

Candidate Answers to Biz Poll Vague.

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by John Bailey

WPCNR CAMPAIGN 2009. From the Westchester County Association. October 24,2009:

Citing vagueness and lack of specificity in responding to questions about issues impacting the business community, the leadership of the Westchester County Association (WCA) made public Wednesday evening the responses to a questionnaire that the WCA had distributed to the candidates for county executive and county legislator.

Developed by members of the WCA's Advocacy Committee, the questionnaire focused on issues of importance to the business community including property taxes, the cost of the HUD settlement, consolidation of services, compensation for county employees, real estate revaluation, Playland and the MTA payroll tax. The WCA had requested the candidates provide responses to the questionnaire distributed in early October in order to prepare an analysis before the election so that its members could make an informed voting decision.

The analysis was the focus of Wednesday night's 16th Annual Government Reception attended by more than 250 WCA members and government officials from the municipal, county, state and federal levels. Among those attending were candidates for county executive, incumbent Andrew Spano and challenger Rob Astorino, who addressed the gathering about their responses to some of the questions.

WCA Chair Alfred B. DelBello said that the questionnaire was the start of a process "to find out where our elected officials stand on the issues that are important to our members and the business community at large." He added: "As most of you know, the WCA has been actively advocating for our elected officials to make the kinds of changes needed to keep our county and state economically viable. We have recommended the government sector adopt the best practices of the business community in the areas of compensation, efficiency, consolidation and privatization of the infrastructure, for example. In this difficult economic climate, the need for reform is even more critical."

WCA President William M. Mooney said that the questions revolved around initiatives to lower taxes and create an environment that attracts and retains business. He felt the responses from incumbent and challenger alike did not give the kind of tough answers needed to change the status quo and that in some cases, the responses were clearly dismissive. Mr. Mooney stated, "Our goal is to provide the business community with the candidates' views on issues that are important to our economic future in the hope that this will lead to informed decisions in the voting booth."