

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Manasquan](#)

Kitrick is new Squan attorney

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By *Kate Slininger*

MANASQUAN — On Monday, the Manasquan Council and Mayor George Dempsey held a special meeting to hire a new borough attorney, with Democrat and Republican council members split over the decision straight down party lines.

Mark Kitrick — of King, Kitrick and Jackson in Brick Township — is replacing James Kinneally as the borough attorney for Manasquan.

Mr. Kinneally did not submit his application to be considered for re-appointment to the position.

Mr. Kitrick was formerly the township attorney in Wall, and currently provides special counsel there, according to Manasquan Borough Administrator Joe Delorio.



At 6 p.m. on Monday, the council met in a closed session to discuss the candidates, and then held an open meeting to vote on the appointment.

The council was split 3-3 over the decision to hire Mr. Kitrick, and Mayor Dempsey, a Democrat, was the tie-breaker, voting in favor of the attorney.

Council members Edward Donovan, Jeff Lee and Owen McCarthy, all Democrats, voted for Mr. Kitrick, while council members Patricia Connolly, Don Grasso and Joseph Lucas, all Republicans, voted against his appointment.

Councilman Donovan said on Tuesday that the attorney is “eminently qualified” to work for the borough.

“He has requisite experience and I think he’s going to do a great job for us,” Councilman Donovan said. “His law firm is large enough that we will get services we need and small enough that we get specialized service.”

Councilwoman Patricia Connolly said on Tuesday that while Republican and Democratic council members disagreed on the choice for borough attorney, “what’s important is that we finally have an attorney.”

“I’m happy that at least the decision was made,” Councilwoman Connolly said. “It’s only for nine months. Anything could happen in January.”

Councilman Jeff Lee, who voted to approve Mr. Kitrick’s appointment, said he found the attorney’s references “support his great ability to work with people.”

“The integrity of his firm and within his profession, and his knowledge of municipal law, would be a great asset to the town of Manasquan,” Councilman Lee said yesterday.

Councilman Lucas said his vote “was based on what I felt was the more experienced and more diverse [candidate].” He said his choice was a local attorney named Steven Zabarsky.

“I feel Mr. Zabarsky has a wide variety of knowledge in local government,” Councilman Lucas said on Tuesday. “He’s involved in quite a few towns, and he’s also an adjunct professor at OCC [Ocean County College].”

The councilman also clarified that his vote against Mr. Kitrick “doesn’t have anything to do with any political motivation,” and said he welcomes the opportunity to work with him.

“There’s no animosity,” Councilman Lucas said.

Although Councilman Grasso voted against Mr. Kitrick’s appointment, he said yesterday that he is “happy that finally after four months the governing body appointed a borough attorney.”

“There are many decisions that have been sitting in limbo and need to be addressed,” Councilman Grasso said. “The borough attorney will be quite busy the next eight months.”

Councilman McCarthy, who supported the choice of Mr. Kitrick for borough attorney, cited the candidate's "13 years of experience" as one of the motivations for his vote, in addition to what he said were abilities to work with other staff members.

"The number one priority that I see for the borough attorney is being responsive to the needs of the borough administrator and borough clerk," Councilman McCarthy said yesterday. "Most of the work occurs behind-the-scenes ... I believe Mr. Kitrick and his firm were the most qualified."

"He interviewed very well," Mayor Dempsey said of Mr. Kitrick on Tuesday. "He thinks before he answers, which I liked a lot."

Mr. Kinneally was appointed as borough attorney in 2009, after leaving a position as a Manasquan councilman.

His new replacement, according to Mr. Delorio, has an appointment to the borough attorney position until Dec. 31 of this year.

The next regular meeting of the Manasquan Council is set for Monday, April 4 at 7 p.m., in the borough hall.

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The Judge → *Posted: Thursday, Mar 31 at 02:42 PM*

"The number one priority that I see for the borough attorney is being responsive to the needs of the borough administrator and borough clerk," Councilman McCarthy said yesterday.

The priority should be knowledge of municipal law- just sayin.

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Mayor, hes not thinking- hes speechelss. You'll see.

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