

LAST DAYS OF HISTORIC CAMPAIGN GET UGLY;  
ZISA TEAM HURLING MUD TO COVER UP 65% TAX HIKE

Personal Attacks Won't Derail Change Team

**WITH WHAT MAY BE AN HISTORIC CITY ELECTION** just days away, the city council election has gotten ugly as the Zisa/Hurwitz controlled team calling itself “open Government” is making desperate attempts to hold on to power for the political machine that is funding them.

While the truly independent team Hackensack Citizens for Change has focused on real issues such as taxes, garbage collection and road conditions, the Zisa-backed slate has launched a flurry of lies at the Change team, going so far as to attack the wife of Change candidate John Labrosse.

Labrosse said the negative attacks are not unexpected.

“The Open Government ticket is trying to protect the record of the Zisa’s political machine, so they have to try to distract voters with issues that have nothing to do with governing,” said Labrosse.

“But no matter how much mud they throw at us, they can’t erase the fact that their machine raised taxes by 65 percent. They can’t hide their redevelopment failures. They can’t pretend that the people backing them are not lining their pockets with millions of dollars of



John Labrosse

taxpayer money,” added Labrosse.

Labrosse’s running-mate Kathleen Canestrino, herself the victim of a slanderous attack by the Zisa team, said she and her runningmates are not concerned about open government’s campaign tactics.

“We knew going into this that wrestling power away from the machine that the Zisas and political operative Lynne Hurwitz created would not be easy. They make a lot of money from city government and they don’t want to give it up and won’t give it up until they have exhausted every

dirty trick in the book,” said Canestrino.

“We have faith in the voters of this city. We believe they are smarter than to fall for the dirty tricks that have kept the Zisa/Hurwitz political machine in power for decades,” added Canestrino, a retired aerospace engineer who has been a community watchdog for the past five years.

Canestrino added “We have exposed

No matter how much mud they throw at us, they can’t erase the fact that their machine raised taxes by 65 percent. They can’t pretend that the people backing them are not lining their pockets with millions of dollars of taxpayer money.

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OPEN GOVERNMENT MACHINE TICKET  
USED CONFIDENTIAL LIST TO INTIMIDATE  
TEACHERS AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

CANDIDATE CALLS FOR PROSECUTOR TO INVESTIGATE

**IN A STUNNING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT,** the Zisa machine-backed “Open Government” ticket in the May 14 City Council election — that features 2012-13 school board trustee Jason Nunnermacker — did a

political mailing to teachers with a mail list that was likely obtained illicitly.

*The Record* reported on May 4 that The Coalition for Open Government, a slate of candidates seeking election to the City Council on May

14, used a school district directory to identify and send campaign letters to teachers in apparent violation of district policy (“*Teacher information used in council letter-writing campaign*”).

The Record reported that teachers and staff “received letters at their homes asking them as educators to vote for the slate of five candidates running in the May 14 election. Roger Mattei, the campaign manager, said he did not believe the directory

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Jason Nunnermacker



Roger Mattei

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Full Service Mailers

Judge Orders Martin  
to Face Trial on June 13

Open Government Ticket Leader  
Faces \$1,000 Fine, 6 Months In  
Jail For Stealing Signs

**THE LEADER OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT** city council ticket in the May 14 election was recently told by a Bergen County judge, Roy F. McGeedy, that he must stand trial on June 13 for theft.

Ken Martin, a retired police officer, faces a maximum penalty for the offense of six months in jail and \$1,000 fine, according to *The Record* newspaper.

Martin was caught on videotape taking down campaign signs

belonging to his opposition, the Hackensack Citizens for Change ticket. The tape shows Martin taking the signs and putting them in his silver Lexus. Martin recently retired from the police force with a \$170,000 taxpayer financed payout for his unused sick and vacation days.

Citizens for Change candidate Leo Battaglia noticed his team’s signs were missing from in front of a supermarket on West Passaic Street and questioned the manager about the signs. The manager

allowed Battaglia to review the store’s surveillance tape, which clearly showed Martin taking the signs. Battaglia filed a theft complaint against Martin.

The local police department, now under the command of a new police director, following the ouster of former Chief Ken Zisa, who was convicted of misconduct, promptly investigated the matter.

