

Mayor Dina Long
2016 New Year Message
Borough of Sea Bright Reorganization Meeting
January 2, 2016

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us today. We are honored to have so many residents, loved ones and elected representatives here with us today.

Before I start, I'd like to take a moment to especially recognize and thank the good men and women who work for the Borough of Sea Bright, our Police, the staff who work in this building or on the library or on the beach, our DPW, and our volunteer departments. Since Sandy, each one of us has had our own issues that we are trying to resolve. So imagine dealing with that times 1000. They are the unsung heroes of our town, and they should know all of us up here see when they go above and beyond, which is often, we appreciate it, and we are grateful for their efforts.

I also want to recognize the extraordinary service of the Borough Council. They are the ones working behind the scenes to make Sea Bright better. They have full lives, and yet they give inordinate amounts of time, with no compensation whatsoever, on behalf of our town.

I'd also just like to thank my husband Rob and son Sam; they are truly my rock. I'm sure I would not have gotten through the last four years without your amazing support. And my Mom, who gets all the credit for me being here in the first place.

So, four years ago, I stood in this gym and took the oath of office as Mayor of Sea Bright. I talked about how I came to be a Sea Brighter, I celebrated the fact that we have the most diverse, eclectic, talented and colorful collection of individuals ever to assemble on one three-mile sand bar. My good friend Mayor Maria Fernandes was sitting right up front, smiling from ear to ear, and anything seemed possible.

Ten months later SSS ripped through and proved that to be true, in the worst way possible. It washed away everything that was familiar and left us with the daunting task of picking up the pieces and putting it back right. Three years later I surprise myself sometimes at how close to the surface those emotions still are. The grief of loss, especially.

And yet, when I reflect back on those early times after the storm, I can see how anything was, and is, still possible, in the best way possible. Remember our collective determination. How, as bad as it was, we still never doubted that we'd get back and that it would somehow be ok. People helped each other and supported each other, making no distinctions between one another, except that we were all together in this strong, colorful tribe of Sea Brighters.

People came from around the country to help us, and with our gratitude came the resources we needed when we needed them most. In the midst of the direst circumstances,

we brought a positive spirit and a can-do attitude. Our town captured national attention, and even the Grammy-winning band Train came here and played a show, for us. I called it our Sea Bright Spirit.

Subsequently, I learned that psychologists recognize four phases of human disaster response. Phase 2, the Honeymoon phase, is known to be when people draw together to solve problems in an intense showing of community. Our so-called Sea Bright Spirit. (By the way, Phase 3, “Disillusionment” follows, ending with a Phase 4, “Reconstruction” phase.)

Alright, so maybe we were not all that unique, but it certainly was special, and that Sea Bright Spirit was real. Looking back, I see how important a role that mindset played in our initial recovery.

When we were grateful, abundance came. When we radiated positive energy, positive results were the outcome. It’s just physics, really, if you think about it. How could you expect to get positive out of negative? Negative produces negative, positive produces positive. It’s really that simple.

So, going into my next term as Mayor, and into the new year, the message for me is the power of positive energy. The fact that anything IS possible, and we have the power to make it happen with our mindset.

I do not mean be happy 365, or that we all need to agree, or even that we all like each other. What I do mean is bringing positive energy to the table, treating people how we want to be treated ourselves, making opportunity out of obstacles, and maintaining an attitude of gratitude.

Experience proves that with these ingredients, our success is inevitable. God willing. God bless our beloved home town. Thank you.