

ELECT

Dan Knapik

MAYOR OF WESTFIELD

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STATEMENT OF COUNCILOR DAN KNAPIK, CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF WESTFIELD

WESTFIELD- My name is Dan Knapik and I am announcing today that I am a candidate for Mayor of the City of Westfield. I am taking on this challenge because I want to make our government responsive to its citizens and position this city financially, so that we can boldly move into the 21st century. I will work to ready our schools for the next generation, provide sound fiscal and personnel management, provide proactive leadership in attracting economic growth and jobs to our City, and I will work everyday to make our neighborhoods vibrant, our citizens better engaged, informed, and proud of our hometown.

I've chosen this site, Abner Gibbs Elementary School, to make this announcement because this school symbolizes the importance of the mayoral election of 2009. Three generations of my family have attended this school. My two sons, Thomas and Jack will enter the Westfield Public Schools in the coming years. It is with their future and that of all current and future students of our City in mind that I promise to provide clear and direct leadership so that they can receive the same quality educational opportunity I did from this great public school system.

To that end, it is imperative that city leaders work cooperatively to ensure that we place high priority on replacing our aged and unsuitable school buildings and maintaining those buildings that remain useful but have long gone neglected. With the closure last spring of Moseley School, the removal of fourth and fifth grade students from Juniper Park Elementary, and the space limitations here at Abner Gibbs, it is wholly evident and widely accepted that a new elementary school is necessary to meet the needs of our public school system. As Mayor, I will work cooperatively and provide clear leadership with the School Committee, the state, the City Council, parents and teachers to ensure that our City is prepared, both financially and programmatically, to move forward on this project as soon as possible.

The budget is the document through which a City sets forth its priorities. It is the responsibility of the Mayor to create this document and to sell it as part of a vision for our City. Over the past two years, our City's vision has been blurred. Like all cities and towns across our state, we are facing challenging times financially. As Mayor, I promise that I will take whole the responsibility for presenting a balanced and responsible budget during my term. I will not hesitate to make difficult and informed decisions. I will work proactively to ensure that our citizens' tax dollars are invested in the most basic and essential city services- public safety, education, roadway maintenance, and neighborhood services.

Further, I will work daily, with citizens, city employees, union leadership, department heads, and elected officials to ensure that these city services are being provided efficiently and effectively. Those who I have worked with in my time on the City Council know that I speak plainly and openly on all matters. As Mayor, first, I will listen to the ideas and concerns of our City's stakeholders. I will

continue to communicate and negotiate to ensure all sides of a given matter are heard. And lastly, I will manage with an understanding that not all are going to agree with the decisions I make.

When I ran for city council eight years ago, my promise was to make sure the citizens of Ward 2 were well-represented. I felt at the time the City could do more and should do more for the residents of its core neighborhoods. Improving the quality of life was a top priority. Prior to the election, I prepared by meeting with the former Mayor and the City Engineer, to discuss the capital projects being planned for the city. Upon my election, I quickly went to work advocating for financing for these projects. They included the Great River Bridge (which is underway now), and phase one of the Old Towne Neighborhood Improvement Project. This phase of the project now completed, replaced sidewalks, water lines, and roadways in some of our City's oldest neighborhoods. This represented the City's first significant investment in these key areas in over 50 years. We presently have two more phases of Old Towne work in planning. When elected your mayor, I will continue such investment in our neighborhoods.

Quality of life issues- I believe that a clean city promotes positive self-image. A great opportunity exists in our downtown- as many of you know, I have been working for many years to make downtown a better place to live and locate a business. In the summer of 2001, the many years of neglect of our city property downtown was quite evident. With the help of some great citizen volunteers, I initiated six consecutive years of downtown cleanups. By coordinating these volunteers and with the assistance of the Department of Public Works, we removed hundreds of yards of trash and tree debris from city owned properties in the core district. We then finished the effort off by mulching all the tree and flower beds in this area every year. As Mayor, I will continue to engage citizens in such efforts so we might take personal pride and responsibility for keeping our neighborhoods clean and safe.

As a small business owner, I have been on the front lines of business planning and development for twenty years. Upon my election, I will immediately reactivate the long-dormant Industrial Development Commission and tap key business leaders to staff this commission. together, we will map out a strategy to attract cutting-edge businesses with good paying jobs to our great city. I am committed to making Westfield a premier location and regional leader in attracting environmentally-friendly businesses. I have worked in the Agawam Industrial Park for ten years, which is home to over 30 environmentally-friendly businesses that employ over 2000 people. As Mayor, the Chief Economic Development official for Westfield, I will work to develop a similar industrial park in this city.

With effective leadership, Our City will endure this economic downturn and emerge stronger. We cannot and will not wait for someone else to solve our problems. We must rely on ourselves- our schools, our families, our business community, and our resolve- to work toward a better Westfield.

I am Dan Knapik and I am running for Mayor. Sincerely, I ask for your vote and your help. Thank you.