

MAYOR ED TRZASKA

I would like to thank my family for their continued support as I begin my seventh year on the Township Committee and third as Mayor. As always, I couldn't do it without them. Our daughter, Maddi, will turn five 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 congratulate Patricia Graham on completing an outstanding year as Mayor and thank Rich Smith for serving as Deputy Mayor this year.

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 600 acres of additional open space, including the creation of Skillman Park.

Moving forward, we will continue to adhere to our core governing principles – doing more with less, protecting public health and safety services, and preserving Montgomery's rural character while enhancing the commercial sections in town.

While all of these principles are important, I would like to focus on the first one – doing more with less. Being fiscally conservative is the hallmark of this team. When I began serving on the Township Committee in 2011, we needed to address spending and debt that was out of control. For years, this was our priority.

Even though there is always more work to do, our success has been tremendous. We are spending below 2005 levels and have reduced debt by almost \$30 million. These are not just numbers on a budget document or balance sheet. What it means for Montgomery is that we now have the ability to wisely and thoughtfully invest in the community.

Over the past two years, we have approved more road projects than any other time in recent history – over \$5 million. In total, we have repaved, reconstructed, or repaired over 30 public roads in Montgomery. And, there is a lot more to come in 2017.

We also launched our parks rehabilitation initiative, which is needed since the equipment in most parks date back to the 1990's. We have already upgraded Montgomery Veterans Park, Mill Pond Park, and Woods Edge Park. In 2017, you will see improvements at Lubas Park and other projects will begin based on the recent community recreation survey.

I remain passionate about protecting our rural character and hope to help preserve more land in Montgomery. In addition, I would like to invest some of our open space resources to make our existing land more attractive and usable for residents. One such project is the stream restoration and pathway enhancements at the Cherry Brook Preserve.

We will continue to significantly invest in public safety services. There is nothing more important than the quality of our police department. With our new leadership team in place, including Police Director Tom Wain, we will ensure that we stay on the right track by hiring of high quality cadets, promoting the best officers, enhancing training, and upgrading equipment.

Finally, I would like to discuss our municipal building. It was originally built over 50 years ago and expanded several times through the years. For a long time, we have known that it needs to undergo significant renovations. The annual operating cost is skyrocketing and major repairs are desperately needed. However, it wasn't until we took a tour of the police department 2 years ago that we decided to get moving on this important initiative. Our police are shoehorned in a space that is woefully too small, littered with hundreds of storage boxes, and limited by utilities that are inadequate.

Since then, we have been researching all possibilities to address our municipal building needs, not just for today, but also for the next 30-40 years. We have assessed countless options to see what adds the most value to our community and we are down to the final stages of our review. Whatever the final decision turns out to be, we are proud that this initiative has been made possible by our hard work to get our finances in order. Our

years of aggressively paying down debt will allow us to cover this initiative with no impact to our current operating budget or tax levels.

This is an exciting time for Montgomery and 2017 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.