

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorneys:
BRIAN R. HOWE and
CHARLES B. McKENNA
973-645-2853 and 2716

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Monmouth County Developer Admits
Bribing Former Ocean Township Mayor

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

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NEWARK – Monmouth County Developer Moshe G. Gohar pleaded guilty today to making a \$50,000 corrupt payment to former Ocean Township Mayor Terrance D. Weldon to gain zoning approvals for a development project he was involved with in the township, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Gohar, 57, of Ocean Township, admitted that he conspired with the late Neptune businessman Philip Konvitz and Weldon to pay Weldon the \$50,000 to change zoning that increased the number of homes Gohar could build in the development known as “Apple Farms.” Before the property was rezoned, Gohar could build just 33 homes but was able to build more afterward in a cluster-type development, according to admissions he made today before U.S. District Judge Joel L. Pisano.

Gohar was indicted on February 24, 2006, for the scheme between him, Weldon and Konvitz. The Indictment alleged that Gohar was seeking approvals to build more than 75 units on 81.1 acres between West Park Avenue and Green Grove Road in Ocean Township.

Gohar pleaded guilty to once count of conspiring to give and offer corrupt payments, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account the nature and circumstances of the crime, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other factors. Judge Pisano, however, is not bound by the guidelines sentencing recommendation.

Judge Pisano scheduled sentencing for March 28. Gohar remains free on bail pending sentencing.

Gohar admitted that he gave the \$50,000 in cash to Weldon in about the spring or early summer of 2001. He admitted that he gave him the money to corruptly influence and reward the then-mayor of Ocean Township for exercising his official influence and changing the zoning and approving the development of Apple Farms.

Weldon pleaded guilty to similar charges on Oct. 10, 2002, before U.S. District Judge William H. Walls. He awaits sentencing. Konvitz was charged in a separate indictment involving unrelated Asbury Park government corruption in October 2002, along with former Asbury Park Councilman, James Condos. A federal court declared the then-92-year-old-Konvitz incompetent to stand trial in April 2003 based on Konvitz’s physical impairments and dementia. Konvitz died in September 2005. Condos pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 15 months in prison in March 2005.

Christie credit Special Agents of the FBI’s Red Bank Resident Agency, under the

direction of Special Agent in Charge Leslie G. Wiser, Jr., with the investigation leading to Gohar's indictment. The Gohar case was be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian R. Howe and Charles McKenna.

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Defense Counsel:
Blair Zwillman, Esq.
John Hogan, Esq.
Woodbridge, New Jersey