

Vote Team Hyde Park in November

BY AILEEN ROHR

Hyde Parkers are passionate about local politics. Some argue this is a bad thing, but when people care deeply for their homes and town, that energy and passion can be a positive force. To ensure it is, we need to see where our needs overlap, where benefits can be felt by all, and where accomplishments can be celebrated without partisanship. We need to re-focus on the common ground.

Living here most of my 52 years, I know and admire this passion. However, when emotions run too high, issues become polarizing and consensus eludes us; we fail to achieve even the simplest of goals. I am running for supervisor of Hyde Park because I know there is a common ground, and if town government concentrates on that and de-emphasizes the differences between us, we will achieve the potential we all know is here.

The last two years have made it very clear that residents have the most to lose when our government fails to focus on the common good. Time and resources have been squandered, we've lost standing in the public arena and the

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efforts of a good people were belittled.

It's time for new leadership. I am proud to be part of Team Hyde Park, a group of residents running to put their energies and skills to work serving the people. Through cooperation and dedication, we will move Hyde Park forward again.

TAX RELIEF

There isn't one amongst us who doesn't find taxes a burden. It is the responsibility of elected officials to carefully track expenses and manage costs.

The current administration has failed to do so. Instead of budgeting responsibly, they conjured up unrealistic income projections to avoid raising taxes. As a result, the savings account of our town, the fund balance, is dwindling to dangerously low levels.

YES, to lower taxes through responsible fiscal management; NO to smoke and mirrors.

ENCOURAGE THRIVING COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Improving economic development has been around since FDR was a boy. We all want more shopping opportunities, more local jobs and thriving business centers. Those of us who grew up here and stayed, as well as newcomers, live in Hyde Park for a reason: We value its small-town charms, appreciate our neighbors and enjoy the natural beauty. My family and I walk our magnificent trails but would like it even better if we could walk to more restaurants and shops.

Knowing that we all want to see our commercial districts prosper, I plan to first focus my energies on the refilling and redevelopment of existing vacant space. "In-fill" development is a win-win; it expands shopping choices, provides jobs for adults and teens and increases the tax base without creating new roads to maintain or patrol.

My background as a property investor and manager and my experience in town government tells me a focused, step-by-step approach is essential. We will assist property owners and work with town and county planning departments and NYS DOT to strategize the reuse of properties such as Hyde Park Motors, the Ames plaza, the gas station at Greentree Drive, the Hoe Bowl and the Amish Market.

Economic growth does not occur in a vacuum. It requires the support of logical zoning, a professional planning board and most importantly, investors

who see a return on their money. Much of this is in place; Team Hyde Park will work to provide the stability investors seek and create the environment where properties can function at their highest and best level.

RESTORING RESPECT

The involvement of any community is central to its success. A positive, open atmosphere can be restored by respecting citizens at meetings, holding forums and answering questions in a civil atmosphere, utilizing the newest forms of communication, and making Town Hall an inviting place.

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE

Many parts of town enjoy municipal water, but there are neighborhoods with problem wells. Our town centers require a commercial sewer system if we want to grow the types of businesses our Comprehensive Plan calls for, and Routes 9 and 9G need the street enhancements commercial tenants expect when they open businesses.

These long-standing problems require a town board with experience in applying for grants and a proven ability to work with developers and governmental agencies. Team Hyde Park has such credentials. With extensive financial, real estate, legal, law enforcement and environmental experience among us, we have the skills and the appetite to take on these tasks.

These issues form our common ground. Just the four I've cited will keep us busy for the next two years. I have spent the past decade serving Hyde Park on the Zoning Board Of Appeals, the Planning Board and the Economic Development Committee, and I chaired the River Access Advisory Committee and the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee. I am ready to be supervisor and dig in to the available opportunities to improve our town.

We need your help first. Vote Team Hyde Park in November.

Aileen Rohr is a member of the Hyde Park Planning Board, chairwoman of the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee and property manager in Dutchess and surrounding counties. She has been endorsed by the Hyde Park Democratic Committee as a candidate for town supervisor. Feedback welcomed at hydeparkdems@gmail.com. Respond to this column at editorial@thehudsonvalleynews.com.

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