

PRESS RELEASE
February 7, 2018
From the Office of Mayor Kenneth T. Palmer
Manchester Township
Goals for 2018

I hope this message finds each of you happy and healthy in the New Year. With each turning of the calendar, I like to write down my goals for the coming year. This year, my goals for Manchester Township are to continue investing in and improving our aging infrastructure, finding ways to improve upon the services we provide our residents and explore ways to increase our tax base without imposing on our residents.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In each year, 2016 and 2017, the township saw approximately one million dollars worth of street paving. The funds were from a combination of state DOT grants and from your local tax dollars. This coming year, we have been approved for additional state DOT grant monies to repave Green Acres Road in Holly Oaks. We anticipate the paving to take place during the summer months. With your local tax dollars, we will pave several roads within the township in the worst condition. Considering pavement lasts approximately 20-25 years, the plan is to systematically repave a portion of our roads each year to spread out the costs. We have started with the roads in the worst condition across town.

As most of you can see, the water tower refurbishing project is near completion. The actual refurbishing and repainting to both the inside and outside of the tank is complete. When the weather allows, the contractor will complete the project by painting “Manchester Township” and the sunbeam emblem. I would like to thank you for cooperating with the water restrictions while the tank was not operational. Please note, refurbishing the water tower was the first step in improving the east side of the township’s water system. The next step is to develop and implement a plan to construct a second water tower. Our current ability to store water is limited to the current tower’s capacity of approximately one million gallons. During the summer months, when the residents turn on their sprinklers, the one million gallons is quickly consumed. As such, the need for summertime watering restrictions will not be eliminated until we install a second water tower to increase our ability to store more water. In addition to planning for a new water tower, we will continue to rehabilitate our wells and pump stations on both sides of town.

In 2017, the Township Council and I were thrilled to complete the rehabilitation of the Sixth Avenue Park. Each time I ride by the park, I enjoy seeing kids of all ages playing basketball, having a tennis lesson or romping around the playground equipment. While we cannot prevent all mischief, the security cameras were extremely useful in detecting the minor instances of vandalism that did occur. Our goal is to renovate and improve one park each year. In 2018, we intend to refurbish Summit Park. The plan is to install new playground equipment, resurface the basketball and tennis courts, put up new fencing and security cameras. Our hope is for the residents of Summit Park, families involved in LMSA and all other residents to be able to enjoy this park, as well. In 2019, we will set our sights on a park on the Whiting side of town.

SERVICES

Each year, we try and find ways to improve the manner in which we provide services. This past fall season, Mother Nature threw us a curve ball with the abnormally warm temperatures. As a result, the leaves on the trees did not fall when expected and our leaf vacuum service was affected. While our DPW employees did a great job in trying to double back to residences when the leaves did actually fall, we simply did not have

enough time to get all the leaves before the first snow. Before the next fall, we will look to develop a plan to adjust our normal schedule and be able to advertise it better to you.

Another area I am always trying to improve is our means of conveying information. Recognizing not everyone can make the Township Council meetings, this calendar year I will continue to hold ‘Neighborhood Meetings’ in each of our senior and non-senior communities. Last year, I conducted 25 meetings across town. I enjoy these meetings because I get to hear your concerns and inform our residents about what’s going on in town. In 2017, we revamped the township webpage to make it more informative and user-friendly. We have also pushed out information on NIXLE and Facebook, via Manchester Township’s page, Manchester Police’s page, Manchester Recreation’s page or the Mayor’s page. If you have not already signed up for any of these methods to receive information, please take a moment to do so.

TAX BASE

At 82 square miles, Manchester Township is a huge community. Despite our size, more than half of our land is environmentally protected by two regulatory agencies from ever being developed. As a result, finding locations to attract commercial development is a challenge. One area that has potential for commercial development is along Route 37, from the Toms River border to the Lakehurst Circle. This stretch of land is located within the jurisdiction of CAFRA, the state DEP’s regulatory authority. Per CAFRA’s regulations, in order for a developer to build on this stretch, the developer is only permitted to cover 30% of the property with an actual building and/or parking lot and leave 70% of the property uncovered. This regulation makes development in this stretch very burdensome and cost-prohibitive. As a means to lessen the regulation, Manchester Township is seeking a Plan Endorsement from CAFRA to designate this stretch a “Town Center.” Should the Plan Endorsement be accepted, the regulatory numbers are reversed. A developer can cover 70% of the property and leave 30% uncovered. The goal is to attract more commercial development as a way to broaden our tax base and relieve our residents of some tax obligations. To prepare the Plan Endorsement application and complete the review process with the State will likely take a year.

At a more local level, I intend to create The Mayor’s Business Advisory Committee this spring. The goal of the committee is to gather our local business owners and hear their suggestions about creating a more vibrant business environment in Manchester. My goal is to continue to grow and keep those businesses in town, and also attract new businesses. I have spoken with some business owners and received a good response. If there is anyone in Manchester Township that would like to participate, please send me a letter of interest via email to KPalmer@ManchesterTwp.com or to my attention via regular mail to Manchester Town Hall, 1 Colonial Dr., Manchester, NJ 08759.

I am looking forward to a great 2018 and hope to speak with you soon.