

# Promises Kept | 2018 Priorities & Accomplishments

As I look toward next year, I want to recap what was accomplished during my first year in office and extend my gratitude to our community for their support.

I would first like to thank the members of the Town Council, and in particular subcommittee Chairpersons Dawn Mackey, Linda Habgood, David Contract & Mike Dardia for their tireless efforts in leading many of our 2018 initiatives. I'd also like to thank Councilpersons JoAnn Neylan, Doug Stokes, Frank Arena & Mark LoGrippo for all of their efforts and support during my first year, and look forward to continuing to work together to benefit the residents of Westfield.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the amazing efforts of our Town employees. As a full-time mayor, I get to see first-hand the daily efforts of each one of our staff members, and I couldn't be prouder of the work they do on all of our behalves.

Starting with some highlights, the following accomplishments are categorized within the 4 main priorities I committed to and set out to achieve when I was sworn in on January 1.

I would love your feedback on how we've done so far, suggestions on what can be done better, and what you'd like prioritized in 2019. Thank you for holding me accountable as your Mayor as we continue to transform [#campaignpromises](#) into reality.

## **\* Highlights:**

- Maintained a robust \$10mm budget surplus
- Increased road paving by 50%
- Generated substantial unanticipated revenue by introducing new cash management plan
- Implemented robust tree planting program
- Implemented various improvements to incentivize Downtown business climate (29 new businesses opened with 8 more planned in 1Q2019!)
- Introduced AddamsFest with 11,000+ attendees in its inaugural year
- Operated as a full-time volunteer Mayor

**Increase resident engagement by improving transparency and communication to better reflect the open, inclusive, innovative and collaborative spirit of our community.**

- Opened volunteer application process for Board & Commission positions resulting in 500+ applications
- Established town-wide volunteer database to engage the talents and skills of residents

- Live streamed Town Council meetings, Town events and storm updates
- Published the names of all Board & Committee members on Town website
- Established part-time Public Information Officer position which has improved timeliness and frequency of communication via Town website and social media channels
- Communicated board agendas, minutes and recaps, and major Town updates using social and traditional media
- Published bi-monthly Mayor updates for key initiatives
- Delivered real-time storm communication during the several winter nor'easters
- Established ward-specific Nixle alerts and Neighborhood Watch program in cooperation with the WPD to improve timely communication related to police activity
- Established new committees to better leverage the talents of our community and engage new members: Senior Advisory Council, Youth & Family Mental Health Commission, Technology Advisory Council, Media Council, Special & Adaptive Needs Committee, Events Committee, and Investment Council, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force

**Improve operating efficiencies, identify new sources of revenue, and maintain strong fiscal oversight**

- Delivered lowest municipal tax rate increase in decades
- Generated substantial unanticipated revenue through a newly introduced cash management plan
- Put excess surplus to work for residents through enhanced focus on capital improvements
- Passed resolution allowing a road engineering consultant to evaluate every road and build a cost efficient long-term paving plan for the Town
- Accelerated our long range capital plan to improve DPW capabilities, including purchase of new street sweepers, bucket truck, plows, road repair equipment and a Cardboard Compactor at the Conservation Center
- Reinvested revenue from Police Department's provision of utility services to purchase new police cars instead of using taxpayer dollars
- Began collaborating with Scotch Plains and Fanwood Mayors to identify potential shared service DPW opportunities, with support from Governor Murphy's office
- Initiated first significant public/private partnership with the installation of a temporary outdoor ice rink at Gumbert Park, converting an underutilized town asset into a one with broad community benefit paid for by a private operator
- Created a new resident service app for real-time, online identification of potholes, light outages, etc. which will be rolled out in 2019

- Announced the establishment of an Investment Council of qualified community volunteers to advise on investment management strategies for 2019 and beyond
- Announced the first open and public budget process to hear feedback from the community at large in 2019

**Chart a vision for Westfield's future that embraces growth and innovation, improves the downtown business climate, and effectively manages redevelopment**

- Initiated Master Plan reexamination process: selected consultant, appointed Steering Committee, and agreed on public engagement process to chart a 10+ year vision for Westfield
- Initiated first ever Parks & Recreation strategic plan: selected consultant, appointed steering committee, and agreed on process to parallel the Master Plan
- Implemented plan to drive Downtown foot traffic and support local merchants: introduced 'Second Sunday' events, enhanced Festifall with new children's zone and merchant friendly layout, and relocated the Farmers Market
- Introduced extremely successful AddamsFest, with potential to be signature annual Town event with significant promotional and revenue potential
- Finalized COAH obligations to facilitate development in areas that need revitalization while minimizing impact on infrastructure
- Addressed short-term parking challenges while long term challenges are addressed in the Master Plan reexamination process: renovated Parking lot 7 (+12 spots), switched to angled parking on Prospect st (4 more spots), and added more grace periods
- Initiated exploration of alternative transportation options starting with microtransit van, bike/scooter share programs, and Lyft partnership.
- Established relationship with Lord & Taylor at the local and corporate level, resulting in a commitment to stay and grow in Westfield
- Created opportunities to improve the business climate in Town: significantly reduced parking enforcement downtown while expanding free parking, passed ordinances allowing rooftop dining and craft breweries downtown, provide greater latitude to Zoning Official to grant parking variances to minimize unnecessary applications to BOA
- Initiated review of zoning ordinances to be able to challenge developers and discourage subdivisions
- Saw 29 new business open in Downtown with 8 more scheduled in 2019, including anchor tenants such as J. McLaughlin, Warby Parker, Atlantic Health and Bare Burger which will provide Westfield's first rooftop dining experience.

### **Champion quality of life issues that impact all residents**

- Hired new Police Chief committed to leading the department with utmost integrity while introducing a community focused and diverse culture, and introduced a comprehensive hiring process that included outside experts' participation
- Founded and co-chaired the Raritan Valley Line Mayors Alliance, which has successfully partnered with key legislators to lobby NJT for RVL peak one seat ride
- Empowered and prioritized Historic Preservation efforts by appointing a Town Historian to provide recommendations for preserving historically significant properties, including seeking public/private solutions for preservation before a property is potentially demolished; investigating opportunities to strengthen existing Historic Designation Ordinance to align with like Towns to allow for broader grant potential; initiated HPC designation status for Reeve House and Triangle Park, collaborated on restoration of Flatiron Building
- Relunched and prioritized the Green Team with 15 volunteer professionals who accomplished the following: implemented 5 new recycling programs at the Conservation Center in two new recycling sheds, funded by a Union County grant; held inaugural Earth Day Fair that attracted 100+ residents, produced an educational video on "how to recycle" that was mentioned on Channel 2 CBS News in New York
- Passed an ordinance repealing \$10 resident parking permits
- Installed new pedestrian safety measures, including beacons on North Ave/ Tuttle Pkwy, West Broad/Marion, Central Ave/Lenox Ave, and South Ave/Boulevard; introduced Pedestrian Safety Task Force inclusive of residents and County leadership to improve Central Ave pedestrian infrastructure; improved timing of traffic light at Central Ave and Terminal
- Passed Short Term Rentals Ordinance to regulate home rentals and ensure neighborhood safety
- Introduced neighborhood watch program to engage neighbors to help in crime prevention
- Completed renovation of Mindowaskin playground to make it inclusive for all, safe, and fun
- Beautified South Ave traffic circle

Thank you for being part of Westfield's bright future! Happy Holidays—see you in 2019!