

TRICITY EFFORT GAINS TO BLOW APART RED BANK STATUS QUO

SEEKING COALITION BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND BERNIE SANDERS DEMOCRATS

Mike Whelan



Bernie Sanders

RED BANK — This town is critical to our mission to transform the triCity region of eastern Monmouth into a suburban area like no other. A place where the creative and alternative are ascendant. A place as happening as any happening medium-sized city.

Red Bank's remarkably large and growing creative community continues to lead the way toward the town's ultimate destiny to become a cultural capital of the region. And by that we mean the northeast.

But the town's politics still stands in the way. It's maddeningly stagnant, with new talent unable to break through. Meanwhile, outright idiots masquerading as elected officials cannot be removed. An ossified local Democratic political machine of a handful of little people controls all. It's absurd.

Everyone now wants to be like Asbury Park. But one of the most important components of our city is that the major stakeholders have bought into wanting Asbury Park to be unique, progressive and as forward-thinking as possible about design, architecture and planning. That has not happened in Red Bank. Asbury Park would not approve a stupid conformist Hampton Inn at the riverfront entrance to their town, as Red Bank did at the Route 35 bridge coming in from Middletown. Let's hope it's never built.

Unlike in Red Bank, Asbury's non-partisan political system allowed elected officials to win office who hold a broad-minded vision. They didn't need the blessing of a petty little local small-minded Democratic machine to get elected. Asbury's elected officials in turn hired professionals to run the government, and appointed those to boards that oversee development, who are of their progressive mindset. No stupid little local political machine has anything to do with it.

Thus our campaign to blow apart the Red Bank political status quo. And it's gaining. We can just feel this stuff. On our front pages, we're regularly pushing Red Bank to eliminate its partisan elections, and replace it with Asbury Park's non-partisan system — also used by Long Branch and many other towns around here — where candidates for mayor and council all run in one column, without designation of Democrat or Republican.

That eliminates the problem in Red Bank. Understand it's an overwhelmingly Democratic town. People normally just vote straight down the ticket, especially these days given the jackass-in-chief in Washington.

But that also means whomever the dumb-ass Red Bank Democratic party picks to run in the Democratic column almost always wins. And that Democratic Party is led by its chairman Ed Zipprich, who is also a councilman. He's also an idiot.

Zipprich and his handful of little allies in the party literally decide who gets to run as a Democrat — and thus who gets elected and runs Red Bank. Yes, it's a joke. But non-partisan elections take dumb local political machines out of the equation and allow anyone to run equally against everyone else. That's because designations of political party are not allowed on the ballot, with all candidates listed in one column. Even better, non-partisan elections are traditionally held in May, so a town can focus solely on that and not be distracted by higher-profile races in a November election higher up on the ballot. Like electing Democratic Congress members this year willing to impeach the son-of-a-bitch if necessary. But we digress.

Fortunately, two young first-term Republican Councilpersons — a rarity on the six-member borough council (although they face political extinction should they run for reelection this year) — say they're going to spearhead a move to change to non-partisan government. State law allows a petition drive to get the question of switching to non-partisan on the ballot for Red Bank voters. GOP Councilpersons Mike Whelan and Mark Taylor say that's exactly what they plan to do. And we say if Red

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