

SEA BRIGHT REORGANIZATION DAY JANUARY 2, 2010

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to Sea Bright's 2010 Reorganization Day.

I would like to congratulate Council members Dina Long and William "Jack" Keeler on their re-election.

I will share with you my goals for 2010.

As I did in 2009, I am asking the Council to introduce a budget ten (10) per cent lower than last year's to try to achieve a zero tax increase.

Here are some cost savings ideas the Council may want to consider.

Eliminate mailing the quarterly Sea Breeze to all postal patrons. Post the Sea Breeze on our website, and we can have it automatically emailed to whomever requests it. For those who do not have computers, we would have copies available at Borough Hall and the library. We would save mailing and printing costs.

Let us all try to make decisions before spending money on professional services. Indecisiveness has become too expensive.

We have asked all of our professionals to retain the same rates as in 2009, and in a few cases they will be lower thanks to the efforts of our Borough Administrator Maryann Smeltzer and her staff.

By June 2010, I would like to be able to offer to our residents and business owners the option of paying their property taxes and sewer charges using credit or debit cards, and any other services where the Borough can accept credit or debit card payments by statute. Our Finance Chairman, Councilman C. Read Murphy can coordinate this effort.

I would also like the Council to work towards the following goals

- a. Permanent cell tower – April 2010
Council President Jack Keeler, Chairman Police and OIM**
- b. Beach Way/Normandie Place Repaving – May 2010 – we received a \$215,000 grant to help for this
Councilman James LoBiondo, Chairman Public Works**

- c. **Beach Pavilion – September 2010**
Councilwoman Dina Long, Chairwoman Beach Committee
- d. **Bulkheads – Beach and Center Streets – October 2010 –**
funding available.
Councilman James LoBiondo, Chairman Public Works

We are optimistic that the litigation with the DEP will be resolved soon. Since it is not yet finalized, all I am at liberty to state is that you will be seeing some much needed enhancements to our municipal beach as soon as the Council makes some decisions.

A successful program that was initiated last year by Beach Chairwoman, Councilwoman Dina Long was the half-price pre-season beach badge sales. We have already sold 215 badges for the 2010 beach season. Keep in mind that this is January 2.

This is a win-win for beachgoers and the Borough.

We will extend this program until March 31, after that date, the price will go back to \$100 per badge.

Coming soon will be Family Fun Fridays (on the fourth Friday of the month), a new program which the Recreation Advisory Committee and Chairwoman, Councilwoman Peggy Bills are organizing. Stay tuned for details.

The Smart Growth Committee Chairman, Councilman Brian Kelly will be providing us with a schedule of quarterly meetings at the January 19 council meeting. At the final Smart Growth meeting in 2009, we had a guest speaker with an interesting concept for a bulkhead. We had good public participation, and Councilman Kelly will pursue this.

There has been much discussion as to whether we should or should not build a pool. Should it be seasonal or year round. How many lockers, should we have day lockers? Will it generate enough revenue to pay down the construction debt? These are all good questions and valid concerns.

We have received professional cost estimates for a seasonal pool with amenities at approximately \$15 million. Some say that this number is not accurate and that it will not cost more than \$3 million.

What I can tell you is that, based on my experience with construction projects in Sea Bright, the proposed pool project will probably be a lot closer to the \$15 million than to the \$3 million.

The residents I have spoken to about the pool are evenly split on this issue.

I urge the council to decide what you would like to do before spending any additional money on architects, engineers, attorneys, plans, studies, etc., for the pool project. Then let the people decide through a referendum in November.

With the consolidation of Sea Bright with the Oceanport School District, we were concerned as to what the financial impact would be for Sea Bright taxpayers. So I sent a letter to State Education Commissioner Davy petitioning her to determine in accordance with A-4141 the apportionment methodology that will remain in effect for the duration of Sea Bright's consolidation with Oceanport District.

Commissioner Davy advised, "the methodology used was a combination of equalized value and enrollment to achieve a neutral tax impact on Sea Bright and Oceanport taxpayers. That methodology will continue as the basis for taxes in this new district for the duration of the Sea Bright – Oceanport K-8 relationship."

That was the written response that we had hoped for. But as soon as Governor elect Christie appoints a new Education Commissioner, I will write to the new commissioner and hope for the same response as Commissioner Davy's.

Two Rivers Mayors Council, of which I am a member, has initiated a Mayors Task Force for School Funding Reform that would require the State to fund per pupil education costs from a source other than property taxes. New Jersey is one of only seven states that continues to use property

taxes to fund education.

The New Jersey League of Municipalities has sent a SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM INITIATIVE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT to all the Mayors in the State for our signature, which I have done.

We are working with the NJ Boat Commission to amend their rules so that from shore to shore the Shrewsbury River from Sedge Island in Sea Bright to Plum Island in Highlands is designated as a “slow speed/no wake” area.

Speeding on the River is hazardous and the wake increases riverfront beach erosion as well as damage to bulkheads, boats and property.

I would like to thank Jo and Re Van Holt and Mary Ann Chevalier for encouraging us to look into this.

I was able to persuade the commission to hold their next meeting in Sea Bright instead of Trenton. It will be on Wednesday, January 13 at 10 AM in our meeting room. We encourage all to attend.

Police Chairman, Council President Jack Keeler and Police Chief John Sorrentino;s main focus is public safety. The Chief and his Department are committed to being proactive rather than reactive with enforcement.

We lost quite a lot of sand with the recent nor’easters, and we had to do something about this.

I was able to convince the Bureau of Coastal Navigation to allow us to scrape the sand from the waterline to build a berm in areas where we did not have permits. Hopefully, these berms will give us more protection than we had in the past.

In the future, we should include sand scraping as a normal maintenance project.

I would like to thank Public Works Chairman, Councilman James LoBiondo, Director of Public Works Dave Bahrle and his crew for coordinating this project.

This year the Sea Bright Business Alliance will be hosting, not one,

but two “A Taste of Sea Bright” events, on the first Saturdays, May 1 and October 2. Tickets will be limited to 1000.

Visit www.visitseabright.com for details.

We would like to recognize and thank all of our employees, whose names and titles appear on today’s agenda, for a superb job in the day-to-day operations of the Borough.

We cannot thank our volunteers enough who selflessly devote many hours to organizations such as the Fire Department, Fire Ladies, First Aid, and Emergency Management; our advisory committees; namely, beatification, library, recreation, environment, public relations; and cats; Board of Health, and the Planning and Zoning Board. We thank you for all your services, your devotion and your dedication to Sea Bright.

If you would like to join one or more volunteer groups, Council or Planning/Zoning Board, please feel free to contact us. Our contact information is on our website www.seabrightnj.com or you can telephone Borough Hall.

I hope that this Council will continue to communicate with each other, and respect each other’s position.

It is important for the governing body to hear from you. Tell us if you like or do not like what we are doing. If you think you have a good idea, please share it with us.

And now in closing, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Mayor. I enjoy every phone call, email and letter that I receive. It is never a bother.

I look forward to the new year, and I wish everyone a Happy and Healthy 2010, and may God bless Sea Bright.

Thank you.

Maria D. Fernandes
Mayor Sea Bright