

1                                   **GREENBURGH CAMPAIGN FINANCE COMMISSION**  
2                                   **PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES—JUNE 05, 2000**  
3                                   **(June 11, 2000 draft)**

4  
5 Present:

6 Andrew Goodman, Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, Claire Lee, Harriet Leib, Erin Malloy, Susan Mancuso,  
7 Sally Schaadt, Charlotte Schienberg, Ervin Schliefer, Francis Sheehan, Lester Steinman, Mary Tobias  
8

9       Speakers (in order of first appearance):

10       Anne Nelson           County Government Chair, League of Women Voters  
11       Danny Gold            President, East Irvington Civic Association  
12                                Chairman, Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations  
13       Joseph Kiell           Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc.  
14                                Co-founder, Grassroots for Greenburgh  
15       Jeffrey Gottlieb       Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc.  
16       Carol Wielk            President, Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc.  
17                                Co-founder, Grassroots for Greenburgh  
18       Ella Preiser            Beaver Hill Civic Association  
19                                Secretary/Spokesperson, Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations  
20                                Co-founder, Grassroots for Greenburgh  
21       William Pohlmann     Chairman, Greenburgh Republican Party  
22       Lorin Brown            President, North Elmsford Civic Association  
23       Stephanie Bellino     President, Lower Manor Woods Neighborhood Association  
24

25 Observers:

26       Beatrice Gottlieb     Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc.  
27       Gail Kiell             Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc.  
28       Joseph Villanueva    Tarrytown resident  
29

30 Absent:

31 Elizabeth Daniel, Rev. Wilbert Preston, Mike Reynolds  
32  
33

34 The ninth meeting of the commission was called to order at 7:35 p.m., in the main meeting room at  
35 Town Hall, Town of Greenburgh, 320 Tarrytown Road, Elmsford. Copies of the May 23, 2000  
36 minutes, which were distributed to members in advance of the meeting via e-mail, fax and/or personal  
37 delivery, were available. Since the sole purpose of the meeting was to conduct a public hearing,  
38 approval of the minutes was postponed. Copies of the commission's recommendations regarding cable  
39 access, ethics, and public finance were made available at the back of the room and distributed to  
40 everyone present. They were also made available to the general public in advance of the meeting via  
41 the Internet, at <http://grassrootsforgreenburgh.home.att.net/cfc.htm>.  
42

43 Co-chair Catherine Lederer-Plaskett welcomed the attendees. She said the commission consists of  
44 concerned professionals, residents, and citizens of the town who have come together to develop  
45 recommendations that will foster increased public confidence in Greenburgh's elections. There are  
46 both positive and negative campaign practices in the Town of Greenburgh, as is the case in any  
47 election. The commissioners want to hear about local campaign practices, both good and bad, which is  
48 the purpose of the public hearing. The commission has already heard from invited guests, and now it  
49 is the general public's opportunity.  
50

51 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett asked the commissioners to introduce themselves, which they did as  
52 follows: Mary Tobias, Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations; Susan Mancuso, Greenburgh Town  
53 Attorney; Lester Steinman, Director of the Municipal Law Resource Center at Pace University; Francis  
54 Sheehan, Commission Secretary; League of Women Voters' member Harriet Leib, resident of Dobbs  
55 Ferry; Catherine Lederer-Plaskett, Democratic Party representative; Ervin Schliefer, Liberal Party  
56 representative; Erin Malloy, president of the Dobbs Ferry League of Women Voters; Claire Lee,  
57 treasurer of the Hastings-on-Hudson League of Women Voters; League of Women Voters' member  
58 Charlotte Schienberg, resident of Somers; and Sally Schaadt, Republican Party representative.  
59 (Andrew Goodman arrived shortly after the introductions had been completed and testimony  
60 commenced.)

