

White Plains Council of Neighborhood Associations
October Meeting

Tuesday, 10/14/2025

Location: Zoom Meeting

Time: 7pm

Attendees: Michael Sanchez, Michael Dalton, Joanne Delanoy, Bob Friscia, Barry Kraver, Tom Osbeck, Larry Tolchin, Nick Wolff, Debra Zipf, Mike Zygmunt

Guest Speaker: Shelly Mayer – State Senator

1. The Meeting was called to order by President Sanchez. President Sanchez welcomed our guest speaker State Senator Shelly Mayer. President Sanchez asked Senator Mayer to review the status of Utility Rates in Westchester, the negotiations currently going on with Con Ed and the Public Service Commission and her work in the Senate regarding Utility Rates.
2. Senator Mayer began her remarks by saying that municipalities in Westchester have been in a state of crisis over the increases in Utility Rates for the past several years. There were public hearings concerning Utility Rate increases this past summer....2 hearings at the County Center in White Plains (1 in the daytime & 1 in the evening) and 2 in Northern Westchester.
3. Senator Mayer explained that Assemblyman Chris Burdick is currently engaged in “confidential” negotiations with Con Ed and the Public Service Commission regarding the proposed Utility Rate increase for 2026. If Assemblyman Burdick and colleagues find that they cannot reach an agreement with Con Ed.... they will push for litigation to settle the Utility Rate increase.
4. Senator Mayer said that the NY State Senate and Assembly have begun legislative action to take control of Utility Rate setting in New York State.
5. Part of the reason that Utility Rates are so high in Westchester is because of property taxes paid by Con Ed to New York City. The NYC property taxes Con Ed pays is an operating expense that Con Ed passes onto its Westchester customers.
6. Senator Mayer said, “the outcome of current negotiations with Con Ed and the Public Service Commission is unknown”. That said...she does expect Utility Rates to increase in 2026.
7. Senator Mayer has spoken with a Consultant who works with Utilities across the USA. That Consultant has reviewed the method used by the NYS Public Service Commission to set Utility Rates. The Consultant has reported that the NYS Public Service Commission’s rate setting method is flawed.
8. Senator Mayer made the point that Utility Rate increases are not limited to Westchester County....it is an issue for communities across the entire USA.
9. In response to complaints about Utilities Rates.... Con Ed has said that they have “programs” tailored to low-income customers. Senator Mayer asked the question, “who is paying for the low-income program?” Is the cost of subsidizing low-income customers being paid for by increasing rates to middle & upper income households?”
10. B. Kraver stated that 43% of his total Utility Bill from last month was for “Delivery Charges”. He asked, “are there competitor utilities operating in Westchester that he could switch to?” And...is Con Ed a “for profit” or “not for profit” Utility. Senator Mayer replied, “Con Ed is “for profit” Utility listed on the NY Stock Exchange with a guaranteed rate of return on its invested capital. And...”No, there are no other Utility companies serving Westchester and NY City”. NY State law gives Con Ed a “Sole Provider Status” as an energy provider in Westchester.

11. B. Friscia asked, "Why hasn't the Governor or County Executive Jenkins called for the re-opening of the now closed Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant? And...why aren't they insisting on using the natural gas being extracted in New York state for our energy needs? Senator Mayer responded, "NY State and the Governor were not the reason Indian Point is not generating power. The Utility Company that owned and ran the Indian Point Nuclear Plant "walked away" from operating the plant and made the decision to cease operations at the plant". Regarding new, clean energy supplies.... there is a new gas pipeline coming online that will be supplying gas to Con Ed power plants and there is a new wind turbine farm being constructed on the coast of Long Island. Senator Mayer made the point that "energy supply is not the problem driving Utility Rate increases....it is the delivery charges which are the costs of transporting the energy to households...those costs include the maintenance of the existing energy infrastructure and the cost of replacing obsolete infrastructure with new infrastructure".
 12. D. Zipf stated that she spent quite a bit of time and energy fighting to close the Indian Point Power Plant...and would not welcome in any way re-opening the nuclear plant.
 13. M. Dalton described the 3 years that the Fisher Hill neighborhood in White Plains has endured as Con Ed and its sub-contractors replaced the 100-year-old natural gas pipeline infrastructure in the neighborhood...from the meters in our homes to the lateral gas piping from our homes to gas shut off valves in our tree strips to the gas mains in the street. This project cost millions of dollars and the Fisher Hill neighborhood just 1 neighborhood in portfolio of hundreds of neighborhoods that Con Ed serves in Westchester and NYC. M. Dalton noted that while this work was very disruptive...it was also important that it was done. How Con Ed has gone about paying for the necessary replacement of its obsolete infrastructure is a whole other matter. Con Ed has known for many, many years that much of the gas and electric infrastructure that it operates was...and still is....in dire need of replacement. For decades...Con Ed's senior management has been critically at fault for not addressing the need to replace this obsolete infrastructure. Finally, when faced with the reality that much of its gas infrastructure was so fragile it was dangerous to operate....it petitioned the Public Service Commission to approve the massive increases to the delivery charges embedded in our Utility bills over the past year or so. Con Ed's urgent plea for the funds to replace their obsolete infrastructure put tremendous pressure on the Public Service Commission. Neither Con Ed nor the Public Service Commission would want the public relations disaster or the liability of a gas pipeline "event" somewhere in the NY metropolitan area. So...the Public Service Commission approved Con Ed's massive capital expense requests that have resulted in the shocking increases to our utility bills. Every element of the electric and gas infrastructure that makes up Con Ed's energy delivery system has a "service life" ...how long it will last before it needs to be replaced. It is was...and still is....the job of Con Ed's management to formulate a "master schedule" to replace every element in its energy delivery system in an orderly manner...and by doing so...they would "smooth out" the cost of this replacement work over many years. Con Ed's management failed in this regard....and we are now paying the price for that failure.
 14. Senator Mayer concluded her remarks on Utility Rates by saying, "the increases cannot be explained by just the capital expenses related to supporting Con Ed's infrastructure. There are salaries of the leadership of Con Ed...along with the countless (and expensive) consultants employed by Con Ed to name just a few items that have contributed to the increase in Utility Rates".
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15. Senator Mayer then reported on "Education" matters. She reported that the White Plains School System was helped this past year by a revision in the way the "Foundation Aid Formula" was calculated. In the school year 2024 -25.... White Plains Schools received NYS Foundation Aid amounting to \$31 million. For this year, 2025-26...White Plains Schools will receive \$36 million from NYS Foundation Aid...an increase of 14%. The increased aid of \$5 million was a result of revisions to the regional cost index used to calculate state aid and additional money was provided to White Plains because of the number of ESL students enrolled in White Plains Schools.
 16. Senator Mayer reported that the "Bell to Bell Cell Phone Ban" went into effect throughout NY State High Schools this school year. The ban calls for no personal internet devices to be used during the school day. The "Bell to Bell Cell Phone Ban" has generally been positively received.
 17. Senator Mayer reported that the "free lunch program" for every student in NY State has been funded for this school year. Senator Mayer said that every School Board in NY State should have a student as a non-voting

