

Stefanie Gara's Remarks - Raritan Borough Re-Organization Meeting – Jan. 5, 2014

I would like to welcome and thank our distinguished guests and residents for joining us today for our annual reorganization meeting. I would like to congratulate Paul and Andy. I look forward to working with Mayor Liptak and the Council in this upcoming year.

2013 was another busy year for the borough. We have been working closely with The Dukes Foundation, The Central Jersey Stream Team and many other wonderful groups to help us continue the progress on our Riverfront Corridor. We have continued a wonderful relationship with the Steeplechase Cancer Center at Somerset Medical Center and with their support had a very successful RiverFest and Rubber Duck race raising over \$23,000.00.

We are anticipating 2014 to be a year of continued productivity as we move forward with our redevelopment plans, enhancement of Canal Park, cleanup of our Canal and the final phases of Orlando Drive to name a few.

This past year serving our Borough I had the privilege of working closely with our Police Department. I would like to wish our outgoing Chief Mark Ciesla the best as he moves on from our community and congratulate our new Chief Ken McCormick as he takes the reigns as leader of our Police Department. I also had the privilege of working closely with our Borough Clerk Rayna Harris with Administration and Personnel. We worked very closely this year in rewriting many policies and procedures for the Borough and I can guarantee the personnel meetings will not be the same without you. Rayna, I am truly going to miss working with. You have help guide this Council through many issues and obstacles over the last 4 years. I would like to wish you the very best as you move on to a new community. You will be truly missed. Thank you to Don Christensen, The Economic Development Committee Chair. You have helped bring the EDC to new levels this year and the Borough is lucky to have such a dedicated person working so diligently. I also enjoyed working with the Somerset County Wastewater Management Committee and the Somerset County Solid Water Advisory Council.

My duties in 2014 will include Administration, Finance and Personnel and Public Properties. I will be liaison to Office of Emergency Management and the Environmental Commission. I will also maintain my seat on the Somerset County Wastewater Management Committee and the Somerset County Solid Waste Advisory Council. I am excited to be Co-Chairing to the 3rd Annual Raritan Riverfest and Rubber Duck Race. This year we have a much larger group of volunteers eager to help assist in the preparation of this wonderful community event. If you are interested in volunteering please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your Council will continue to work to improve our quality of life, the efficiency of our many Borough departments, and of course to provide continued services while focusing on maintaining our taxes at the lowest possible rate. We are working very hard to help meet both the present and future needs of Raritan. I would like to urge all residents to get involved in any way possible. I am readily available to all of you and of course I welcome communication from you. I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Thank you.