

I am honored to deliver to you my sixth state of the borough address. I offer congratulations to our 2016 council president, David Jacobs and to our re-elected council persons, Tom Tsilionis and Peter Smith. I truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of all of our council members.

Let's review some of our accomplishments that occurred this past year.

Roseland was designated as the 7th best town in the State of NJ to live in by NJ monthly magazine. The publication Ranks all of NJ's 500 plus municipalities based on several factors including; taxes, public safety, schools, and the resale value of homes. I am proud our ranking and I wish to thank all of our hard-working employees and volunteers for helping us achieve this well-deserved designation.

I am also very proud that the borough finalized the purchase of the Dockrell property also known as the former Fernwood Golf and Swim Club. The acquisition was completed using funds collected through our open space and recreating trust fund and without the need to increase property taxes. The Purchase of this 11.6-acre parcel will ensure that the property will be preserved for the enjoyment of this and future generations and will prevent the property from any sort of future commercial or residential development. The land shall be used for our own recreation and open space enjoyment.

We debuted our brand new, state of the art baseball field, "Fernwood field". The field was re-angled to protect our players from potential harm. Drainage and new turf was installed along with a brand-new restroom facility, scoreboard, and dug outs. A berm was installed and beautiful mature evergreen trees were planted for screening. The finished product came out better than we ever expected.

The building at BondForcePark was spruced up and given a much-needed face lift. The building had been neglected for years and we are pleased with its current refurbished condition.

We paved Beechtree Road, Cedar Lane, and Paradise Place and the expense of the projects was offset by a DOT grant in the amount of \$225,000. We awarded a bid for the resurfacing of the final section of Monroe Avenue and the expense for the project will be offset by a DOT grant in the amount of \$232,000. We plan to resurface Becker Farm Road shortly and the expense of that project will be offset by a DOT grant in the amount of \$217,000.

We entered into a shared service agreement with our neighbors from West Caldwell and Caldwell for the purpose of purchasing a new senior citizen bus. The three towns applied for and were awarded CDBG grant funds totaling \$70,780. The grant money will be used to purchase a new bus that will replace the old bus which has been on life support.

We are nearly complete with the repairs to the main borough Hall building (19 Harrison Ave) that had been damaged by fire. We finalized a lease of the first-floor space to our tenants, the ARC of Essex County. The lease of additional space to the ARC will result in \$33,000 per year in additional revenue for the borough. The ARC has also made considerable investment in interior improvements to the premises. I cannot recall a time in my life that our borough real estate has been in better condition than it is now.

We have built a brand-new salt shed at our DPW yard which replaced the old utility building that had partially collapsed. Most of the funds used to build the new facility were recovered through an insurance claim settlement that we received as proceeds from the collapsed utility building.

We are pleased to report that we reached amicable resolution and finalized a water agreement with our friends from Essex Fells, a sewer agreement with our friends from Caldwell, and an FOP patrol contract with our FOP Union representing Roseland's finest.

We continue to deal with tax appeals from our commercial property owners. The majority of commercial office building owners in Roseland file property tax appeals every year. We expect some of these matters to go to court this year and we will report the outcomes back to you, our constituents.

In spite of a year over year loss of revenue totaling 7.8%, the portion of your tax bill that is under the control of this group increased by only 2.9%. We adopted a municipal budget where expenditures increased by a mere one quarter of one percent (\$22,291).

Roseland scored 88% on New Jersey's Best Practices Survey and we are pleased that, as a result of our excellent score, we received 100% of our State Aid. We expect to score even higher on the survey this year as we have adopted New Jersey's Pay to Play Ordinance which mandates that the borough follow a fair and open process when awarding contracts to our professionals.

We had our share of fun in the borough this past year and we are a strongly knit community thanks to our amazing spirit of caring for one another that has become our culture. Roseland is all about family, we are about neighborhood block parties, annual borough bonfires, Christmas tree lighting and Menorah lighting celebrations, and Farmers Market Fridays. We are about the parents who choose to raise their families here, we are about the senior citizens who share their experience and wisdom with the community, we are about our youth with whom we share the good things in life that are innocent and pure, we are about our volunteers who give so tirelessly of themselves for our common success, and we are about our business owners who offer their goods and services to our residents.

Yes, Roseland is a good physical place to be, but we are a great community to experience!

As your elected officials, we are proud of the work that we do for our constituents and we are committed to forging ahead and preserving Roseland as "the Gem of Essex county".