

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FINDINGS IN THE COMPLAINTS OF
SOUZA AND STACKS AGAINST TANNENBAUM**

Tarrytown, NY (October 29, 2021) - The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee met via Zoom on October 28, 2021 to hear the complaints of Julie Souza and Ben Stacks, incumbent candidates for Rye City Council, against Lisa Tannenbaum, candidate for Rye City Council. Julie Souza and Ben Stacks were represented by Meg Cameron, their campaign manager. Lisa Tannenbaum attended with Bill Serratore from the New York State Democratic Committee and Shari Punyon, Chair of the Rye City Democratic Committee.

COMPLAINT 1: Julie Souza and Ben Stacks complain that Lisa Tannenbaum has misled voters by stating in a Rye Patch article and on her campaign Facebook page, “I am the only candidate with experience in government...” Ms. Souza and Mr. Stacks claim that this statement is “false and damaging” since they are incumbents serving four-year terms on the Rye City Council and are running for re-election.

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

Lisa Tannenbaum’s statement that “I am the only candidate with experience in government...” is false since she is not the “only” candidate with government experience. Ms. Souza and Mr. Stacks have been on the Rye City Council since 2018 and therefore have experience in government; the Rye City Council is a municipal body with legislative and administrative powers.

The statement in the Rye Patch article violates the following FCPC Principle: “The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.”

COMPLAINT 2: Julie Souza complains that Lisa Tannenbaum has misled voters by stating that she [Ms. Tannenbaum] is “...the only candidate that is an active Democrat.” Ms. Souza claims that this statement is “false and damaging” and states “I have been an enrolled member of the Democratic party all my voting life. I am an officer of the Rye City Democratic Committee. I ran

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for City Council on the Democratic line in 2017 and am running for re-election on the Democratic line in 2021.”

FINDING: UNFAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICE

Lisa Tannenbaum’s statement that she is “the only candidate that is an active Democrat” is false since she is not the “only” Democratic candidate; Ms. Souza has provided ample evidence to support that she is also an active Democrat and running for re-election on the Democratic line.

The statement in the Rye Patch article violates the following FCPC Principle: “The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.”

Committee Members: Susan P. Guma, [Chair], Jennifer Mebes Flagg [Coordinator], Elizabeth Bermel, Gisele Castro, Victor J. Goldberg, LaRuth Gray, Kyle-Beth Hilfer, Lee Kinnally, Robert C. Kirkwood, Carole Princer Levy, Don Marra, Paul Bennett Marrow, Joy Rosenzweig, Susan Schwarz, John Stern, Evelyn M. Stock
Party representatives (ex officio): Republican Party, Democratic Party, Working Families Party, Independence Party, Green Party

The purpose of the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee is to help set an acceptable standard for political discussion by offering a forum for identifying unfair campaign practices and promoting a climate in which candidates conduct honest and fair campaigns. The Committee encourages candidates to conduct campaigns openly and fairly, to focus on issues and qualifications, to refrain from dishonest and defamatory attacks, and to avoid the use of campaign materials that distort the facts.

The Committee accepts written complaints from candidates about alleged unfair campaign practices. The Committee may then hold hearings to determine whether the action complained about is indeed unfair or whether it falls within acceptable political discourse. Among other things that the Committee will consider to be an unfair campaign practice is a misstatement of a material fact or any communication that misleads the public.

The Committee has no power to compel anyone or any group to stop doing what it has found to be unfair, nor does it have the authority or power to enforce election or other laws.

If the Committee acts on a complaint, it will release its findings to inform the public. The Committee may choose not to consider a complaint; in that case, a hearing is not held and the parties to the complaint are notified.

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Statement of Principles of the Committee, as stated in its Manual, is available at www.faircampaignpractices.org. The Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee believes that candidates should conduct their campaigns in accordance with the following principles:

- The candidate will conduct a campaign for public office openly and fairly, focusing on issues and qualifications.
- The candidate will not use or condone any campaign material or advertisement that misstates, misrepresents or distorts material fact or any communication that misleads the public.
- The candidate will neither engage in nor be involved with false or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor in invasions of privacy unrelated to fitness for office.
- The candidate will not participate in or condone any appeal to prejudice.
- The candidate will clearly identify by name the funding source of all advertisements and campaign literature published and distributed.
- The candidate will not abuse the Westchester County Fair Campaign Practices Committee process in order to obtain political advantage. This includes, but is not limited to announcing that he/she has filed a complaint, or quoting from the Committee's Findings unless the individual Finding cited is quoted in its entirety. The Committee considers selective quotation or misrepresentation of its Findings to be an unfair campaign practice.
- The candidate will publicly repudiate materials or actions made on behalf of their candidacy that violate this Statement of Principles.