



## Mayor Brindle's Opening Remarks November 20, 2018

I would like to reiterate Jim and Greg's comments regarding our efforts during the last storm. We will learn from this unprecedented event and strive to do better. I believe that our DPW, under Greg's leadership, is second to none and am fully confident in their ability to continually evolve and improve their service to residents.

We do have good news to report on several fronts.

### **WESTFIELD HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

I would first like to congratulate Megan Avallone, Westfield's Director of our Regional Health Department, on being elected as the President of the Association of County and City Health Officials. I had the privilege of swearing her in last week, and got to see first hand how Westfield is recognized as having one of the premier health departments in the state as a result of her leadership. Megan will now have a seat at the table for state level conversations regarding significant public health issues, whether it be mental health, flu outbreaks, infant mortality, and any unforeseen public health crisis.

### **RVL ONE SEAT RIDE**

Last Thursday I co-hosted a breakfast for the Raritan Valley Line Mayor's Alliance along with Mayors Colleen Mahr and Bob Fazen. We were joined by State Senators Tom Kean, Joe Cryan, and Kip Bateman who discussed their bipartisan efforts to find a legislative solution to obtain a peak one seat ride for the RVL, while also demanding service improvements to NJ Transit and holding them accountable.

As a next step, the senators are working on a plan to require NJT to put together a feasibility plan for a RVL peak one seat ride. The Mayors Alliance will be introducing a website, Facebook page, and video in the beginning of the year with a call to action for the public. In the meantime you can stay updated on our progress by following us on Twitter @RVLMayors.

### **WESTFIELD RINK AT GUMBERT PARK**

The Westfield Rink had a successful grand opening with appearances by the Devils mascot, some fantastic figure skaters, and lots of families including almost 200 people who attended the public skating session. To date, there have been over 2600 users of the rink with 1100 of those for public events. It's been a great two weeks!

As a reminder, there is public skating on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and more public sessions are being added due to high demand. You can check the schedule on the Town website <https://www.westfieldnj.gov/icerink>. The Rink will also be open on Thanksgiving for public skating at 11am and 2pm. I know where my kids will be!

## **MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

Next week we will be officially kicking off our Master Plan process with the first meeting of the Steering Committee and our consultant H2M. The committee is comprised of various stakeholders who will be leading the process. In addition to myself, the committee members are:

- Town Planner Don Sammett
- Town Administrator Jim Gildea
- Planning Board Chairman Robert Newell
- Planning Board member and Council liaison Linda Habgood
- Planning Board attorney Alan Trembulak
- Historic Preservation Committee Chairwoman Kelly Kessler
- DWC Executive Director Sherry Cronin
- Former Zoning Board Chairman and Downtown Task Force Chair Bill Heinbokel
- Economic Development Advisor Liz Jeffery
- BOE President Gretchen Ohlig

Planning Board members Michael LaPlace and Anastasia Harrison will serve as alternates.

The Committee's role is to guide the process, which includes ensuring that we engage the public as much as possible. At the end of the day, this Master Plan belongs to the residents, and as such, needs to reflect the desires of the community at large.

## **NEW RESTAURANT/BAR OPENING**

I'm very excited to announce that Bare Burger, a high end burger/vegan restaurant with a full bar will be opening in the Coldwater Creek space, with an entrance on Central Ave across from Banana Republic. Tonight, the Town Council will be formally approving their liquor license transfer in anticipation of a late spring opening. Many folks may already be familiar with Bare Burger locations in the city, as well as in Montclair and Ridgewood. They will be a fantastic addition to Town and will enliven a space that has been vacant for too long. And yes...they are planning on a rooftop bar and dining!

## **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Similar to last year, we will soon be asking for residents to submit volunteer applications so that we can have a database of interested residents when volunteer opportunities arise. These opportunities may consist of filling the limited open seats on various Boards/Commissions, new committees to support and plan things like the Memorial Day parade, Westfield's 300th Anniversary celebration, and AddamsFest. Information on how to submit an application will be available next week and I would enthusiastically encourage everyone to apply.

## **HOLIDAY EVENTS**

Everyone is invited to attend the Christmas Tree lighting this Sunday at 5:30 in the North Ave train station lot. Please bring your families downtown, take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, sing some carols, and stop by the giant gingerbread house to make a gingerbread craft courtesy of Bovella. You can then head over to the Westfield Rink where there will be public skating from 6:30-8pm.

And if that isn't enough fun, we are having our first annual Townwide Gingerbread House Contest. Entries will be displayed in shop windows in town for all to see. Entry information and a voting tool can be found on our town website and I would encourage everyone to participate!

The holiday cheer will continue with the lighting of the menorah which is taking place on Sunday December 2 at 5:00 also in the Northside train station lot. Just one more reason to bring your families downtown to celebrate the season.

I hope everyone enjoys a fantastic Thanksgiving with their families.