

WHO IS HE? Aaron Hirsch was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. He has fond memories of Lakewood from the young age of six, when he started visiting his married sister here. Particularly, he enjoyed the sprawling farmland, horse-pastures on Squankum Rd. and the lake, which he says he found beautiful. “It was a feast for the eyes, especially for a kid used to seeing the concrete of Boro Park.”

In 2013, he moved to Lakewood with his family from Flatbush. He kept ownership of his Brooklyn house, and is a landlord there.

Aaron has been in business for 20 years. He founded his management company 11 years ago, managing properties mainly in North Jersey. Through his work, he has turned around several large-scale distressed properties from near foreclosure into profitable entities. His work has given him an understanding of budgeting and fiscal management, and often requires him to work and interact with multiple government agencies.

WHY IS HE RUNNING? This year, Aaron says, is an especially important voting year. The Township Committee will be voting on the new Master Plan for Lakewood. The current Master Plan (which is a ten-year projection of where the Township hopes to grow/change) is not sustainable. Currently, the Township has approximately 120,000 people (the Township doesn’t even know a definite number of people, sometimes citing the population as low as 97,000), and the current Smart Growth Plan is projecting the population to increase to 230,000 in the next 13 years, making it the second most populated city in the state. “The current plan doesn’t have enough consideration for the basics such as roads, schools and safety. If you think the situation in Lakewood is tough now, imagine this: the population doubled with the same infrastructure and maybe a few more traffic lights.”

Aaron is committed to smarter planning and strictly enforcing current building laws to avoid a continuance of past failures.

LAKWOOD’S MAIN ISSUE: Law and order

THE BEST FIX: Vote for Aaron Hirsch, of course! Laws were created to help us; if we find that these laws do not work as intended, then we can work to change them, but we must always follow the laws in place.

OTHER GOOD FIXES:

-We must have more fiscal responsibility. For example, we should require all applications to pay the Township for a fiscal impact study. This study determines if the Township will be making or losing money on any new application.

-The Master Plan is meant to be a 10-year “smart growth plan.” With a projected population of 230,000 in 13 years, we must be *much* smarter in our preparation. “A lot of people, my neighbors included, have had enough. They have decided to just pick up and leave. Head to Toms River or Jackson. To take the good that Lakewood has to offer, without all the hassle. I have decided instead to step up and try to put some common sense into how things are being run. The grass isn’t always greener on the other side, and I believe we have to water our own grass.”

-We need more elevated governmental accountability and transparency.

THE OTHER CHIEF CONCERNS: We need to encourage more of our residents to get involved locally on our various boards and committees. Volunteerism is the lifeblood of every community and fresh perspective can help solve seemingly intractable problems.

UNIQUE IDEA: To create an accessible computer program to pull up a full history on each block and lot in the Township, so that during hearings, this information is readily available so the boards can make a properly informed decision. This will eliminate a lot of shenanigans. •



AARON HIRSCH