

Carmine Mele - Gardiner Town Board 2009 Candidate
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Gardiner, NY 12525

For most of life I have lived in the town of Gardiner. I started Kindergarten in the building that now houses the Town Hall, and except for school and a brief time working for Grumman Aerospace in Long Island, I have been here ever since. While I was away, I completed my studies as both a mechanical engineer and an attorney. In 1989, I started working for IBM, which allowed me to move back to Gardiner as soon as my studies were completed. At IBM I have held various technical and business related positions, most of the time in a management role. My wife Janet and I bought our first house in Gardiner and when our family started to grow, we built our second one here because this is where we wanted to raise our children. Like my parents, it is our hope that our children grow up and settle here also. My family and I are members of St. Charles Borromeo in Gardiner.

Following the lead of my father, I became a member of the Gardiner Planning Board. During the 12 years that I was on the board, several of them as chairman, I saw some significant growth in the town, most of it due to small, family subdivisions but there were some large and controversial projects as well. During some of the most controversial projects, the Planning Board needed to maintain an objective but effective process to evaluate the projects to make sure anything that was approved was consistent with the current law at the time and not unfairly impact applicants or others in the town due to the issues of the day. I feel I was able to provide that leadership as chairman and as an effective member of the board. I worked with, and sought the input of, many other organizations, fire and rescue personnel, neighboring towns, and county and state agencies, to make sure the best and most complete information was available to the Planning Board. I believe any zoning law, truly consistent with the vision of towns citizens (the Master Plan), consistently applied and enforced, can lead to equitable solutions if fair discussion is allowed and the decisions are objective.

I am now seeking to be a Gardiner Town Council member. The issues a town board faces are varied and complex, but common to all of them is that they require reasoned debate and objective decision-making. I believe my experience gained, and actions demonstrated, while on the Planning Board support that is how I will act on the Town Board. I believe my experience with the administration of the zoning code for 12 years, will help assure that any of the laws I work on will be clear and concise. Possibly more importantly, in the recent past the town has seen a marked decline in its financial position. Not long ago we had a substantial surplus and now we are concerned if we can meet our current obligations. The next town board will have to focus on making some tough decisions to help us get back to better financial health, mainly related to the priorities we are going to hold to going forward. Again, reasoned debate and objective decision-making are going to be required. I know that there will be disagreement on some these issues; there always is when tough decisions have to be made. However, we should insist that our elected officials take the time to hear the discussions of all sides and then make a fair decision – so we can move on knowing we are doing the best we know how. If elected, I will do my best to be part of a town board that best represents the whole town fairly and effectively.