

## **CITY COUNCILMAN'S STANCE FIRM ON SENIOR CENTER LOCATION**

**Backs study on moving city court to Gregory School**

**December, 2008 -- City Councilman Brian Unger made public statements during city council meetings during November and December to make it clear that he opposed Mayor Schneider's option that the city could theoretically sell the Senior Center on Second Avenue for a luxury condo or commercial business development.**

**"Let's just keep an open mind and find out what we are doing and where we are going with this," the mayor said in the Nov. 20 issue of the Atlanticville newspaper. Most seniors in the city oppose any change in the center's location.**

**Councilman Unger went to the Senior Center for lunch a few weeks later and declared in plain words: "I am against moving this Senior Center for a developer. It is a perfect location. It is city-owned, it is within walking distance to Pier Village and the boardwalk. There is no good reason to move this center," Unger declared to loud applause.**

**The mayor had tried to persuade the seniors to move to the abandoned Gregory School on Joline Avenue, but most of the city's silver elite were strongly opposed. Many were upset when the mayor continued to push the Gregory School option.**

**An angry voter penned a letter to the editor criticizing Schneider: "Why must 'we the people' be open-minded while you do not? First you pick on folks who've lived on the beach for all their lives. Now it's the seniors turn to receive your dictums!" "Why do you insist on representing just the developers?," wrote Long Branch resident Kathy Vignolini under the headline 'Mayor wants to reshape Long Branch into his vision.'**

**The municipal court complex, costing the city over \$100,000 in rent, has been found to be a substandard. Superior Court Judge Lawrence Lawson in Freehold has been urging the city to renovate it and finally a renovation is in place.**

**“This rent is atrocious, it’s an embarrassment,” said Councilman Unger, and even City Attorney James Aaron agrees. That \$100,000 fee could be used for capital improvements in the form of a new court complex large enough so that other municipalities can hold court there and give Long Branch a check for rent and courtroom services.**

**Packing up the court and other city offices and moving them into the Gregory School is an option worth studying, said Unger, “but the senior center stays put, why ruin a good thing?”**