

TOWNSHIP OF PRINCETON
2012 REORGANIZATION MEETING

January 3, 2012
Chad Goerner, Mayor

WELCOME

Welcome! My colleagues on Township Committee and I thank you for joining us today for our reorganization meeting. First and foremost, I'd like to recognize and thank Governor Florio for taking the time to swear me in this evening. I worked on his campaign while in college and his ability to stand by his principles and make difficult decisions – but the right decisions - even when they weren't always the most popular inspired me to become involved in politics. Thank you, Governor.

2011 HIGHLIGHTS

In keeping with tradition I would like to briefly touch upon just a few of our many accomplishments in 2011.

But before I do so, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge our staff and the volunteers on our boards & commissions. They've made many of these accomplishments possible and we owe them our sincere thanks.

At the beginning of last year, I laid out the significant challenges and goals that we faced and some of you may recall that I quoted David Bowie in stating "we might not always know exactly where we are going but it won't be boring." Well, it certainly wasn't. We accomplished even more than we set out to do and that is a testament to the talents and abilities of my colleagues that sit up here with me today. Here are the key goals we set for last year:

- (1) The first was consolidation. We knew that the work of the consolidation would be completed mid-year and that there may be a recommendation to place consolidation on the ballot. Many of us worked tirelessly to move consolidation forward. From the time I was first elected to township committee in 2006, this had been one of my key goals. And we did it.
- (2) We challenged our staff for a zero increase municipal budget recognizing our difficult economic times; With the help of our citizens finance advisory commission and the work of our staff and committee – we did it marking the first time that this happened in at least 25 years.
- 3) We needed to move forward on a new community park pool complex; and we did it; We are currently monitoring completion and are hopeful to have the project completed in time for a Memorial Day weekend 2012 grand opening
- (4) We promised to work collaboratively with our counterparts in Princeton Borough and with the community as we addressed the University's Arts and Transit complex – and we did that too culminating in the creation of a

- Memorandum of Understanding that provides the municipalities with a written agreement preventing any further move of the Dinky station further south once it relocates to the new station, right of way for a future service to Nassau Street and funding for a study to develop a long term transit service for the community.
- Approval of the Arts and Transit Ordinance - that will represent a significant investment in our community and bring a vibrant and dynamic arts presence to Princeton.

(5) We vowed to have Princeton Township become a certified sustainable community – and late last year we did that too – becoming a bronze level certified sustainable community...and that, I'm sure, will just be the beginning.

In addition, to those goals that we outlined, we also:

- Building upon our first significant voluntary contribution with Princeton University last year, Deputy Mayor Sue Nemeth and I successfully negotiated a significant increase to this for 2012. This means the University's voluntary contribution to the Township in 2011 will total \$775,000 with \$250,000 of that to assist us in transition costs as we merge into one community.

THE YEAR AHEAD

As many of you know consolidation has been near and dear to me.

Princeton has proven its leadership and set an example with consolidation, in terms of effective governance and efficiency, in a state that has been afraid to embrace consolidation. The League of Municipalities' who some may argue has a conflict of interest has shied away from supporting it. Many of the state's 565 towns shun consolidation and only some look to shared services and many do so reluctantly – as home rule continues to dominate their thinking.

This must end. Consolidation is not a silver bullet solution for all of the state's financial woes. Instead it is a part of what needs to be a total, comprehensive set of solutions to help us manage our state more efficiently and effectively. We need our leaders in the Governors' office, the legislature and locally across the state to stand up and do what is right to encourage consolidation where it makes sense, shared services where it makes sense and other structural reforms to reign in our out of control 'Municipal' madness.

Before we talk about the exciting year ahead that we will have transitioning to the new municipality, I thought it might be good to look back at the past in what will be the last year of Princeton Township as a stand alone municipality.

This morning I went with our Deputy Clerk, Kathy Brzezynski, to our vault of old meeting minutes. We pulled the meeting record for 1838, the first year of Princeton Township and I took a look at the hand-written meeting notes for the first meeting.

Interestingly enough, the first meeting of 'the Inhabitants of the Township of Princeton' was actually held in the Borough of Princeton (which did not exist as a separate entity until 1894). It was at this meeting, some

174 years ago, that a budget was adopted. It mainly included:

- \$500 to be raised for repair of the roads
- \$500 to be raised for support of the poor
- \$50 for the repair of all bridges
- \$400 for the Common Schools
- and a tax on each dog of one dollar (\$1)

From our humble beginnings to a budget today of approximately \$36m (61m if we include Princeton Borough), we have grown into a vibrant, diverse and desirable community. Reunited once again, the future for our community looks very bright.

And that brings me to our most important goal for 2012. We need to ensure a smooth transition through strong collaboration with Princeton Borough and our residents. We must ensure that we achieve the savings identified in the consolidation commission report and find additional savings where possible. We know there will be challenges and obstacles, but to quote the spirit of the Moody Blues we will "keep as cool as we can and face piles of trials with smiles."

As I reflect on what I felt was a whirlwind, action-packed year – I am extremely proud of what we were able to accomplish and it has been an honor to have had the opportunity to serve my community. When I first became active in politics – I was guided by the hope of 'making a difference.' We've certainly done that and I believe the future is very bright for the town that will simply be called Princeton.