Battaglia said Martin is conducting business the way it was conducted under the Zisa regime, when the

police department was routinely used to help the Zisa family’s political machine.

“Apparently, Kenny Martin didn’t get the memo, there is a change coming to this city and the old corrupt way of doing things will no longer be tolerated,” said Battaglia.

“This is not about stealing signs, this is about trying to silence the political opposition,” said Battaglia.

Martin’s runningmates have failed to criticize Martin’s actions or

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# Caught Lying, Again!

**IN THEIR DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO KEEP CONTROL OF CITY GOVERNMENT**, the city council ticket that is a front group for the Zisa political machine has been fracturing the truth and fabricating stories to discredit their opposition.

In one ridiculous, un-sourced and unsubstantiated mailer to the voters, Zisa’ Open Government ticket said the Hackensack Citizens for Change team voted against playgrounds, street paving and the volunteer ambulance corps.

However no such vote ever took place, nor could it, because four of the five Hackensack Citizens for Change members do not hold public office.

The one Change candidate who is on the council, John Labrosse, never cast a vote against roads, lighting, park or the Ambulance Corps, or

any other worthwhile city project.

“They completely fabricated a story about my votes on the council,” said Labrosse. “I challenge the Open Government team to provide proof of their allegations; but they won’t, because there isn’t any. I have consistently voted to do more for the people with our tax dollars.”

## FIGHTING \$2 MILLION SLUSH FUND

“What I did do,” said Labrosse, “was push to eradicate a \$2 million slush fund from the city budget. I did that on December 30, 2010.

Labrosse explained that after he managed to fight his way on to the council four years ago, overcoming a vicious campaign by the Zisa political machine, he delved into the budget with his now runningmate Kathleen Canestrino, a

senior manager in an aerospace company.

He and Canestrino discovered, among other things, that the city council was putting an extra \$2 million a year into a fireman’s salary account year after year. The money was parked there to be used later to pay for things such as legal fees for the politically well connected.

“The Zisa controlled government didn’t want people knowing how much the city was doling out to lawyers and their political friends hired by the city. So they hid money. They are still hiding money,” said Labrosse.

State officials in Trenton were made aware of the slush fund and the next year it was eliminated.

“If they want to accuse me of closing down one of their slush funds, I will plead guilty to that,” said Labrosse. ❏

# Labrosse Calls for Citywide Redevelop Plan

**COUNCILMAN JOHN LABROSSE SAID THE CITY SHOULD MOVE IMMEDIATELY** to open negotiations with COSTCO to keep the River Street store in Hackensack and stop the company from relocating to Teterboro.

A recent article in *The Record* newspaper said Costco and Wal-Mart may be headed to the new mega-development in Teterboro.

“It is imperative that the city take action to stop COSTCO from moving and taking its jobs and its \$675,000 in property taxes with it,” said Labrosse. “We can’t sit by and watch other towns pilfer our businesses.”

Labrosse said the city’s failure to implement a wide ranging redevelopment plan is part of the problems the city faces in attracting and keeping new business investment.

“Unfortunately, redevelopment, like everything else in Hackensack, is predicated on political decisions controlled by the political insiders whose primary concern is putting money in their pockets, not what is best for the community,”

said Labrosse a first term councilman who is seeking re-election on March 14 on the Hackensack Citizens for Change ticket.

“This city desperately needs a professional, independent, and un-politicized redevelopment commission to attract developers and business development to the city,” said Labrosse. “If my team is elected on May 14th that’s what we will create.”

Labrosse said that Teterboro is using an array of state sanctioned financial incentives to attract businesses to its major new development Teterboro. Included in the complex — according to *The Record* newspaper — will be a Wal-Mart Store that many had hoped would locate in Hackensack.

“To be competitive with other communities, Hackensack needs to have an aggressive, city-wide redevelopment plan that can offer financial incentives to developers, just the way Teterboro and other municipalities are doing,” said Labrosse. ❏

## CONFIDENTIAL LIST

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was a restricted document, but the district's top official disagreed.”

“The bottom line, from my point of view, is that a staff directory is confidential,” said Joseph Abate, the interim superintendent.

Abate told *The Record* that “the district doesn’t allow campaigning and politicking on school premises and that the use of school records was also off limits.

“As far as personnel goes — starting date, ending date and salary [are public],” Abate said. “Anything beyond that the public does not have a right to know.”

