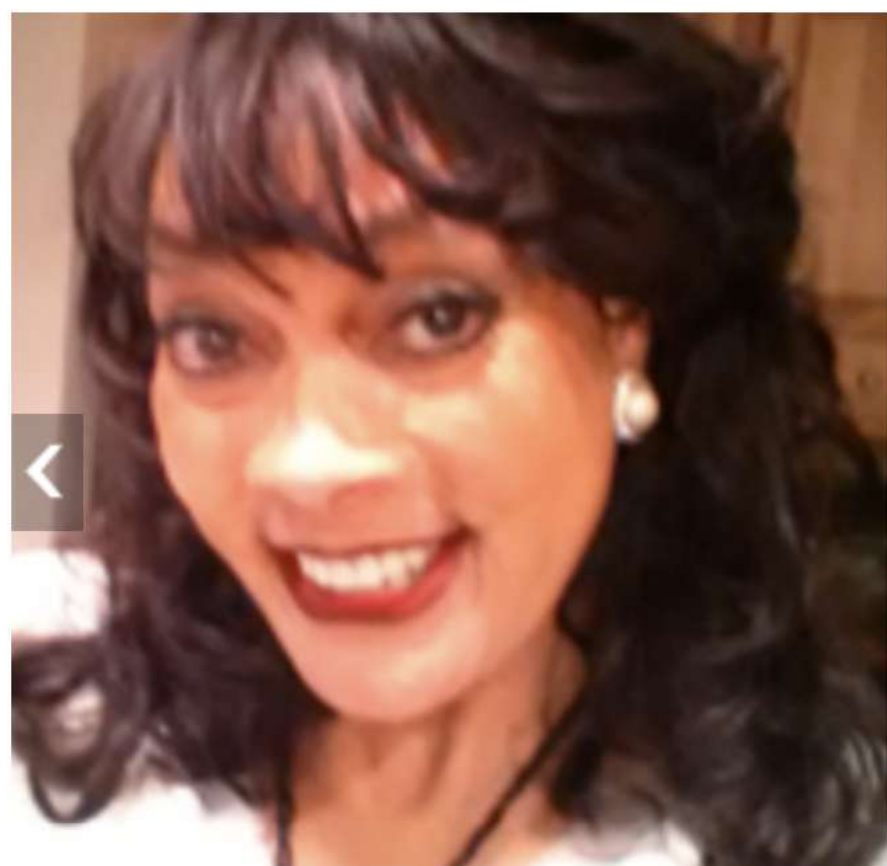




ESSEX COUNTY NEWS

UPDATE: Day After Jackson Announces Decision Not to Run, Two Vie for Montclair Mayor Seat

By NATALIE HEARD HACKETT
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Renee Baskerville, Sean Spiller
Credits: Township of Montclair



UPDATE: After publication, Schwartz clarified that he may run for a Third Ward or "townwide" council seat, not mayor.

MONTCLAIR, NJ - Third Ward Councilor Sean Spiller and Fourth Ward Councilor Renee Baskerville have all announced their decision to vie for the Montclair Mayoral seat. Planning Board Member Martin Schwartz states that he is considering a run for council.

The respective announcements have come after current Mayor Robert Jackson announced his decision not to seek re-election.

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Jackson's administration has recently come under fire by some residents for the development in the community and the issues surrounding the Board of Education. Though not directly involved with either entity, some critics have placed blame for the mayor's appointments to the Board of Education and decisions of the Planning Board.

Jackson, who is well-liked by many, is the only mayor to have served Montclair two times.



According to InsiderNJ, Spiller and Baskerville made their announcements to the Montclair Democrats during an event on Monday evening, while Schwartz announced his decision on Monday afternoon.

In Montclair, elections are nonpartisan and will take place May 12.

Though no formal announcement has been circulated to the press by Baskerville just yet, Schwartz and Spiller each have issued formal statements. Baskerville and Spiller have firmly stated their intent to run, while Schwartz has stated that he is "...seriously thinking about it."



Schwartz is currently a member of the Montclair Planning Board, appointed by Jackson. According to his bio, he has worked behind the scenes as a campaign advisor and frequent campaign commentator on multiple issues over the years. He has also made headlines over the years, for his public criticism of development in Montclair.

Martin Schwartz on running:

"I am still seriously thinking about running as we need balanced leadership on key issues impacting over-development, housing and the board of education. If I do run it would be for a townwide or third ward seat, depending on what other candidates are at the table and their stated views in these core areas."

Spiller on running:

"Montclair is more than a place. It's an ideal. Our beautiful community is a beacon of progress, justice and equality.

That's why my wife Lauren and I chose Montclair to call our home and raise our growing family, and why today, I am proud to announce my candidacy for Mayor.

Preserving the Montclair ideal is a collective effort. During my term on council, we've worked to protect and enhance the things that make Montclair so special. We've made critical investments in infrastructure and parks, stood up for our progressive values, all while significantly reducing our municipal debt.

I have always believed that progress begins on the local level -- that local government can do much to improve the lives of many. Communities throughout the state look to Montclair as an example of what government can do when we follow through on our progressive values.

I'm proud of the progress we've made together. Hand - in - hand, we stood up for working families and finally made paid sick leave in Montclair a reality. We did our part for our climate by passing a ban on single use plastic bags. We invested in our future by increasing funding for our library and Pre-K. And, together we sent a message to Washington DC that everyone has a place in Montclair, including our undocumented neighbors.

We've made great strides, but there's still much to be done.

Over the course of the next few months, I look forward to meeting with residents, exchanging ideas and sharing my vision for how we can continue to preserve the things that make Montclair special. By working together, I'm confident we can create a bright future for the town we all love."

Baskerville's statement has not yet been released. However, when the formal statement is made, information will be updated.

By profession, Baskerville is a pediatric and school physician. According to her bio, she is a fourth generation Montclair resident and has served the residents of Montclair for more than three decades. A former Montclair School Board member, Baskerville has been Fourth Ward Councilor for the past four years.

Also according to her bio, Baskerville is a graduate of the Montclair Public Schools. A member of St. Paul's Baptist Church and former councilor of Montclair Grass Roots. She received her BS from Oberlin College and her Medical Degree from the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry.

Spiller is Vice President of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and has been a Third Ward Councilor in Montclair for the past eight years.

He currently serves on the township's Economic Development Committee, Education Committee, and the Board of School Estimate. (BoSE), and is a sitting member of the Montclair Center Business Improvement District (BID). He has been an educator for 15 years as a high school science teacher in Wayne.

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