



## **Mayor David Runfeldt's Remarks from the 2019 Borough Council Reorganization Meeting.**

I would like to begin by welcoming everyone here tonight for the annual re-organization meeting of the Borough of Lincoln Park. A special thank you to the elected officials from throughout the county and state who have joined us this evening.

I must say that I am very honored and humbled to be elected to a fourth term as the Mayor of Lincoln Park. This is a privilege that I take seriously and I am grateful for the support and trust of this great community.

Congratulations to Councilman Moeller and Councilwoman Thompson on your re-election. It has been a pleasure working with Council members Gemian, Kerwin, Ross and Wild this past year and I expect that we will continue in 2019.

Tonight I am happy to welcome our newest Councilman, Andrew Seise. Along with living here in town, Andrew also works here and has two children in our public school system. Possessing that same background upon my getting involved in town government, I expect that Andrew will bring an exceptional desire to do what is right by Lincoln Park now and for our future.

It is important to recognize outgoing Councilman Lou Pepe. Lou had been an important part of this Council off and on for nearly a dozen years and was instrumental on many issues, especially those pertaining to flooding and financial matters.

I have long said that Taxes, Development and Flooding are the major issues that affect our town. They were the major issues 40 years ago when my parents were involved in the town and they continue to be to this day.

I am happy to once again be able to say that last year's municipal tax increase was a very minimal one. In fact, 2018 was the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year without any major spending increase. The total increase to the Borough portion of the tax has been roughly 2% TOTAL. Total over 10 years, not 2% each year. Even more exciting is

that the Borough now has a plan to become completely debt free in just over 10 years. The last 12 years of zero based budgeting and long term planning for large expenses and capital purchases has put us in a position where being debt free is an achievable reality, not just an election time talking point.

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?” Revitalization of our Main Street business area continues, although at a slow pace. The planned Main Street developments that nearly 5 years ago, detractors declared a done deal, and the ruination of Lincoln Park still do not have a shovel in the ground. I believe this is the result of our town Council, administration, professional staff and volunteer land use boards being wholly and completely dedicated to ensure that development occurs in such a way 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. Each development that has been built over the last 50 years in town have all enhanced our community and I am confident that we will find a way to make sure that any proposed and future development do as well.

Flooding, luckily, is not something we need to talk about this year regarding effects or devastation. We can, however, see many positive steps that have been done to help improve our situation. We continue to converse and meet with elected officials from neighboring towns along with state and federal agencies to make sure that we are doing everything possible to help when it comes to issues regarding flooding. Just last month I invited the Mayors, administrators, and OEM officials from Wayne, Fairfield, Pequannock, and Pompton Lakes to join us in meeting with the NJDEP and the NJ Dam Operations staff to insure that our new Governor and his staff are aware of what is important to us who reside or work in the Pompton and Passaic River Basins.

Although there were no major natural or other disasters this year, do not underestimate how much effort goes into the protection of you, your family and your property. Chief Simone and the men and women of our Police Department keep us safe at all times and do a tremendous job. Chief Fede and the volunteer members of our Fire Department are on call 24/7/365. Chief Anderson and the members of the

LPEMS have likewise done a fantastic job to keep us safe in times of emergencies. Those involved with our Office of Emergency Management and Community Emergency Response Teams, although not called into action much this year, are always ready to drop everything and serve you in times of need.

Lincoln Park is also truly blessed with great employees. CFO Fabiana Mello has improved our finance department in the short time she has been here and is the brains behind the plan I mention earlier to become debt free. Health Officer Kathy Skrobala is a tremendous asset to Lincoln Park and has become one of the foremost health officials in Morris County. Sal Marino of the Building Department, Rick Beyer from DPW, Janet Cassidy from Parks and Recreation, Ashley Fritz in the Court, Borough Clerk Cindi Sloane and in my office Borough Administrator Perry Mayers and my Aide Dina Stoel each have my appreciation and they all deserve yours. Of course all of our department heads are only as good as the staff they have. Every worker in Borough Hall, our Police Department and in Public Works are dedicated to our town, your community and every resident.

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 2019!"