

# Suburban

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Calls for officials to put bad behavior aside, work for voters

A letter written to the Suburban, February 18, 2010

This is an open letter to Mayor Jim Phillips and the members of the Old Bridge Township Council.

I attended the Feb. 8 council meeting, and I can now say I am embarrassed to be a resident of Old Bridge.

As a registered independent, I have voted Democratic and voted Republican — and to be honest, I have probably voted the Democratic line more often than the Republican line. However, after last week, I am seriously considering registering as a Republican.

The behavior of some of the Democratic representatives on our council was disgraceful and destructive — Councilman Edward Testino's comments and Councilman Patrick Gillespie demanding that members of the public audience calm down when they expressed their views with applause.

I applaud the Republicans. In many votes, they were voting with their heart and not voting the party line. Only in one instance did a Democrat not vote the party line, and it was Councilman Reginald Butler. I must say that both Councilman Butler and Councilman Robert Volker seem to be able to demonstrate leadership qualities that our residents expect from public officials; it's a shame that the rest of the Democrats can't. And President G. Kevin Calogera took the cake last week. He should seriously consider resigning if he cannot change his behavior, conduct himself with some dignity and treat other members of the council with respect.

And to be honest, Mr. Mayor, you and Himanshu Shah, township director of finance, don't have much to be proud about either after last week. You speak in a condescending tone when council members ask questions that, to be honest, I would like to know the answer to as well. Again, we expect much more from our elected and appointed officials. And if some of our council members and our mayor can't exhibit the qualities required, then perhaps our township residents will have to exercise their right to vote them out in upcoming elections. I'm only sorry that if it comes to that we have to wait so long. At the end of the day, we are in a mess, and to be honest, Mr. Mayor, you and the Democratic council have been in place long enough to own a lot of the responsibility for that. You all need to remember that you are working for all of us — Democrats, Republicans, independents, conservatives, etc. — all township residents. It is a shame that a township resident who has attended two council meetings needs to remind you of this, but put your petty issues aside and get to work for the people of Old Bridge.

Kathleen Jack

Old Bridge