61  
62 Co-chair Harriet Leib said the commission has had many meetings. The commission broke into three  
63 subcommittees and those subcommittees met as well. Tentative recommendations have been made,  
64 reduced to writing, and distributed for public comment. The commission is asking for public comment  
65 on the tentative recommendations so they may be finalized and presented to the Town Board.  
66

67 Harriet Leib explained the rules governing the public hearing. First, a speaker must legibly sign the  
68 speaker sign-up sheet at the back of the room. Second, when called, the speaker is to step up to the  
69 microphone and give his/her name and community, a more descriptive address is optional. Third, the  
70 speaker is not to include personality bashing and political commentary in his/her comments. Fourth,  
71 the commissioners will carefully listen, and not answer questions except for points of clarification--  
72 this is the public's opportunity. Fifth, each speaker is allowed three minutes. Charlotte Schienberg  
73 will be the timekeeper. When one minute remains, a warning sign will be raised. When time has  
74 expired, a stop sign will be raised indicating the speaker should end after completing the last sentence.  
75

76 Harriet Leib said the meeting is being taped for broadcast on channel 71, on June 8, 2000, in the  
77 evening. The Village of Ardsley's live broadcast of its Village Board meeting has pre-empted the  
78 commission's meeting from being broadcast live.  
79

80 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett invited anyone watching the June 8, 2000 broadcast who has questions or  
81 comments to call 421-0075.  
82

83 Harriet Leib said the commissioners will listen carefully to each of the speakers and also review a copy  
84 of the videotape. She asked that the speakers on the sign-up sheet be recognized.  
85

86 Anne Nelson, League of Women Voters' County Government Committee Chair, said she met the  
87 commissioners at their first meeting. She was involved in the commissioner-selection process and  
88 helped convene the first meeting. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization but it is  
89 an advocacy organization. The League of Women Voters advocates strongly for campaign reform. It  
90 is a difficult problem. She applauds the commission's hard work and respects its decision to avoid  
91 personality bashing and political commentary at the hearing. She thinks the commission is on the  
92 correct path. She is particularly grateful to Commission Secretary Francis Sheehan for his minutes,  
93 which are 14 pages, 17 pages, etc. Even though she has not been able to attend any meetings  
94 subsequent to the first one, the minutes have kept her up-to-date. She wished the commissioners well  
95 and hopes the commissioners can meet some kind of timeline.  
96

97 Danny Gold, East Irvington resident, President of the East Irvington Civic Association and Chairman  
98 of the Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations, praised the commissioners for their work, stating  
99 that the recommendations drafted are very good first steps in trying to bring fair campaign practices to  
100 the Town of Greenburgh. Some of the recommendations may not be as strong as he would like but  
101 certainly there are very good steps being taken. The turnout for the meeting is small because there has

102 not been much publicity about the hearing. He happened to get an e-mail from Carol Wielk earlier in  
103 the day. Other channels of notification need to be explored. He praised Paul Feiner for having a  
104 commission formed and said he hopes the Town Board will follow-up on the commission's  
105 recommendations. The commission's recommendations need to be implemented. The Town Board  
106 should hold its own public hearing on the final recommendations and then publicly vote on the  
107 recommendations so the public will know what will happen to the recommendations. He will be very  
108 upset, as he believes many residents will be, if the Town Board buries the commission's  
109 recommendations. The recommendations must be publicized through whatever means possible. The  
110 commission needs a communication's plan, calling for action by the Town Board, including holding a  
111 follow-up public hearing. Publicity is important to get the recommendations implemented. Referring  
112 to the subcommittee recommendations, Mr. Gold made several specific points. Regarding cable  
113 access, he said fair program scheduling needs to be considered when providing a baseline amount of  
114 access for all candidates. Providing an equal amount of airtime to each candidate does not necessarily  
115 make cable access fair. It is not fair for one candidate to get airtime on the eve of the election and  
116 another to get the same amount of time, but during a holiday period. Equitable and reasonable  
117 scheduling is needed. Regarding the Ethics Code recommendations, the provision that recusal occur  
118 "under certain circumstances" is very weak. It could be anything or nothing. It needs to be better  
119 defined. He understands each subcommittee worked on the recommendations separately, but the Cable  
120 Access Subcommittee and the Ethics Subcommittee both recommend a Campaign Oversight  
121 Committee be formed, while the Public Finance Subcommittee recommends a Fair Campaign Practices  
122 Commission be created. The committee and the commission seem to have overlapping responsibilities  
123 and the different committees/commissions are confusing. Clarification is needed. In general, he said  
124 the commission has done excellent work. He very much hopes the Greenburgh Town Board will  
125 consider and implement the commission's recommendations.  
126

