

2006 – STORMS VALIDATE A “NEW DAY” IN MONTCLAIR

Have things really improved in Montclair municipal government? The two record storms of 2006 provided indisputable evidence of improved operations in Montclair.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, February 12, 2006, Montclair and the region were hit hard by a winter blizzard which dropped the largest snowfall in the history of New Jersey and the New York City metropolitan area. Blanketing our streets, homes, and businesses with two feet of dense snow, this storm paralyzed the region, locking down all airports, grinding mass transit to a halt, and shuttering the doors of businesses and institutions.

Though no one had predicted such a severe storm, enough of a forecast had been made – for one foot of snow, not two – that our management team was ready and our crews and equipment prepared. Preparations and plans were actually well laid out the Thursday and Friday beforehand.

Execution was superb: plowing and salting both during and after the storm, the men and women of the Department of Community Services performed admirably and effectively. With only a few minor issues arising, the streets of Montclair were cleaned of a history-making snowfall before the end of day, and emergency routes were efficiently kept open at all times for the safety of our citizens. How this storm was managed ratified the improvement of municipal government in Montclair.

As fate would have it, however, this was only the first storm to severely test our municipal government in 2006. On July 18, at approximately 9:00 p.m., a freak storm with extreme winds cut a swath through town mainly north of Bloomfield Avenue. Termed a “microburst” by meteorologists, this storm touched-down with immense power and almost surgical precision, uprooting many trees like dandelions, effortlessly carving the tops off many others, and snapping utility poles in two. Five thousand – 5000! – Montclair homes were immediately plunged into darkness as power lines were felled left and right. Our streets were transformed into a dangerous maze of massive, shattered tree limbs and trunks tossed across the roadways, intermingled with sparking hot wires and steaming pools of water. This surreal scene – previewed as it was by purple lightning and deafening rapid-fire thunderclaps – seemed more fitting in a Hollywood disaster film than on the halcyon streets of our quiet neighborhoods.

Again, our township departments and workers rose to the occasion. Moments after the storm concluded, we declared a local state of emergency. Our new Emergency Operating Center in our new Fire Headquarters was immediately put into full operation. All hands were on deck.

For the next week, our township staff worked 24/7 to mitigate the damage of this massive storm. More importantly, the immediate response to clear our major arterial roadways was successful. Our emergency management operation functioned just as it should, serving as the vital, central coordinating nexus for the recruitment and deployment of resources as they were needed. In a crisis this severe, outside help is essential. The State Police, Essex County, sister municipal agencies, utility companies, the Red Cross and other non-profits – all of these and more, including private citizens, responded to render assistance.

Our Parks and Shade Tree, Public Works, Streets and all other work groups of the Department of Community Services; our Police and Fire and Health Departments and other members of our Local Emergency Planning Council; all of these visibly demonstrated the growing spirit of pride and efficiency we are working so hard to make the hallmark of this municipal government. And we are doing it. The performance of township government responding to this disastrous event validates that our municipal operation and its people are on the right track.

The citizens of Montclair are represented in our municipal government by the elected Mayor and Township Council. During and after these storm events, not only were we fortunate to have the unqualified support of the Mayor and majority of Council, but they took the initiative to be out in the community providing help and reassurance to our citizens in any way possible. Having this kind of support from engaged elected officials was not just significant then, it is indispensable to good government and to all the good things we are doing together in Montclair.

While the responses to storms were in many respects the dominating events in the Township in 2006, they were by no means the only significant achievements in municipal government for the year.

With constantly improving efficiency and effectiveness always first on our minds, improving communications and the uses of technology will always be of critical importance to this administration, and 2006 was a year of very important achievements in this regard.

Consider the significance of just these following achievements, all of which are platforms for even greater accomplishments:

- We launched a completely re-designed, multi-functional, interactive website, commencing a new era of improved communications with our constituents.
- We launched a fully digitized Voice over Internet Protocol communications system, “cutting the cord” with old technology and opening a window to a whole new world of communication tools, all while saving money and improving efficiency.
- We launched a sophisticated optical recognition and digital document storage system with full search capabilities, thus taking the first giant step into a “paperless” world that will make for faster, better, leaner management.
- We purchased state-of-the-art Cable Television broadcast equipment and reorganized our communications operation, the first steps toward professional-quality broadcast television programming for the community.
- We installed a computerized fuel monitoring system at the Township’s fuel pumps and are now retrofitting all vehicles to comply with it.
- We upgraded our Finance Department to the latest accounting and financial control software system and completed all training for it.
- We completed installation and training for the new “Recware” software system for our Recreation Department scheduling and operations, improving work-flows there while laying the groundwork for future collaboration with our public schools and better information exchange with our residents.

While making significant achievements such as these, we also continue to fine-tune more traditional methods of communication as well. In particular, our successful production and dissemination of informative printed newsletters in 2006 was generally well-received and appreciated.

