

CITY OF ASBURY PARK
ONE MUNICIPAL PLAZA
ASBURY PARK, NJ 07712

PHONE: (732) 775 – 2100
FAX: (732) 775 - 0441



CITY COUNCIL
JOHN MOOR, MAYOR
AMY QUINN, DEPUTY MAYOR
YVONNE CLAYTON
JESSE KENDLE
EILEEN CHAPMAN

MICHAEL CAPABIANCO, CITY MANAGER

2017 State of the City

Delivered by City Manager Michael Capabianco on Wednesday, February 8, 2017

2016 was yet another year of growth and change for Asbury Park, and we are pleased to report that the majority of our goals laid out last year were either accomplished altogether or have at least made significant progress. It's been a year of breaking ground with building projects, additions to City Hall personnel and policies, and updating the technology and services provided in Asbury Park. As we look forward to what is planned for 2017, we take a moment now to look back on all that was accomplished in 2016.

We continued to work with our partners in 2016, bringing exciting new events and developments to Asbury Park. These included continued cooperation with the Asbury Park Board of Education and Asbury Park School District, the Asbury Park Housing Authority on the Boston Way and Choice Neighborhoods Grant process, Interfaith Neighbors on development of the Turf Club, and the Asbury Park Music Foundation on the Levitt AMP Springwood summer concert series. With the help of other local organizations we also brought wifi to the beach, assisted in the creation of the Salt School at the Asbury Hotel, built a playground at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, rebuilt Atlantic Park, planted the Pulse Orlando Memorial Grove, and dredged Deal Lake. Beyond Asbury Park, we worked with NJ Transit to maintain our level of train service and passed a resolution asking for more trains later in the day and directly from New York to Asbury Park, and increased our shared services in agreements with Monmouth County, Neptune, and Loch Arbor.

PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT

Asbury Park's changing fortunes have drawn attention from all over the state, country, and the world. As exciting as this period heralded as a "renaissance" can be, we will not leap into action without a framework and vision for the future of Asbury Park. The Mayor and City Council are committed to guiding the development and growth of Asbury Park by holding to our plans and agreements across the City, and amending and revising those plans to fit Asbury Park's changing nature. The Central Business District Plan was amended in 2016, incorporating changes such as noise mitigation measures and expanding the types of businesses permitted along Cookman Avenue. Amendments to the Waterfront Redevelopment Plan are underway, and will continue into 2017. We began reevaluating the Master Plan in 2016, and we anticipate implementing the new plan by late summer or early fall of 2017.

The Springwood Park was completed in 2016, officially opening the first city-built public park West of Main Street. The park hosted a hugely successful Levitt Amp free summer concert series led by

the Asbury Park Music Foundation, drawing diverse crowds of music fans every week. Housing changes are ahead for Asbury Park's Springwood Avenue corridor, with funding for a rebirth of Boston Way and the Michael's Group Renaissance Village, projects which will create over a hundred units of affordable housing. The city was awarded a \$500,000 HUD Choice Neighborhoods Grant, and opened up the community input and planning process with the help of consultants to create an in-depth plan for the future of the West Side.

We rated and ranked every road in Asbury Park, launching an annual road paving plan which is the first of its kind in Asbury Park in six years. The Sewer Treatment Plant was outfitted with repaired diffusers, a new roof partially paid for by FEMA, and a FEMA-funded new emergency generator. The Sunset Lake Footbridge is currently being repaired using FEMA funds, and the City has completed paperwork for a \$40,000 DEP grant to repair Wesley Lake's outfall. Asbury Park received a \$400,000 Brownfield grant from the EPA, to identify and cleanup brownfield sites so that they can be redeveloped and turned into income-generators and job creators.

As we repair the infrastructure and facilities in Asbury Park, buildings have also begun to rise from abandoned or neglected properties. The Asbury Hotel opened its doors in 2016, and was recently named the best new hotel in the entire country by readers of USA Today. The development of the 1101 Ocean Avenue project was approved and construction has begun. Construction has begun on the Fifth Avenue pavilion, and we look forward to the opening of the event and restaurant space in the future.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Improving the lives of those within Asbury's borders continues to be the primary goal of City Hall. Led by the Quality of Life Committee, our annual spring cleanup was another success, bringing together residents and Asbury Park students. We increased our efforts to promote residential recycling as well as bringing in new containers for recycling and trash collection along Springwood Avenue.

Addressing unemployment and underemployment in Asbury Park continued to be a top priority in 2016, and one in which the City made good progress. A four-year Workforce Development Plan was awarded, and the planning process will start in February of 2017. The City continues to require workforce development elements as part of projects that require Council approval. This is an ongoing commitment, and one that's already manifested in the successful Salt School program at the Asbury Hotel, and will be present in the 1101 Ocean development ahead. Our efforts are ongoing in expanding existing activities that the City can hire local residents for, including seasonal beach jobs and recreation programming.

