

Good evening. This is my 16th annual State of the Borough Address to the residents of Ridley Park.

2012 was the year we became 125 years old. The date was 12/12/1887. Briefly, this is how it happened.

A petition signed by 51 resident freeholders, who represent the majority, was forwarded to the Court of Quarter Sessions. An affidavit was attached authenticating the signatures and the dimensions of Ridley Park. Eventually, the Grand Jury reported favorably on the petition and the court issued the requested charter. Ridley Park went from a Village of Ridley Township to an Independent Borough; Ridley Park. The first organization meeting was held at the Presbyterian Church on March 5, 1888.

Not to be outdone, the Library celebrated their 100th anniversary. Their process involved Council requesting a \$5000 grant from Andrew Carnegie. Council assumed the grant was approved and wrote a thank you letter to Carnegie. He knew nothing about this grant, nor did he approve it. I guess he liked Ridley Park because he now only approved it, but he added another \$5,000. An interesting side note was that the vote was 6 for and 1 against accepting the additional \$5000. Andrew Carnegie was personally active in the design and construction of our library. The library recently had a makeover for their 100th anniversary. The outside door was replaced, and new paint makes for an inviting entrance. The outside was completely landscaped and other more subtle improvements were made as well.

The Year In Review

There were 2 major personnel changes. A new Borough Manager was employed. DawnMarie Human comes to us with 16 years Borough Manager experience and has been doing an excellent job for us.

Our former Police Chief Tom Byrne retired due to a disability after 24 years of service, 10 as Chief of Police. The Acting Chief is Corporal Mark Bascelli who also has 24 years with the department.

We welcome Dawn, and wish Tom and his wife Marge the best in the future. We also support Cpl. Bascelli as he takes on the responsibilities of Acting Chief. Internal interviews will take place shortly.

The Sellers Avenue bridge replacement issue was basically resolved following a public meeting in mid November and allows us to move on. Construction is expected to begin by mid 2014. It is expected at least one more public meeting will be scheduled for final details and scheduling in 2013.

A new, more energy efficient, fountain was installed at our lake as well as several aerators to protect the aquatic life and keep our lake one of the most beautiful in Delaware County.

A committee was formed, and is currently meeting with County Planning to develop a new 10 year Comprehensive Plan. This is to develop a plan of how we see Ridley Park in the next 10 years. As the plan develops public meetings will be held to review the proposed plan and obtain the input of our residents. The approved plan provides a guide to our Planning Committee for future development in our borough. The comprehensive plan not only provides a guide to our future but is very helpful in obtaining grants.

The sound barriers are practically complete. Patience is a virtue. This project was 10-12 years in the making. The traffic noise from 95 and

the Blue Route should be significantly reduced for our residents in the second precinct.

A big plus for enhancing the quality of our town was bringing the grass cutting in-house. Our parks and properties have never looked better. Myself, and members of council, have received many compliments. Thanks go out to our maintenance employees.

Our attempts to further enhance the quality of our town include a program of notifying residents whose homes are significantly out of code so we can bring them back to Ridley Park standards. To ensure this, our solicitor is developing stronger ordinances to give us more enforcement options.

The Fall Festival and weekly farm markets have become something every resident of Ridley Park looks forward to. Main Streets is a non-profit organization separate from the Borough, whose purpose is to develop spirit within the business community to compliment and sustain revitalization and to assist residents and businesses in flourishing together. Main Streets carries most of the costs while Ridley Park enjoys most of the benefits. They also provide scholarships to our youth, and paid for half the cost of our new sound system that we use for many of events including Memorial Day, the Victorian Fair, the Fall Festival, etc.

Ridley Park was once again awarded the Tree City designation in 2012 for the 9th consecutive year.

Bob Berger, our very dynamic and involved Council President, received the Taylor Community Foundation Community Impact Award for 2012. This award brings individuals who make a tremendous positive community impact to the attention of our community. Bob's involvement in the CDCA, youth sports, Council, Main Streets, regular participant in community cleanup programs and various other endeavors made him an easy choice.

Traditional events, such as the Fireworks and Victorian Fair, 4th of July Parade and the Business Associations “Santa Comes To Town”, Halloween Parade & Easter Egg Hunts were enjoyed by many residents and visitors to our community.

The RPAC Club has provided activities to our youth since 1961. Their activities give our youth structure, teach respect and provide a safe outlet for the immeasurable energy that young people have. 200 to 500 of our young people participate in this clubs various activities.

Our seniors enjoyed another active year with luncheons, special events, bingo and occasional trips.

