

Sitting in on a Council meeting, I find it hard to believe the little show of support from town citizens. Still, my wife and I find time to show up for all the Council meetings, economic development committee meetings and planning meetings when time permits. Talking to most members of these groups, I find most of the members to be open with their beliefs of our town. Most want to help in making this town a better place, some even put out for extra work to improve and try to expand things we already have.

My wife and I started attending meetings simply to find out why are taxes are so high and where is the money being spent. Though we have a better understanding of the financial obligations of the town, we have come to embrace positive recommendations and efforts being made to improve North Plainfield. For example, discussions of regentrification of our downtown by attracting developers and businesses such as a ballet school to expand on the existing commerce. The expansion of the street fair, Fourth of July parade and fireworks. All areas to improve our town pride.

As stated before, meeting and talking with town officials, along with attending NPCC meetings and listening to their concerns. Personal my feeling is that I am still an outsider in my own town. NPCC has some valid concerns, which do need to be talked about. There are some good people in the group, which care about this town. I personally do not like their tactics, but at times can understand it. Which is sad in it self. Being new to this process, talking nicely, asking the right questions and willingness to work, as a volunteer should work. Clearly I can see the frustration that these citizens have in town. What else can I do or say to feel like I have a voice in town. I do not want to get to the level of frustration as other citizens in town. North Plainfield is where I call Home. What else do we as citizens need do to matter? Where are we as a society that we have lost our love for our own town? What happened to the pride to make it a better place and the willingness to do so? Why have we just sat back and disassociated ourselves from the problems? Why do others and I feel hopeless in the fight? Improvements do not happen over night, I know this and most of our citizens do also. Yet things still do not happen on the small fronts. Everything seems to be a big battle and this does not need be. Towns list of problems are many. Some are large and some are small. Can we plain out the large, yet fix a few of the small? So we can feel good that some progress is being made. Then the large will not look all that large. It sounds so simple, I know. A few accomplishments along the way, keeps people feeling good and working hard on the big picture. Goals need to be set and we need to be accountable for their completion. To this we need to work together as a TOWN.

An area I find we need to work on is information. Information as far as what is going on in all areas of town. Other towns have newsletters letting us know about special events. Organizations that are working to improve our town. Personally seem to hear about these events after the fact. I'm pretty sure the same for the rest of the town folks. Our web site could be so much more. I know our web master is a volunteer and that info is slow getting to him to post. Yet this is a major avenue for info, for the groups and committees in town to get their activities out to the public. Any info on projects to improve our town should have a place on our web site. Which these groups can get posted on a timely basis. Also a town newsletter, that is for all town news. Getting out info to all town citizens.

This to could be a great avenue for info, upcoming events. Things like downtown clean up, the parks and library too. Both avenues could pull in volunteers for much in town, giving us info on special events around town. Along with keeping us up to date on our town improvements.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am by far not the picture of a model citizen. My writing to you all is just my opinion and thoughts. Would love to do more for the town, if I had the knowledge and info pertaining to what is going on in town. What areas we need to work on and the support to do that work. There are many in town that do more than is asked of them. Just look at the volunteers that are on more than one committee. Not sure if that is lack of volunteers or as rumor says, just keeping control of what is going on in town to just the few. Still thinking this one over. Rumors are running like wildfire out there, is it not time to clear them up? Is it the lack of public help that has me puzzled? The answer would be a sounding yes, but as stated earlier I can see why. Why can't we erase the line in the sand and stop daring the other side to cross it? Can we not have an open civil meeting of both sides? My personal feeling and hope is that we could get more done, for the good of the town. Where good and bad input can come out of it. Not just the negative that I am hearing to this point.

My time is valuable as is all of yours. My knowledge of town politics is limited to what I have learned in the last year. Yet I am willing to help in any area that I can, but do not feel like the door is open. I am hoping that there are others out there that want to help, but just need the info to do so and am asking you all to open that door to let us help. As with others in this fine town, I want to feel good when I say, I LIVE IN NORTH PLAINFIELD.

Thank you for your time
And patience,
Lawrence J. LaRonde Jr.
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