate donations above \$300 to be reported, then the Birdsall contributions were reportable and the amount was never intended to be kept private.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 4:43 PM

Tom Abbott said...

Stacy:

I've collectively labelled the nine \$300 contributions as Birdsall's for simplicity. If you go back to the original post and check the [Teaneck Pay-to-Play](#) I created or the actual report that can be viewed from the site, you will see that they are actually from nine separate entities all connected to Birdsall Engineering. For example one is from Howard Birdsall himself, another is from Birdsall Engineering, and a third is from the President of Birdsall Engineering.

By splitting the contribution into nine different entities, the contribution were not reportable and Birdsall was still eligible to be awarded the contract.

I hope this makes it clearer.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 5:16 PM 🗑️

Tom Abbott said...

On the same subject, there is a further indication that Birdsall did not consider these contribution to be reportable. Before being awarded a no bid contract the

applicant must fill out a form that lists any reportable contributions. When the council approved their contract the completed form was available. It listed no reportable contributions.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 5:26 PM 🗑️

Apoplectic said...

"Before being awarded a no bid contract the applicant must fill out a form that lists any reportable contributions."

I have a question. What exactly is the issue here?

As I understand it:

- 1) A company's subsidiaries and individuals that work for the company contributed money to political campaigns.
- 2) No laws were broken, nor are you alleging any laws were broken.
- 3) It wasn't considered reportable income and therefore was not reported.
- 4) None of the 9 subsidiaries or individuals that you named (that gave \$300) was a signatory to the no-bid contract.

For those that haven't bothered to go to the site you set up, Mr. Abbott put together, among other things, a list of 9 subsidiaries and individuals that contributed money to political campaigns.

Did any of these subsidiaries sign the no-bid contract?

If the "Parent Company" that signed the contract HAD put down those donations, it would have been perjurious. They did not give them, rather subsidiary companies and individuals did.

This may not sit right with you, but the answer then, is to require donations by subsidiaries to be reported on all no-bid contracts.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 7:27 PM

Anonymous said...

Apoplectic,

It seems to me that the situation you've just described would be covered under "conflict of interest", and thus shouldn't be happening for that reason.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 8:01 PM

Tom Abbott said...

Apoplectic:

Yes, they were very clever. They kept their contributions within the law, but a

bribe is still a bribe even if it's legal. I have no bone to pick with Birdsall. They understand pay-to-play and do what they need to gain business. You may believe they contribute due to shared political ideals. I don't.

The Bergen County Democratic Organization spent over \$35,000 on last years Teaneck election. They expect a return on their investment. I expect they will be willing to spend substantial amounts to solidify their hold in 2008.

Again this may be perfectly ok with you. It's unlikely I will be voting for their candidates.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 9:02 PM 

Apoplectic said...

"You may believe they contribute due to shared political ideals. I don't."

Mr. Abbott,

Your statement really does hit the nail on the head. The question that you need to be asking is -

Whether the solution that you are proposing (Pay to Play legislation) is actually an appropriate response?

By enacting this kind of legislation, you are effectively preventing not only individuals, but their spouses, children, etc... from contributing to campaigns and participating in the political process with their capital.

I agree with you that there are possible problems with companies that can "game" the system, just as I agree with Swurgle as to what those problems may be (insert your own emoticon here, Swurgle).

Where we differ is how to address it. I'm a staunch supporter of free speech and free association rights. I don't feel that they should be abridged even to curb possible bribery.

Don't confuse my position -- I'm NOT FOR bribery at all. I just feel that where free speech will be constricted, we need to find another way.....even if it's less perfect.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 9:23 PM

Anonymous said...

"subtle suggestion that I am dishonest"

What was the comment? Are you interested in all comments or should they be pre-approved?

JULY 18, 2007 AT 10:16 PM

Apoplectic said...

"It seems to me that the situation you've just described would be covered under "conflict of interest", and thus shouldn't be happening for that reason."

Anon 8:01:

For the record, I do not have the facts about which groups signed any of the contracts in question, but it's my understanding that it was only the Birdsall "parent" company. I don't have any reason to doubt that the information Mr. Abbott provided is accurate - so I don't see a conflict of interest.

What would the conflict be? The subsidiaries didn't sign any contracts with the township!

JULY 18, 2007 AT 10:35 PM

Tom Abbott said...

I believe Birdsall Engineering, Inc. signed the contract. It is not the parent group.

As for the ethics of the situation, it is clear to everyone by now that you see no ethical problems. You need not repeat yourself.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 11:14 PM 

Apoplectic said...

"As for the ethics of the situation, it is clear to everyone by now that you see no ethical problems. You need not repeat yourself."

You have not understood me then. I do believe that there are many "possible" ethical problems. I just don't think that the solution is Pay to Play legislation that will affect many more people than just the "Birdsall's" in Teaneck.

This legislation affects the free speech rights of Wives, Husbands, children, etc....

That's not the message I want to pass on about how to participate in our republic.

JULY 18, 2007 AT 11:46 PM

tnb has filing issues as well said...

if you have time tom, please check out the reporting irregularities both from the new beginnings campaign (for example last report is entirely unsigned) and deputy mayor parker's returns (\$3000 contribution to new beginning campaign, not reported on the unsigned new beginnings filing)

hmmm...

JULY 18, 2007 AT 11:59 PM

Tom Abbott said...

I should really delete the post by "tnb has filing issues as well said..." as it fails my standards in two ways. It is off topic and not true.

Lizette Parker's campaign reported the 5/16 - \$3000.00 contribution to Teaneck New Beginning on the 20 Day Post-Election Report. Teaneck New Beginnings listed the receipt of this contribution on 5/19 and also included it properly on their 20 Day Post-Election Report.

Neither the last report or any report is totally unsigned. The treasurer signed every report. The three candidates do not appear to have signed the two post election reports, but that is a minor problem they will probably be corrected.

There may indeed be some minor problems with either of the above campaign reports, but there is absolutely no indication that they made any attempt to hide any information including support from the Teaneck Police and Fire Departments.

This appears to be just another spurious anonymous attack on Teaneck New Beginnings.

hmmm... indeed!

JULY 19, 2007 AT 1:41 AM 

Anonymous said...

Tom:

That should have been your method of responding to the other posts as well.

Deleting comments just makes people believe that their comments aren't as important as agendas.

JULY 19, 2007 AT 8:44 AM

Anonymous said...

One should also investigate the trail of money into the most recent BOE election last spring and candidates' connections with BCDO and/or TNB.

JULY 19, 2007 AT 9:07 PM