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LOCAL NEWS

WP

The Journal News Wednesday, May 6, 2009 3A

Hecklers try to derail new city judge

Keith Eddings
keddings@lohud.com

WHITE PLAINS — A city woman once jailed by Congress for interrupting a judicial confirmation took on the Common Council and a city judge this week, when she talked through Mayor Joseph Delfino's requests to take a seat, heckled the judge during his confirmation by the council, then pursued him out of City Hall.

The fireworks began even before Judge Brian Hansbury arrived in the council chambers Monday when Elena Sassower asked the council to reject Hansbury's renomination and instead turn him over to prosecutors for the corrup-

tion and conflict of interest she alleges he demonstrated in his 2007 decision to evict her and her mother from their Lake Street apartment of 21 years.

Sassower disregarded Councilman Rita Malmud's protest that council rules do not allow for personal attacks and City Clerk Anne McPherson's reminder that her three minutes of speaking time were up. She then handed the microphone to her mother, who continued with the slings and arrows.

The two eventually returned to their seats, where they carried on their protest. When Hansbury arrived in the council chambers, Elena Sassower greeted him by

shouting, "He's a corrupt judge!" prompting Delfino to steer Hansbury to the council side of a rail that separates the council from the audience. During an invocation by the Rev. Carol Huston, Sassower interrupted Huston's observation that "White Plains is a city that cares for all its people" with a loud "Hummmph!"

The protests were in vain. The council confirmed Hansbury in a 7-0 vote. He thanked the council and walked from the chambers, accompanied by his wife and followed by the Sassowers and two cops.

As the Sassowers stepped up their pursuit, the officers blocked them from descending a staircase to the first floor

until the Hansburys were out of the building. That prompted another protest.

"I'll go when I'm good and ready," Doris Sassower told the officers. "I don't need to be escorted out. This is a public building. I came here to perform a public service."

City Court clerks yesterday responded to a request for records in the eviction case by providing a related decision signed by another City Court judge, Jo Ann Friia, on July 3, 2008.

In it, Friia noted that the eviction proceedings began in 1988 when the condominium board at 16 Lake St. rejected the Sassowers' application to buy a unit they were renting from John McFadden. The

women responded to the eviction by suing McFadden, a suit a federal appeals court dismissed in 1993.

They appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to hear their case. In 2004, Elena Sassower served a six-month sentence for "disruption of Congress" during the confirmation hearing of Judge Richard Wesley, a nominee for the federal appeals circuit. Wesley's connection to her case could not be determined yesterday.

In his chambers yesterday, Hansbury shrugged off the incident with the Sassowers the night before.

"It would be inappropriate for me to comment on her or her case," he said.

EX A-1

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White Plains woman heckles city judge during confirmation

BY KEITH EDDINGS • KEDDINGS@LOHUD.COM • MAY 6, 2009

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White Plains woman heckles city judge during confirmation

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