

Annual Message
2013

Good evening and Happy New Year!

First, I want to thank Tony Britt, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts and Reverend Garvey for their participation in this Reorganization Meeting.

Second, I want to congratulate Council members Resto and Holman on beginning their second full terms.

We are doing something fairly unusual tonight – and that is we’re having a Regular Meeting immediately after this Reorganization Meeting. We’re doing that because we’ve been very busy working on new programs for 2013, and we don’t want to lose any momentum by delaying our discussions until the January 28th meeting. In fact, it looks like we’re going to be very busy over the next several meetings. Therefore, I’m going to keep my remarks tonight brief.

The world didn’t end on December 21st, but , nevertheless, 2012 was a challenging year for all of us. Thanks to teamwork on the part of this Council, volunteers, and Borough employees, we met the challenges. And we proved we can work together very effectively to meet the many challenges we will face in 2013.

We also learned something else in 2012. Those of you familiar with the author Malcolm Gladwell, whose built his reputation by writing clearly and thoughtfully about his observations on society and social phenomena, might have come across an article he wrote last year about “tweakers”. In his view, “tweakers” are distinguished from inventors, but are essential to our progress. Inventors come up with new ideas – “tweakers” are the people who make little adjustments to make the new ideas even better. One example of a tweaker was Steve Jobs, at Apple, who was known for always revising the work of his engineers to make the final product better. Tweakers improved the steam engine, the electric light bulb, and almost every other invention you can think of.

Well, in addition to having people with new ideas, we have a lot of tweakers in this town – people who are always thinking of ways to do our jobs better. After the hurricane and freak storm in 2011, we made a number of adjustments to our emergency management procedures that, I believe, improved our handling of Hurricane Sandy. And, not resting on our “laurels”, after Hurricane Sandy we developed a long list of action items for further “tweaks” to our emergency procedures. In 2013, in addition to new ideas, we’ll be doing a lot of tweaking – tweaking to make sure that Chatham Borough remains the special community that it is.

In February, we’ll be discussing our goals and objectives for 2013. Mr. Falzarano has been circulating drafts over the past weeks, and all of us have been thinking about where we want to focus our efforts this year.

We expect to have a very full plate – and a few of the areas we will be working on, in addition to further improving our emergency management procedures and working on our budget, are:

- build upon our past work on traffic and pedestrian safety and the Complete Streets plan to develop a comprehensive policy regarding sidewalks and designated routes to schools, tree planting and parking (both overnight on street parking and downtown parking)

- begin studying our industrial districts to identify and take advantage of opportunities that might arise

- improving the Borough's e-mail systems and information technology systems to help make municipal government more efficient and even more open

- continue to transition more recreation sports to the “club” model

- continue to identify ways we can improve our recycling program, expand our community gardens, be better stewards of our open space, and continue on the path of being a sustainable community.

I think I can speak for all of us up here and say that we're looking forward to the challenges before us.

I also think that all of are looking forward to a year when we can celebrate Halloween on October 31st, and not some other day. (And hopefully this will hold true for the other holidays as well.)

Thank you!