“The bottom line, from my point of view, is that a staff directory is confidential,” said Joseph Abate, the interim superintendent.

It is not clear how the open government ticket obtained the list, but Citizens for Change candidate John Labrosse said it was likely that Nunermacker and perhaps school board attorney Richard Salkin had a hand in it.

“It’s certainly not out of the realm of possibility that Nunermacker and Salkin used their connections with the school district to get their hands on the list. I think Mr. Nunermacker should explain how they got the list and what

they were trying to do with it,” said Labrosse.

Kathleen Canestrino, who is running with Labrosse on the “Change” ticket, said the letter to the teachers and school staff was a subtle form of intimidation from the political machine that is controlled by Zisa ally Lynne Hurwitz, who backed candidates in April’s school board election.

“The message is pretty obvious; Nunermacker is not so subtly implying that: ‘vote for our team or you might find yourself out of a job,’” said

Canestrino, a city council watchdog.

“Lynne Hurwitz has a history of intimidating people and this letter that went to teacher’s homes is just one more example of how she employs strong-arm tactics to get votes,” added Canestrino. “It’s shocking to think that the so called open government ticket is now strong-arming teachers in our school system. What will they do next?” asked Canestrino. Citizens for Change candidate Rose Greenman, an attorney, said there should be

an investigation into how Nunermacker’s slate obtained the confidential teacher list.

“The school superintendent has said publicly that the list of teacher’s home addresses is not and should not be available to political candidates; therefore the question is how this list was obtained. Were any laws broken? Did Mr. Nunermacker or the school board attorney use their influence to obtain this list surreptitiously? The county prosecutor should look into this,” said Greenman. ❏



ZISA  
HURLING  
MUD

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the Open Government ticket for what it is, and the political machine that controls this city doesn't like it. We have taken them off their game, so now they flailing away throwing whatever they can at us. They are frantic and they are just hurting themselves," said Canestrino.

David Sims, a member of the Hackensack Citizens for Change team and director of the city's youth basketball league, "The people I talk to while campaigning want to talk about the deplorable condition of the city's streets, and the lack of garbage collection. They don't want to talk about who is driving what car. They want their streets fixed and the trash collected and that's what we are going to do when we are elected on May 14," added Sims

The mudslinging said Sims' runningmate Leo Battaglia is an intimidation tactic designed to scare voters and intimidate anyone who speaks out against the political machine. But, says Battaglia, people aren't afraid anymore.

"The people are speaking out; they are talking to us directly and on our Facebook page about what's wrong with this city and how it can be fixed. They want us to fix it and we will," said Battaglia, a retired businessman and founder of the city's youth soccer league.

Change candidate Rose Greenman, an attorney said that at with former Police Chief Ken Zisa awaiting sentencing after being found guilty of official misconduct, the city's political elite lack the use of the police department to do their bullying for them.

"The city has a new police director who is a square shooter and he has kept the police department out of politics, which is how it should be," said Greenman. ■

COMMENT

On Tuesday, May 14, you will have the opportunity to radically change the future of Hackensack and the fortunes of many — your children and your grandchildren included.

To make this change, all you have to do is get up, get out and go vote. Are you willing to do that?

The case for change in Hackensack is obvious. The city has been run by a small cabal of well-connected, wealthy political insiders who got rich by controlling everything that happens in this city. They care about themselves not you. Need proof?

Look at your streets. They are deplorable. Garbage pickup was dropped to once a week so the city could pick up garbage twice a week in neighboring Maywood. Flooding problems persist year after year with no solutions. The recreation building and programs need to be upgraded. The city is crumbling while the people in power raised your taxes 65 percent!

Those are the things you can easily see. But the biggest reason to change Hackensack is the insidious back room dealing

Are you Willing to Make the Change?

and abuse of power that is not so easy to see.

EXAMPLES:

Late last year it was disclosed that property owned by Zoning Board attorney Richard Malagiere at 236 Johnson Avenue somehow mysteriously escaped inspection by the city for numerous housing violations. Malagiere, a politically connected lawyer who was paid more than \$800,000 by the city, failed to disclose conflicts of interest between him and an attorney he had private dealings with; Malagiere chose not to be reappointed to the Zoning board rather than explain the conflicts. But a lawyer from Malagiere's firm has been sitting in on board meetings since January a "temporary" board attorney. Only in Hackensack!

