

# Mayor recruiting residents for city boards

## *Positions available on five groups, including oversight of Housing Authority and library*

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

Applications again are being accepted for residents who wish to serve on one of the city's boards.

Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. said residents can apply for vacancies on the Rent Leveling, Planning, Housing Authority, Library and Alcohol Beverage Control boards.

Hawkins said appointments will be made under the city's Call to Service initiative, which he said is designed to encourage residential participation in city matters.

"I will be appointing one member each on the Orange Rent Leveling Board, Orange Planning Board, Orange Housing Authority, Orange Library board of trustees, and Orange Alcohol Beverage Control Board," Hawkins said. "All board members serve as volunteers without compensation. In filling the vacancies, I want to choose from among the most dedicated, best informed and highly experienced Orange residents."

Hawkins said his administration will conduct an "open appointments process" so that all qualified citizens and "not just the politically connected may apply." The deadline for expressing interest is Aug. 12.

"The criteria and qualifications for service on the separate and distinct boards vary from one board to another, but that should not discourage anyone interested in serving the city from applying," said Hawkins. "The common thread that runs through all of this is our desire to get the absolutely best and most talented citizens who have the most to offer."

Hawkins listed the purposes and qualifications for the boards.

• **Rent Leveling Board:** Its purpose is to protect tenants from steep annual rent increases while allowing owners to receive a fair return on their investments. The board meets on the second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the City Council chambers inside City Hall.

"The process allows for mediation for rent disputes and for binding decisions regarding allowable rent increases," Hawkins said. "The board consists of seven members and three alternates, and includes at least two tenants, three homeowners and two landlords. The only requirement is that the homeowner member owns a home in Orange."

• **Planning Board:** The board meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at

7:30 p.m. in the City Council chambers.

Hawkins said among the Planning Board's powers are the consideration of subdivision control and site-plan review for permitted uses, recommendations as to the official city map, conditional-use applications, recommendations as to zoning ordinances or amendments, review of capital improvement projects, and variances in connection with site plans and subdivisions.

• **Housing Authority:** The Orange Housing Authority is an autonomous entity from city government but it does allow for the interaction with Orange residents and officials. The OHA is federally funded and its mission is to provide and increase the supply of affordable housing in an economic and efficient manner.

"The Housing Authority develops, owns and operates public housing," Hawkins said. "It is committed to improving the quality of life for residents and to providing families with economic development and home ownership opportunities."

• **Alcohol Beverage Control Board:** It maintains the files and records of liquor licenses in Orange, regulates the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages of each licensee and ensures that all licensees fol-

low the state and municipal laws, rules and regulations governing their operation.

Meetings are conducted on the second Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. in the executive conference room of the Freddie Polhill Law and Justice Complex, 29 Park St.

• **Library Board:** Another board that is supposed to operate outside the government, in recent years, the mayor's appointments have become a high-profile job in light of the historic institution's ongoing challenges that included its closing for several months in 2010.

"The board of trustees oversees the operation and maintenance of the library, determines the library's budget for building maintenance, renovation and new acquisitions, and is responsible for raising public- and private-sector funds for the library," said Hawkins.

Hawkins said residents who wish to express interest for a vacancy should mail a resume and statement of their goals for the positions they seek to his office inside City Hall, 29 N. Day St., Orange, NJ 07050 or send them by email to Lawanda Henry, secretary to the mayor, at LHenry@ci.orange.nj.us.