

2018 Montgomery Township Committee Reorganization Remarks

COMMITTEE MEMBER ED TRZASKA

I would like to thank my family for their continued support as I begin my eighth year on the Township Committee. As always, I couldn't do it without them. Our daughter, Maddi, will turn six next month. She helps me stay focused on why we are serving and the importance of protecting the long-term quality of life in Montgomery.

I would like to thank Mark and Christine for serving this year as Mayor and Deputy Mayor. You both have been outstanding partners on the Township Committee and I look forward to working with you again. Also, I would like to welcome Sadaf to the team, it's always great to work with someone new.

Over the past several years, we have accomplished a lot for Montgomery, including holding the line on budget spending, reducing township debt, making local government more open and transparent than ever, saving residents millions in electricity costs, moving forward with significant investments in our roads and police department, and preserving more than 700 acres of additional open space.

We also concluded 2017 with a remarkable agreement that settles our COAH housing mandate. After years of confusion brought on by poor court decisions and inaction from Trenton, we approved a plan that will protect Montgomery for the next decade. Better yet, it only requires us to approve a small fraction of the housing that special interest groups were originally pushing on us. It was time to take control of our future and that was accomplished.

Looking forward, 2018 will be a productive year. We will conclude our park rehabilitation initiative, which was needed since the equipment at most parks date back to the 1990's. We have already upgraded Montgomery Veterans Park, Mill Pond Park, Woods Edge Park, and Lubas Park and approved a joint project with the Board of Education to rebuild the ten tennis courts next to the Upper Middle School. We have a few more items to address and that work will be completed this summer.

We also remain passionate about protecting our rural character. There is nothing I am prouder of than the open space we have preserved (700+ acres and counting). Montgomery is a special place not only because of what we are, but also because of what we are not. Most of the time, the best thing to do with land is “nothing”. Open space protects our quality of life and protects our budgets. There are countless studies that show how development, especially residential, never pays for itself.

Finally, I would like to discuss our municipal building project. After four years of analysis and review, we decided to move forward with a new building on the former Convatec property. This was a big decision, but we could not spend the required \$15 million to upgrade the current building, especially since even at that price tag, the final product would not fully meet our future needs.

We are working with Somerset County on the process and will know our construction options in the next several months. There are many benefits with the new location and building. Our police department’s facility will now conform to all state and federal guidelines and be located much closer to our schools. The new building will also include enough space for a brand-new library, which will be run by the county library system.

This is an exciting time for Montgomery and 2018 is going to be a great year. We have a lot of work to do, but I know we will get the job done and make our community an even better place to live.