



Mayor Kevin Sullivan's Statement January 6, 2015

Good evening everyone, and welcome to Chatham Township's 2015 Reorganization Meeting. I first want to welcome our two newest members of the Township Committee, Mrs. Karen Swartz and Mr. Mike Kelly. Karen, having lived in and raised her family in Chatham Township over the past 25 years brings a wealth of business acumen along with her affable personality. Mike, having grown up in Chatham Township and through his work as an editor of the Independent Press and a volunteer has a long history and understanding of the town. Both will add to the depth of knowledge and expertise of the committee and I look forward to working with both of them as well as Bob and Curt in the coming year.

I would like to personally thank Curt for not only his work and advice as Deputy Mayor but the outstanding contributions he has made to the township in the area of communications. Curt along with the other members of the communication committee has rebranded our ACT Now, emergency messaging system. The Township has established a Facebook and Twitter page along with hyperlinks on our web page so residents can read Ordinances and Resolutions and be more informed about what is taking place in town. He has also streamlined the issuing of press releasing helping to reach as many residents as possible. When you combine this with the outstanding live TV production work of the Township meetings by our Communications Manager, Mr. Tom Salvas, and his posting of our meeting videos on our web site it is hard to be more transparent. To think all of these advancements took place over the past 12 months is quite remarkable. Curt has also helped to build a great Thanksgiving morning tradition with the running of the Highland's Turkey Trot raising critical funds in support of the all-volunteer Chatham Township Fire Department.

In the Township form of government we are a committee of equals. While we, the Township Committee, have divided our responsibilities amongst several boards, commissions and committees, we all have a shared voice and the same vote. Like any organization though, for it to be effective, someone has to lead and I am honored and grateful to the committee for nominating me and placing their confidence and support in my responsibilities as Mayor of Chatham Township for 2015.

I want to also welcome back **all** of our professionals serving the Township and particularly those who are here with us tonight. Mr. John Ruschke, our township engineer, a consummate professional who provides not only outstanding engineering services, but in the work that he performs is always conscious of your taxpayer dollars.

Last year the Township hired a new attorney, Mr. Albert Cruz. The challenges that faced Mr. Cruz over the past year were numerous and varied and his knowledge and insight were invaluable to the town. I often joke to Mr. Cruz about lawyers, but somewhere over this past year in my readings, I was reminded that it took a lawyer to save the Union.

Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, 2015 will mark the 150th Anniversary of the end of the Civil War. In Chatham Township we have our own renowned author and expert on the Civil War, Mr. Bill Styple. Bill has recently becoming a Trustee of the Township Historical Society and he also sits on our Board of Adjustment. Bill is reflective of so many of our great citizens who willingly share their time and talents, whatever they might be, volunteering to make Chatham Township a unique and outstanding place to call home. On behalf of the entire committee we extend a **grateful thank you** to all those who willingly volunteer their time and talents to protect, train, educate and serve others in Chatham Township and elsewhere. Thank you for the contributions you make to our town.

2015 might just be the year of the Anniversary. In addition to the end of the Civil War, 2015 celebrates the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta. This 'Great Charter' issued by King John of England at Runnymede was used as a cornerstone in the establishment of our liberties by the earliest colonies and later as a fundamental basis for our Constitution. How fitting a reminder that we here in Chatham Township have our own Runnymede, Runnymede Road. 2015 also marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. These men, heroes who are still amongst us, but less and less every day, fought at battles in 1945 such as Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the Battle of the Bulge. For them and those who made the ultimate sacrifice it is appropriate for us to maintain a standard of remembrance.

The Chatham Township Historical Society, under the outstanding direction of Martha and Pat Wells and a dedicated group of trustees and volunteers, will be providing many programs over the coming year to remember these and other events. I encourage everyone in Chatham Township to make it a point this year to visit the Red Brick School House and take advantage of these wonderful learning opportunities.

And speaking of history we cannot forget the historic open space purchase of Giralda Farms in 2014. Chatham Township successfully submitted an application to the Morris County Open Space Trust, which awarded the largest grant in the programs history in the amount of 10 million dollars. This is a wonderful resource for the town, forever protected and open to the public.

In 2014 we also completed a major sewer overhaul, upgraded police equipment, continued our road improvements program and finished our sidewalks along Shunpike, but the work goes on. The challenges we face have not dissipated; in 2014 the State of New Jersey received several credit rating downgrades. While we here in town have an Emergency Operations Plan to deal with natural and man made disasters we have no economic emergency plan to deal with economic hardships that may entail. Being responsible stewards of your tax dollars **today** will allow us to weather the storm, so to speak, if we face an economic challenge in the future.

New challenges in 2015 include upgrading equipment for our fire departments, replacing aging equipment and vehicles at our Department of Public Works, repaving streets, enhancing our recreational facilities as well as preparing and opening Giralda Farms for public use. We will tackle them with the same deliberate, considerate approach, ever mindful of handling your tax dollars appropriately.

It's hard not to be filled with pride when you live in a town that has been voted one of the best to live in the state and country. When in the same year your school district is voted the best and your town is ranked the safest in the state. I think Bailey Brower, former Mayor and long serving Committeeman, said it best when he delivered at the end of his term, magnanimous and thankful remarks to the town employees, former members of the committee and the people of Chatham Township, and I paraphrase; good begets better and better brings out the best. These things do not happen by accident and they come together by the leadership of the town's department heads, the chairs of our commissions, boards and committees and the professional work of the entire municipal staff employees under the guidance of our Town Administrator, Tom Ciccarone. I would add the work of our Town Clerk, Greg LaConte and the professionalism that he always displays. They help to make our town, Chatham Township, resident friendly and on behalf of the entire township committee, we say thank you.

May God continue to shine his light upon Chatham Township and our citizens and may everyone enjoy a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Thank you.

Kevin Sullivan
Mayor, Township of Chatham
January 6, 2015