

ELECT

Dan Knapik

MAYOR OF WESTFIELD

For Immediate Release
August 13, 2009

Contact: Daniel M. Knapik
(413) 562-1390
dknapik@msn.com

**“A Clean City Strategy”
By Daniel M. Knapik**

WESTFIELD- In trying economic times, city officials become very familiar with the word “No.” Too often, without a second thought, this reaction is followed by the sentence, “There is no money for that.”

As a City Councilor, I’ve prided myself on finding ways to make things happen, whether there was money set aside for them or not. Removing tree stumps, sweeping our neighborhood streets, keeping our parks and public spaces free of graffiti and trash- these are all efforts that should be undertaken without earmarked resources.

It is imperative that city leadership place an emphasis on these tasks and develop a “clean city strategy” with our city departments. Before asking for assistance, whether through volunteer time or other resources, the City must prove to its citizens that it is serious about promoting a positive and clean image. For instance, like many of you, I drive down Clay Hill on a regular basis and I have become disgusted by the overgrowth of vegetation and unkempt visual at a prime entry to our City. The last time any maintenance was done on this hill was by a volunteer corps. It doesn’t have to be that way. It shouldn’t be that way. As a public space, the City should set such clean-ups as a priority. As Mayor, I will instruct city departments to focus on some of these seemingly small but vitally important activities.

Similarly, on Route 20 to the east of the National Guard Bridge, trash and debris litter our streetscape. I would take better advantage of available resources, including the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department “clean team.” By focusing on the gateways to our City we can promote a positive image to visitors and residents alike.

Throughout my term on the City Council, I have worked as both a participant and as a chief organizer for several clean-up and community building initiatives. Prior to the establishment of the BID, I initiated six consecutive downtown clean-ups where volunteers worked to clean and mulch the parking lots in the downtown area. In 2008 and 2009, I worked alongside residents of White Street, Dubois Street, and Cherry Street in an effort to clean up their neighborhood near Fort Meadow School. The City must work to engage our citizens through volunteer efforts not as the solution, but as a complement to core city services.

The “Re-thinking Downtown” draft Action Plan, which was unveiled last week, sets forth a list of suggestions that should be employed citywide in developing our “clean city strategy,” including volunteer coordination and citizen engagement. When elected, I will work to create a Mayor’s Volunteer Corps across the City to ensure that our parks, streetscapes, and neighborhoods reflect the deep pride of our residents. I ask you to join me in making such efforts successful.