



Township of Bernards

1 Collyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
Phone: 908-204-3001; Fax: 908-204-3015; Website: www.bernards.org

Mayor McNally's Reorganization Meeting Speech 01/03/2023

Good evening, Happy New Year, and a warm Bernards Township welcome to all of you. I'm Andrew McNally and it is an honor to be sworn in as Mayor of the very best town in the State of New Jersey.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to the elected officials who have joined us tonight, beginning with State Senator Jon Bramnick, Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz and Assemblywoman Michele Matsikoudis. They represent us in our State Legislature, and are exactly the leaders we need in these times.

Thank you to Monmouth County Commissioner Nick DiRocco for joining us, as well as former Bernards Township Mayors John Carpenter and Branchburg Committeewoman Anna Columbus. We're truly honored by your presence tonight.

We also recognize someone who wanted to be here, but couldn't for a very good reason. Our newly elected Congressman, Tom Kean, was sworn in today in Washington. We congratulate Congressman Kean on his election, and thank him for representing all of us in Congress.

I'd also like to recognize my wife Keri, my daughter Hannah, my son Alexander, my mother, brother, sister-in-law, and cousins who are here with us tonight. My family has made me into the person I am today. My wife, in particular, makes many sacrifices so that I can serve in our town government. You all have my deepest gratitude.

I'd like to thank all of the people who assisted me in countless ways to serve in town government, as well as all of the Bernards Township residents who've entrusted me to serve in this way.

With a New Year upon us, I'd like to reflect on what has made Bernards Township successful in the past, and lay out a vision for the upcoming year.

The folks you see here with me on the dais have all contributed to our collective success. It has been an honor to serve with Committeewoman Kate Grochala, and our new Deputy Mayor Jen Asay. You are both extraordinary leaders, and our town is a better place because of your service.

Congratulations to Jim Baldassare on a highly successful year as Mayor in 2022. Jim—you're a tough act to follow, but I've learned a lot from you, and I'm thankful that we will continue to benefit from your leadership. Additionally, we congratulate Committeewoman Janice Fields on her recent re-election, and for her service as Mayor in 2021. I hope to live up to the standards of leadership that Jim and Janice have set for being Mayor of Bernards Township.



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We also have to thank our exceptional municipal staff, led by Administrator Pat Monaco, for our continued success. The people who serve in the various departments across our local government keep our town running in a safe, accessible and fiscally prudent manner.

In addition, we thank the folks who volunteer their time on our boards and commissions, who spend countless hours in service to our town at no cost to the taxpayer. We further thank our professionals for their dedication to Bernards Township.

Finally, we also thank all those who have served on this Township Committee in the past. We who serve now are the heirs to their great legacy.

All these people have helped to make Bernards Township what it is today—one of the best places to live in New Jersey, and indeed, the entire country.

Looking ahead, 2023 will be filled with great challenges and great opportunities. Chief among our challenges is keeping our municipal tax levy low, while maintaining top notch local government services. This is even harder now because we operate in the same inflationary environment everyone else does. When the cost of everything goes up, our town government faces those same rising prices.

Bernards Township is the envy of similar towns throughout New Jersey because our municipal levy is extraordinarily low, and thanks to the wisdom of the leaders who came before us, our town has zero debt. I can assure you these traditions will continue in 2023. Inflation or no inflation, your municipal tax levy will remain low, your services will remain high, and we won't borrow a single penny.

While this means we won't be able to repave every road tomorrow, or do a lot of other things we would do if money were no object, it also means that Bernards Township enjoys a fiscally responsible government that's unparalleled almost everywhere.

At the same time, we have a big agenda for this year. Our town is extraordinarily safe, and indeed, not long ago was named the fifth safest town in the country. Our success in this regard is largely due to the strength of our police and other first responders.

That said, just as prices are rising everywhere, crime is also rising across the country. Therefore, it is critical that we continue to provide our police with the resources they need to keep our residents safe and to tackle any threat. At the same time, we'll also be restoring community policing programs.



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These programs will strengthen bonds between residents and our officers, and help our police deliver on their mission to protect and serve.

We will also be strengthening the bonds within our community in other ways. We will again hold our annual Charter Day celebration in May, and the Mayor's Fall Festival in October. We'll also coordinate a new event for 2023, which will highlight many of our non-profit organizations based in Bernards Township, and celebrate their contributions to our town and region. We'll also continue to grow our Fabric of Bernards and Understanding Bernards programs. Through these events, residents will get to know the people and organizations that make our town the great place that it is.

To be good stewards of our community, my colleagues and I will make many tough decisions throughout 2023. We'll also be sure to encounter unexpected challenges this year. Rest assured that your Township is in good hands with the fine folks you see here, who will be joining me on this important endeavor. As Mayor, I will work collaboratively and constructively with my colleagues on the Township Committee, our staff, other government officials, with our businesses, schools, houses of worship, and our residents. And all of our decisions made on this committee will be with the best interests of our community at heart.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve as Mayor. May God Bless Bernards Township and may God bless all of you.

Andrew McNally,
Bernards Township Mayor