

## Solicitor denies mayor's claims

Posted by the [Times-Beacon Newspapers](#) on 02/8/06

BY NICHOLAS HUBA  
STAFF WRITER

BEACH HAVEN — Long Beach Township Solicitor Richard J. Shackleton has fought back against claims that he is allegedly "double-dipping" when it comes to the beach access issue that has plagued the Island for the last decade.

Last month, Beach Haven Mayor Deborah C. Whitcraft claimed that Shackleton was telling people in Long Beach Township to sign the easement agreements and then telling residents in Beach Haven not to sign them and then charging both for representation.

"The statement made by Mayor Whitcraft is absolutely false," Shackleton said in a statement. "I have never told anyone in any of the five Island municipalities involved — Harvey Cedars Surf City, Ship Bottom, Long Beach Township or Beach Haven — not to sign the easement deeds."

The easement issue has been the centerpiece in the detailed \$71 million beach project. As a condition of the state and federal funding the project, the state Department of Environmental Protection is mandating beach access every quarter mile in the exclusive North Beach and Loveladies sections of the township. Some residents of the area have sought legal advice in order to gain more information about what impact granting the easement will have on the them.

"I do not feel that it is right," Whitcraft said. "He is charging the township, then he is telling residents not to sign them. I have a problem with that."

Shackleton said he is no longer representing oceanfront homeowners in Beach Haven.

"On behalf of three oceanfront owners in Beach Haven who were clients of mine, I referred them to other counsel" Shackleton said. "Because even though I was no longer the solicitor for the borough of Beach Haven, I felt for me to take a position either in favor of or opposed to the execution of the easement agreements, would place me in a significant conflict situation because of my representation of Long Beach Township."

Shackleton was formerly borough solicitor for Beach Haven and Whitcraft praised his work for the borough.

"During his time with the borough, he did an outstanding job," Whitcraft said. "There was just an issue with him doing private work for me and that would have represented a conflict of interest."

Shackleton alleged Whitcraft's comments have had a negative impact on the Island getting the much-needed beach replenishment project.

"The misleading statements such as those made by Mayor Whitcraft have an obvious negative impact on getting this much-needed protective plan in place," Shackleton said.

Copyright © 2006 Ocean County Observer. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). (Updated June 7, 2005) Site design by [Asbury Park Press / Contact us](#)