127 Joe Kiell, a Hartsdale resident, said he only recently became aware of the commission's work by  
128 reading Commission Secretary Francis Sheehan's minutes that are posted on the "Grassroots for  
129 Greenburgh" website. He does not have any specific comments on the recommendations, except to  
130 note that what the commission is doing is contrary to what is occurring in the town. The commission  
131 is tilting at windmills if it thinks the Greenburgh Town Board will change its ways, unless the  
132 commission engages in a very strong publicity campaign. A strong backing by the residents of the  
133 town is needed to create a roar that will be heard by the Town Board. Publicity is the only way to go.  
134

135 Jeffrey Gottlieb, a Hartsdale resident, said he agrees with Mr. Kiell's comments and has no other  
136 comments at this time.  
137

138 Carol Wielk, a Hartsdale resident and President of the Secor Homes Civic Association, Inc., said she  
139 echoes much of what Danny Gold said, not only because she admires him as a civic association  
140 colleague, but also because she agrees with much of what he said. Due to time-constraints earlier in  
141 the day, she didn't have a chance to better organize her comments. However, she said the  
142 subcommittee recommendations are really excellent, particularly the Cable Subcommittee  
143 recommendations. They are "right on". She applauds having the League of Women Voters or similar  
144 organization create the campaign oversight committee. Secor Homes Civic Association endorses it, as  
145 well as the other recommendations. She attended a commission meeting where an invited guest from  
146 the The Journal News didn't show up. She asked if the commission ever met with the The Journal  
147 News representative.  
148

149 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett responded that the commission had not.  
150

151 Ms. Wielk said it is important for the commission to meet with the The Journal News representative  
152 for exactly the reason Danny Gold highlighted-- publicity. The "Grassroots for Greenburgh" website,  
153 a local grassroots website can only do so much. Many in the community know nothing about the  
154 Internet. She hasn't seen any coverage in the The Journal News.  
155

156 Harriet Leib said that the public hearing was listed in the "Calendar" section in today's (6/5/00) paper  
157 and in the "Briefs" section in last Friday's (6/2/00) paper.  
158

159 Ms. Wielk said that is fine but follow-up is needed. The Journal News must be made to understand  
160 how important it is to cover all the candidates in an election. It rarely happens. The Journal News is  
161 the key local newspaper in the Town of Greenburgh. The weekly Scarsdale Inquirer, with one  
162 Edgemont/Hartsdale page, does a good job but many do not get that newspaper. The League of  
163 Women Voters has considerable influence, even if it doesn't like to admit it. It is a very established  
164 organization. Anything the commission can do to prod the The Journal News to provide coverage of  
165 all local candidates would be helpful. With respect to the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendation to  
166 establish a campaign oversight committee, she urges that the League of Women Voters or similar  
167 organization create it, as was recommended by the Cable Subcommittee. The Public Finance  
168 Subcommittee's first bullet calls for more frequent disclosure. The term "more frequent" needs to be  
169 better defined. She doesn't have a recommendation to offer. The third bullet-- "participating  
170 candidates should pledge not to accept 'interested' contributions, such as from developers doing  
171 business before the town's boards"-- cannot be stressed enough. It is an absolutely essential  
172 recommendation. It is important for the commission to get the candidates, particularly the incumbent-  
173 candidates, to abide by it. She agrees with the commission that, at this time, taxpayer-financing of  
174 candidates is not welcome. She doesn't want to give any more money to the incumbents, who already  
175 raise a lot of money. Why should the taxpayers fund their campaign literature?, she asked. Before  
176 taxpayers are asked to finance campaigns, there has to be some evidence of voluntary cooperation.  
177 Regarding the proposed local Fair Campaign Practices Commission, she urges it also be created by the  
178 League of Women Voters or similar organization. She is very impressed with the League, more so  
179 than when the commission was originally constituted. She applauds all the commissioners for their  
180 work. She said she will call the telephone number given earlier if she has any other comments.  
181

182 Ella Preiser, Beaver Hill resident, member of the Beaver Hill Civic Association and Council of  
183 Greenburgh Civic Associations Secretary, said she seconds Danny Gold's comments. She attended a  
184 few of the meetings and is impressed with the commission's work. There were questions raised at the  
185 meetings regarding the legality of holding a referendum. They have not been answered, at least not to  
186 her satisfaction. She is concerned about having a referendum on the ballot if it is not legal to have one  
187 on this issue. She is also concerned about the timetable, since initially the report was to be presented  
188 to the Town Board in June. She asked if that timetable is still likely.  
189

