

# Former pol suggests suit was political payback

Seymour Lachman opines civil action by a couple may have been instigated by Domenic Recchia

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STATEN ISLAND — Former state Sen. Seymour Lachman said he may have been on the receiving end of some political retribution at the hands of Democratic House candidate Domenic M. Recchia.



**LACHMAN**

It centers on a personal injury lawsuit filed against Lachman in 2010 by Brooklynites Jane and Leonard Beninson.

The suit said Beninson was injured after falling outside Lachman's Brooklyn home.

The couple hired Theodore Pavlounis as their attorney. The two sides have since reached a financial settlement.

At one time, Recchia, a former city councilman from Brooklyn, and Pavlounis had their separate law offices in a Brooklyn building owned by Recchia.

Pavlounis also worked on Recchia's Council campaigns and was campaign treasurer for Recchia's 2008 congressional bid.

Leonard Beninson worked as a paid consultant to Recchia's 2001 City Council campaign, according to the Brooklyn Daily, which first reported the Lachman-Recchia story.

Lachman, a Democrat who used to represent parts of the Island and Brooklyn, told the Advance he'd known the Beninsons for years and was surprised they launched a lawsuit against him without contacting him first.

"It's strange that a man that I've known would do

this on his own and wouldn't contact me," Lachman said. "I was surprised. He was a nice old man."

Lachman added, "It was very strange that these folks didn't come into the house, and for them to call an attorney."

He said, "I honestly don't know whether they were acting on their own."

Speaking to the Brooklyn Daily, Lachman said, "Either they were old and forgetful of what was going on, or they were controlled and manipulated by the councilman at the time."

Lachman had at one point considered running against Recchia for City Council, and also encouraged Staten Island Democrat Michael McMahon to run for Con-

gress in 2008 even though Recchia was in the race.

Lachman said the lawsuit might have been retaliation for his encouraging McMahon, or a way to discourage Lachman from running for office in the future.

But Lachman, head of the Hugh L. Carey Institute for Government Reform at Wagner College and a published author, said he is done with running for elective office.

As for the whole lawsuit incident, Lachman said, "It is in the past. Whatever I think is irrelevant at this point."

Recchia and Pavlounis declined to comment.

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