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Good morning and happy new year to all.

After serving for four terms, a total of sixteen years, Councilman Matthew Nalbandian has retired from office. Matt has served on nearly every committee on the council, most recently as Council President. He has been a most valuable asset and will be missed. On behalf of the governing body and the residents of Old Tappan, I wish him, and his family continued success and good health.

Congratulations to Councilman Bill Boyce upon his re-election and to Cort Gwon upon his election to the open council seat.

2022 will be remembered as the year that our country came out of the Covid-19 pandemic. Masks, for the greater part, were cast aside and socialization has moved forward to nearly that which it once was. During the pandemic many of our employees, as others, were affected by the disease. To the credit of our department heads, all pulled together to continue to provide the services and needs of our residents and the borough at large.

During the past few years and through the early part of 2022 we experienced a continued rise in property and home values. Interest rates on loans were offered at very reasonable rates all of which spawned an explosive increase in home construction. We have experienced everything from large home additions, to tear downs & total reconstruction projects. There has also been an uptick in simple home improvements along with landscaping projects, swimming pools and cabanas, to name but a few. However, the most notable are the two townhome projects which are Central Square opposite the high school and the Enclave next to the Bi-State Plaza. Both have been built according to code and to satisfy the New Jersey Court ordered mandates as required under the Mount Laurel Doctrine.

Having been "shamed" by a resident last year for my oversight in failing to recognize one employee while noting a list of retirements in the Borough family, I will generalize my praises to all: as I often say, my success as mayor is attributed to the people I work with and those who serve the Borough. Among them are the six members of the council who all show great respect for one another and have the best interest of the borough as their base. All come from widely varied backgrounds, from those who work the soil to those in sales. From those in healthcare to those in service-related fields. I thank each of them for their respect and friendship.

The administrative staff at the borough hall is second to none. They are the ones that keep the borough functioning on a daily basis. The Department of Public Works is the envy of the Northern and Pascack Valley communities and possibly the entire county. The police, fire, and first aid corps are all fully trained and are ready at a moment's notice to serve the needs of the community. Our recreation department is to be recognized for the many public events that take place during the course of the year; many to the delight of the young and old alike.

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Finally, I extend my gratitude to the volunteers and chairpersons who serve on the many boards and committees that serve Old Tappan. These volunteers give their time and are a very important part of what makes Old Tappan a great community in which to live.

In conclusion, I thank all for your support in having made 2022 a successful year and look forward to an even better 2023.

Happy New Year to all!

Sincerely,

John M. Kramer

Mayor
Borough of Old Tappan