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Myron Cowher sentenced to state prison for election-fixing scheme

Sentencing of former Wild Acres board member follows conviction of former board member Dimitry Kupershmidt

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Photos



DINGMANS FERRY — Myron Cowher, 53, was sentenced to state prison for a scheme to fix an election in the private community of Wild Acres Lakes in Delaware Township, District Attorney Ray Tonkin announced Monday.

Dimitry Kupershmidt was previously found guilty on numerous charges related to the scheme.

Judge Gregory H. Chelak sentenced Cowher to a term of 1 1/2 years to 4 years in a state correctional facility and fined \$10,850.

Cowher was previously convicted 217 counts charged against him relating to forgery, identity theft, criminal attempt, criminal conspiracy, tampering with records, and criminal use of a communication facility. At the time of the offenses, Cowher was the secretary on the board of directors and Kupershmidt was the chairman of the board.

Kupershmidt had his sentencing continued to a later date after retaining a new attorney.

The case dates back to May 2014, when an employee for Wild Acres called the District Attorney's Office expressing concern over a possible scheme to fraudulently fill out ballots in the community's election that was to be held in June of that year. Upon Tonkin's direction, the employee was put in contact with the Pennsylvania State Police.

The election was for five positions on the community's board of directors. As with many private communities, the board of directors serves as the governing body for the community. Wild Acres is a registered non-profit corporation registered through the Pennsylvania Department of State.

The employee informed the state police that Cowher had wanted to meet with him to pick up a collection of ballots that were to be mailed out to individual lot owners. Cowher had directed the employee to select the ballots of lot owners who owned vacant lots not suitable for building. Cowher admitted to the employee that he selected these people because they rarely voted in elections.

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A meeting took place between the employee and Cowher that was monitored by the state police. During the meeting, Cowher filled out 9 of the ballots and took the remaining 62 ballots to fill out at a later time. Upon leaving the meeting, Cowher was arrested by the state police.

During the trial, evidence was presented showing that an agreement existed between Cowher and Kupershmidt regarding the scheme, and that Kupershmidt had suggested to the employee that he turn off the cameras in the office building in an effort to conceal anyone finding out about what they were doing.

Tonkin says he's satisfied that Cowher was sentenced to state prison.

"While we sought a stiffer sentence from the court, I am satisfied that Cowher was sentenced to state prison, and that he has been held accountable for his attempts to fraudulently alter the election," he said.

First Assistant District Attorney Bruce DeSarro, who presented the case to the jury, said, "We hope that this case sends a strong message to people in positions of trust in a private community who would think about abusing that trust."

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