

Congratulations to Bernie.

I begin by offering my heartfelt thanks to the voters of Princeton. Cliché though it may be, I sit here as living proof that every vote counts, a fact that is not lost on me. I value and respect each and every person who supported me, and I pledge to continue to work as hard as I possibly can to make our consolidation successful; to deliver excellent services at a reduced cost; to make our government more efficient and responsive to residents; and to make our work transparent and honest.

And to the six special voters who put me over the top – let me say that your new sidewalks will be installed shortly. That, of course is a joke – in part, because everyone in Princeton knows that there is no such thing as a free sidewalk.

On a serious note, we had some significant achievements in 2014, most of which have been covered by Mayor Lempert.

In particular, though, I would like to highlight the significant improvements on the legal front, with a new attorney and reduced expenses. We established a process for regular review, and as members of the legal committee, Ms. Howard and I have taken steps to become more proactive with regard to potential litigation by reviewing possible areas of friction and addressing them before they get to a crisis stage.

I would like to again offer a warm welcome to Marc Dashield as we begin our year in earnest. I look forward to our goal setting tomorrow evening.

We made significant progress on consolidating our ordinances but much work remains, and I look forward to continuing that work with Councilman Miller and Councilwoman Crumiller.

In November, the County Freeholders approved our request to use our Mercer at Play grant money to refurbish Mary Moss Park – a project that is of particular interest to me, and I am delighted that with a new three-year term, I should see this project through completion. The Parks and Rec Department is in the initial stages of planning, and I look forward to the time when we can meet with neighbors and concerned residents to gather their input on the project.

I am pleased by the formation of the Council Finance committee. Under Scott Sillar's leadership, CFAC has done an exemplary job of recommending fiscal policies and communicating important information to the public, and I am eager to continue to work with them. Their analysis has been vital to our decision making. I hope that the Finance Committee will allow Council to do even more work on our capital spending priorities.

Finally, I would close by recalling our message to voters two years ago when we sought their support. We acknowledged our Different Viewpoints but also our Shared Values and commitment to teamwork to make Princeton the best it can be. I renew my commitment to celebrating our differing viewpoints, but also our shared values, and hope we can recommit to teamwork on behalf of our community.