

NEWS

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Atlantic City Businessman Admits Paying Bribes to Atlantic City
Councilmen for Their Influence on City Contracts

(More)

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CAMDEN – A long time politically active Atlantic City businessman pleaded guilty today for paying bribes to two Atlantic City councilmen, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Edward DiNicolantonio, 70, of Atlantic City, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joseph H. Rodriguez to a one-count Information that charges him with giving corrupt payments to public officials in Atlantic City. Judge Rodriguez released DiNicolantonio on a \$50,000 unsecured appearance bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for Aug. 23.

At his plea hearing, DiNicolantonio admitted bribing certain Atlantic City Council members in exchange for preferential treatment on city contracts and other business opportunities. DiNicolantonio admitted that from 2002 until 2006 he made corrupt cash payments totaling in excess of \$45,000 to Atlantic City councilmen Craig Callaway, 48, and Gibb Jones, 81, in return for their support for various matters occurring before council.

DiNicolantonio stated that from 2002 through October 2004, he was employed as a consultant to an insurance company that was interested in providing risk management and other insurance services to Atlantic City in 2002 and 2003. DiNicolantonio admitted that during that time period he met with Callaway and offered him money in return for his support for awarding the risk management contract to the insurance company.

Furthermore, DiNicolantonio admitted that he solicited Jones for his support for the insurance contract. DiNicolantonio admitted that he gave Jones cash payments and paid various expenses on Jones' behalf before and after soliciting Jones for the insurance contract and other matters before council.

On Sept. 3, 2003, city council approved a \$700,000 no-bid contract to the insurance company for risk management services, with Callaway and Jones voting in favor of the contract. DiNicolantonio admitted that on Sept. 10, he gave Callaway \$1,000 in cash in return for his support in obtaining the insurance contract and promised to make additional payments as long as Callaway continued to approve payments to the insurance company for the risk management contract. DiNicolantonio admitted he made six additional cash payments of \$2,000 each to Callaway, from October 2003 until March 2004, totaling \$12,000 in return for his support for various matters occurring before council, including the risk management contract.

DiNicolantonio admitted that in late 2003 and early 2004, he offered to “whack up” the money he would receive as a consultant on the Garwood Mills project with Callaway in return for Callaway's support for a developer who had hired him. In 2004 and 2005 DiNicolantonio made cash payments to Callaway in return for his support in connection

with the development of the Garwood Mills site, DiNicolantonio admitted.

Jones pleaded guilty on Oct. 4, 2006, along with councilman Ramon Rosario, 48, both admitting that they accepted bribes – one from a businessman seeking city contracts and the other from an undercover FBI agent and a contractor working with the FBI.

Jones, Rosario and Terry Jacobs, 42, of Pleasantville, who is a contractor in Atlantic City, Camden and elsewhere, are scheduled to be sentenced tomorrow, April 2, before Judge Rodriguez in Camden. On March 13, 2007, Callaway was sentenced to 40 months in federal prison for accepting \$36,000 in bribes to assist Jacobs in obtaining major construction work in Atlantic City.

The charge to which DiNicolantonio pleaded guilty carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of 10 years and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Rodriguez will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, in Newark, with the investigations of into Atlantic City corruption.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas J. Eicher and Judith H. Germano, both of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense Counsel: Edward J. Crisonino, Esq. Haddon Township