190 Harriet Leib said the answer is dependent on how much can be accomplished in the next few weeks.  
191 However, the commission has decided that it would not limit itself, and will take more time if it is  
192 needed.  
193

194 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said Harriet Leib's statement is accurate. The commission will evaluate the  
195 comments heard at the public hearing and the previously drafted recommendations and work toward a  
196 consensus. It would be wonderful if those who spoke about the need for more press would submit  
197 recommendations for improving the commission's publicity. As Harriet Leib said, there is no set  
198 timeline.  
199

200 Mrs. Preiser urged the commission to not terminate in June. After stating that the commissioners are  
201 entitled to some vacation time, she said the work needs to continue. The recommendations are a

202 wonderful head start. She agrees with Carol Wielk's comment and, at this point, there is no way she  
203 could support using taxpayer-funds to finance town campaigns. There are so many logistical questions  
204 that first need to be addressed, some of which were eloquently addressed at the last commission  
205 meeting. The incumbents already have a bankroll that is obscene to run for a local office. Giving the  
206 incumbents even more money for their war chest would definitely not level the playing field for any  
207 challenger. Regarding the Ethics Subcommittee's recommendations, she is sorry the recommendations  
208 did not go further because the Ethics Code needs major revision. Perhaps the commission is limited to  
209 recommending only campaign finance related matters, but it should, nevertheless, pass along a  
210 recommendation to the Town Board that the entire Ethics Code needs to be revised. She was one of  
211 the organizers of the Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations' candidate debate, and greatly  
212 appreciates the League's debates. She urges the League to participate in doing more than one debate,  
213 adding at least one, during the primary season.  
214

215 Mrs. Preiser said the power of the incumbency was very evident at a Town Board meeting last year, a  
216 month before the primary. A Town Council primary challenger asked the incumbents at the meeting if  
217 the meeting would be televised before the primary. When he received little or no answer, he said, "I  
218 guess that is the power of the incumbency." One of the Town Board members responded, "you  
219 betcha". It was crude but it was honest. The incumbents have a tremendous amount of clout and  
220 power that needs to be examined. She said she is not on the Internet. She picked up the  
221 recommendations at the beginning of the meeting and will reserve additional comment until she has  
222 had a chance to review them more thoroughly.  
223

224 William Pohlmann, Ardsley resident and Greenburgh Republican Party Chairman, said the  
225 recommendations are a start but he is not happy with them. He wants campaign finance to be a  
226 success. He wants all parties to participate. He believes, more and more, that decent campaign finance  
227 is needed to get the "big money" out of politics. Big money is corrupting the system. At the federal  
228 level, everyone knows \$100,000 gets a campaign contributor an ambassadorship. They are bought and  
229 sold. Concentration must be on getting candidates more exposure. If a candidate has exposure, there  
230 is no need for 30-second commercials and some of the literature that is put out. Instead of shows such  
231 as those played last year prior to the election, debates should be played around-the-clock on all three  
232 stations that the town controls, at least on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before the election. He  
233 objects to the Public Finance Subcommittee's recommendation that participating candidates should  
234 pledge not to accept interested contributions. The present law says such contributions are illegal. The  
235 recommendation is only a pledge. An illegality, if properly enforced, is better than a pledge. The  
236 recommendation weakens the existing requirement. He also objects to the provision that debates  
237 follow League of Women Voters guidelines because the guidelines prohibit empty chair debates. If an  
238 opponent refuses to show up, the debate should proceed. The candidate who shows up should not be  
239 barred from debating and should be able to make a statement that his/her opponent refused to debate  
240 and that statement should be played around the clock as punishment. And there should be more  
241 debates. He gives his undying devotion and heartiest support for the League of Women Voters'  
242 educational and informational work. He has a problem with their advocacy component since he  
243 generally finds himself on the other side of the League's positions. It is the League's informational  
244 and educational component he seeks to strengthen. He said he objects to the Public Finance  
245 Subcommittee's recommendation that disclosure by participating candidates be more frequent and  
246 more descriptive than state law requires. The Republican Party fundraisers, since he has been  
247 involved, have not been more than \$40 per person. He has been told by potential contributors that they  
248 are worried about retribution in town should their names appear in print. He doesn't know if the  
249 concern is realistic or not. \$40 is not going to corrupt the system. He has not had enough money to  
250 mail campaign literature to every voter in the town at any time during the last ten years. The present  
251 system requires disclosure for contributions above \$99. The big money, the \$1000 contributions, is the

