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## YORKTOWN CSEA blocks road outside Spano's house

By Adriane Tillman

Traffic crawled slowly by the CSEA union protestors who blocked Broad Street at Route 35 on Thursday, August 30 to demand the county negotiate a new contract since the last one expired at the end of 2005.

Approximately 200 members of the 4,000-large Civil Service Employees Association gathered across from County Executive Andy Spano's house to sound their concerns with sandwich boards, whistles and a bullhorn. Several cars honked in support, and other drivers expressed frustration at the detour to their homes.

In unison, members chanted slogans, including: "We want respect; put it in our check." Union president Jack McPhillips of Yorktown claimed the county will only speak to him informally. He also said that Spano did not appear to be home during the protest. "He won't come to the table so we will come to him," said McPhillips.

McPhillips wouldn't discuss details of the negotiation, but said the union wants more than the three percent annual salary increase the county originally offered for four years. Deputy County Executive Larry Schwartz said the county has been negotiating with the union, but McPhillips is constantly changing his position.

"We can't get something done if at one meeting he agrees to something and at the next meeting he takes it off the table," Schwartz said. Schwartz claimed the county has compromised since the original three percent offer but would not divulge further.

According to Schwartz, the county has met with McPhillips' union approximately six times in the past couple of months.

Schwartz accused the union president of issuing "misleading statements" to union members. "The Spano administration has been in office for 10 years and we've been doing it this way for 10 years," Schwarz said. "He's never called them informal negotiations before. Why is he doing it now?"

Schwartz viewed the protest as ineffective.

"Protesting outside Spano's house isn't going to get negotiations done," Schwartz said. "Sitting at a contract table and hammering out an agreement and not changing your mind from meeting to meeting – that's going to get a contract done – not blowing whistles."

Twenty-year Mahopac resident, Sam Florio, said salary increases have not met the rate of inflation.

"They've made us into second class citizens," Florio said. "You're looking at blue collar and officer workers here."

Mohegan resident Jim Kelly has worked for the county for 32 years, and has seen approximately 10 contracts go through.

"My biggest complaint is that we never get a contract on time," Kelly said. "Taxes always go up on time."

The union's demands can be viewed on their website at [www.csea9200.com](http://www.csea9200.com).

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