

2015 REORGANIZATION
By Denise Carra

Good Afternoon,

I would like to thank the voters of Raritan for placing their continued trust in me and re-electing me to the Borough Council for my 5th term. I will continue to serve with honesty, integrity and dedication.

As most of you know, the moral of this election story is very simple, every vote counts. I went to bed not sure if I really won. I woke up the next morning only to read in the newspaper that I had won the borough council seat by one vote. I had so many people taking credit for the one vote. I thanked each one personally for being responsible for the winning vote. In the days following the election, I acquired additional provisional ballot votes changing my election victory from one to seven votes. So remember that your vote is very important and can make a difference.

I would like to congratulate Councilman Foohey on his election victory. I had the privilege of serving on the borough council with him before and look forward to working with him again as we continue to improve our town and do “great things” for Raritan. Councilman Foohey was responsible for putting my name on the ballot twelve years ago. He asked me if he could put my name on the ballot as a place holder until he found a replacement to run in the 2002 election. Needless to say, he never found a replacement. Frankly, I am not sure if he even looked for a replacement and how could I back out when your father is your running mate. The rest is history.

This year I am appointed to Public Safety. I will be the liaison to the Raritan Fire Department and the Somerville Rescue Squad. Congratulations to our new Fire Chief, Brian Kredatus, and our new Assistant Fire Chief, Thomas DeSantis.

Also, I will be the liaison to Board of Health, Municipal Courts and a member on the Finance Committee with Councilman Sibilia.

As a member on the Finance Committee last year, we maintained a stable borough tax rate. The tax rate went from 2.295 in 2013 to 2.248 in 2014. The 4.7 cent tax rate difference resulted in over \$150 decrease for an average homeowner. We hope to maintain a stable borough tax rate in 2015 despite the continuing loss of state aid. We must remain fiscally responsible and look for alternative sources of revenue.

Through grant acquisitions, thanks to our Borough Engineer, Stan Schrek, we were able to reconstruct Orlando Drive and install and replace sidewalks throughout the town.

We continue to aggressively go after overcrowding to maintain house values and the quality of life for our residents.

We have listened to your concerns and we are working with our Police Department to deter speeding throughout the town.

We will continue to provide garbage, bulk and leaf/brush pickup with our in-house Department of Public Works.

My most rewarding accomplishment this year was Co-Chairing the 2014 Raritan River Fest and Rubber Duck Race with former Councilman Don Tozzi. We raised \$28,000 in donations (\$21,000) for the Robert Wood Johnson Steeple Chase Cancer Center and (\$7,000) for the Raritan Volunteer Fire Department. Saving lives makes the time and effort put into the fundraiser worthwhile.

In closing, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to our Borough Attorney, Richard Wenner, Borough Engineer, Stan Schrek, Borough Administrator, Dan Jaxel and Municipal Clerk, Maggie Schmitt for their knowledge and guidance throughout the year. A special thank you to the Public Works Department, Police Department, Raritan Fire Department, Somerville Rescue Squad, OEM, John Basilone Parade Committee, board members and all the volunteers who give to our community. A special thanks to our Veterans and the men and woman serving our country.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year.