



## Mayor Brindle's Opening Remarks April 23, 2019

I hope everyone had a happy Easter and Passover, and a restful spring break. Many of us were on vacation and are coming back to a lot of activity.

Before I left for vacation, I attended the wake and funeral for WHS principal Dr. Derrick Nelson. The outpouring of support, including national media attention, speaks to the genuine hero he was and the enormity of our community's loss. Tonight we will be issuing a Proclamation to honor Dr. Nelson's extraordinary life.

### **PSEG 69Kv PROJECT**

Since we last met, PSE&G hosted a workshop for residents to answer their questions and concerns about their proposed 69Kv project. While the format was not ideal for hearing collective questions and answers, it did reveal a lack of transparency around many issues, and provided clarity around the specific issues that need to be addressed so that we can determine a path forward, including, but not limited to:

- Documentation specifying the project's necessity and the scope of its actual mandate, including whether this project is considered baseline or supplemental
- Concerns about the vegetation management plan, including the necessity of removing the number of trees along the South Avenue route
- Specifics regarding the cost and feasibility of moving the lines underground

In the interim, I've asked our Town Council Public Works Committee Chair and Vice Chair -- Ward 3 Councilman David Contract and Ward 4 Councilman Doug Stokes -- to serve as the liaisons between residents and PSE&G as we move forward. They will work together in a bipartisan effort to ensure we continue to collect and respond to all concerns in an organized and comprehensive fashion. We have already had an initial follow up meeting with PSE&G to make introductions and to discuss next steps after the workshop.

Once we are confident that PSE&G will be able to sufficiently respond to the many questions and concerns that continue to be raised, you can expect an additional opportunity to hear from them. Be assured that no work will be done on this project before then and that we are united in fighting for the best interests of our residents. Councilman Contract will provide an update later tonight as part of his Public Works Committee report.

I do want residents to be aware in the meantime that PSE&G plans to complete some ongoing work they have been doing on the north side of Town over the last few months. They will be dropping notifications to all affected residents and businesses in the coming days with more details, and I want to reiterate in

advance -- so that there's no confusion when folks see their crews out -- that this is not part of the 69kV project, but instead bringing to completion a project that has been underway for quite some time.

### **UCC CELL TOWER**

I have had several conversations regarding the proposed UCC cell tower, most notably with Freeholder Chairwoman BJ Kowalski reiterating our strenuous opposition and with Cranford Mayor Pat Giblin who has directed their Planning Board attorney to assert their position that this project requires their Planning Board approval. He just confirmed that Verizon/UCC has agreed to submit an application for approval which is a significant development. Cranford has not yet passed a resolution formally opposing the cell tower as they were waiting for a response from Verizon's legal counsel. We are working on our own resolution which may potentially come to the full Council after being reviewed by the Code Review Committee at their next meeting.

### **2019 BUDGET ADOPTION**

Tonight, we are voting on the adoption of the 2019 budget. I'm proud to remind everyone that we have introduced a budget with a zero percent municipal tax increase, which is the first time that's happened in decades. We are looking forward to passing this budget so that we can begin working on the many technology, equipment and infrastructure improvements that it enables

In two weeks we will be introducing a capital ordinance which will include the budget for road paving among other capital improvements. The list of roads is being finalized and we are also in contact with Elizabethtown Gas to have them perform full width paving on roads where they have performed work, rather than just patching or half road paving. We were thrilled to receive a \$375k State DOT grant and a \$95k County grant for the paving of Rahway Ave and we look forward to sharing the final 2019 road paving list with the public shortly.

### **MASTER PLAN/PARKS PLAN**

I just want to remind everyone that there will be a public meeting tomorrow night with the Parks Plan and Master Plan consultants to solicit additional public input. This meeting will take place at Edison School at 7pm and encourage all of you to come, even for a second time. It's a very fun exercise!

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

There are many exciting events coming up in the next few weeks, beginning with the Baseball/Softball Opening Day Festivities this Saturday, followed by Greta's Run on Sunday, and to commemorate Earth Month, a parks clean up on Sunday beginning at 9am. It's not too late to volunteer! The parks clean up is just one of many events leading up to the numerous Earth Day activities that are happening around town on Saturday May 4. Separately, as part of Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, our Westfield Police Department is hosting an Autism Family Day this Saturday from 11am-1pm for families of children on the spectrum. And to further their commitment to community policing, you are invited to Pizza with the Police hosted by Outta Hand Pizza on Thursday, May 2 at 4pm.

With so much going on, spring has definitely sprung!  
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