

Annual Report to the Electors of the City 2017

While the word family is tossed around to describe communities, I can think of no better way to describe this City. When there is a need, the citizens and employees are there for each other, and even though we many not always agree, we always respect each other. I am proud to call myself a citizen of Harrington.

It is with great pleasure that I am able to report to the electorate that the City is in a fiscally stable position and is starting to grow. There have been many decisions made in the last year that will put us on a sure footing for growth and prosperity. The City Council has adopted both citywide and downtown specific incentives to encourage building and investing in our City. Reductions and waivers for various fees have been made along with changes to the Zoning Code. All while still protecting our character. An Economic Development Committee has also been formed with the intention of making recommendations to the City Council on ways to promote the positive development of the City.

We have had many businesses show interest in the City and have seen growth in some of those already here. In the upcoming year we hope to welcome at least half a dozen new businesses. The City Council has made strides to increase the speed and ease of businesses joining our City including hiring an in house planner.

On August 10, 2016, the City of Harrington achieved the designation of a Downtown Development District from the State of Delaware. This program opens opportunities for investors by offering grants from the State of Delaware and Kent County in the form of rebates for a portion of construction costs. The combination of State, County, and City incentives makes building and remodeling in our downtown more attractive than ever.

The tax and utility rates for city services have not increased for the second year in a row. This is due to the diligent work done by the staff in City Hall. In addition, seniors no longer are required to apply every year to get the tax discount they deserve.

After decades of neglect, the City of Harrington has made progress on improving its infrastructure over the last few years and will continue to do so in the upcoming year. Hanley Street is currently receiving water service

line replacements, new sidewalks, and street paving as part of the 2016 Road Program. Replacement of some sewer lines is planned in order to increase capacity. At a special election on October 25, 2016, voters approved the borrowing needed for water system improvements. These projects include a new water tower, well, and replacement of some water mains and are funded by State and Federal grants and low interest loans.

New steps and an ADA ramp were installed at the Price Community Center. The City has also switched to a paperless agenda management system not only to save paper but to also provide a more user friendly experience for public meeting information.

The Delaware Legislature has accepted the three charter changes requested by the City Council. The bill is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. These changes implement term limits for the Mayor and City Council, allow for debt refinancing without voter approval, and allow for borrowing without voter approval for debt that does not require the principal amount to be repaid.

Beverley Ireland from City Hall was selected as the 2016 Employee of the Year. She is a shining example of the excellence of our City workers. The City has hired several new employees over the past year, including the key position of City Manager and the addition of the new position of City Planner. Welcome to City Manager Don Williams, City Planner Jeremy Rothwell, and all the new employees.

Many times I have said that we have the finest police force in the State. I have had the opportunity to meet with other municipalities and see the problems that the world is facing, and while we face many of the same challenges, they have not grown to the same extent. This is a direct result of the style of policing and community involvement that is shown here in Harrington.

City Hall continues to guide the operations of the City and strive for excellent customer service. Public Works constantly maintains and improves our City. The Library and Parks and Recreation consistently host quality programs for residents. I encourage everyone to check out what they have to offer. Progress is being made to build a new Library; the site has been selected and is in the process of being secured. The next steps will be the building design and fundraising.

As an elected official, I am honored to be starting my second, and last term, with the City. I have been involved with the City in one form or another for the last 18 years and have seen a lot of changes. With all sincerity, I have never worked with a more caring and devoted City Council. It has been my pleasure to serve with you for the last four years. The same can be said for the employees of the City.

In closing, I would like to thank the two Council Members starting another term this evening, Council Members Baugher and Bivans, for their continued dedication to this City. I would also like to thank Council Members Helsel, Marquis, Minner, and Parker for their service to the community. With this Council, I believe the future of Harrington is bright.