



BOROUGH OF NORWOOD

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Dear Residents,

Happy New Year! 2020 was an unprecedented, emotional year for everyone. While most, if not all of us, were directly affected by Covid, some losing a family member or friend, the borough lost two exceptional people. In March Mayor Gus D'Ercole passed away at the age of 86. Gus was Mayor of our great community for 20 years, from 1984-2004. Prior to his run as Mayor Gus served as a Councilman for 5 years, from 1979-1983. His two greatest accomplishments for the borough were building the triplex which houses the DPW, Police Department and Community Center and also developing the affordable housing for the seniors. Gus displayed amazing leadership, patience and kindness in all facets of his life. We also lost lifelong resident Thomas Kraus. Tom, who was a pillar of the Immaculate Conception Church and a great influence in the Boy Scouts, served as a Special Police Officer from 1965 until he was hired as a full-time officer in 1969. Tom's father was also a Special Police Officer and they worked together until 1980. Known best for his professionalism and being a valuable mentor to the new officers, it was no surprise that he was the field training officer for the department. With a distinguished career Tom retired as a Lieutenant in 2000.

As we reflect on the past year let's try to think of the positive. We were able to spend more time with our family, we were able to complete projects, start a new hobby or learn a new skill. We learned how resilient children are and that they are able to adapt to and overcome any obstacle thrown in their way. We saw our community come together like never before to help those in need. Strangers helping and caring about strangers. Personally, I loved seeing families out for a bike ride or taking a walk together. I would like to thank our residents and the restaurants in town for dropping off food to our first responders during these difficult times. Gerry's Place, Ragazzi, Dimora, Cousins and Chok Dee all donated food multiple times. Performance Health came through and donated antibody tests for all of our first responders. Many residents and businesses donated PPE equipment. Michael and Christina Westphal set up the Canvases of Hope. On one sunny weekend in April 10 Norwood families came out and spread joy throughout our community by painting positive messages and images on these canvases. It's a great reminder to everyone driving by to not give up hope, brighter days are ahead. The out pouring of support we showed for our first responders, and for our neighbors as well, was enormous. Again, I thank all of you for everything you have done during this difficult year.

Our family of borough employees grew this year as well. Some got married and some had children or grandchildren. We hired two new employees. A full time DPW employee and a Borough Administrator. Even though we were in the midst of a pandemic, we were still able to provide our residents with the services they are accustomed too. Though Borough hall did close to the public for a short time, in the interest of the health and safety of our employees, it never stopped being business as usual. All departments were fully staffed and running like normal. Our police department, department of public works, fire department and EMS all followed normal operating procedures. I would like to thank all of our borough employees and volunteers. Without their unwavering loyalty we would not have been able to continue to provide the exceptional services our residents deserve.

We were able to complete some important projects this year. All new sidewalks were installed along McClellan Street making it safer for all who walk or live in that area. The new electronic message board, that will be placed at borough hall, will be up and running very soon. The borough hall parking lot and the walking path at Kennedy Field had all new lighting installed. Our basketball courts were completely redone and dedicated to the memory of former Mayor Gus D'Ercole. Irrigation systems were installed at borough hall and the library. Penny Lane had a makeover. It was regraded and had new pavers installed. The gazebo was also restored. The finishing touches of the new trees, lights and pavers along Livingston Street completed the Beautification Project. We have also set up speed radar signs which are helping to stop the speeding on Livingston Street. Our biggest accomplishment this past year was completing the renovation of our public library. Being able to reopen the doors of our library to our residents was paramount in gaining some normalcy. We are just getting started as we have more wonderful improvements scheduled for 2021.

Along with door side pickup, the Norwood Public Library started online virtual classes to bring something new to our residents. They have everything from exercises classes, to cooking classes, to handwriting and debate classes. There is something there for everyone.

Norwood Day was slightly different this year, though not any less fun. It was the kick off to our Healthy Norwood Initiative. We brought in new activities and food vendors that were a hit. A big thank you to the Norwood Police Department for running the fishing derby. We had a record number of participants. The fire department came through again providing contact less pick up for their delicious hot dogs. Mark your calendars as this year's Norwood Day is scheduled for Saturday September 25th.

Norwood was ranked 29th out of the 100 safest small towns in America. This is largely in part to the Norwood Police Department. Please join me in thanking Chief Krapels and his officers for all their hard work and dedication. Their biggest priority has always been, and will continue to be, keeping the residents of Norwood safe.

I would also like to thank our DPW. They were kept very busy this past year. Director Tracy did a fantastic job making sure borough hall, the triplex and Kennedy Field were fully stocked at all times with the necessary equipment to keep our staff, residents and visitors safe. They installed a plexiglass barrier in the offices where it was needed, placed one-way signs around the walking path, and installed multiple outdoor hand sanitizer systems around Kennedy Field and the playground. They also had the cleanup of Super Storm Isaias and the snow event that was just a few weeks ago. The grinding of debris from the super storm generated over 2,000 yards of wood chips that resulted in over 100 deliveries to residents. The DPW did an exemplary job this year.

Volunteers are what make a community great and we are lucky enough to have the greatest volunteers. All of our volunteers stay for extended periods of time, often taking on more than one role. These volunteers give up their personal time to join our committees and coach our children. I would like to thank all of our

volunteers for everything they do for our community. Kevin McLaughlin just ended his two-year term as fire chief and will continue to serve as a volunteer fireman, Evan and Carolyn Pinkus were part of our recreation committee and football program for 11 years, Michael Casey served on our Zoning Board for 15 years. I thank you for your service to the borough and residents of this community. The dedication you showed does not go unnoticed. Good luck in all your future endeavors.

There are many outside professionals that help this borough run as smoothly as it does. Thank you to Michael Neglia and Evan Jacobs from Neglia Engineering, our board attorneys Robert Regan and John Conte and our labor attorney Jason Saffron. The help and guidance you provide is invaluable.

I would like to welcome Kevin Corrison as our new Borough Attorney. Kevin is an outstanding lawyer and respected by all who knows him. With his many years of legal experience, the borough is in very good hands.

Andrew Fede, who has served as our borough attorney since 2004, is a man who garners respect and who has a wealth of knowledge of municipal law. His even temperament, cool head and ability to respond to the situation at hand will be missed. Myself, and the Council, wish you all the best in your retirement.

I would like to thank our 2020 Council for their dedication as well. When we ran for election none of us thought we would be conducting council meetings through Zoom. Councilman Tom Brizzolara is in his 6th term on the Council. With his knowledge of the zoning and property maintenance ordinances he is the perfect fit as our Construction Department liaison. Councilman Foschino is in his 2nd term on the Council. With his expertise in the maintenance and beautification of landscaping and machinery he is the perfect liaison for our DPW. Councilman John Rooney is in his 3rd term on the Council. He is versed in municipal finance will continue to be our Finance Department liaison and work closely with our CFO to keep our taxes low. Thank you to Councilman Haberman for serving these past three years. You brought wonderful ideas to the table and it was a pleasure working with you. Councilman Scott, a lifelong Norwood resident, was not only a councilman for borough but also a softball, little league and Knickerbocker coach, a football coach, a past Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus and an active member of the American Legion Post 272. Thank you, Councilman Scott, for your many years of service to the borough.

I would like to welcome to the Council and congratulate Bong June "BJ" Kim and Annie Hausmann on their win. I look forward to working with both of you and know we will accomplish many great things.

I look forward to everything this new year will bring and I wish you and your families a happy, healthy, safe and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

James P. Barsa

Mayor