

G.N. attorney vies for Plaza board seat

Jonathan Stein trying to get name on March ballot

BY ADAM LIDGETT

Attorney Jonathan Stein announced last week that he will challenge two Village of Great Neck Plaza trustees for a seat on the village board.

Stein, an attorney who has lived in the village since 2009, said he decided to run in the March election back in November 2014.

"One day [my wife and I] were just walking down the street with our newborn twins in the stroller looking at the 'for rent' signs and the stores that went out of business," he said. "I was complaining to my wife and she said to go do something about it."

Stein said the village has been in a state of decline and that current trustees are "putting Band-Aids" on the problems.

Neighboring villages in Manhasset and Roslyn, he said, have been facing similar problems, such as high rents, but are experiencing revivals.

"It doesn't seem like anything is working here," Stein said. "People are leaving, and just having gone to a couple meetings and read through the ones I've missed, it seems [the board] has focused on all the wrong things."

Stein will be challenging trustees Gerry Schneiderman and Lawrence Katz for the two seats on the village board. Both Schneiderman and Katz said they will be running for re-election.

Stein has created a campaign website, JonathanForTrustee.com, through which supporters may donate funding.

A Fundly.com page set up for Stein's campaign had three contributions for \$100 by Friday morning.

One issue that Stein said he sees as a primary concern of the



Great Neck attorney Jonathan Stein is looking to be the next Great Neck Plaza trustee

village is a lack of parking in the village, which he addressed at the Jan. 7 trustees meeting. He said he was concerned a parking report given last month by a village consultant would not be made public and might lead to increased meter rates.

Village of Great Neck Mayor Jean Celender said at the meeting that no official report had been made and that a parking consultant only made a series of suggestions on how the board may alleviate its parking concerns.

She said the recommendations were only preliminary findings and that the announcement of the report would be made public.

The parking consultant, Jerry Giosa of Level G Associates, said in December that the

main issues the village faces are employees of local businesses parking in spots intended for shoppers, a dearth of merchant parking and not enough vehicle turnover in parking spots. His preliminary recommendations included shortening parking time on Middle Neck Road from a two-hour maximum to an hour and a half, increasing parking fees to 50 cents per hour and shortening parking time in Gussack Plaza.

"Instead of focusing on parking turnover, maybe we should wonder why we're turning into a village of hair salons and yogurt places," Stein said. "Maybe we should look to get people to park here for other reasons."

Stein said the village trustees should be debating what

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kind of character they want the village to have.

He said he also wants to look at certain functions in the village to see if they can be reworked, such as the Great Neck Plaza Business Improvement District.

The money spent on the district might be better served somewhere else, he said, adding that he would analyze the program to determine what distinguishes it from other neighboring villages.

"I don't really see [the Business Improvement District] do anything that isn't done anywhere else," Stein

said. "They're not really doing anything novel and they're spending bit of money on that."