

MAYORAL ADDRESS

FROM MAYOR MERINGOLO

JANUARY 4, 2016

Thank you for attending our re-organization meeting tonight.

First, let me say that I am honored to serve as Mayor in 2016 and I want to thank this committee for giving me the opportunity to represent Long Hill as Mayor. I would also like to thank my wife for allowing me the time necessary to serve on this committee.

Long Hill is a great place to live and raise a family and I know I speak for everyone on the township committee when I say that. We are all here, in addition to the couple of hundred volunteers in town, to contribute to our community and try to make it the best we can. Whether it is the Memorial Day parade, the street fair, little league, or finally, the Meyersville tree lighting at the end of the year, Long Hill is blessed for its community spirit and pride.

2016 will mark the 150th anniversary of the chartering of Long Hill and our community spirit and pride will be on full display with a couple of events to commemorate our founding. I hope everyone will come out to participate and enjoy the planned events.

While the 150th will be cause for special celebration for us, there will be other topics that will occur throughout the year and we, as a committee, need to work on improving our communications out to the residents about those topics. I am confident that we can do better by leveraging our current tools but by also introducing a newsletter that can be available to all residents. I would like communications to be one of our key objectives this year and I will work hard to ensure we are giving every resident the opportunity to be informed.

One of the significant topics to debate this coming year will be the potential sale of the sewer system. It has been discussed briefly in the past and currently a committee is compiling all the detailed facts for the community to understand. Once all the facts are compiled, we will discuss it publicly and provide the public with a referendum to make the decision. A sale has the potential to lower the

town's debt burden and reduce the overall operating expenses while at the same time giving the infrastructure the resources needed to make costly upgrades and repairs.

Additionally, we will be discussing the west end of Valley Rd in terms of redevelopment. For far too long that area has been an ugly sight and I have had many residents ask me if the town can do something to improve its appearance and contribution to the town. I'm hopeful the redevelopment process can make something happen for the benefit of our community.

Finally, I hope we can finish the plan for a park across from town hall. Park spaces bring communities together and Long Hill has a tremendous opportunity with this area that can be utilized for generations.

The sewer system, redevelopment, and park are significant areas the township committee will be engaged on throughout the year but there are many areas that have been on the radar that will continue to move forward on as regular agenda items. Issues such as sidewalks, road pavings, the old schoolhouse, our police and emergency services, as well as improving government efficiency and reducing cost will continue to be focused upon as they affect everyday life in Long Hill. We were able to make good progress in 2015 such as getting the Gillette pathway done and paving roads including White Bridge and Karen Dietrich, and of course building a turf field so those were the big hits last year. I am optimistic that we can build on those successes and improve the quality of life in Long Hill.

I am confident 2016 will be a great year for Long Hill and all our residents and I look forward to serving the community.

Thank you.