

Melanie S. Donohue Council Member-at-large

Councilwoman Melanie S. Donohue has had an interest in politics from childhood, stemming from a continuing stream of political arguments with her father at the dinner table. Melanie's deep-seated interest in American History and early visits to Washington D.C., Monticello, and other historical sites also fueled her desire to some day run for elected office and become a public servant.

Melanie is a 1986 graduate of Douglass College, Rutgers University, where she was on the Dean's List, consecutively, and majored in Biochemistry and Biology. Melanie worked for local attorneys as a paralegal during her college years. After college, Melanie worked in the Biochemistry Department as a laboratory technician in Manhattan at Cornell Medical Center/New York Hospital, as well as Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Pediatrics Genetics. Subsequently, she worked in Lakewood, New Jersey for a generic pharmaceutical company as a chemist. When the division she worked for folded, Melanie decided to go back to school. Melanie was accepted to Rutgers Law School in Camden and enrolled in August 1991. Despite the challenges of a daily commute to Camden and balancing motherhood (her son was 16 months old when she enrolled, and her daughter was born between the first and second year of law school), Melanie was on the Dean's List, consecutive semesters, was chosen for Advanced Labor Law Moot Court competition, and was awarded the American Jurisprudence Award for the highest grade in the class, for First Year Moot Court, Business Organizations, and Products Liability.

After graduating with a Juris Doctor and becoming a member of the New Jersey Bar in 1994, Melanie served as Law Clerk to the Honorable James M. Havey, Appellate Division. After working as an insurance defense attorney in Wall, she returned to Ocean County to begin working at Gilmore and Monahan. Melanie has been a successful local government and public entity attorney, having represented numerous local and state government entities, including South Jersey Transportation Authority, Atlantic City International Airport, Stafford Township, Little Egg Harbor, and Lavallette Borough. Melanie was the author of the Dover (now Toms River) Township Administrative Code upon the change in government in 2003 and also wrote the Administrative Code for Jackson in 2005. Melanie is a Diplomate in New Jersey Municipal Law, which was awarded originally in June 2002. She also earned the status of Local Government Fellow from the International Municipal Lawyers Association, which was awarded September 2005. Melanie is one of two Local Government Fellows in New Jersey, of which there are less than a 100 in the United States and Canada.

After involvement in many local campaigns for several years, Melanie ran for and was elected in 2007, as the first woman elected as Council Member-at-large in the new Mayor-Council form of government.

Since entering office, Melanie drafted and was the proponent of the nepotism ordinance, which prohibits the hiring of relatives of the elected officials in Toms River, to help foster the public trust in their elected officials. She also spearheaded the rewriting of the General Legislation of the Township Code. This recodification was adopted at the end of December 2008, revamping inefficient and out-dated ordinances as well as streamlining permit procedures, making the Clerk's office the central location for seeking a permit of any kind. Keeping recodification in-house and utilizing Melanie's extensive municipal law experience, instead of hiring special counsel, saved Toms River about \$100,000.

Another important issue to Melanie has been the creation of a new website. Toms River is currently in the process of a complete website overhaul, which will result in a user-friendly, up-to-date website. A new website will help the citizens take care of more of their township business without taking the trip to town hall and will be a ready resource for important information affecting the lives of our citizens.

Melanie is the proud mother of two children. Her son Matthew, having graduated from Toms River East High School in 2008, now attends the College of William and Mary. Her daughter, Jaclyn, is currently a sophomore at Toms River East. Melanie recently became engaged to Seaside Park Councilman, Randy Appleby.