

2008 Somerdale State of the Borough Address January 3rd, 2008

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here tonight to share in this special occasion as I enter into my 4th term as your Mayor and we welcome back two Council members to our team and make permanent a third Council member who was serving an interim term.

I find it hard to believe that 12 years have passed since assuming the role as your Mayor. I feel honored and blessed to have served such a wonderful community. Together, we have faced many challenges and have achieved new heights. It is with the help of my Council, my administration, our professionals and all of our staff along with your continued support that this was made possible.

As always, I take this opportunity to report on our town's progress in the past year.

The total appropriations for our 2007 Municipal Services were \$4,890,846, down approximately \$39,000 from 2006.

- 50% of this budget covered Salaries & benefits
- 31.8% of this budget covered annual operational expenses
- 9% of this budget paid for long-term debt
- 9.2% was reserved for uncollected taxes

Our total debt has been reduced by \$250,602 and with accumulated authorized long-term debt totaling approximately \$2,548,267 payable over the next 10 years.

This year, we were planning on new revenues that our redevelopment efforts at Lions Head Plaza will bring. Unfortunately, due to delays in the approval processes, construction did not commence last fall as anticipated. Part of the delay was due to an appeal submitted to the County Planning Board. That appeal has been overturned but did create a several month delay. Currently, we await final determination and approvals from the State Dept of Transportation which we are hopeful will occur this month. If so, ground breaking should occur in March/April when the weather breaks and completion of the retail portions will be in early 2009.

The loss of the tax revenue for this project in 2008 will again place an extreme burden on our budget. That revenue loss combined with the new 4% tax levy cap will make for a trying financial year.

A number of street improvement projects were completed in 2007. I'm sure that you have seen the work throughout the town. In addition, we completed the final landscaping improvements to the Borough Hall which included a sprinkler system, gazebo, electric and holiday lighting.

Last year, I announced a number of goals for the 2007 calendar year. I am happy to report that we accomplished all but one. These goals included:

- The development of a streetscape plan for Kennedy Boulevard
 - Not only have we developed and initial plan – we submitted and just received notice of a \$150,000 streetscape grant to help us start this process.

- Continue our joint efforts with the WHP coalition to revitalize this crucial corridor
 - We have just received another grant and awarded a contract to a firm to perform a “Site mart” plan for our corridor of the White Horse Pike. This plan will provide the needed marketing materials to reach out and create interest with potential developers.
 - A new White Horse Chamber of Commerce has been formed and has been extremely successful with over 50 participating businesses in just 6 short months
 - Two new building projects on the WHP were commenced during the year. The Columbia Center is a new 6300 SF retail center that will boast a UPS store as its anchor and the old DiDonato’s optician center has been completely renovated and expanded.

- Complete our marketing efforts to re-brand our community
 - We have developed and unveiled a new town logo and position statement which is now used in all of our Municipal materials and is being applied to our town vehicles
 - A new name (CooperTowne Center) has been selected for Lions Head Plaza which is consistent with our overall town revitalization plans.

- Improve our regular communications with the public through a “News Letter” that will be published at regular intervals and a new website to keep the town informed of our efforts and current community events
 - Our newsletter has been very well received and is being published on a regular quarterly basis.
 - We launched a new website that will eventually provide a wealth of information and documentation to our residents.

- Provide a renewed investment in our recreation and town sports programs & facilities
 - We continue to fund and support our local F&S association and as you will see they have had a banner championship year
 - We conducted the first of two public sessions to explore the reconfiguration of our Kennedy Blvd. ball field/recreation area. This may include the construction of a new Community/Senior Center, Soccer/softball field, amphitheater, tot lot and much more.

- Break ground on our historic and most significant economic development project at Lions Head Plaza
 - Unfortunately, this is the only goal we were unable to achieve, and not by our doing. However, this will happen this year and we look with anticipation to the ground breaking and ultimate unveiling of this wonderful project.

I am proud of our efforts but as always, recognize that there is much, much more to do.

To that end I will again set some continuing goals and objectives for 2008:

- Address the parking situation at our Hilltop Ave. Recreation facilities
- Complete our transition to an online property ID/management system through our new National Geomatica software.
- Complete the lighting at the Park School walkway
- Complete plans for the Kennedy Blvd. Recreation/Community Center
- Coordinate the streetscape work on Kennedy Blvd. with the development at CooperTowne Center
- Continue to reduce operating costs through technology & new innovative processes and work practices

In closing, I would like to recognize all of the departments, the administration, our many volunteers and Council for their efforts throughout the past year.

Without their support and dedication to this community, we would never have achieved many of these accomplishments. As always, I pledge to you that I will always serve this community in the best capacity possible. I look forward to a very successful new year. God bless you and our community.