

Each year, the Mayor is given the task of reporting the state of affairs in the Lincoln Park to the Borough Council. This is typically done by reading the address into the public record at the organization or first Council meeting of the year. In the effort of trying to enhance communication between borough hall and the residents we serve, I would like to share the "State of the Borough" with as many of you as possible. In addition to the public reading at the meeting, this account will be available on our website and in the Beavertown Journal.

Clearly, one of the most noticeable events of 2007 was the completion and occupation of our new Municipal and Emergency Services Buildings. The two year construction project was actually the culmination of nearly 20 years of contemplation and planning. The Municipal Building allows for greater productivity and efficiency of the daily borough operations and more importantly, enables us to provide a greater level of service to the residents and community we serve. The EMS Buildings give our Police, Fire and First Aid – already among the most respected in our region – state of the art facilities to maintain their equipment, increase their training and safety, and to further proficiently protect you and your property.

The improvements and benefits of these buildings do, however, come with a price. Yes, there was a significant tax increase in 2007 due partially to the funding of the new buildings. Administration and Council have taken steps which should insure that funding of this project going forward should not exceed the increase our residents have already experienced.

Alas, the buildings were only a portion of the 2007 increase. Rising insurance and energy costs, state mandated increases to pension programs, a county mandated property re-valuation are just a few of the items which did and will continue to plague us, as well as every other community in New Jersey. Your elected officials are committed to balancing these uncontrolled increases by thoroughly evaluating those which we are able to exercise control over. This year's budget planning will be a zero-based process where each department in the municipality, rather than start with the funds they were allocated the previous year, will have to start from zero and build up to their 2008 request. I and your Council members will also continue to work with and lobby the county and state to provide much needed property tax relief.

Another prominent event which affected every member of our community was the 'nor easter and subsequent flooding which occurred in April. Thankfully, there was no loss of life in Lincoln Park. Regrettably, the loss of property and the disruption of far too many lives in our community was staggering. This year for the first time in the long and horrible history of flooding in Lincoln Park, a town meeting was held with representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, State and Local Officials, to discuss the impact of flooding locally. This meeting which was attended by nearly 200 residents shows the distress that our community has regarding this predicament and puts the State on notice that we need movement towards solution of this problem. Once again, communication with our county, state and federal officials must continue to insure that once flood waters recede in Lincoln Park the issues which contribute to the severity of flooding in this region are not forgotten. Prevention, relief and mitigation of flood hazards in Lincoln Park is a continuous topic, not just one to be thought of while we are inundated with water. These issues are not particular to Lincoln Park and must be addressed regionally. I call on our local and County Emergency Management agencies to improve their protection of and service to every municipality in the county. The State must take responsibility for planning proper development throughout the region where water run-off or flood control measures from one municipality will have a burdensome affect on another. The Federal government must be able to better provide aid to us when we as a community and the individuals in it need assistance most. I must take a moment to thank Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen for his tireless efforts on

behalf of Lincoln Park during the flood. Senator Menendez, our State Representatives Alex DeCroce and Joe Pennacchio and assemblyman elect Jay Webber offered a great amount of assistance, as did our County Freeholders.

During the campaign preceding my election, I met with many residents of town who told me of their desire for new and improved borough programs and services. 2007 saw an increase in programs offered by our Health Department and Parks and Recreation Department and Lincoln Park's participation in the New Jersey Mayor's Wellness Campaign. Programs were offered for the benefit of children as well as adults. Improvements to our Community Lake, Parent's Night Out, expanded hours for the "Kinder-Rec" and Summer Camp programs, Walk to School Day, Weight Loss Challenges, a Holiday Festival at the new Municipal building and the formation of the 1st Annual Beavertown Fall Classic 5K race are just a few of the ways that we were able to add to the quality of life and pride in our community this past year. I look forward to being able to offer even more in the coming year.

An additional item that was a topic of interest in speaking with many residents was the need for better communication between the borough and our residents. We have responded with many upgrades to the communication to and from the borough. There have been many improvements to the Beavertown Journal that is published by our Municipal Clerk. In order to offer the journal to more residents, we made one additional town-wide mailing in 2007 and I look to do more in 2008. We have enhanced the use of our cable public access channel, not only for emergency purposes, but to post notification of information and events from the borough and the different civic organizations which serve Lincoln Park. There has been greater use of the borough web-site including an expansion of borough and community event calendars and the implementation of a newsgroup service which has the ability to send important information via email directly to those who sign up for the free service.

As in any vibrant community, youth is the key to the future. This past year many vacant and expired terms to our various boards were filled by appointments of some young adults in our community. I value and appreciate the efforts of all the members of our town who have served and continue to serve on the different boards and committees which help guide our town. This year we also have the formation of two new committees in town: The Citizen's Advisory Board and the Flood Advisory Committee. These two new entities are full of deeply dedicated individuals who have a great desire to assure that Lincoln Park remains the great and wonderful community that it is.

Many civic organizations have contributed greatly to Lincoln Park this past year. Just to name a few, The Pequannock Valley Rotary Club helped tremendously with the 5K race. The Lion's Club continued their support of our annual Halloween party. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts continue to shape the future leaders of our community. The American Legion runs our annual Memorial Day Parade. The Fire Department and First Aid Squad along with the great service they provide for health, fire and flood protection made sure that Santa could get around town this year to all his stops. I would like to express gratitude to every civic organization, business owner and individual who contributed so magnificently to our community in 2007 and ask you for your continued commitment and enthusiasm in 2008. The PAL, its volunteer board members and coaches, continue to provide excellent athletic programs for our children. And speaking of PAL programs, along with running their first invitational softball tournament, Lincoln Park took home awards from various tournaments this year including girls Softball, Baseball, Soccer, Competition Cheerleading and a Super Bowl Championship for one of our Raider's Football teams. I would like to congratulate the entire PAL membership, coaches and children on great seasons and for representing Lincoln Park so well.

Through the course of 2007 we had the retirement of several long time borough employees. Parks & Recreation Superintendent Stan Smith, Zoning Enforcement official Gary McNabb and Nada Lohavichan from the finance department decided to move on to the next step of their lives. I thank them for their dedicated service to the borough and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

I would like to thank all of the department heads for a job well done this year. Administrator and Borough Engineer Joe Maiella, Department of Public Works Superintendent Tom Piorkowski, Police Chief Sean Canning, Health Official Pat Pignatelli, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Janet Cassidy, CFO Dennis Gerber, Fire Chief Sal Marino and EMS Chief Donna Moeller along with our Municipal Clerk Penny Maida-Smith and Secretary to the Administrator Ellen Ross were all involved in making sure that the services of the borough were provided as efficiently as possible. I would like to extend a special thank you to those individuals above who also helped to make my first year as your Mayor a resourceful and productive one.

I am grateful towards each and every employee of the Borough of Lincoln Park. At the beginning of the year, I met with every employee and let them know that my goal was to provide a great quality of service, increase communication and be accountable for the service we provide to our residents. I hope you join me in my belief that this goal has been accomplished. I expect that every employee will unite with me in pledging that the accessibility, accountability and reliability of all borough department and employees will continue in the coming year.

Credit for much of what happened in Lincoln Park this year must be shared with the Council members who serve the best interests of the borough. Hy, Ray, Jim, Ellen, Anne, Lou and Janet – I, and the residents you serve thank you for your hard work.

In closing, I would like to recognize the efforts of the Lincoln Park Community as a whole. Every person, every group, each individual, each of us who provide a service and those that make use of the service and programs provided; we all play an important part in the completion of our community. Wherever you fit in this circle of community, thank you for being part of it and contributing in the ways you are able to.