



MAYOR'S 2025 MESSAGE

Good evening, Happy New Year and welcome to the Borough of Waldwick's Annual Reorganization Meeting. It was once said, and I quote The closing of one chapter is the beginning of another. Here's to the adventures awaiting us in 2025.

I would like to congratulate Councilwoman Katie Cericola-Drake, Councilman Mark Ramundo who was sworn in last month according to law and Councilman Mike Ritchie on your re-election to town Council. Your dedication to your position and to the Borough is second to none. I am very appreciative for your valuable commitment to the welfare of our residents and for the knowledge you bring to the Council.

To Councilwoman Michele Weber, Councilmen Joe Martinello, and Andy Brennecke, thank you for your hard work and unselfish dedication this past year. The six of you devote countless hours and much energy to borough business. You are always ready to work hard for all residents equally as we continue to pass ordinances and budgets that make the quality of life in Waldwick a little easier.

To our spouses, thank you for putting up with our rants when we return home from a meeting. Your understanding allows us to do the job we enjoy doing and that is making a difference in Waldwick and making everyone's quality of life a little easier.

To our Borough Administrator Steve Neale, CFO Colleen Ennis, Borough Clerk Kelley Halewicz, Confidential Assistant Tatiana Marquis, Assistant Clerk Melissa Librizzi, our Police Chief Mark Messner and the entire Police Department, DPW, Certs and all our Borough Employees as I have always said, you are the backbone of our community and without your hard work that you do each day, we would not be able to function as a Borough as we do.

We are very fortunate in Waldwick to have a dedicated and professional fire department and Ambulance Corps who are on the front line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week protecting all of us from harm. They volunteer their time with pride and dedication It was said that Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, they just have the heart.

Our Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Corps are with us tonight and their 2025 Officers will be sworn in shortly. I would like to ask everyone to give them a round of applause. Thank you.

To our professionals and consultants thank you for your diligence in providing guidance throughout the year.

To all our Waldwick Veterans thank you for your service to our country and community, to our elderly thank you for your examples, and to our young residents thank you for your hope and optimism.

We are especially thankful for all our many residents, who tirelessly volunteer to serve on our many boards and committees. Your time, commitment and dedication are an integral part of our community.

Volunteers are the fabric of small-town living. Without dedicated volunteers who continually give selflessly of their time, talent, and support, often thanklessly, we could not provide nor do all that we do for our residents.

I have always said that there is a spirit of service that is at the very heart of our community that holds us all together. That service to Waldwick is shared by many residents, businesses, clubs, schools, churches, Veterans, and scouts.

Each one of you has improved the lives of countless individuals and made our community a better place. It inspires all of us to continue to get involved and to make a difference in our community

I would like to welcome and thank the new businesses that have made Waldwick their home this past year, many have been making renovations and expansions to their facilities enhancing our downtown community. Please remember to support our local businesses by shopping Waldwick

This Council's guiding principles have always been fair and open government, and our primary concern has been the welfare of the people who have elected us.

The seven of us who sit in front of you are totally committed to working together as a Council with no hidden agendas to provide the very best for the residents of Waldwick in the most cost-effective way.

I can say with all honesty that Waldwick continues to be the best place in New Jersey to live in and raise a family. Our borough has continued to receive a Double A 2 rating from Moody's.

The focus for 2024 was on making improvements to our critical infrastructure and municipal buildings to bring things up to current standards.

- The PFAS Remediation Project was completed this summer after a few years of planning and almost a year of major construction
- 2024 Road Paving Program & ADA Curb Ramps at Various Intersections: 13 Roads were paved in total, and 20+ intersections were upgraded with new ADA curb ramps. These included various grant-funded improvements.
 - Improvements to Bohnert Pl. & Hudson Ave.- DOT & CDBG funded Harrison Avenue Paving & Ramps-Between Prospect & Wyckoff- CDBG funded
- Complete website rebuild & new communications strategy, which also includes a new weekly and monthly newsletter
- A new Geographical Information System was created to map all our water infrastructure
- ADA Traffic Push Buttons were installed at several locations around town based on recommendations from our WAFA Committee and in partnership with Bergen County
- Added new high impact ladder crosswalks at high volume intersections with the Bergen County

