

Mayor Dina Long 2019 New Year Message  
Reorganization Meeting, January 5, 2019

Good morning. Thank you so much for braving the sideways spray and gray to be here today. It is an honor to have so many residents, loved ones and elected representatives joining us.

I'd like to start by recognizing the good people who work for the Borough of Sea Bright: our Police, the amazing clerk's office, administrator, admin staff, the DPW (who, on top of everything else, have done such a great job keeping our town beautiful), those who work in the library or on the beach. And how about our volunteer departments. Who in Sea Bright doesn't look forward to seeing Santa and Firemen/First aiders on Christmas morning? They are the ones who make everything happen. They are the unsung heroes of our town, and more often than not, they go above and beyond. I want to thank them all on our behalf.

I also want to recognize the service of the Borough Council. They have full lives, and yet they give an incredible number of hours, lost times with family and friends, with no compensation whatsoever, to help our town. And then there's this guy...

You may have noticed him sweeping up puddles at 5:45 in the morning, or hanging around your neighborhood waiting for the tide to come in so he can watch the water come up to the bulkheads, or maybe you saw him carrying boxes, with his son right behind him, or maybe you got the phone call and the message. I was wishing I could make an award for him, the hardest working councilman, probably of all time, Councilman Charlie Rooney. Thank you for all you do, Mr. Sea Bright.

Charlie is joined by some amazing people here on the Borough Council. They're smart, they're talented, and they love our town. We are lucky to have them.

And as you heard from Council President Leckstein, 2018 was an eventful year for Sea Bright. Last year I stood up and talked about how we finally have progress you can actually see. Then, it was the completed streetscape, for which were recognized by Monmouth County Planning Board, and improved aesthetics and safety of our downtown.

Now, it's the completed sea wall. We knew from the day after Sandy, when, right where we are standing, a torrent of water barreled through, taking everything in its wake. Today that gap is filled with beautiful rocks. And it brought another opportunity-- one we had only dreamed of but can now look outside and see with our eyes: the walkway over top of the sea wall and rebuilt boardwalk. The playground is coming, as is a basketball hoop (that's not in the middle of a parking lot), and, of course, this building we are standing in, the Sea Bright Beach Pavilion.

Although the original completion date was in May, there were a number of delays. Some of the delays have been caused by unforeseen circumstances; delays in the supply of materials or plan changes, but the contract provides for adjustments for changes and penalties for unjustified delays. All of that is taken in to account before final payment is made, and you can probably see, some final punch list items still need to be completed. Importantly, however, I am pleased to report that there have been no cost overruns and the final cost of the Pavilion will be within the amount bonded and approved by the residents of Sea Bright for the project.

For the first time ever, Sea Bright has a new municipal building! From the onset, our goal has been to deliver the best, most cost-effective and future-looking projects that are

possible. We will continue to do that, and take the hard lessons learned, as we work toward completion of the Municipal Complex. This building, which you can see taking shape outside, is a critical part of our town's future, as it will hold the SBPD, the SB Fire Rescue, and the Borough Admin. offices. It is crucial that we get it right.

We are in the final leg of our recovery from Sandy. It was a lot simpler in the early phases, to repair and or replace the storm damaged with more resilient structures. It's more complicated now, perhaps because of our success. In 2019, the council will have to deal with future infrastructure projects like our sewers and sidewalks, the bulk heading, quality of life issues like traffic and safety, parking, and balancing our summer economy with potential nuisances to our residents.

For me personally, my priorities in the coming year are to increase transparency in how we do things, to keep pushing for inclusion and collegiality to the decision making process, to improve on the delivery of timely and reliable information about what the governing body is up to, and to finish the Sandy projects, including the Municipal Complex and also Anchorage Park, on time and under budget

This is year 4 of a 4-year term for me, and my head spins to look back over the years. We have come a long way. As much as I want to be proud of all we have accomplished, I also have disappointment for the ways that I, we, fell short in 2018. Goals not met; situations that could have been handled better. Misinformation put out by Anonymous personas in an attempt to fester negativity and mistrust. Twenty years ago it was anonymous liar flyers, now it's the internet. But back then, we didn't have workshop meetings open to the public; we didn't have podcasts and a recording of every meeting available for download at the click of a mouse. Back then, council work was done in groups of 3, behind closed doors. It wasn't easy for residents to know what their governing body was doing. Not anymore. Maybe with so much going on, it's still not possible for every person to know every thing that is happening, but I'd like us to do better than we did last year.

Finally, 2018 also taught me what a gift it is to wake up in the morning and to feel good. To have all your loved ones. Reading the list of the Sea Brighters who passed is excruciating. Today we leave here and go to the Memorial service for Eddie Smack, another Mr. Sea Bright. But we owe it to them all, and to each other to carry them with us and to keep going, relentless as the tide..or as Charlie Rooney.

So I'd like to close with a quote from Benjamin Franklin, who wrote in one of his *Poor Richard's Almanack*: "In the affairs of this world, men are saved--not by faith-- but by lack of it."  
I have faith in Sea Bright. I know you do too.

May God bless our beautiful hometown, and each and every one of us with success and prosperity in 2019. Now let's get to work.