252 problem and that money in recent years has been going to fund a campaign that is not local. Since  
253 names are not to be used, he said he wouldn't use them, but everyone knows who he is talking about.  
254 There is more than enough money in his (an incumbent's) local campaign fund to last years. Taking  
255 the big money is the problem. The Ethics Code must be strengthened. He would like to be on the  
256 Ethics Board. It then would not be a "quiet board". The chairs of the three largest parties who are not  
257 in power, who are not in the party of the Supervisor, should be able to designate appointees.  
258

259 [Secretary Note: At this point the timer rang. Mr. Pohlmann's name was the last on the sign-up sheet.  
260 Mr. Pohlmann was initially advised that he could have another minute and was then subsequently  
261 advised that use of the timer had been discontinued. No time limit was imposed on his presentation.]  
262

263 Mr. Pohlmann said he objects to the Public Finance Subcommittee's recommendation to create a local  
264 Fair Campaign Practices Commission. The League of Women Voters already has a Fair Campaign  
265 Practices Commission and it does a good job. It has a member of every party in Westchester. There is  
266 no need to duplicate its function. If a local Fair Campaign Practices Commission is created, it should  
267 be bi-partisan, not non-partisan. Everything, it seems, is partisan. He is concerned about who will  
268 pick the appointees if a local commission is formed. Cable access, he said, is crucial. It is one  
269 component. The booklet distributed by the League of Women Voters is another component that,  
270 perhaps, could be expanded on a local basis to cover more issues. The print media—The Journal  
271 News, The Scarsdale Inquirer, and The Rivertowns Enterprise—should pose three or four questions  
272 and have candidates respond without being able to see each other's answers. All the answers could  
273 then be printed simultaneously for the public to see. In the last election, the Rivertowns Enterprise  
274 endorsed his opponent without ever interviewing him. The paper never put his picture in the paper  
275 once throughout the campaign. For the highest office for the largest town, he thinks the newspapers  
276 should at least go through the charade of interviewing the opposition candidates. Again referring to  
277 the Ethics Board, he said complaints have been made and they go no further. There must be a way for  
278 a complaint to be investigated. He suggests the Ethics Board be constituted as follows: three members  
279 selected by the Town Board, one member selected by the League of Women Voters, and one member  
280 picked by each chair of the three or four largest parties in which the Supervisor is not registered. If the  
281 Supervisor is of one party, then the chairs of the three or four other parties get to pick appointees. If a  
282 complaint is filed and the League of Women Voters member and the chairs of three or four parties  
283 agree it should be investigated, then it should be investigated. Currently, investigations do not go  
284 forward. It is a significant problem. Regarding the Public Finance Subcommittee's recommendation  
285 that "participating candidates should pledge not to accept interested contributions from developers or  
286 business owners doing business before the town", he said that non-incumbents do not know who are  
287 doing business with the town. He would have to file a Freedom of Information request. He doesn't  
288 know if he would be told. Since challengers aren't always given information, it would be hard to  
289 comply. However, the Ethics Code is the key. If someone else can raise a charge and an investigation  
290 go forward, it would be significant.  
291

292 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said everyone who signed the sheet has spoken and asked if anyone else  
293 would like to comment.  
294

295 Lorrin Brown, North Elmsford resident and President of the North Elmsford Civic Association, said he  
296 missed Danny Gold's comments and apologized for any repetition. He agrees with Ms. Wielk's  
297 comment that the citizens do not want to pay more money to the town. The residents have paid  
298 enough. It is wrong to ask the residents to pay for campaign finance. In terms of cable access, he  
299 supports an organization such as the one in Larchmont/Mamaroneck, where the cable stations are not  
300 run by a political party, as is the case in Greenburgh. It should be independent. He echoes Ms.  
301 Wielk's comments.

