



June 18, 2014

Dear City Council members,

I am writing to update you on the status of several important matters.

**Affirmative Action Officer:**

Upon the advice of counsel, I am requesting that Nita Raval of Florio Kenney be appointed as the City's Affirmative Action Officer and her firm be awarded a contract for general litigation in an amount not to exceed \$35,000 at tonight's Council meeting. Ms. Raval is the first woman to serve as Commissioner on the NJ Division of Civil Rights and is well qualified to serve the City in this role. This appointment is necessary because Kim Wilson, our current Affirmative Action Officer and Assistant Corporation Counsel, is on indefinite leave due to a family matter. Please be reminded that personnel matters related to City employees cannot not be discussed in any public meeting. Thank you for your understanding.

**Appointment of Provisional Police Chief & Swearing In of New Police Officers**

Per the attached announcement last week, Captain Garcia has been appointed as the provisional Chief of Police effective on July 1st following Chief Falco's retirement on June 30th. Captain Garcia has been a captain for the Hoboken Police Department for 19 years and has served Hoboken for more than 40 years. Captain Garcia will serve as Police Chief on a provisional basis until a new Police Chief is appointed.

On Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> three future police officers will complete training and be graduated from the Bergen County Police Academy. I hope you can join us on Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at City Council Chambers where they will be sworn in and appointed Police Officers.

**Hoboken Flood Protection Planning:**

As you are aware, Hoboken successfully won the Rebuild by Design competition. After nearly a year-long effort, our "Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge" proposal was ultimately awarded \$230 million in Community Development Block Grant funding out of 44 proposals. Last week, we had an initial meeting with HUD representatives to discuss next steps and to learn more about the process going forward. HUD will soon be posting the grant notice, and then we will be working with the State to devise an action plan for implementation that will need to be approved by HUD before any funds can be disbursed.

While the award provides a historic opportunity to protect Hoboken, Weehawken and northern Jersey City, as is the case with all the competition winners, we will also need to fund portions of the project as well. The most expensive and complicated portion of the project is the "Resist" component, and I intend to make protecting the Hoboken/Weehawken Cove area with a connection to Weehawken a top priority. Since we already own the land and have conducted the site remediation, I am advocating for the first phase of the project to start with finalizing a "park as defense" plan that will provide not only a park

amenity for our communities but also protect from the storm surge. With consensus from all levels of government, this project could begin as soon as the master plan has been completed.

We hope to have a meeting soon with the State and HUD to develop a clearer framework on how we can work effectively in partnership at the municipal, State and federal levels to implement the full design as expeditiously as possible to protect our cities (The HUD grant funding will pass through the State and permits will be needed from the State).

In addition, we are working towards implementing the "Delay" and "Store" elements of the plan, which calls for green infrastructure to slow or prevent storm water from entering our sewer system. One component of that is to use open space to not only provide an important amenity to the community, but also to minimize storm water runoff. At the BASF site, we are also working on a possible concept that could provide a park, an underground parking garage, and also help NHSA with their combined sewer overflow challenges (We are moving ahead with appraisals for BASF and using another grant from the Re.Invest Initiative to determine some engineering design options).

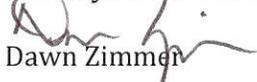
This week we were also awarded \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Interior for the Southwest Park, which is being designed to hold 200,000 gallons of storm water and is an integral part of the broader resiliency strategy. Similarly, we are working to acquire the Pino property and BASF for new open space that will also play an important role in the "Delay" and "Store" strategy. In order to accomplish this and ensure that we have adequate funds to purchase land and build out the parks, I am proposing to maintain the open space tax rate at the current level rather than adjusting it to offset the effect of the revaluation. This would generate approximately \$2 million annually that could go towards land acquisition and at the same time assist in our resiliency strategy. I will be advocating for at least one of these park/storm water retention sites to receive some funding from the \$230 million grant, but it is so far not clear whether that will be possible. Until we meet with the State and devise a master plan, it is difficult to say how much funding could be allocated for these important storm water and park projects. The first phase, which focuses primarily on the Resist infrastructure, is projected to have a significant funding gap. Through the master planning process, a detailed framework for the entire Resist, Delay, Store & Discharge strategy will be developed and the costs will be much more clearly defined.

Given the serious flooding Hoboken faces from the increasing heavy rain events, we will be advocating for more funding to be used for the Delay/Store and Discharge strategy, and also working on alternative strategies that could be implemented for funding. One funding concept that was suggested by HUD and will be explored is the possibility of creating a Resiliency District that could help fund the infrastructure and exempt Hoboken residents from the costly but ineffective National Flood Insurance Program.

Additionally, we are moving ahead expeditiously on the second flood pump. We are working on finalizing a shared service agreement with North Hudson Sewerage Authority and hope to have this ready for all parties to review in July. Given the severe flooding our City faces, it is important that we move ahead with funding and completing the pump through the low-interest loan from the State. This loan application also includes a small portion of funding for a rain garden/cistern design around City Hall as a demonstration project and as part of the Delay/Store strategy.

We will coordinate with Council President Giattino on our meeting with the State and provide a more detailed update as soon as possible.

Thank you and best regards,

  
Dawn Zimmer