

TOWNSHIP OF DENVILLE

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TO: Denville Township Council

FROM: Mayor P. Ted Husa

DATE: January 6, 2009

Mayor's Report – Reorganization Meeting

January 2009

Fiscal Conservatism and Accountability – By restructuring several departments and positions we achieved a savings to the taxpayer of \$300,000 in salary and overhead. We feel this helped us achieve greater productivity and accountability. We hope these procedures that worked so well here can be a model for other towns of how to save tax dollars. This was done at the same time while maintaining the same level of service to the town. Every step of the way in 2008 and in the future we will consider the taxpayer in this manner.

At the same time Marie Goble and I feel we have increased our availability by maintaining basically an open door policy all year long. Sometimes it was like a circus, but our stated goal way back in the beginning of the year was to be responsive and available. We handled many constituent calls and facilitated the resolution of many complex township issues.

Committees – We believe this attitude was responsible for the increased outpouring of volunteerism during 2008. We had over 120 new volunteers on the 16 committees that are run by the town. Recently a new slate of volunteer fire officers was sworn in and some 30 CERT volunteers were trained in 2008. Hopefully the fire departments job was made a little easier with the passage of the false alarm ordinance. Every effort was made to assist our many volunteers in every way as they served their community in their various capacities. I'll speak more about this later, but I want to add that all our volunteers are honored, valued and respected as signified by the awards being given tonight, those that were given in December and those that are given at various other meetings throughout the year.

Special thanks always go to our dedicated Fire and Emergency service volunteers. Their commitment is always far above any other volunteers. Consequently they have earned exceptional praise.

Incidentally, being dedicated to volunteerism, we always have plenty of room for new volunteers and always have meaningful places for them to serve. Do not hesitate to contact us if you want to serve in some capacity.

I'd like to highlight some of the many other items promoted and supported by this administration this past year.

Sewer Project – As the Phase I sewer project is being completed in 2009 we feel we have been very responsive to all individual concerns. A meeting was held in January to poll phase II people as how they wanted the administration to proceed. Many site visits we attended by the mayor and Business administrator as we worked through the various issues.

Pedestrian Overpass – This was negotiated under the previous administration and should also be completed at no cost to Denville taxpayers. It fulfills a major safety need as the premier recreational facility in the area is across the busiest highway from four eating establishments and a major residential area.

Road Paving and Curbs – We completing the most extensive curb project in recent history we spent \$490K for curbs and paving, which included a \$170,000 DOT grant.

Recreational Fields – Two Green acres public hearings were held in 2008, with 5 permanent fields planned at Veterans Park and Ford Road. They will be started in 2009. Additionally, the use of four new temporary fields was procured with renewable agreements with private landowners. These were used for Lacrosse, Rugby and girls softball. Don Bogardus will quantify the field needs of Denville's Recreation Department in a study he is currently conducting.

Shared Services – Marie Goble and myself have pursued and continue to pursue shared services where feasible with neighboring towns and Morris County.

Open Space – Working with the Open Space committee, we applied for Green Acres and Morris County Open Space funds for the purchase of the Patterson Diocese land adjacent to Knuth Farm and the Kovacs property adjacent to Muriel Hepner Park. We supported a POWWW purchase also. We expect to close on all three properties this year.

Grant Applications – We applied for the following grants; Morris County Mitigation grant, Highlands grant, State trailways grant, Morris County Energy grant, NJ DOT paving grant, MAC grant, Click it or Ticket grant, Body Armor grant, 2 health grants and a Clean Communities grant. We submitted an application for the County Solar Feasibility Study.

COAH – Council members and members of Denville staff joined the mayor and business administrator in attending seminars about COAH. Our attorneys further educated us about the third round rules. In September I started a series of weekly meetings with our planner, Bill Denzler. Having nearly completed the fair share plan, we were presented with a no obligation grant from NJ Highlands to consider becoming a Highlands town, which involves a lower COAH obligation. This is a one-year extension to file our fair share plan.

Special Activities - Denville's volunteer committees teamed together to put on several events whose goal it was to enhance our quality of life here in Denville. In November the new Green Sustainability Committee put on an Energy Fair extravaganza, which resembled a mini Atlantic City Convention. It had a series of speakers, many vendors and lots of valuable give-a-ways. The newly formed Public Health and Safety Committee also had a major Bike Safety Fair, a Health Fair with St. Clare's, a fundraiser for Jersey City Battered Women's Shelter, an Awareness week for a rare disease, an event for women's cardiac health and it sponsored a Mayor's recycling contest.

These events set a new standard of public service and most events appear to be turning into annual events.

In particular through the efforts of the Green Committee we seem to have already achieved 2/3rds of the State's requirement towards becoming a certified Green municipality. Of course the payoff is in completing the last third of the requirements.

Capitol Expenses - We started the Cooks Pond pavilion, which was budgeted for last year, purchased a set of Jaws of Life for the Fire Department, several new vehicles for the Fire Department and DPW and made several improvements to our Fire Houses.

Future Priorities – This year we look forward to Labor negotiations, Coah Obligations, a challenging municipal budget and a sluggish economy. We plan to meet these challenges with the same fiscally conservative approach that we have exhibited in 2008. Consideration of the taxpayer will always be an earmark of this administration.

At the same time we will be all about the business of developing these raw parcels of land we have been purchasing into fine parks with trails, picnic areas and bike paths. We plan to continue working on recreational fields, acquiring more land from our priority list of parcels, pursuing shared services and going green wherever and whenever possible.

We have every expectation we can get through these economically troubled times and come out better than we were before.