

**COMMITTEE MEMBER PATRICIA GRAHAM**

Good Evening and Happy New Year! Thank you all for coming tonight and a special thanks to all of our honored guests, some of whom may have traveled quite a distance to be with us. I hope the weather holds out for your trip home.

Welcome. I would like to thank the residents of Montgomery for re-electing me to the Township Committee and again giving me this extraordinary opportunity to serve the Township. We are perhaps all tired of elections this year, and I look forward to continuing the work of the Township. I would also like to congratulate Ed and Rich on their appointments as Mayor and Deputy Mayor this year.

Most importantly, I would also like to thank my husband Frank for coming tonight and for all the support he gives me in this and other endeavors.

Last year I had the privilege of serving as Mayor and it was quite an experience. Among other things, we addressed challenging budget issues, purchased the Convatec property, dealt with the challenges imposed by the Transco pipeline, opposed the Transco compressor station in

neighboring Franklin Township. We also preserved an additional 170 acres of open space lands, made improvements to our roads and parks and continued the process of the succession of leadership in our police department. I also had the great pleasure of speaking with many residents at town hall meetings, attending Eagle Scout ceremonies, awarding resolutions recognizing the achievements of many of our residents -- such as including eagle scouts, girl scouts, sports teams and EMS cadets, and attending several ribbon-cutting ceremonies in town.

Serving as Mayor also gave me the chance to work even more closely with our talented professional staff and outside professionals. You know, as members of the Township Committee, we set goals and policies and do our best to make things happen. But the people who accomplish the nuts and bolts of all the Township business are the people who work for the town.

I would like to recognize the great talents and skills of our Township Administrator, Donato Nieman, our clerk Donna Kukla and our new CFO, Mike Pitts. They come in every day and efficiently and without any hoopla, keep the Township running smoothly and efficiently to serve the residents of our town. And that is true for all our other departments as well as Planning, Health, Public Works, Recreation, Construction and

Engineering. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with all our talented professionals.

And, I would be remiss if I did not mention our excellent Township Attorney, Kris Haddinger, whose wise counsel and good sense are much appreciated.

Ed and Rich have already discussed some of the larger challenges we face this year so I will mention just a few areas of my special interests.

First, as always, crafting and adhering to a fiscally responsible budget remains our top priority. Even though we face annual increases in costs over which we have no control -- such as pension and healthcare costs -- I believe it is our obligation to always keep the taxpayer in mind and to limit the burden on our tax paying residents as much as possible.

Second, in 2016, we saw the retirement of Police Captain Director Bob Palmer, a model public servant who served the township well for 37 years. We were fortunate to have Bob and we are also fortunate to have promoted Captain Director Tom Wain. I have enjoyed working with Tom already and I look forward to working with him in the future.

I continue to be impressed by the talents and hard work of the many residents who serve on the various boards, committees and

commissions of the town. I have been privileged to work with many of these volunteers and I thank them all for their service.

I am excited to begin the new year ahead!