

EYE ON THE NORTH FORK

Who Is Mike Comando?

By Erika London

631News

In the upcoming race for Suffolk County's 1st District Legislative seat, rookie Michael Comando is the only sure major-party candidate so far for the Nov. 8 election.

Comando stands firm as other candidates, such as county clerk Ed Romaine, are mentioned as possible replacements for Michael Caracciolo, who is running for the open assembly seat, due to the departure of longtime GOP stalwart Patricia Acampora.

The GOP shuffle should end by Friday as backroom dealing reaches a Board of Elections deadline.

While Comando, who has never been in or run for office, at least faces Romaine, who has already been endorsed by the Independence and Conservative parties, he is ready to "take on all comers" and almost snickers at the instability of his competition.

When asked what he wants people to think when they hear the name "Michael Comando," his response was: "Strong leadership and commitment to the voters of the 1st District Legislature. My mission is to make the government work for them." Comando is confident that he is right for the job because he has the "courage to tackle issues that represent the people." He believes that at this time the people "lack voice" and "need



Mike Comando

something different, someone who will work for them."

Comando's confidence comes from experience and involvement in his community that give him a strong feel for area voters and reason for them to place their trust in him. His work experience as a certified financial planner has allowed him to raise money for organizations such as the Brookhaven Citizens for Community Preservation, Community

Action of Southold Town and the Peconic Community Council. Other organizations also include the Alliance for Quality Education and the Long Island Pine Barrens Society that assures voters of his fiscal abilities and potential contribution as one of the 18 members of the county's legislature.

Even though Comando's fiscal background may seem overwhelming, it is also supported by his rich history of community involvement. Comando's passion for reaching out to the people is especially noticed in his heavy involvement with the Long Island Community Foundation, a division of the New York Community Trust (the nation's largest community foundation) whose goal is to "provide residents with an economical alternative to a private foundation or a commercial gift fund." If Comando's engagements are even a slight reflection of his character, then voters on the North Fork can expect a close race in what is normally a GOP-leaning district.

Although Comando does recognize that this is in fact his "first endeavor in politics," he is diving in with a plan. If elected, Comando will be prepared to tackle his long priority list of community commitments of which he finds "protecting the environment and approaching the issue of housing in a meaningful way" to be at the top. Comando hopes that he will be given the chance to attend to the Open Space Program of Eastern Long Island, which focuses on the planning and delegation of land development and conservation.

But is this rookie actually capable of holding this position and doing it well? Will the people of Suffolk County consider him qualified enough for the job, and does he actually stand a chance? Comando has already started to make a

name for himself by going door to door everyday this summer.

"I expect to be taking my door-to-door campaign to Brookhaven soon. I am totally encouraged and energized by the responses I am getting from voters," he said. "I was on Shelter Island yesterday, and Republican and Democrat alike share the view that we have not been adequately represented for the past 12-plus years."

There are many other facets of Comando's campaign that could provide for success. Comando's innate sense of leadership had been revealed long ago in the year 1971 as he was elected Senior Class President at Smithtown High School and then continued to double major in Political Science and English at the University of New Mexico. Comando later received his degree from Adelphi University and was credentialed as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and subsequently became an Investment Advisor. Comando is not only an effective community leader, but also a husband and a parent of two children. All of these roles are integrated to create a candidate that is not only well-rounded, but one that can identify with ordinary North Fork voters.

Comando's long list of achievements and involvement in community events and organizations proves that he isn't merely dipping his toe in to test the waters for the first time and won't hesitate to dive right in.

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