302  
303 Mrs. Preiser, after asking if she could speak again, asked about process. Mr. Gold raised the issue  
304 earlier. Is the commission planning on having different oversight committees?  
305

306 Harriet Leib said that, although the subcommittees may have named it differently, the tentative plan is  
307 to have one campaign oversight committee.  
308

309 Mrs. Preiser asked how the commission intends to present the report to the Town Board, will it be  
310 solely a written report or will there be a Town Board presentation.  
311

312 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said the commission has not gotten that far and asked for suggestions.  
313

314 Mrs. Preiser said it should not be just a written document that could be placed on shelf. There is not a  
315 large turnout due to a lack of adequate publicity. Putting a notice in the newspaper on the day of the  
316 event does not work well. When the report is ready, she urged a formal presentation at a better-  
317 attended meeting be made so the public will learn of the commission's recommendations.  
318

319 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said publicity has been mentioned several times. The television stations  
320 were contacted, and all newspapers more than one week ago. It is difficult to get press, as anyone who  
321 has tried knows. The commission welcomes suggestions.  
322

323 Harriet Leib said the commission also put the information on the Internet.  
324

325 Mrs. Preiser said she has no idea how to "turn on" the Gannett newspapers.  
326

327 Stephanie Bellino, a Hartsdale resident and Lower Manor Woods Neighborhood Association President,  
328 said that since the Town Board asked the commission to convene, it could have made an  
329 announcement about the commission's public hearing at the last Town Board meeting. If they had  
330 done so, residents with children or who work all day could have planned ahead. The Town Board also  
331 sends out a tentative agenda that goes out to some residents and organizations. It could be listed at the  
332 beginning or end of the agenda in bold print. The Edgemont Community Council had a meeting this  
333 evening and could not be here. She agrees with the previous speakers-- the report needs to be  
334 presented at a Town Board meeting so additional comments may be received.  
335

336 Francis Sheehan said that he announced the commission's public hearing at the last Town Board  
337 meeting. However, the meeting was not in Town Hall and was not shown live at the usual time.  
338 Instead, the meeting was taped and later broadcast at an "off time", not when Town Board meetings  
339 are generally played. He said anyone present at the last Town Board meeting heard the announcement.  
340

341 Mr. Kiell, commenting on the publicity issue, said the announcement in the newspaper said the  
342 meeting was about campaign finance. The low turnout indicates, "who cares" about campaign finance.  
343 If the announcement stated that Greenburgh Ethics Code changes would be discussed, or that Cable  
344 access changes would be discussed, or something that residents could understand, maybe someone  
345 would show up.  
346

347 Harriet Leib read the press release that she sent to the The Journal News politics editor and to the  
348 calendar listing: "The Greenburgh Campaign Finance Commission has been studying for several  
349 months the issues having to do with campaign reform in the town, ..."  
350

351 Mr. Kiell said it is too long. It is not catchy.  
352

353 Harriet Leib continued reading the press release: "particularly those of ethics, cable access, and public  
354 finance. Invited speakers have presented their views...." The notice was printed today in the The

355 Journal News' calendar listing. There was also a notice in the "Briefs" section on page two of Friday's  
356 Westchester section. The commission really wanted the website address that was part of the submitted  
357 press release to be printed as well, but it was not printed. Fliers were put up and the newspapers and  
358 television stations were informed. She agrees with Mr. Kiell's comment that there just may not be  
359 enough interest.

360  
361 Mr. Kiell said the meeting was also listed on the cable access bulletin board but it only said there  
362 would be a meeting. No details were given.

363  
364 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said, along with the press release, she faxed a copy of the informative  
365 poster that was created. She agreed with Mr. Kiell-- the newspapers didn't pick up the story. She is  
366 eager to find ways to get people more interested.

367  
368 Mr. Gold suggested using Supervisor Feiner's e-mail distribution list. He endorses Mr. Pohlmann's  
369 proposal to have around the clock broadcasts of the debates done by the League of Women Voters or  
370 other non-partisan groups. Broadcasting the debates around the clock would end game playing by  
371 incumbents and allows everyone a fair chance to be heard. He said it is amazing how many people  
372 watch cable access. The Council of Greenburgh Civic Associations has a show that he hosts and he is  
373 frequently recognized in town due to his appearances on the cable access stations. Playing multiple  
374 debates continuously in the days leading up to the election, when residents might flip the channels and  
375 catch them, is an excellent idea.

