



A Closer Look at Democratic Candidate David Gruman

M. Solomon

The ballot for this year's primary elections will have a cast of candidates who have never run for office before. On the Democratic ticket, challenging Mayor Raymond Coles and his running mate Moshe Raitzik is David Gruman. A newcomer to politics, David runs a successful online business and is a former *talmid* of Bais Medrash Govoha and lifetime Lakewood resident.

David likes to see the good in people and he has nothing against anyone who is currently on the township committee. What does concern him is that there are issues in Lakewood, and he feels that the issues aren't being dealt with quickly enough. "Part of the problem is that people in office are always supposed to be kept on their toes," says David. "The people on the committee have all been there for a long time and that is very unhealthy. People should be in office for a few years and then move on in order to allow others with enthusiasm to take the reins of the township. The system that we have in Lakewood allows officials to grow complacent. In the beginning, every new member of the committee feels the urgency to accomplish and effectuate change. After a few years in office – knowing that elections are easily won once a person has brand-name recognition—the urgency is gone and the committee member grows stagnant."

Term limits

David is a big believer in term limits and that is one of the first issues that he would like to tackle when he wins a seat on the Township Committee. He feels that any problem that we might have in Lakewood, whether it is traffic, taxes or any other issue, is due to the fact that the members of the committee have been there for multiple terms. The lack of innovation in dealing with Lakewood's problems is a direct result of the low turnover rate on the committee, according to David. New members would bring new ideas and vigor to the committee and would better reflect the opinion of the common resident.

Although the issue of invoking the Faulkner Act has been

a topic of conversation for many years now, David believes that it is something that should be worked on in addition to creating term limits. Term limits would put pressure on elected officials to perform, but more importantly, having a directly elected mayor would force the mayor to take control and make sure that issues are dealt with expediently.

Better budget management

One area that speaks to David's expertise is managing budgets. In regard to the township's budget, David remarked, "It is sad to see that year after year the township hires the same engineer, law firm, etc., while their compensation continues to increase. In the business world, professionals don't take anything for granted –

they assume that the only way that a company will retain them is if they remain competitive and perform to the standards of the company. Performance reviews and price shopping are common business practices. The same holds true for vendors and any other expenditure. For the most part, businesses operate with zero based

budgeting, where prior year spending is not a given for the coming year. There is no reason why government should be any different."

Tired of always hearing talk of what could be done to fix traffic, David quips: "Actions speak louder than studies."

Board dynamics

David is also concerned about the Planning and Zoning Boards in Lakewood. He feels that members should be switched out more frequently. The dynamics of the boards have to change periodically in order to allow for new opinions to infiltrate the thinking of the boards. It is time to set up an oversight committee that will evaluate the performance of the board members to ensure that current and future board members have the best interests of all of the people of Lakewood in mind, and to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Infrastructure

Over the years, there seems to have been a push by the

OFFICIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY BALLOT										
OFFICE TITLE	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN G	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN H	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN I	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN J	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN K	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN L	DEMOCRATIC COLUMN M	PERSONAL CHOICE		
GOVERNOR <small>OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR</small>	ZINBA	BRENNAN	JOHNSON	WISNIEWSKI	MURPHY	LESHAM				WRITE IN
STATE SENATE <small>OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE SENATE</small>					JONES					WRITE IN
GENERAL ASSEMBLY <small>OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES</small>					COLON					WRITE IN
STATE COMMITTEE <small>OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE STATE COMMITTEE</small>					SCOTT					WRITE IN
STATE COMMITTEE <small>OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE STATE COMMITTEE</small>					SALONIS					WRITE IN
STATE COMMITTEE <small>OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE STATE COMMITTEE</small>					KOSTOPOULOS					WRITE IN
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township to increase housing in Lakewood. In David’s opinion, although it is important to look to the future, it is also important to look back and take note that there has been too much effort put into increasing housing and not enough emphasis placed on improving the infrastructure. David feels that this has to be reversed in order for there to be a proper correction in town. Going forward, the boards and the committee *must* take a forceful stance against new housing. Variances should only be granted on very rare occasions. No more spot zoning should take place in Lakewood.

Traffic: Action over studies

The severity of our traffic situation hasn’t been realized yet. We see glimpses of what is to come whenever a main artery is temporarily shut down for maintenance or emergencies. The impact of such occurrences can be devastating to the vehicular traffic flow in town. If we continue the way we are going, then these cases of gridlock will become the norm. In light of this, David recommends that swift action be taken. “There is no need to perform traffic studies to figure out that we need a traffic light on Pine Street and MLK,” says David. “When you see that an intersection is confusing, take care of the issue immediately. Enough with costly studies! If something is obvious, why harp on it? Fix the issue and move on!” There are so many areas that could use a turning lane or a new thoroughfare altogether in order to relieve the traffic in the area. Tired of always hearing talk of what could be done to fix traffic, David quips: “Actions speak louder than studies.”

A voice for everyone

David has lived his entire life in Lakewood Township. He loved the Lakewood of old, he loves Lakewood for what it is today and he is hopeful for a better Lakewood to come. David concludes: “I feel that the next three years will be very crucial to Lakewood’s future. It is my hope that during these formative years, I will be able to play an important role in steering Lakewood in a positive direction. As a member of the Township Committee, I will be a voice for all of the people and will work hard to make this town a place to be proud of once again.”

This article was paid for by the committee to elect David Gruman.