

Mayor's Remarks at Borough Council Re-Organization Meeting, January 2, 2018

I would break this year's comments down into **People, Places, and Things to do.**

PEOPLE:

2017 was an eventful year in that we've had some significant changes in borough employees and volunteers.

Clerk/Administrator John Gregory left us and the Council made the decision to split his position into two separate employees. As a result, Nancy Bretzger joined us as our new clerk and Christopher Tietjen came aboard as Deputy Administrator. Randy Bahr has been handling the role of Acting Administrator until Chris is up to speed at which time Chris will be named Administrator, and Randy will step aside.

Rodney McCatharn elected to retire, as did Deputy Clerk Donna Bassman and Deputy Court Administer Vicki Mangulson.

Anthony Suriano elected not to be a candidate for another term on the Borough Council.

Michael Madalone, Chad Cook, and Anthony Duarte have joined the Department of Public Works.

Adriana McKenna has begun work as a part-time clerk in the Assessor's office.

Sara Jane Noll has joined the Zoning Department as Clerk to the Land Use Board.

Volunteer Steve Neville moved from town, resigning from the Land Use Board. Matt Sutte will join the LUB.

John Terry passed away after years of service on various committees including the Land Use Board.

Louis Palma retired from the Board of Education after 20 years of service. Heather Santoro has been elected to fill his position.

Steve Kinsey and Abeer Abu Judeh have stepped down from the Library Advisory Board, being replaced by Colleen Price and Kate Rizzo.

Most recently, Police Chief Gregory Skinner announced his retirement effective December 31st.

To each and every one of these valuable people, I would like to express my appreciation for the work you do and, for those who have left our employ, we wish each of you well in future endeavors.

PLACES WE'VE BEEN:

We have wrapped up some efforts which have taken considerable time and effort by Council members and staff. Most notably, the Matheny lawsuits, both State and Federal, have ended either by Superior Court decision or negotiated settlement.

Our obligation for affordable housing has been settled with both the court and the Fair Share Housing Group. We are awaiting receipt of a contract from Fair Share confirming our agreement. This will require further action by the Land Use Board and Council in regards to zoning.

The Council approved rental and property maintenance ordinances after extensive discussion and numerous revisions. If you are a landlord, please conform to the inspection requirements of the rental ordinance. Questions should be addressed to the Zoning Department.

Speaking of the Zoning function, our zoning officer has announced his retirement and we have already hired Geoff Price to continue that function.

Other things that got accomplished this past year include refinishing the gym floor to improve safety, the Lime Kiln was re-pointed to stabilize that structure, and The Women's Club held the first "Candidate's Debate" which everyone considered a successful evening.

At the request of residents, the gym is now open during off hours for use by residents. Please speak to the Administrator before using.

Amy Dietrich was elected to the Council for a three year term beginning January 1, 2018. Amy brings a great level of enthusiasm and a dedicated work ethic to the job. We are all anxious to work with her.

Through a donation, the Environmental Commission along with our DPW planted 350 new trees in Rockabye Park.

THINGS TO DO:

Going forward into the New Year, we have several issues in progress. Most notably, we are in contract negotiations with the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) and hope to conclude an agreement in the near future.

We are cooperating with the Prosecutor's office to work through the selection of our next Chief. This is an endeavor with which none of us on the Council have experience, and we are anxious to proceed with this process carefully in order to achieve the best outcome for all concerned.

We continue to work on renovation of both the Library and Liberty Park. The park, especially, requires us to work with the NJDEP which is terribly time consuming.

We have awarded a contract to connect new generators and when they are finished, virtually every town function that would require emergency power will have that power available.

The 2018 budgeting process is well under way and thanks to thoughtful work in the past, our town is fiscally in very good condition.

Lastly, I would like to thank every person who volunteers or works for the town. Requirements that are imposed on the municipality increase every year and so does the required training. Our employee staff, as well as volunteers, spend a large amount of time to stay abreast of these changes and frequently do so on their own time.

For those of you who may consider volunteering your time, please email me at wmuller@peapackgladstone.org or speak to any Council member.

I am thankful for the dedication of each and every one of you and am optimistic that 2018 will be a fruitful and satisfying year.

Respectfully,

Bill