Ridley Park even had an event for the canines of our community thanks to Daisy Delights, our Gourmet Pet Store in our Business District. For the 7th year in a row, a Halloween Costume Parade for dogs was held at the lake.

Now, I would like to say a few words about the most important responsibility that we provide to our taxpayers as a local government – Public Safety. We take your security, personal safety and protection of your property very seriously in this community. These services are provided to you by our Police and Fire Departments.

Police Department

2013 is a year of leadership transition. Our former Police Chief, Tom Byrne, retired effective December 31, 2012 after 24 years of service and 10 years as Chief. Tom accomplished much in his 10 years and we wish him the best.

We are currently in the process of promoting someone from inside as Chief. Promoting from within cannot be emphasized enough. We have a great police department with an excellent corps of officers. Our goal is to continue this way and possibly improve upon what we have. A key component of our police is proactive management. We want to

anticipate problem areas and take a preventative approach as opposed to a reactionary stance.

Fire Department

Volunteerism is key. It is important that we have a sufficient number of volunteers to provide quality service to our community to assure residents protection in the event of a fire.

The Ridley Park Fire Department continuously works to recruit new members to make sure that our station is adequately manned. The alternative is employing firefighters which would be costly to our community.

Firefighting is complex and is subject to rigid state standards with obvious risks. Firefighters must undergo extensive training before they are qualified to be part of a fire fighting crew. Safety is of the utmost importance for their protection, and the protection of others. Ongoing training is extensive, including weekly training every Thursday at our firehouse. Everyone in our community should remember to take a moment to thank those who put their safety at risk for us and our property.

2013

The dredging of the lake is a must and the preliminaries necessary to do this legally and efficiently are in progress now. We planned to complete this project last year but the discovery of the red-bellied turtle interfered. Regardless, we plan on beginning the dredging project this summer. It is absolutely necessary to prevent the continued build-up of silt. We budgeted some of our funds and continue to seek grant funds to do a thorough job. Our lake is enjoyed by many outside of Ridley Park and we are the end of the watershed system, leaving the silt from

many towns upstream settled in our waters so we believe we should get some additional support.

In early March of this year, one of the seniors asked the Borough Manager and myself to tour the community room kitchen. It is in desperate need of renovation. This facility is not only important for the seniors, but also for the other community groups that use the facility. Since then we have been working hard to secure volunteers to handle most of the renovation work and obtaining estimates for the rest. We expect to have the kitchen completed with the help of the Highway Department, Police, Council Volunteers, Manager and the outside donors we are lining up to provide electrical, plumbing, materials and other services by the end of the summer.

We are restarting the Heroin Alert Program with funds raised by Cookie April, a resident who lost her son to prescription drugs. The amount raised was \$5000. The purpose of this program is to warn our youth of the dangers of heroin and other drugs. Corporals Frazier and Nasella have made presentations to approximately 8000 students of all age levels and over 1000 adults. Unfortunately the funds ran out for this program and we were unable to obtain new grants to continue. We are now cooperating with the District Attorney's program and hope to merge our program with the County efforts to expand the program and create an even bigger preventative impact.

Main Streets also sponsors Ridley Park's 2 main events; our weekly Farmers Market and the October Fall Festival which is attended by upward of 5000 people. They accomplish this through their own funding, allowing us to put on these events at a minimal cost to taxpayers. They have several new events planned for 2013. They include the creation of new scholarships for our youth and the expansion of the Farmers Market.

Through the diligent work of Council President Bob Berger, the Borough was able to be reimbursed in the amount of over \$215,000 after being able to prove incorrect billing by the CDCA for years. The successful recapture of those funds allowed us to maximize our contribution to the Capital Reserve Fund for our community and offset a tax increase in 2013.

I have already touched on the comprehensive plan and the Sellers Avenue Bridge but I do want to remind residents to plan on attending the 2013 public meetings that will be announced for both projects.

Council approved a 2013 tax ordinance with NO TAX INCREASE and no increase to tax and trash fees for residents, regardless of substantial increases passed on to the municipality. Council assures me that there will be no cuts that would reduce the high quality of services that our residents currently enjoy.

In conclusion, Ridley Park is a premier community in Delaware County because of our residents and volunteers. We are proud to be part of the Ridley Park experience. This is exemplified by how we maintain our homes and properties and the large number of volunteers who give of their time and talents to our many organizations, committees and boards that work hard to meet the high expectations of our residents.

As in previous years, my goal is to maintain and enhance Ridley Park as a quality residential community. Working together we can achieve this worthwhile goal for our town.

I wish you all a happy and successful 2013.