The Police Department and Fire Department both grew in 2016. Accreditation of the Asbury Park Police Department is underway, and is anticipated to be finished by late Spring or early Summer of 2017. The Police Department has also been outfitted and trained in the use of body cameras, promoting transparency and citizen confidence. A closed-circuit camera system was installed to monitor various streets and schools. Our public safety forces have expanded, and Asbury Park was awarded a \$269,000 SAFER grant to hire more firefighters, and a \$470,000 COPS grant for more police officers. Both

departments are getting a technology upgrade, allowing them to communicate more easily and securely with each other, and across other public safety agencies.

We worked to increase public services throughout the City last year. Wifi on the beach has been implemented in partnership with Madison Marquette, and will see its first summer season test in 2017. The sound system in City Council Chambers and on APTV's cable and online coverage was updated, with more upgrades planned. The City Council passed a Sterile Syringe ordinance, and an agreement to implement the program. Asbury Park rated third in the Human Right's Campaigns state equality index, measuring municipalities' services and inclusion of LGBTQ concerns. Asbury Park also received recognition for implementing the Street Smart Program, a public awareness campaign for pedestrian safety. The Senior Center continued to increase their daily census, were able to purchase a player piano, and finalized the restoration and mounting of the "Turf Club Marquee" in the Center's lobby.

CITY HALL

Many changes came to City Hall itself this year, as we attempted to make the building and people working in it more accessible and helpful. It's an ongoing commitment rather than a goal with a concrete end point, but 2016 saw significant progress on the internal workings of City Hall. The Personnel Policy was revised for the first time in 25 years. New technology was integrated into City Hall's processes, including an OPRA program to expedite the processing records requests, an agenda program to streamline the city council's agenda-building process, and entering the beta testing phase for a web-based public performance measurement software.

This year brought improved communications through the City's website, social media, and press outreach. The City was awarded with the Best Web and Social Media by the Rutgers School of Government Studies' Public Information Contest. The long-awaited Business Committee was formed in 2016, with representatives from a range of Asbury businesses in order to open up channels between local businesses and City Hall. All boards and committees were open to new members in 2016, bringing in more community members with a passion for improving Asbury Park.

The Mayor's Rodeo for Recreation raised nearly \$50,000 for the summer recreation program, allowing for the biggest and best year of the program on record. Hours were expanded at the Asbury Park basketball courts, and more year-round programming was available for Asbury Park children.

In 2016 we hired a Transportation Manager, whose job includes addressing the parking and circulation issues in Asbury Park.

In the Financial Department, Asbury Park hired a full-time CFO. The City reduced insurance costs through our Joint Insurance Fund. All utility funds – sewer, parking, and beach – were self-liquidating, meaning that at a minimum they all broke even, for the first time in two or three years. The City continues to sell City-owned properties that are too small to develop to adjacent property owners; putting properties back onto the tax rolls where they belong.

The Code Enforcement department was expanded, with new staff including a part-time weekend code enforcement officer to give Asbury Park seven-days-a-week service. The property

maintenance code was updated from the 1999 BOCA code to the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code. Code will also benefit from updates to new technology in 2017, with software to simplify the inspection process and create accessible histories for each property.

GOALS FOR 2017

This year, the City of Asbury Park plans to continue and grow what we've accomplished in 2016. General objectives include creating a Mayor's Wellness Committee, bringing together high school students for a joint council, completing the Workforce Development Plan, hiring an IT Director, increasing the use of the Nixle government messaging platform, exploring a city-wide citizen survey after the Choice Neighborhoods assessment is complete, upgrading Asbury Park's credit rating, adopting ordinances managing short term and summer rentals, developing a gateway sign plan, developing "welcome kits" for both residents and businesses, exploring partnerships with college and universities, and continuing to explore shared services and cooperation with county, state, and federal agencies.

Planning objectives include completing the Master Plan Reexamination Report, beginning an affordable housing review and drafting a Fair Share Housing Plan if appropriate, continuing to evaluate the City Hall and Transportation Center properties for better uses, reviewing various zoning districts and redevelopment plans to ensure they meet the City's current needs, developing a bike and pedestrian plan, exploring alternate-side-of-the-street parking, conducting a city-wide street light survey, increasing access to bikes and bike racks across the City, and working with NJ Transit to update bus needs

Recreation and Environmental objectives include expanding the arts and entertainment in Asbury Park, re-obtaining Sustainable Jersey certification, and creating a restoration plan for Sunset Lake.

Thank you to all of our residents, business owners, visitors, committee and board members, staff, and everyone who has helped to strengthen Asbury Park day by day and year by year. We continue to celebrate Asbury Park's rich and diverse past, and look forward to what the future will bring.

Hannah Walker • Director of Communications
732-502-5749 • communications@cityofasburypark.com