The case of former police chief Ken Zisa has been well documented. But the fallout continues. Taxpayers paid millions of dollars to finance a slew of lawsuits stemming from misconduct and abuse of power at the department. The police department became Zisa's power base and like some Latin American dictator, he routinely used his power to intimidate opponents.

So now you are faced with a choice of what to do on May 14.

One slate of candidates, calling themselves "Open Government" is backed by the Zisa/Malagiere forces. The "Open Government" ticket is headed by a former cop who is headed to court in June for stealing signs, and a school board trustee, Jason Nunnermacker who was elected last year with the help of political operative Lynne Hurwitz. He vowed to help our children but then abandoned the children after less than a year to run for city council. So much for commitment.

The "Open Government" ticket is nothing more than an extension of the Zisa machine politicians, who are working feverishly to hold on to power — and the money that comes with it. They have lied throughout this campaign about who they are and what they stand for. Their slogan makes a mockery of democracy. They are not open to anything and will change nothing. So if you like high taxes, potholes, flooding favoritism and back room deals; vote for them.

If you are want to see real change in this city, you have no choice but to vote for the entire

five member ticket: **Hackensack Citizens for Change** — and give them the mandate needed to make long lasting improvements that benefit you.

The Change ticket is a composed of grass roots individuals who care deeply about the people of this city. They are volunteers who have given back to this community. They have been political watchdogs, battling the political machine at every turn. They have faced up to the intimidating wrath of the machine politicians.

More importantly, "The Change" ticket is owned by no one. No bosses control them. No big money lawyers are financing their campaign. They owe nothing to anyone — except you, the voters.

The choices are clear; you can continue to have four more years of the embarrassing abusive government of the past decades, or you can demonstrate the courage to make lasting change to your community.

***It all depends on you. Are you willing to do what it takes to make a change? ■***

MARTIN  
FACES TRIAL

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distance themselves from the thefts. In fact, they are making excuses for it.

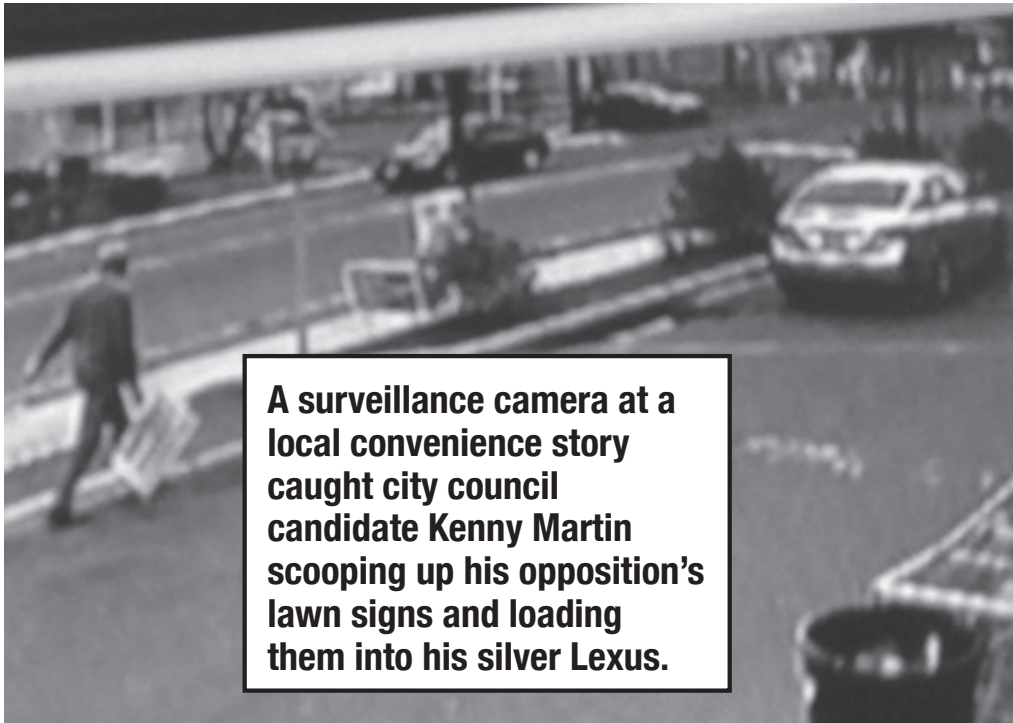
At a candidates' forum on April 29 at the Camelot high rise housing complex, Martin's

Mr. Barreto's remarks are disturbing coming from someone who is entrusted to teach and counsel children.

