



**Mayor Mark Taylor**

**Annual Reorganization Meeting 2023**

**January 5th, 2023**

Good evening and welcome to the Annual 2023 Reorganization meeting of the Borough of Florham Park. Happy New Year to all. I would like to thank the dignitaries, family members, visitors and friends who have joined us in the Court room this evening to help welcome in a New Year for the Borough of Florham Park. As some will remember, we were urged last year to hold this meeting via Zoom due to the ongoing pandemic. As a result, we were unable to recognize the years of service on this Council and the accomplishments of our former Councilwoman Carmen Cefolo-Pane. Tonight, I would like to officially thank Carmen on behalf of the entire Council. May this table lamp always remind you of the countless nights spent at the Planning Board meetings.

This evening we would also like to recognize the years of service of Councilman William Zuckerman. Bill has contributed many years to the Borough of Florham Park as a fireman and served several terms as a Councilmember. I would like to thank Bill on behalf of the entire Council and to present to him this wall clock. May you always know what time it is when the 6:20 tones ring out.

Please know that I, along with the Council members, continue to work every day to do our absolute best for the residents of Florham Park as we move forward together into this new year. We are a family here in town and we are Florham Park Strong. I continue to nurture our relationships with our neighboring towns for shared services and a common theme of standing strong as a team to help all our collective residents through the recent Pandemic as well as through the challenges we face as municipalities.

We will have some exciting news to report in the next month or so following many meetings on Flood mitigation. Florham Park, East Hanover, Hanover Twp and Parsippany have teamed up and we will have a story to tell shortly on how we will be helping our residents in these low lying areas.

Staying on theme, we have a major issue facing all towns beginning once again in 2025. That may seem like a long time away from now, but it is right around the corner. The issue I refer to is Fair Share Housing, COAH or as far back as the Mount Laurel Decision of 1985. The next round or Round IV of

these state wide obligations for all municipalities will once again begin in 2025. Florham Park has been hit exceptionally hard by this last round of obligations. The growth of this new wave of obligations has caused our bucolic little town to change significantly. I want to reinforce that this is a Superior Court ruling and not the will of this Council or myself whatsoever. We mounted a strong defense in this last battle, and we were able to lower our overall judgement of Fair Share units by over 450 units. The lower number is still not good for our town. We plan as a council to fight in this next round and to bring a cohesive group of Municipalities together and fight as one on this topic. Our roads and infrastructure including Fresh Water, Sewer Treatment and services such as Police, Fire, First Aid and Schools cannot withstand these increases in population. We as a community do not offer the transportation and jobs needed to sustain this growth. It is our obligation to our town and the residents to fight until our State representatives start to understand the issues in our towns. During the recent league of Municipalities conference in Atlantic City in November, "I", along with more than 100 elected officials, attended a legislative panel discussion. At the end of the hour-long discussion, I went to the microphone and proclaimed to the legislative body on the dais that it had been one year since I last stood before them to plead with them to do something about affordable housing in NJ. Nothing, I repeat nothing has been done. The entire group of our State elected officials had nothing to offer any of the local officials in that room. I offered to serve on a committee or an oversight panel and I'm sure that many other elected officials would also serve on such a committee if asked. This is an emergency for all towns in New Jersey, and we need all the State representatives on board to help in this fight. Our small-town feel is at stake.

As we once again change the calendar to a New Year, I must look back and reflect on Florham Park in 2022. If it wasn't for my great team of OEM, Borough staff, DPW, Police, Council members and many others, I am not sure how we would have moved through this year. We are blessed to have these great team members.

Despite the issues at hand, we continue to see growth as a community and some of the expansion has changed the way I remember Florham Park.

In many ways the Planning Board, chaired by Michael DeAngelis, the Zoning Board Chaired by Michael Cannilla and the Town Center Task Force, chaired by Michael Prokop, and all the volunteer members of these boards have and will do their very best to work through every application presented, and listen intently at all of the hearings to come up with the best plan that we can present as a community while still preserving the rights of the land holders. Progress will continue long after these current Council members and I have moved on.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our outgoing Council President Scott Carpenter for his service as my Council President and for all his hard work and input during this very long year. Scott was able to take the reins as acting Mayor during the few times I was out of town. For that, I say thank you. I would also like to congratulate Kristen Santoro on her reelection and our newest Councilmember Nick Cicarelli for winning his first Election.

I would like to congratulate Charlie Malone for taking on the role as our 2023 Council President. This will be voted on as the meeting continues this evening.

As we look back on 2022 and all that we have accomplished, I must highlight that Florham Park continues to be the best place in New Jersey to live and raise a family....

I cannot convey to you how proud I am to be a part of our continued success. As we move into 2023, the governing body continues to work very hard to tell the story of our successes to all the residents of our community. We will produce the next edition of the Florham Park Newsletter in the First Quarter of 2023. This information will help to aid our residents with issues and increase awareness of just how

fiscally responsible we are as a municipality and how this governing body is set to address the future as we move forward together.

I am hopeful that in 2023 we will be able to meet again with the Board of Education and the Superintendent Dr. Caponegro. Prior to the pandemic, we were meeting on a quarterly bases to discuss and understand both the Borough's perspective and the BOE's perspective. I am very hopeful that we can once again set up a meeting date to get things back on track.

