

Councilor Consalvo

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by Jim LaFond-Lewis, Hyde Park Community Examiner



In 2002, Dan Conley resigned his seat representing the 5th district on the Boston City Council to become District Attorney. After a failed, but squeaky close run for an at-large seat, Rob Consalvo, district 5 native son, was poised and ready. He handily won the special election to replace Conley and has never looked back. A tireless worker who says that he's on the job seven days a week, Consalvo is quick to point out his accomplishments and his engagement with the people he represents. He talks a blue streak. He's hard to keep up with, but he manages to do it with a measure of humility, at one point he interrupted himself and said a bit sheepishly, "I know this must sound like one long campaign speech."

We met on a very chilly January afternoon at TC's café, one of Hyde Park's newest bright spots on Fairmount Ave. located just before the bridge that crosses over the MBTA's Fairmount Station and the Neponset River. I walked down to the café from my house, about a half-mile away. Consalvo, just a tad late, immediately apologized and offered to buy me a cup of hot coffee and then pointed out that he had discovered that the state did not control the parking lane on the approach to the bridge as was previously believed and that soon there would be additional parking for the businesses along Fairmount. Welcome news to the businessmen who recently spent a good deal of money developing the site that includes TC's, Townsend's restaurant and a number of residential units above, and good news too, for their patrons who would rather drive than walk on an icy cold day. That's the kind of service Consalvo relishes.

When I asked him his philosophy of government he didn't hesitate. "It's about helping people." After a little thought he added and the "way to do that is by replacing confrontation with communication." There's no doubt he enjoys the conversation. He launched into an anecdote about his early days in the district. He surprised a group of Mattapan residents by visiting their street. They were angry because they couldn't get a street light fixed. Consalvo described a street in complete disrepair and a very skeptical group. He told them that he couldn't believe that all they wanted was a light when they needed a complete overhaul of the street's infrastructure! He told me that he had never seen anything like it. He used his position to get the street rebuilt. Now he attends their meetings regularly and he's sure he can count on their votes. He looked at me with some measure of pride and said that's what it's all about.

I asked him which of his achievements he most valued. He thought about that question for a quite a while...it was funny, he was stumped by his own successes, with all seriousness he said "there are so many" but after some thought he knew. It was "John's Law!"

For more info: This is the second in a series covering my interview of Rob Consalvo. Tomorrow, John's Law.