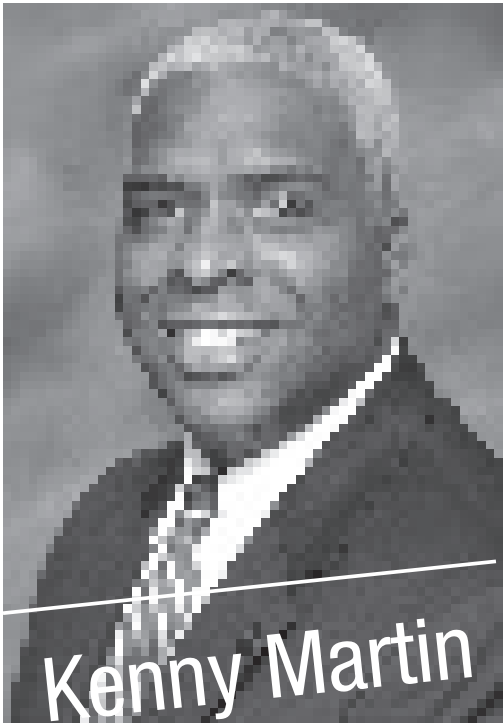
runningmates refused to condemn his actions as a violation of free speech rights and an act of political intimidation. Martin's runningmate Joseph Barreto, a New York City school teacher and counselor,

defended Martin by saying "everyone does it." "Mr. Barreto's remarks are disturbing coming from someone who is entrusted to teach and counsel children," said Battaglia's

runningmate Kathleen Canestrino. "If the open government ticket is willing to condone political suppression as candidates, it's shocking to think what they will do if they get elected." ■



A surveillance camera at a local convenience story caught city council candidate Kenny Martin scooping up his opposition's lawn signs and loading them into his silver Lexus.





# It's Time for a Real Change in Hackensack

## Jury finds Hackensack Chief Zisa guilty of multiple criminal counts

JULY 13, 2012, 2:14 PM | MARK J. BONAMO, MANAGING EDITOR

## Hackensack Zoning Board attorney steps down a month after a fire exposed failure to disclose potential conflicts of interest

THURSDAY JANUARY 17, 2013, 10:30 PM  
BY STEPHANIE AKIN, STAFF WRITER | THE RECORD

## Ex-Hackensack chief Zisa routinely asked police unions for political donations

TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2012 M  
BY STEPHANIE AKIN, STAFF WRITER | THE RECORD

## Hackensack candidate to go to trial on charge he stole campaign signs

THURSDAY APRIL 25, 2013, 4:45 PM  
BY KIBRET MARKOS, STAFF WRITER | THE RECORD

HACKENSACK — A city council candidate accused of stealing his opponent's campaign signs this month will go to trial in June on a theft complaint, a judge ruled Thursday. Kenneth Martin, a retired police detective, was accused by his opponent, Leo Battaglia, of removing Battaglia's campaign signs from the front of a supermarket on West Passaic Street.

After years of political and governmental scandals, insider deal making and abuse of power by Hackensack officials, it's time we gave our city back to the people it belongs to: YOU.

You have read the headlines about corruption at the top rungs of the police department, the sweetheart deals at the planning and zoning boards, the overpaid attorneys and the secretive city government designed to keep those with power, in power.

The Hackensack Citizens for Change ticket is committed to restoring integrity, honesty and openness to Hackensack's city government.

Our mission is to end Hackensack's self-serving government that has a long history of making decisions that benefit the few —at the expense of the many.

The Citizens for Change team is the only truly independent ticket in this year's city council election. We owe nothing to anyone except you, the citizens of this great city.

Support our effort to create honest, transparent, responsive government in Hackensack.

## VOTE MAY 14

- ✓ #1 JOHN Labrosse
- ✓ #2 KATHLEEN Canestrino
- ✓ #3 DAVID Sims
- ✓ #4 ROSE Greenman
- ✓ #5 LEO Battaglia



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