

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Contact: scho0922.rel
Michael Drewniak, Public Affairs Officer FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
973-645-2888 Sept. 22, 2008

**Founder of Prominent Engineering Firm
Admits Paying \$15,000 to Former Ocean Township Officials**

(More)

Public Affairs Office 973-645-2888
Michael Drewniak, PAO

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NEWARK – The founding member of the Schoor DePalma civil engineering company pleaded guilty today and admitted paying \$15,000 to the former mayor of Ocean Township and the chairman of the local sewerage authority for their support of contracts with the engineering firm, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Howard M. Schoor, 69, of Manalapan, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to defraud the public of the honest services of former Ocean Township mayor Terrence Weldon and the then-chairman of the Township of Ocean Sewerage Authority (TOSA), Stephen Kessler.

Schoor, the founding member of Schoor DePalma Engineers and Consultants of Manalapan, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Dennis M. Cavanaugh, who scheduled sentencing for Jan. 12. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison.

From about 1996 to 2002, Schoor DePalma provided engineering and consulting services to TOSA. Kessler was chairman of the TOSA board during that entire time, and Weldon was on the board until 2000; both Kessler and Weldon were in positions to vote on contracts awarded by TOSA to Schoor DePalma.

Schoor admitted that during the period of 2000 and 2001, he agreed with Weldon and Kessler to pay \$15,000 to Kessler, pursuant to a solicitation from Kessler and Weldon. Schoor admitted that the payments were a reward to them for their official support.

Schoor admitted that he paid Kessler three installments of \$5,000, including the last installment of \$5,000 in November 2001 in Atlantic City. Schoor said he did this without the knowledge of anyone else at Schoor DePalma.

Schoor pleaded guilty to Count One of the indictment returned against him on Dec. 14, 2006.

Weldon pleaded guilty on Oct. 10, 2002, to three counts of extortion unrelated to the conduct here. He was sentenced on Aug. 27, 2007, to 58 months in prison. Kessler pleaded guilty on July 14, 2005, to extortion and awaits sentencing.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, with the investigation of Schoor.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys James B. Nobile and Brian Howe of the Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Justin Walder, Esq., Roseland

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