

SouthOrange2015

Media Contact:
Sheena Collum
201.704.0484
sccollum@mac.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

COLLUM ANNOUNCES BID FOR VILLAGE PRESIDENT DAVIS FORD, LEVISON AND ROSNER SEEK TRUSTEE REELECTION

South Orange, NJ (February 24, 2015) – The 2015 municipal election season began in earnest today as four incumbents announced their candidacy under the banner of *South Orange 2015*. Trustees Howard Levison, Deborah Davis Ford and Mark Rosner will be seeking three Trustee seats for 4-year terms, and the ticket is being led by Village President candidate Trustee Sheena Collum. The community is invited and encouraged to attend the campaign's kickoff event which will be held at Above Restaurant and Bar on Sunday, March 15 from 3:00pm-5:00pm.

“In the upcoming weeks, we look forward to unveiling an aggressive platform which will hit on topics such as municipal finance, shared/regional services, redevelopment, business recruitment, public safety, and building a culture of customer service for our residents,” said Collum. “What I want more than anything is for this community to be proud of the people who take an oath to serve them. It's what motivates me every day.”

A first-term Trustee and 14-year community volunteer, Collum has spearheaded several new initiatives including a focus on Irvington Avenue revitalization, improving senior citizen services with the expansion of transportation options, orchestrating a town-wide business code review, and launching a Great Streets matching grant program to support local business improvements. As Chair of the Public Safety Committee, Collum has worked closely with Trustee Levison on IT upgrades improving the overall efficiency of the police department and has focused on quality of life, community relations, and pedestrian safety enforcement. The village has seen a steady decline in crime with 2014 numbers showing a 24% reduction in crime from 2013. Professionally, Sheena is the Executive Director of the American Planning Association – New Jersey Chapter, a statewide planning organization and works on a range of public policy issues affecting New Jersey's municipalities - smart growth, state and regional planning, transportation, sustainability, public health, economic development, and housing. Sheena is a proud alumna of Seton Hall University, where she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelors Degree in Political Science and a Masters Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in public policy.

Elected in 2007, Howard Levison chairs the Village's Finance and Information Technology Committee where he has helped restructure debt to capitalize on historically low interest rates; saving the Village approximately \$400,000 per year. Levison was also instrumental in reducing the Village's telephone and utility costs, saving over \$100,000 a year. Levison worked to terminate the contract with East Orange Water Commission and secure New Jersey American Water as an alternate water supplier as well as introducing single stream recycling. Professionally, Levison has developed solutions and improved efficiency across management, information systems, and engineering capacities at large manufacturing, financial, service and health care organizations. Levison has a B.S. and M.S. in Industrial Engineering/Operations Research from New York University.

Deborah Davis Ford has served as a Trustee since 2007 and chairs the Village's Legal and Personnel Committee. She has coordinated the effort to streamline the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual for employees, worked on single source employer medical relationship for pre-employment, workers compensation, and sick leave evaluations, significantly reducing lost work days, and introduced a standardized employee performance evaluation process ensuring greater accountability among employees. Professionally, Davis Ford serves as Clerk to the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and brings a 20-year track record of corporate experience in the field of personnel training/development and client management, having served as a Corporate Client Manager at a large pharmaceutical company and a Director of a professional services firm providing IT staffing/project management and managed services solutions.

Mark Rosner, the longest standing member of the governing body, has served as a Trustee since 1998. For the past several years, Rosner has chaired the Village's Planning and Zoning Committee where he is currently overseeing a comprehensive re-writing of the Village's Master Plan and has been intimately involved with the Village's successful redevelopment projects including the Gateway, and Third and Valley. Professionally, Mark has been in the insurance business for thirty years and is the Insurance Brokerage Director at the Integrated Financial Concepts office of NL Financial Alliance. He is a regular on the train to NYC and can often be found talking local politics with commuters.

South Orange 2015 also announced that a variety of communications vehicles including a website, printed literature and social media pages will be introduced shortly to allow residents to learn more about the candidates and their full platform. In addition to the campaign launch, a dozen events have been coordinated throughout various neighborhoods in the Village where the candidates will be available to sit down face-to-face and answer questions, gather feedback and discuss a collective and collaborative vision for the future.

"Elections are incredibly exciting because it gives all candidates a chance to discuss and debate issues that impact our community in a meaningful way. We're running a boots on the ground campaign where we'll be knocking on doors, making calls and getting our message out there. It's both a humbling experience and a rewarding one," said Collum.

South Orange 2015 has named Reverend Sandye Wilson as Campaign Manager and Michael Auer, Campaign Treasurer, both worked with Collum in the last municipal election.

The South Orange Municipal election is on May 12, 2015.

###