member of the School Board.

18. Senator Mayer said that the “Big Beautiful Budget Bill” that was passed earlier this year may impact NY State schools in the coming years. NY State does not support the school voucher program for non-public schools. For the next several years...cuts to Medicare and Medicaid funding will make balancing the NY State Budget particularly challenging.

19. M. Sanchez said that White Plains middle schools do not allow students to use cell phones during the school day...and it has not been a problem.

20. B. Friscia stated that he felt the amount of capital expense that the School System spends on its facilities is enormous and the salaries of its administrators & staff need to be looked at when it's only a 9-month job. Senator Mayer responded by saying, “local School Boards are responsible for setting the salaries of the school system's administrators & staff...not NY State”.

21. D. Zipf responded by saying a teacher's job is not a 9-month job or a 9am to 3pm job. Her mother was a teacher...who spend countless hours in the evenings and weekends preparing for her class.

22. M. Sanchez explained that contractually... a teacher's job in an 11-month job.

23. Senator Mayer then discussed Legislative Bills specific to White Plains. A Bill was introduced that allows non-profit organizations to advertise at the Gedney Park facility. A Bill was introduced that would allow NY State cities...like White Plains...to designate “3 School Speed Zones” at a school. The 3 School Speed Zones would be equipped with cameras capable of recording speed violations. Violators would then automatically be issued speeding tickets.

24. Senator Mayer commented that the NY State Legislature has taken a look at the “approval process” taking place in White Plains for the Galleria project...but there is no legislative involvement by the State.

25. Senator Mayer has certain discretionary funds that she has the power to distribute to projects in her district. She has provided \$15k to White Plains High School to fund a program to train “Student Teachers”. It is hoped that the students in the program will go on to become the future teachers in our schools. She has provided \$35k to the White Plains Library to fund a teaching position dedicated to educating students who have been suspended from attending regular school. She has provided \$350k to fund the capital improvement of the Mitchell Place “Tot Lot”.

26. M. Sanchez thanked Senator Mayer for attending our CNA meeting. He then announced that Planning Commissioner Gomez would be the guest speaker at the November CNA meeting. Commissioner Gomez is expected to update the CNA on the re-development of the Galleria project. He then asked Tom Osbeck, CNA Treasurer, to present the “Treasurer's Report”.

27. T. Osbeck reported that the CNA bank balance stood at \$1782. He then reported which neighborhood associations had paid their current CNA dues. B. Friscia, president of the North Street Association noted that T. Osbeck did not name the North Street Association as having paid its dues. B. Friscia explained that he had paid the North Street CNA dues in March of 2025. M. Sanchez asked that T. Osbeck work with B. Friscia to update the North Street association's dues status.

28. Pres. Sanchez explained that the CNA will conduct the election of Officers at our December meeting. To date.... CNA Vice President, Michael Dalton has agreed to stand for election to be the next President of the CNA. Gary O'Brien of the Battle Hill neighborhood has been contacted to stand for Vice President. Mr. O'Brien is giving the idea some thought and is expected to get back to Pres. Sanchez. CNA Treasurer, Tom Osbeck has agreed to stand for re-election as Treasurer. M. Sanchez offered to stand for CNA Secretary...if no CNA member volunteers to stand for the Secretary position. M. Sanchez explained that for a neighborhood association to be eligible to vote in December's Elections...an association must have paid its CNA dues.

29. President Sanchez thanked all the attendees. He then closed the meeting.

