
TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
TOWNSHIP MANAGER
MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Township Council
FROM: Kenneth W. Daly, Township Manager
SUBJECT: Township Manager's Annual Report: 2006
DATE: February 9, 2007

On April 11, 2006, Franklin Township experienced another major tragedy with the deaths of Firefighter Kevin A. Apuzzio and Betty Scott, the woman whom he and others were trying rescue. Township Council approved \$15,000 in contributions to the Kevin A. Apuzzio memorial fund. This fund covered expenses of FF Apuzzio's funeral and the construction of a life size statue in honor of FF Apuzzio in front of the East Franklin Fire House. In addition, Township Council approved two other permanent memorials to the heroism of FF Apuzzio. The Township constructed and will maintain a pocket park next to the East Franklin Fire House, dedicated to the memory of FF Apuzzio. And Alexander Avenue, off Route 27, was renamed Kevin A. Apuzzio Avenue.

Under the leadership of Mayor and Township Council, Franklin Township made a number of significant accomplishments during 2006. The most notable of these accomplishments include:

- **Opening of the House Foods tofu factory on Randolph Road.** This \$6.9 million facility not only adds an industrial ratable, it provides jobs and a potential market for local farmers' soybeans.
- Agreements in place that will result in the **implementation of the Renaissance Redevelopment Plan from the railroad tracks up to French Street.** From south to north, these are: RPM, Leewood, the interlocal with the Sewerage Authority for the pump station, and Somerset-Douglas. Between Leewood and Somerset-Douglas, we are working with existing property owners on a revitalization strategy to upgrade their properties. Combined with projects previously completed (Naaman-Williams Park, First Baptist Church, and Somerset-Henry), implementation of these agreements will mean achievement of the goals of the Renaissance Redevelopment Plan. (In the short time she has been here, I do want to recognize the great help that Deborah Mitchell has been in reaching this point.)

But by far the greatest and most beautiful part of wisdom deals with the proper ordering of cities and households,
and that is called moderation and justice.

-Plato, Symposium 209a

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- **Elizabeth Avenue retail overlay district** approved by Planning Board and Township Council. About 130,000 square feet of retail and office approved near the intersections of Elizabeth, New Brunswick, and Schoolhouse, with another 20,000 s.f. coming to Planning Board this month.
- **Ruby Tuesday** opens on Davidson Avenue, as part of the Township's continuing economic development strategy of bringing more restaurants and commercial support services to Franklin Township. Another accomplishment in that vein was the opening of **Office Depot** on Easton Avenue.
- Revitalization of the Hamilton Street business district was marked by the first **Special Improvement District (SID) budget**. Façade and lighting improvements along Hamilton Street are underway as part of the Hamilton Street streetscape program.
- As a way of linking our open space/quality of life initiatives to the economic vitality of the Township, the **Eco-Heritage Tourism Plan** was completed during 2006. In June 2006, the Eco-Heritage Tourism Map was published to market the many amenities available in Franklin Township. These maps and other action items in the plan are aimed at bringing tourists to Franklin to occupy beds in our hotels, to shop and to dine locally.
- **Preservation of the Higgins House** on Route 27 in Kingston through a public-private partnership, which saves the house, but avoids Township continuing costs of maintenance, insurance, etc.
- **Donation of the historic structures at the corner of Old Georgetown and Canal Roads** to the Township. Over the last six years, the Township has worked on getting grants, obtaining historic studies, redevelopment designation, and redevelopment plan, as well as continuing dialogue with Trap Rock, all towards reaching this point. In 2007, DPW will be working with Police to implement Lt. Vornlocker's plan for improving visibility at this intersection.
- **Connection of all homes in the Zone of Involvement in Franklin Park** to the township water utility. In 2004, the Township undertook this project on its own, rather than continuing to wait on NJDEP. Now all homes in the Zone of Involvement have been connected to public water because of contamination of groundwater in this area. We expect that a portion of the \$1.1 million that the Township has spent on this project will be offset by a grant from NJDEP. (These bonds are funded by the water utility, not through property taxes.)

