

## Mayor's Re-Org Statement 1-3-2017

2016 was certainly a productive year for your local government. In order to gain insight for this letter, I reviewed the Council minutes from the meetings of 2016 and found many interesting items. As a result, I would encourage everyone to review them and get a feeling for what has been achieved. All this is available on our website, [peapackgladstone.org](http://peapackgladstone.org).

In approximate chronological order, these are the things that happened in 2016, with some of the actions/results being accomplished by residents and employees without the input of the Council.

- KDC gained approval to install Solar Power at the Pfizer (Beneficial) facility
- Lime kiln restoration grant received
- Chamber of Commerce created in PG
- Bernardsville joins the Bedminster & PG Shared Court
- The Lynch Report is received concerning Police Department efficiencies
- Somerset County repaved their roads within the Borough
- John Gregory joined our employment as Borough Administrator/Clerk
- Our DPW took over routine maintenance of Far Hills police cars in a shared service agreement
- NJ Transportation Trust Fund was shut down by Governor Christie creating a halt to any project receiving funds from that source. This caused a postponement of the Mosle Road repaving job which will now be done in 2017
- All Borough employees received training to prevent harassment
- The town, through the Property Committee, began the permitting process for drilling a well to supplement the water supply to Liberty Park pond
- Our Construction/Zoning offices moved downstairs within the Municipal Building
- We received a retirement letter from DPW head Rodney McCatharn
- The meeting room above the firehouse was completed to include kitchen facilities planned to be available for parties, meetings, and other uses. The first event held was an appreciation party for town employees and town volunteers
- The November 8<sup>th</sup> election resulted in incumbents Caminiti and Corigliano being re-elected
- Work begins on the 2017 budget
- The new agreement between the borough and Friends of the Library was signed for library renovation
- The town hired a new auditing firm resulting in lower fees
- The Property Committee and Liberty Park Association identified potential architects for the park renovation
- A new shared service agreement was signed between Bedminster and PG where PG will supervise the sewage pumping station and transmission system. This happened because PG employees possess the licenses, qualifications, and PG owns the equipment to do the job

As your local government strives to control costs while maintaining the level of service that we are accustomed to, we have employed some techniques that are one-time events. As time goes on, we are

faced with rising costs, especially in the insurance area, that are always challenging. Our Administration and Council are always looking for areas where efficiencies can be created to reduce cost. Sometimes we are successful, sometimes not.

But these are the areas where we are working that could have long-term impact on the appearance and nature of our town: (1) Affordable Housing (also frequently known as COAH) is a subject of current litigation. The NJ State Supreme Court has taken over the duties of the Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) since COAH was deemed to be non-functioning by the court. This has resulted in several different judicial jurisdictions trying to create outcomes for each municipality in the state. The result will define the number of Affordable Units for which each town must provide zoning. It's a horrible situation which is costing every town considerable expense with an unknown outcome.

(2) Long term budgeting is a constant concern. I would encourage everyone to review a very interesting report issued by our Finance Committee and contained in the Council minutes of March 8, 2016. We labor under a mandate from the State limiting our ability to raise revenue (the 2% cap). When we face increasing costs as I previously mentioned, we need to find areas where we can cut costs, if we are to maintain services.

As a result, your government is faced with the choice of creating higher taxes, more shared service agreements, reducing services, or expanding ratables (income). It has been suggested that when the legislature enacted the 2% cap, they understood that it would force towns to find ways to cut costs. All of these options are doable, but each would have a resultant effect on our borough. These budgeting/management challenges will be faced in 2017 and beyond, but they will not go away.

In closing, I offer my most sincere thanks to our employees, volunteers, and elected persons. Each of you provides a service that is invaluable to the rest of us and thank goodness for all the talent that resides here and the hardworking and talented people that we employ.

Thanks for your support, and all the best in 2017,

Bill