



Forest Hills Protocol on Conduct by Elected Officials

Forest Hills elected officials believe that there is no higher calling than public service. To that end, the borough's elected officials share a common bond regardless of party or political consideration and establish this statement of protocol which shall govern the conduct and behavior of all elected officials and establish recommendations for those running for office in the borough.

The foremost goal of all Forest Hills elected officials must be to promote, protect and preserve the community at large. We recognize that no one person, no single group and no separate entity is greater or more worthy of advancement than the whole community of Forest Hills.

Officials recognize that politics is a necessary part of the process initially but that once the political function is completed the governing function must take precedence in order to move the borough forward. Forest Hills elected officials agree that the political function must take place in an atmosphere of honest debate and that honest debate requires a respect for the right of an individual to run for and attain office regardless of the positions he or she holds. This concept of honest debate carries into the office that he or she holds recognizing that policy discussions and implementation do not come at the cost of engendering disrespect among colleagues and do not include personal attacks as part of promoting what one believes to be in the best interest of Forest Hills.

This code is therefore established to encourage a high standard of behavior among all Forest Hills elected officials so as to provide a higher level of public confidence in borough government and guide elected officials in making decisions and interacting with the public and each other.

1. Whatever personal disagreements I have had with other elected officials, whether imposed upon me by others or inflicted by me on others, ended with the adoption of this protocol and a clean slate exists with my fellow elected officials so that we may together promote the principles noted here.
2. I recognize that all of my fellow officials share a common bond with me that is unique to the American political system and seek and hold office in order to serve, maintain and

improve the Borough of Forest Hills regardless of the views each holds and regardless of whether I agree with those views and opinions.

3. I recognize that allowing the dignity of a fellow official to be sullied or denigrated by others only serves to reduce the dignity and respect for my position as well. My actions and words will reflect the tone and dignity with which I wish to be treated.
4. I will treat others with respect even though I may have serious disagreements. That means that the tone of my voice and my words will be used only to explain my position on matters and not to disparage others or impose my will.
5. Should I run for office against a fellow official or support others who may oppose a fellow official I will do so with respect, courtesy and dignity and will refrain from innuendo, half truths and distortion. I will encourage those running for office to follow these values as well. Further I will encourage those running for office to educate themselves on the workings of the borough in advance of seeking public office and participate in any orientation offered by the manager and staff.
6. I will not allow others who may have a disagreement with a fellow official to attempt to influence me nor will I listen to or spread the words of anyone, be they employee, citizen, the media or other, which impugns the dignity or integrity of a fellow official and will request that any such individual or group bring matters of disagreement to the official in question.
7. I will only seek to make decisions that serve to further the best interests of the Borough of Forest Hills and to that end will not allow partisanship to enter into my decision making.
8. I approach my work informed of issues, enthusiastic, energized, interested, ready to participate, and focused. I prepare by reading agendas and other material before meetings and asking the staff ahead of time informational questions to assist my preparation. In meetings and otherwise, I ask relevant questions that will advance the discussion and assist decision-making.
9. I respect the manager's position as an apolitical, nonpartisan employee. I will allow the manager to do his job and refrain from involving him in a disagreement with another official. Further I assume that the manager's recommendations, actions, and ideas are made after careful consideration and regardless of who may support a particular side and is done so only in the best interests of Forest Hills.

Approved: May 20, 2009