- **Neighborhood quality of life.** The Township administration solicits and gathers quality of life complaints from residents (e.g., zoning and health violations), makes sure they get assigned to the right departments, and then tracks them through to resolution (e.g., the list of suspects properties provided by Gerry Fudge and friends). Also, in response to the complaints from the Hampton Ridge neighborhood, the Township organized a neighborhood meeting with Police, Code, Zoning, and other departments. Neighborhood watch training and additional enforcement activities, as well as better communications between the residents of this neighborhood and the various departments, resulted from this meeting.
- Open space funds continue to provide other improvements to the quality of life in Franklin Township. The **preservation of the Puskas farm** on South Middlebush road was finally accomplished in 2006, after years of battling through state and county bureaucratic hurdles. The **native grasslands preserves** off Skillmans Lane and Canal Road are now open for the public.
- **Prevention of the loss of affordable housing units.** Working with April Harbstreet, SCCOAH, and the Township Attorney's office, we have intervened in a variety of ways (financial counseling; forced sale of units no longer occupied by eligible residents; purchase and resale of units subject to foreclosure) for the purpose of maintaining our existing inventory of affordable housing credits. From a list of about 20 units in danger last year, we are now down to two or three units. The number is subject to change daily because we are monitoring to prevent these situations as they are coming over the horizon.
- **Completion of the community development expansion of the municipal building,** which now provides one point of service for both planning/zoning and construction approvals. When engineering and economic development relocate next to this wing in the coming year, we will have achieved the vision of one-stop service for residents and businesses seeking approvals to improve their properties. Vince Lupu was primarily responsible for making this new wing happen.
- **Completion and occupancy of the new animal shelter.** Again, Vince Lupu managed this project to successful completion.
- **Completion and occupancy of the new, expanded library.** Jim Pettit, January Adams, and members of the Library Board have worked very directly to manage this project.
- **First year where the road program implements the comprehensive road conditions survey priorities.** On the recommendation of Township

Engineer, Tom Zilinek, we now have a plan for addressing neighborhood roads using unspent funds at the end of each year's overlay program.

- **Use of credit cards to pay court fines.** Maryann Nishimura, Joyce Miller, and Marc Dashield worked hard to negotiate this service with Commerce Bank. We are now moving on towards credit card and online payments for taxes, permits, and other charges.
- Addition of **12 new officers to the Police Department** to keep up with the Township's growth. The fiscal 2006 budget funded 10 additional police officers to cut the shortfall in sworn police officers in half. Under the long-range plan, the Township will be adding at least three more officers a year to the force so that we will achieve the FBI benchmark of 2.2 officers per 1,000 population by 2020. Through an interlocal agreement, the Board Education funded the addition of another two officers, devoted to school safety.
- Public access and transparency in local government improved in 2006 with the posting of the **audios of Township Council meetings on the Township web site**, broadcast of recorded **Planning Board meetings on FTTV 25**, and availability of the new **Township Code in its entirety through the Township web site** (www.franklintwpnj.org).

In the category of works in progress, I would include business planning and long-term financial planning. Business planning efforts have included a department head retreat with training on performance measurement; a briefing of the Administration Committee by the trainer, Katherine Kloby, on the recommended approach towards establishing business planning within the Township; and an online course for major department heads to bring everyone up to the same level on development and use of performance measures. Council continues to use the long-term financial planning spreadsheet as a vehicle for discussing policy and setting direction for multiyear periods, not just year to year.

In past annual reports I have recognized the contributions of Marc Dashield, who has served Franklin Township as Assistant Township Manager, Municipal Clerk, and Chief Financial Officer. In January 2007 Mr. Dashield moved on to become Administrator for the City of Plainfield. We shall miss him. His replacement as CFO is Vandana Khurana, an 18 year employee of the Township, who has her CMFO. And, as I have done before, I do want to recognize the invaluable contributions of Assistant Township Manager, Donna Vieiro, to many of the accomplishments listed above, and to thank the Office Coordinator in my office, Janie Dong, not only for her help to me, but to the many members of the public who come to my office every day.