376  
377 Ms. Wielk said the comments related to publicity are well intentioned. The commission should not be  
378 defensive. A coordinated strategy is needed to keep up the pressure. The commission should be  
379 ongoing. The commissioners have been educated about what the community wants and could develop  
380 an educational program. People need to be made aware of the importance of campaign finance. It is a  
381 dry subject. Sound bites are needed even if the press was interested. There are so many issues battling  
382 for the public's attention. The term "campaign finance" causes people to just turn off. They don't  
383 realize how it relates to how they are governed and how their town is run. The people just don't  
384 understand that. The commission could help develop that educational program. She would be willing  
385 to help.

386  
387 William Pohlmann suggested that Supervisor Feiner be contacted regarding the publicity issue because  
388 no one is more capable in the area of publicity than Supervisor Feiner, unfortunately.

389  
390 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said it is important for the public to understand that the commission went  
391 out of its way in the first meetings held to figure out how to be independent of the Supervisor's office.  
392 The commission was concerned that anything it did would result in fingers being pointed that it was  
393 not acting independently or was not being bi-partisan or non-partisan. When these recommendations  
394 are being made, that has to be taken into consideration and, to the Town Board's credit, they respected  
395 the commission's independence. They did not continue to issue press releases or anything else.

396  
397 Mr. Pohlmann said that he was only recommending getting suggestions from Supervisor Feiner  
398 regarding publicity, not that Supervisor Feiner should do the publicity. He said the commission has  
399 worked well and hard, and the work is crucial for a vibrant democracy. He does worry whenever a  
400 non-partisan type committee is sought to be established. He said he has never seen a non-partisan  
401 committee. It usually results in the exclusion of Republicans. In a vibrant democracy, two or three  
402 parties is important. He likes the idea that a Liberal and a Republican is on the commission. However,  
403 on a commission, or Ethics Board, or oversight board, it is crucial that representatives be selected by  
404 the party chairs. It is likely a "friendly" Republican or a Democrat could be found. The League of  
405 Women Voters should be included. When the League of Women Voters formed the Fair Campaign

406 Practices Committee they included every party, as well as League members. They deserve credit for  
407 doing so. With a so-called non-partisan board, he isn't sure there would be balance. In the last year,  
408 three members of the League of Women Voters left their non-partisan positions and are now running  
409 as Democrats. If he has a representative on a board he knows that representative would give a fair  
410 shake. It is in his best interest reform works because the Republicans have not won a local election in  
411 27 years.

412 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett asked if any commissioner wanted to speak.

413 Mary Tobias said that Mrs. Preiser raised the issue regarding the legality of a referendum. Ms. Tobias  
414 asked if it should be clarified that the commission is not considering a referendum issue.

415 Harriet Leib said the referendum issue is not the charge of the commission but no decision had been  
416 made. She asked Lester Steinman to respond.

417 Lester Steinman said that the reply was exactly on target. Whether or not there will be a referendum is  
418 a legal matter. Until the commission comes up with a proposal, the issue cannot even begin to be  
419 addressed. If there is financing involved, the town would have to get an opinion from its bond counsel  
420 before any bond issue could appear on the ballot.

421 Harriet Leib asked if anyone else had anything to say. There was no response.

422 Lester Steinman moved that the public hearing be closed.

423 Catherine Lederer-Plaskett said she wanted to give out an address and phone before the public hearing  
424 is closed. Anyone with comments can write to the Greenburgh Campaign Finance Commission, 40  
425 Birchwood Lane, Hartsdale NY 10530. The phone number is 421-0075.

426 Harriet Leib thanked those in attendance and those who spoke. She said the comments will be taken  
427 into consideration and she hopes the commission will succeed in developing recommendations that  
428 will be implemented and make a more level and fair campaign playing field in our town.

429 Harriet Leib moved the meeting be closed. Catherine Lederer-Plaskett seconded the motion, which  
430 was approved unanimously.

431 The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

432 [Note: Immediately after closing the meeting, the commission decided its next meeting would be held  
433 at Rochambeau School, 228 Fisher Avenue, White Plains, on Thursday, June 15, 2000, at 5:30 p.m., to  
434 discuss the public hearing comments and address pending issues.]

435 Respectfully submitted,  
436 Francis Sheehan, Commission Secretary