- 2 Electric Vehicle Fast Charging Stations were installed behind the Public Safety Complex, which are used daily. These were funded through various grants
- WALVAC Bathroom & Kitchen Renovations
- Acquisition of 197 Wyckoff & 9 Brady for Open Space Purposes. Planning for the space to be discussed in greater detail this year
- Replacement of Sprinkler Mains at Admin Building
- Council Chambers Recording System Upgrades
- Admin Building & Public Safety Parking Lot and Exterior Lighting Upgrades
- Increase Cyber Security- replaced and upgraded all firewalls throughout the Borough
- HVAC upgrades including full replacements at the Ambulance Corps building and a new heater in the bays at WALVAC
- Completed an updated Open Space & Recreation Plan, which will help guide us on future decisions regarding open space and parks.

As we look to 2025 our Potential Projects are to continue upgrading our critical infrastructure with a focus on water quality. Additionally, we are looking to improve our parks and open space areas.

- Creation of a Water Quality Subcommittee - Led by our professional water consultants, who will help us maintain an updated website with all relevant info and updates and create more frequent communications to keep the community aware of all progress. The committee will include the Mayor, Administrator, DPW Superintendent, a council member and one member of the public that the mayor will reach out to tomorrow morning. We are looking to take a team approach on water quality issues.
- One of our Assemblymen has reached out to us regarding any possible assistance we may need with the NWBCUA. This will be spearheaded with the assistance of the Mayor, Borough Administrator and a Council member.
- A Redevelopment plan, not Revitalization Plan, has been approved by the governing body. Now any formal applications and designs submitted by prospective developers will go through the planning board for their approval.
- A review team comprised of full-time Borough staff will be set up to address any weaknesses in our building codes, including enforcement.
- Addressing traffic safety concerns, especially around the schools. New Blinking Crosswalks have already been purchased and will be installed within the next couple of months.
- Another aggressive Road Paving Program, which includes two DOT funded projects on Schuler Ave. and Hudson Ave. Phase 2

- Already awarded and ready to start construction: Water Storage Tanks Rehab project- ARP funding being used to help offset costs
- Already awarded and ready to start construction: Hemlock Evergreen & Bergen to Sheridan Water Main Loop to improve water quality and eliminate dead end water mains. - ARP funding being used to help offset costs
- Already awarded and ready to start construction: Malcolm St. Pump Station Rehab project
- Reconstruction of Lions Playground in Borough Park, which also utilizes various open space grants to help offset the costs.
- Upgrading the HVAC system and roof at the Pistol Range to increase usability
- We will be sitting down to work on our Operating and Capital Budget
- Increase residents' communications and launch a citizen's request portal
- Implementation of additional digital tools to help with workflow management and improve efficiency.

These are just some of the items we are working on with much more that will come up. There will be challenges in 2025 and as we have always done, we will respond to them with diligence, determination, hard work and bold decisions.

Walt Disney said, "YOU CAN DESIGN, CREATE, AND BUILD THE MOST WONDERFUL PLACE IN THE WORLD, BUT IT TAKES PEOPLE TO MAKE THE DREAM A REALITY."

Time and conditions change so rapidly that we must keep our aim constantly focused on the future.

As we begin 2025, I am hopeful for the future of our Borough. I, the Council and our Borough employees and volunteers will continue to strive to make Waldwick the greatest place to live, work and raise a family.

As I have always said, and I truly believe our best days for Waldwick lie ahead of us.

Let us together make Waldwick a community filled with Unity, Respect, Confidence, Optimism, Strength, Pride, Diversity and Success with the knowledge that we are well prepared for all our tomorrows and for future generations to come.

May 2025 bring all of you Good Health, Joy, Prosperity and Happiness, may all your dreams turn into reality and your efforts into great achievements.

May God continue to bless all of you, our country and the place we all call home Waldwick.

HAPPY NEW YEAR.