Revisiting an old foe

By Max Pizarro - June 20, 2007 - 10:06pm
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Headed into a November general election, two Democratic senators hope to burnish their reformer credentials by kayoing the discredited Victims of Crime Compensation Board.

For one of them the legislation marks a return to an old battlefield.

When the can't miss bill that State Sen. Ellen Karcher co-sponsored with State Sen. Loretta Weinberg goes before the full Senate tomorrow, it will represent the second time Karcher has helped deflate the machinery of Matthew Scannapieco, former mayor of Marlboro.

In 2005, Scannapieco admitted he took bribes from a developer while serving as mayor.

For his one year as a Commissioner of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board, he received a hefty, six-figure salary for the political appointment along with three other appointees and was enjoying the largesse of the taxpayers when the board's whistle blowing chairman, Richard Pompelio, went to Trenton last year and exposed an under-worked office mired in sleepy-eyed patronage.

Karcher -- who as a Marlboro councilwoman helped the feds bulldoze a planning board and city government under Scannapieco's leadership that was adrift in kickbacks - and Weinberg, hope to finally put the board out of commission tomorrow.

As currently constituted, the board consists of one chairman and four appointed members. As of 2006, each of the three remaining board members earned an annual average of $112,321 and the chairman earned $116,061. Under the provisions of the Weinberg-Karcher bill, the chairman would be replaced with an executive director "whose salary presumably would be comparable to that of the chairman.

The other members would be volunteers.

The Office of Legislative Services estimates the potential cost savings of this bill could be between $286,963 and $449,284 annually for the allotted four board member positions.