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Kenny may replace Spinello on Jersey City City Council

by Amy Sara Clark

Sunday March 29, 2009, 10:39 PM

Jersey City City Council hopeful Philip J. Kenny might be joining his running mates in the council chambers even sooner than he might have expected.

City Council President Mariano Vega said Friday the council is strongly considering appointing Kenny to replace Ward B Councilwoman Mary Spinello who announced her resignation Wednesday to head the Jersey City Parking Authority.

"He's been a strong activist for a long time. It's an appointment of someone I think people can trust," said Vega, who is running with Kenny on Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy's ticket along with Council members Willie Flood, Peter Brennan, Michael J. Sottolano, Bill Gaughan, and Viola Richardson.

Not every council member is giving Kenny a thumbs up.

"It's outlandish to think they could pick their running mate to fill that spot," said Ward E Councilman Steven Fulop. "We shouldn't be giving somebody an advantage....It is showing disrespect for the voters in Ward B."

A majority of the nine-member council -- now eight members with Spinello's departure -- can vote to appoint any Ward B resident 18 or older to fill the seat; or they have the option to leave it open until the term expires on June 30, said Deputy City Clerk Sean Gallagher.

Ward B candidate Michael Manzo said he would like to be considered for the fill-in appointment, while Ward B candidate Paul Catsandonis said the seat should be temporarily filled by a non-candidate.

"It's clearly another example of Hudson County machine arrogance," Catsandonis said about Kenny's potential selection. "A voter looking at it would say, 'Where is the democracy?'" Vega responded, "There's nothing illegal about it."

"We have to act in a responsible manner and choose someone who will do justice to their ward," Vega said. Such pre-election appointments are nothing new in New Jersey, according to Ingrid Reed, a policy analyst at Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics.

"In New Jersey politics that seems to be part of the picture," Reed said.

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Posted by **ebears** on 03/30/09 at 8:59AM

The whining from the Manzo Team is so typical. Phil Kenny is one of the most honest and upstanding people I know. It is now the time for someone like him to be in office, for unlike some of you he is not a tiger looking for his prey.

http://www.nj.com/hudson/index.ssf/2009/03/kenny_may_replace_spinello_on.html

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