

Mayor David Runfeldt's Remarks

Re-Organization Meeting

January 3, 2017

I would like to begin by welcoming everyone here tonight for the annual re-organization meeting of the Borough of Lincoln Park. Thank you to the elected officials throughout the county and state who have joined us this evening. And, of course, a special thank you to all the residents of our great town who have taken the time to come here tonight.

Although I am mid-way through my third term, I must say that I am as honored and humbled today as I was 10 years ago when I was first elected Mayor. This is a privilege and a duty that I take seriously and I am grateful for the support and trust of this wonderful community.

Congratulations to Council members Gemian, Ross, Kerwin and Wild on your re-elections. I would like to also offer congratulations to Councilman Gemian on your election to the position of Council President. Your being named to this position shows the faith your colleagues have in you. I look forward to creating a solid working relationship with you for the benefit of the entire town, our residents and our businesses.

It has been a pleasure working with the entire Council this past year...well at least most of the Council. On a few occasions this past year, some of us here have not always seen eye to eye. I welcome these disagreements as long as we remain focused on what is truly in the best interests of Lincoln Park and wholly committed to making a better community for future generations. Old ways, personal attacks and stubbornness, however, do nothing to help propel us forward, and worse, is not why the good people of Lincoln Park put us in these positions. I challenge myself with every decision I make to do what is in the best interest of this community now and for our future. I would encourage that all of us in this community do the same.

Luckily, 2016 would present no major natural challenges to the Borough and our resources. The year started and ended with winters that were cold and snowy, but not too much so. Spring was wet, but not too wet. Summer was a little hotter and drier than we would have liked it to be, but I'm sure anyone in this part of the state would take hot and dry over wet any day!

I caution though, even when things seem easy and effortless, do not underestimate how much work is done for the protection of you, your family and your property. Chief West, Deputy Chief Runfeldt and the men and women of our Police Department keep us safe at all times and do a tremendous job protecting and serving. Chief Fede, outgoing Deputy Chief Cifelli, incoming Deputy Chief Royce and the volunteer Firefighters of our two fire companies are on call 24/7/365 ready to run into danger for you and the things important to you. Chief Meisch and the men and women of the LPEMS have likewise done a fantastic job to keep us safe in times of emergencies, both large and small. Those involved with our Office of Emergency Management and Community Emergency Response Teams, although not called into action this year, are likewise always ready to drop everything and serve you in times of need.

Mayor David Runfeldt's Remarks

Re-Organization Meeting

January 3, 2017

I will make one request of our community at this time. Volunteerism is not what it used to be. I believe this to be true throughout the area. The many civic organizations in town are always looking for new members and do so much good for our community. The PAL is always looking for new blood to help coach teams, and greater participation can only help grow programs.

Our Fire Department and First Aid Squad, however, are in dire need of new members. I encourage everyone in town to consider volunteering on some level, and if you have any desire to serve in the Fire Dept. or FAS, please contact someone there and find out what is required. It's probably not as much as you think and can make a huge difference.

2016 was the 8th consecutive year that Lincoln Park's budget had no appreciable increase in spending. In fact, spending rose less than ½ of one percent in 2016. CFO Kerry Geisler and Administrator Perry Mayers deserve much of the credit for preparing our budgets. Unfortunately, the diligence that both the Council and Administration puts into keeping our budget in check each year is continuously overshadowed by the continued loss of ratables, especially those through flood buyouts and commercial tax appeals.

A direct quote from my State of the Borough Address of 2 years ago – which was in turn a re-quoted from a portion of my inaugural address 10 years ago – “Development continues to be an issue here in Lincoln Park. How do we keep our small town feel, while making up for the tax impacts of so many buyouts and still maintain a vibrant community? This is a dance that will continue, no doubt, this year”. It is important to note that although there are some that would like everyone in town to think that this governing body is development happy, there has been no residential development in town during that entire time. Development may be coming, but it should be what is right for our town. I think I can speak for most of our town Council and administration when I say that we are committed to finding the best solutions to keep Lincoln Park the great community it is now and do our best to prepare it for the future...our future and that of our children. I can only hope that future is not doomed by old schools of thought and stubbornness.

During the past year, our community, like every community throughout the world has had our share of joy and tragedy. Births, deaths, promotions, retirements, weddings, good times and bad are all part of life everywhere.

Our little Borough Hall mirrors life as well. We have had some good times, weddings, births, promotions and retirements with many borough employees this year. Unfortunately, we have also been hit a little harder than usual this year with the bad things. The recent passing of Skip Tintle and before that Barbara Wild, took two extremely loved people from us too soon. Not just employees of the town, but wonderful members of our community for many years.

Mayor David Runfeldt's Remarks

Re-Organization Meeting

January 3, 2017

Also, the sudden health issue and early retirement of our CFO Kerry Geisler hit us hard as well. Anyone who has followed our town budgets for the last 8 years knows how important Kerry has been to Lincoln Park. Kerry was able to take my vision of stable taxes, decreased spending and manageable debt and make it a reality.

Of course the silver lining is, and I always try to find good in bad situations, is that so many of the dedicated employees of our town came together, helped out, pitched in and made everything work. Skip, Barbara and Kerry deserve not only our remembrance and appreciation as great people, but as great Lincoln Parkers that touched or helped so many of us!

I need to recognize three individuals that are moving on to the next part of their lives through official or pending retirement. Police Chief Mark West and Lieutenant Fred Mabey and Recycling Coordinator Kevin Mackey have served the Borough of Lincoln Park well for many, many years and they too deserve our thanks and gratitude.

Lincoln Park is truly blessed with great employees. Incoming Police Chief Mike Runfeldt, Health Officer Kathy Skrobala, Sal Marino of the Building Department, Rick Beyer from DPW, Janet Cassidy from Parks and Recreation, Patty Fritz in the Court, Borough Clerk Cindi Sloan, Ruby Malcolm who has pitched in as interim CFO and in my office Borough Administrator Perry Mayers and my Aide Dina Valente-Stoel. Each of these people, and every employee on their staff, give so much of themselves to make Lincoln Park great. They each have my appreciation and they all deserve yours.

In closing I would like to say to every Lincoln Park resident, employee, volunteer, business owner, elected official and member of a civic organization, "Thank You for all you do, and I wish you a Happy, Healthy and Wealthy 2017!"