In this community of volunteers, the accomplishments continue to be realized due to the efforts of so many people. One of the most important factors is all our dedicated Employees of the Boro of Florham Park. I would like to wish all the best to all our employees and thank them for a job well done in this past year. I also would like to wish at this time my heartfelt appreciation to the staff in Borough Hall.

I would also like to recognize our new Clerk Danielle Lewis. I would like to recognize our Deputy Clerk MaryAnn Lang, Assistant Lisa Gaeta and Board Secretary Marlene Rawson for all their help during this past year to keep our meetings moving in the absence of our Dear Friend Sheila A. Williams. May God rest her soul. I would like to thank all the staff in the Clerk's office. Many thanks go out to our Health Officer Tom Cantisano, Maryann Lang and to all our Health department members for keeping us informed over these last two years.

Also, kudos to the Police department under the direction of Chief Joseph Orlando, Captain Karl Svenningsen, and to all our Police officers. I continue to be updated by the Chief on their efforts to curtail crime before it happens in our town. I ask that each resident please remember to take their Key Fob and to lock your car when you are not in it.

I would also like to thank all the employees of the DPW under the direction of Mike Smith, supervisors Andrew Williams and George Stiner and Joe Bassolino. This team of DPW workers are very dedicated to keeping our town looking and running the best as it can. Thank you for your hard work.

I would like to recognize the Water department for all they do every day. Thank you, Water department director, Mike Sgaramella, Water Department Superintendent Alex Zipeto and the entire water department team. I also would like to recognize our sewer plant manager Joseph DePasquale and all of the Sewer plant workers. Many thanks to our Recreation department, directed by John Timmons and his assistant Tammy Verderber, who together, continue to work to keep our programs running and the Pool open. I want to thank Nancy Shah, our Library Director for sending me a complete recap of all the activities at the library. The library hit a 10-year record for traffic, and they hosted the first "All About Florham Park Day" with a Touch-a-Truck event at the same time. They also ran two successful grant programs under the "State Labor of Literacy".

I would like to thank our Construction department, with construction official Kevin Guilfoyle and the entire staff in that department as we continue to see projects end and inspections remain at an all-time high. Florham Park has been very busy this past year with new development. Our dedicated employees continue to work very hard every day to keep things moving forward. The Planning Board and Council along with our Planner Katherine Sarmad recently completed a long overdue clean up of our Borough code. This process took close to a year with many Zoom calls and meetings in-person with the Planning Board and Council members. These new changes will be part of our Master Plan moving forward. I would also like to thank Mike Sgaramella, Marlene Rawson, Kevin Guilfolyle, the retired Janet Doherty and all of our Board and Council members for the hard work on this project.

I would also like to recognize our Engineering department, directed by Mike Sgaramella and his assistant Kayla Kaplan. Also, CFO Patrice Visco and her staff. Patrice's department has continued to bring in a budget that is on time and on budget every year and I thank Patrice and her staff members

for their hard work. Also, our dedicated Tax Assessors office John Murray, Jim Gibbs and their assistant Lisa Amato. Thank you for all you do.

I would also like to recognize Board secretary Marlene Rawson. Marlene is the secretary to both the Zoning Board and the Planning Boards. Florham Park is once again starting to see some new applications on the horizon at the two boards. These applications will be reviewed and a hearing date will be set.

I apologize if I forgot to recognize anyone but I sincerely thank all of you for a great job well done.

Thank you goes out to my budget team members, Patrice Visco, Jon Rheinhardt, Ray Sarinelli, Jr and Sr., Bill Huyler, council liaison Charlie Malone, Council President Scott Carpenter and all the Council members that worked so hard to achieve this goal. We have a great financial team in place and we also have an aggressive plan in place as we move forward into the next five plus years. As we move forward into 2023, we are still seeing some very large increases in materials needed to keep the Borough Buildings Running and the Streets paved. This has had a huge impact on the Budget, and just like the increases we all see at the grocery store or gas station or heating your home, it all comes down to a strict budget.

As we begin 2023, I am very hopeful for the future of our Borough. I, the Council and our hardworking Borough employees continue to strive to make Florham Park the greatest place to live and work. I would like to stress to each Florham Park resident that they can be confident that the Council members and I will always do our very best to keep Florham Park the greatest town that we all love and respect.

I would like to remember some of the people that we lost during 2022 and I ask that we have a moment of silence after I finish reading this list.

Sheila Ann Williams

Deacon Bill Ward

Beatrice (B) Guzzi

Marie Northridge

Virginia Arnold

Bob Dolan Sr.

Tracy Timmons

And Peter John Taylor (always in my heart)

I know that there were many other people that we lost in 2022, but these people all come to mind as I wrote this speech.

In closing, I would just like to say I am proud of this great Borough and proud to be your Mayor. At this time, I would like to formally announce that I will seek another term as your Mayor in the Primary this June. I believe that I have more to accomplish as your Mayor and I look forward to serving this Borough for another four years. I want to take a moment to thank my wife Janet and our children for allowing me the time needed to do this job properly.

Please stay safe and healthy in this New Year.

God bless all our armed forces and retired military and anyone who has lost a family member or friends this past year.

God Bless America. Thank you.

Mark Taylor, Mayor