

2016 State of the Borough

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, Borough Staff and family and friends, welcome to our annual reorganization meeting of the Borough of Bloomingdale. Thank you for joining us today. We are very pleased to welcome back Councilman Mike Sondermeyer and Rich Dellaripa for another three year term. These gentlemen are an integral part to our success. Effective government represents diverse opinions and towards informed, conscientious decisions and compromises, for the good of the order. We sit here to make Bloomingdale the best it can be and the finest community in Passaic County. We do not stand still. We do not rest on our laurels. We are creating a new Bloomingdale and ensuring its strength and vitality not just today but for years to come. People are taking notice. We are opening minds and changing perceptions.

We have done some great work in our borough. This success is attributed to our great council members, our dedicated Borough Staff and our unbelievably dedicated group of volunteers on our boards and commissions and our Borough Professionals, Fred our attorney, Paul our Engineer, Dave Voza our Insurance risk consultant, Joe and Andy our auditor. These people are the backbone of our Borough. I thank them for their input and advice in making the Borough a better place and I am grateful for their efforts. It is very gratifying to work with so many dedicated and enthusiastic people. I also want to thank our Police Department and Department of Public works for the fine job they continue to do for the residents of Bloomingdale.

No community can function without its volunteers and we are grateful for their service to our Borough. They give their time and talents to help plan our community and preserve our quality of life. Special recognition should be given to our Fire Department and the Triboro First aid squad, who respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days per years. Their commitment and dedication is beyond description.

I am pleased to report on some of our accomplishments in 2015 and what we can look forward to in 2016.

- We have stabilized the Borough tax rate and rebuilt our surplus with a tax collection rate over 98%
- We continue to make an investment in our Borough-with the paving of over 60% of our Borough Roads, much of this done with grant funds from the Dept. of Transportation as a result of establishing a 10 year road paving plan.
- There will be additional paving in 2016
- Investing in our aged sewer and water infrastructure. We have obtained over 1.2 million in zero interest loans and grants to replace failing water and sewer lines. We have invested in a leak study that has recouped hundreds of thousands of lost water, saving our residents over \$200,000 annually, allowing us to stabilize our rates.
- Sold excess sewer capacity and built utility surplus to over \$1 million, to help stabilize rates.
- We have reduced the Borough debt from 11 million to 9.4 million while still making these investments.
- We have obtained over 1.25 million in grants for recreation improvements to all of our field with new restrooms and walking track at Walter t Bergen, with drainage improvements to take place in 2016. I am most proud of the restoration of the Delazier field Grandstand. These grandstand are a large part of our Borough history and this project has ensured that the Grandstand will be enjoyed by all for years to come.
- We have reduced operation cost over \$500,000 with shared services
- Continue flood mitigation projects to lessen or stop flooding. We are in the final stages on the Sloan park project. The gem of our downtown will be reopened in 2016
- Invest in the remapping of our flood zones to remove over 100 resident who are erroneously classified as well as enter into the Community rating system all of which will save our residents will over \$1 million in insurance premiums.
- We have improved community outreach with a new website, swift reach and an active face book page.
- With the help of our Insurance Consultant we have instilled a strong employee safety program which helps reduce our premiums.

- We have reduce employee health insurance cost, saving the Borough \$100,000 annually.
- We have developed a vision for Main St. With zoning changes the downtown growth will only continue. We have reinstited the economic development commission who will assist in bringing additional growth to our Borough.
- We will continue to seek ways to increase the Borough revenues so that we can continue to stabilize our taxes.
- We will continue to explore the Tilcon expansion concept to determine if this is good for Bloomingdale.
- We have for the first time in 20 years protected the Borough form Affordable Housing lawsuits.
- In 2016 we will be offering grants to qualified residents for various home improvements.
- New digital sign boards will be installed in 2016 so that our residents have another means of gathering information. One of these sign boards is being paid for by a Passaic County Grant.
- I will be starting a Mayors Book Club within our schools to promote literacy and the importance of reading to our students.
- As always our school district continues to be a top priority. While the Borough is not involved in the day to day operations of the school district which is an autonomous body, we have collaborated in improving facilities and implementing cost saving measure.

These are just some of the accomplishments of this Governing Body. We look forward to continued improvements in 2016. I again remind you that you have open access to my office and encourage you to come to our public meetings and participate in your local government. During the coming months I pledge to work with you and the members of the Borough Council, committees and Borough Departments to continue to implement a strategy that promotes managed responsible growth and revitalization and to aggressively seek the funding to carry out our plans at the least cost or no cost to the residents of this wonderful community we know as Bloomingdale.

In conclusion, the Council and I would like to wish you and your loved ones good health, happiness and peace in the New Year. May God bless our servicemen and women; the United States and the Borough of Bloomingdale.