



HOEHMANN LOOKING TO CLARKSTOWN'S FUTURE PART 2

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter



Ever since Pyramid began having financial problems there have been questions as to what is going to happen to the Palisades Mall. Many ideas had been thrown back and forth, but none seemed to work. In February of this year the mall was put up for auction and purchased. The new owners seem to be getting things in order and making the necessary repairs to it for optimum usage and customer satisfaction. Best Buy has been a staple of the mall but now it seems that it is moving out of there and relocating into the Shops at Nanuet. This would leave a major amount of space open and unused.

"The Best Buy is relocating from the mall, but the mall is already working on, they've got a deal. They're not telling us, but my understanding is they have a deal, to backfill the Best Buy, down at the mall."

Speaking about the mall, what else is going on with it? We've got new owners. There's been talk about mixed-use hotels and housing.

"They haven't come in with any plans for housing. They do have the ability to do a hotel. As of right, they could do a hotel down there. The former owners had looked at a hotel and were potentially talking about some housing. But the new owners, the current owners now, they have not broached the subject of housing. What they have done is that there was a moratorium because they were capped on the amount of gross leasable space even though the building is over 4 million square feet, when you factor out the common space, they had like 2.1 million square feet that they could rent out. They have space, that famous attic on the 4th floor, and other internal space that they could easily rent out, but they were prohibited from doing it." Hoehmann stated.

It required a referendum that passed a number of years ago, so the current owners have put in building plans to not expand the footprint of the mall, but to expand the leasable space inside the mall, which they're working on to get another quarter of a million square feet online inside the mall, that they're working on and they have building permits in and, I've been meeting with the town planning department as well. So, they have not pushed housing, but they have talked about additional retail space, which they have plans for.

So, you know, kudos to them that they're really pushing, that vision.

What's doing with the parking lot over there?

There were some issues with the parking deck, and I know that underneath had been closed. It's now open. In fact, the last time I was there for a building, for a business opening, I actually parked in the basement. That's now open in the parking garage. There's still some issues that they're working on the parking deck, but unlike the previous owners, who really were not investing in the mall, the current owners are investing millions each year since they've taken it over. I think people are already seeing some improvements in the physical structure of the mall.

<https://youtu.be/a3aB9ZQwMsY>

Government accountability. What are you doing to keep government accountable to the public. A couple of months ago with that whole demonstration outside, about the complaint from a town vendor related to Mr. Gianatasio's conduct that caused the town attorney to file an ethics complaint with the town ethics board. The demonstrators felt that there was no transparency or government accountability on this issue.

"We've revised our ethics laws. In terms of our ethics law, we have amongst the most stringent ethics reporting within the state for a municipality. We totally revised it when I became town supervisor. What I can tell you is, you hold, yourself accountable and the government accountable."

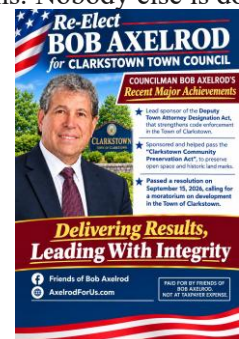
How do you hold it accountable?

"You do it by enforcing your policies and making sure that you're letting people know what's going on. I'm one of the most, if not the most accessible supervisors in the entire county, if not the Hudson Valley. We're the only town that actually does, tele town hall meetings. We get 3 4000 people on the tele town hall meeting. For 9 years we've done coffees with the supervisor and weekly newsletters. When I first came into office, we didn't broadcast our town board meetings. We have a very aggressive platform for social media to be able to

to let people know what's going on. I think overall the transparency and accountability, it's there."

"Unfortunately, my opponent doesn't really run on a platform. He's pretty much just throwing out bold face, statements that, arguably, are untrue. I'll give you a case in point. He's come out with a 10-point platform to address illegal housing. I think 6 of his 10 points are already implemented, including unmasking LLCs. The other 4 he's talking about involve heavier fines, and he's putting out a number that on its face is ridiculous and will be struck down by a court immediately because it would violate the 8th and 14th Amendments. You can't take somebody's house for a first-time violation of illegal housing. As much as you want to, you can crack down, and we're already hitting them with fines that are in the thousands. He's talking about \$50,000 fines on a first offense which in and of itself is illegal on its face, and he should know this as an attorney under the 8th and 14th Amendments."

Hoehmann said that when you deal with accountability, you deal with transparency, we're the most accountable and transparent government in the entire county. No other town supervisor does tele town hall meetings. He does 9 of them a year. They're not easy to do. He sits in his chair, looks at that screen and listens to this phone. People can say whatever they want and despite what people think, they don't pre-screen it. He has a team of staff that sits around and they follow up and hear people's concerns. Nobody else is doing that.



“At a town board meeting, we get 5 people, 7 people, 10 people in an election year, which last year and this year Unfortunately it's back-to-back election years. In election year we pretty much will get people that might have a one-off issue that show up and and friends of of political candidates that want to come and posture and ask politically motivated questions. The way you get around that, the way you make yourself accountable, and the way you have transparency is the tele town hall meetings. It's the weekly newsletters, the coffees with the cops, the coffees with the town supervisor.

It's all of that, variety of outreach where you expose yourself to the people and you let them ask you questions and you give them answers, and I'm very proud of what we've done with that.”

Going back to your opponent. A couple of months ago, he put out a thing, I think it was a couple of months ago, on Clarkstown unity Uncensored. ‘*Hoehmann's campaign managed under Rockland County Sheriff's Office investigation for ballot fraud.*’

“That's just, it's patently false. I don't have that campaign manager. Again, here's what my opponent has done, and I don't want to focus on my opponent. Let me suffice to say this, as it relates to my campaign, my opponent has decided to run a decidedly negative campaign where he puts out assertions that are false, and if they're not challenged, then he wants people to believe that they're true. I'm not going to waste my time just chasing down every time this guy says something that's not true. I have a record. I have a very strong record, and people can look at my record as town supervisor. I took over a town that was in fiscal distress. We now have the strongest finances. I took over a town with a part-time code enforcement officer. We now have 6 code enforcement officers and the most stringent code enforcement, policies and procedures and practices in the entire Hudson Valley.”

Hoehmann explained, In fact, they had the legal housing task force which included Gordon Wren, Rabbi Justin Schwartz, members of the fire services community, and they did a summary of all the municipalities and Clarkstown came out as ranking the highest in terms of what they're doing to combat illegal housing and illegal apartments. Now, if you were to listen to political opponents of him and the town board, you wouldn't hear any of that. You would just hear things that are just not true.

“Let me give you a case in point. Not lowering myself to respond to what that gentleman was talking about, what he's trying to assert. How would he know what any law enforcement agency is doing? He doesn't. It's a lie, and it's basically just putting stuff out that's not accurate. So again, I think the people see through that. People want results. People are hurting because of the financial climate on a national level. We're capping taxes this year again, as I said, for at least the 4th time since I've been town supervisor and two cuts. So, again, we're going to do everything we can to address the issues that are important to people and that's spending that's making sure the government is reformed and efficient and we're going to continue to do that and with the development with the moratorium we put in place, we've given a framework and a format for people to be able to ask questions, but I, I've never run a campaign where I respond to my opponent.”

Why should you re elect George Hoehmann as Town Supervisor?

<https://youtu.be/fJRIh6mRKXk>

