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OFFICE OF MAYOR WILDES

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Charlotte Schoen, Council President
City of Englewood
Englewood, New Jersey 07631

December 16, 2007

MAYOR'S VETO OF ORDINANCE 07-33

I am returning the attached Ordinance No. 07-33 (calling for the provision of exorbitant benefits) with my veto. Please accept this communication as my unconditional Veto of the above-referenced Ordinance, No. 07-33, pursuant to my authority under our City Charter.

The reason for this Veto is that I find this Ordinance to be an unacceptable raid on the public trust. In this Ordinance, the City Council, with the exception of Councilman Jack Drakeford, has proposed a lavish and unnecessary "golden parachute" for an incoming City Manager by providing that he or she may be entitled to twelve (12) months' salary and medical benefits whether or not he or she leaves within the first five (5) years of his or her employment. I am confident that no Englewood citizen has such an extravagant provision at his place of employment.

We can not afford this golden parachute. At a time when our City government should be tightening its belt, the City Council is loosening theirs, reaching further into the pockets of our community to offer this excessive benefit. The state permits a provision for three (3) months. To offer this inflated benefit, which represents an exorbitant compensation package, prior to even negotiating with a City Manager candidate shows total disregard by the Council for Englewood's taxpayers. It sends the wrong message that our City is prepared to give away extravagant benefits, rather than bargain hard with applicants for this position.

My veto is also based on the poor fiscal judgment it exhibits, particularly after a number of these Council members (Rosenzweig, Schoen, Reddin and Johnson) previously criticized health benefits extended to our prior City Manager. Here, the council turns that criticism on its head by offering this grossly excessive benefit package in which a City Manager would not even have to have served five (5) years to receive a full year's salary with full medical benefits after leaving the job. Council Members Rosenzweig, Schoen, Reddin and Johnson crafted and passed this Ordinance in an effort to fill the City Manager's post, which remains open for nearly a year now. The Ordinance is more a reflection of their faulty fiscal judgment, internal political agenda and their poor governance. I will not stand by while they bleed our City Treasury unnecessarily.

Accordingly, I Veto this Ordinance because the City simply cannot afford it. It sends the wrong message in these times when our residents are being stressed by the profligate spending of this Council. Our citizens watch their taxes go up while they experience significant financial hardship, many finding it difficult to meet their obligations. I Veto this spending Ordinance and ask that the Council set a better example by approving ordinances that demonstrate fiscal responsibility rather than wasteful spending.

MICHAEL J. WILDES
MAYOR

DAVID LAZAAR
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 31-4929781
Qualified in New York County
Commission Expires May 2, 2010

