

## June Eisland gets to keep campaign \$\$

By Joshua Payne

June Eisland can keep \$130,000 she raised for her campaigns when she represented the Riverdale-Kingsbridge area in the City Council, a three-judge panel of state appellate judges has ruled.

The decision was a victory for Ms. Eisland in her battle with the City Campaign Finance Board, and allows her to spend the funds left over from her council campaigns through a political action committee called EISPAC.

Ms. Eisland, who served in the council for 23 years before being forced out by term limits legislation, did not join the taxpayer-funded campaign finance system for any of her Council races. But when she ran for Bronx borough president in 2001, she did seek matching funds from the city.

That became the issue in a series of administrative and courtroom arguments that culminated in the decision by the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court on July 6.

Although Ms. Eisland had tried, by establishing different committees to hold her various campaign funds, to keep money she raised before she sought public funding separate from the money she was raising for the borough president's race, the Campaign Finance Board, which administers the city program, had forced her to commingle the funds, then sought the return of \$142,306 in unspent money.

The Appellate Division decision overturned the order of Justice Marilyn Shafer of State Supreme Court in Manhattan, who had ruled that Ms. Eisland had to repay the entire amount to the board.

The decision was not a complete victory for the former councilwoman. She does have to repay \$12,306, the appeals court ruled, and it denied her efforts to get the city to pay her legal fees.

In an e-mail, a spokeswoman for the finance board described the decision as narrow in scope and said it would not have implications for the future of the campaign finance program.

She also reiterated that "the board has long pressed its position that the City Council should ban 'war chests,' defined as money left over from a prior election.

Ms. Eisland did not return calls seeking comment, but her lawyer, Laurence Laufer, said he and Ms. Eisland "were very pleased with the decision."

Last summer, Ms. Eisland said that if she won the lawsuit, the money "would be used appropriately for the community."

On Monday Mr. Laufer said he had no knowledge of Ms. Eisland's plans for spending the money.