It could be argued that one of the least visible accomplishments of 2006 might have been the most important for our citizens – the successful completion of labor negotiations with all nine bargaining units in township government. Many people do not realize that Montclair is a “union” employer to the extent it is. Fewer than twenty-five of our full-time employees are not union employees. Thus, having these contracts completed, and for long terms and in a positive manner, is very important. Some of the highlights of this achievement are:

- All negotiations were done in-house, without outside counsel or consultants, as opposed to how this was achieved in the past, saving at least \$100,000.
- For the first time in memory, the P.B.A. and F.M.B.A. contracts were settled without binding arbitration.
- Improved procedures, work-flows, job descriptions and cost controls were achieved.

Good labor relations is good business. Montclair has very significantly improved in this area, even while becoming more efficient and effective.

If you laid end-to-end the length of streets in Montclair that received new surfaces, full reconstruction, or new curbs in 2006 it would stretch out for over six miles! That’s the equivalent of entering the Garden State Parkway on Bloomfield Avenue and driving to the Vauxhall Road exit in Union; the point being that the Township is continuing to deliver effectively on “core mis-

sion” projects even while adding so many new initiatives. We are particularly pleased that in 2006 we continued “quality of life” and beautification efforts all over town. The improved South End triangle in 2006 as well as gardening and planting efforts at Church Street, Town Hall, uptown, and throughout our parks are all indicative of our push for excellence in community aesthetics.

Unfortunately, one element of our community infrastructure was destroyed by fire in 2006 – the Bellevue Avenue train station. Because of a lengthy insurance dispute, this became an ongoing news story for the year, but the important thing is that no headway was lost for replacing it in a thoughtful way. Township Council appointed a special task force to work with the administration and all community stakeholders and by year’s end a well thought-out plan had been devised. Construction should begin in 2007.

Our new management team continued to build an impressive roster of achievements in 2006, continually inspired and supported by the Mayor and a majority of Township Council and working in conjunction with a strategic plan developed by and with our elected representatives. This team – 80% new in the past three years – provides the vision, drive, and “right stuff” attitude to help make results like the following possible:

- A completely re-done, comprehensive Affirmative Action Plan, accomplished hand-in-hand with the Civil Rights Commission.
- A significantly reduced crime rate.
- Flawless execution of the new leaf collection and removal system.
- Continued exploration of shared services initiatives and the winning of State grants for same.
- Successful implementation of several traffic calming initiatives – at Orange Road and North Mountain, for example – and pushing along more projects in the pipeline.
- Assisting in the launch of Montclair’s new Parking Authority.
- Moving many community improvement projects forward, like rehabilitation of the township tennis courts, South Park Plaza, the rescue of Wildwood open space, swimming pool improvements, a new emergency dispatch center, new Police desk area, streets and curbs, sewers and drainage, and much more.
- The best First Night ever.
- The best Fourth of July parade and fireworks ever – the latter moved to a new location and had the unheard-of addition of a special train shuttle to and from the event.

And there is so much more that was accomplished. But the one area where Montclair faces challenges is the same for every municipality in New Jersey – property taxes and finances. Cost control is always foremost on our minds as strategy #1, but that alone cannot do it, especially with our municipal government constituting only 22.8% of the property tax picture. Like other municipalities, we will continue to explore any and all possible strategies. In 2006, we implemented a new sewer utility, controversial to be sure, but we got it done and the financial correctness of this approach continues to be better understood.

We also hired in 2006 a grants writer, on a consulting basis, to become more aggressive in exploring all revenue sources that might help our taxpayers. Another significant personal change in 2006 was the hiring of a new CFO to replace the retiring Dianne Marus, to whom we express a debt of gratitude for the needed changes and improvements she brought to township financial operations.

Of course, a most significant “financial” achievement in 2006 was the smooth, efficient, on-time and on-budget implementation of the state-mandated revaluation of all properties in Montclair. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Revaluation Task force appointed by Township Council which rendered invaluable service in the public education component of this substantial task.

Overall, the Finance Department had an outstanding year in 2006 in improving the Township's financial operations and controls. In addition to the complete upgrade of the software system, the Department continued to transform itself structurally for better operations. Receivables and payables are now handled more efficiently, staff size has been streamlined, new billing and receipt ledger systems were implemented, grants claims are now processed more quickly, and many other improvements have been made in upgrading the Department to a modern, effective financial operation.

Finally, we have added a new feature to this year's municipal annual report, adding sections to reflect the strong alliance we have with our "partner" non-profits and quasi-governmental agencies. This is a vital part of what Montclair is all about, and we are honored to include them in the following highlights of 2006 achievements from the various township departments.

Police Department

The Police Department, which is staffed by a 111 sworn police officers, is broken down into two distinct divisions: the Patrol Division and the Investigative Division. The Patrol Division has the primary responsibilities of proactive patrol and responding to calls for assistance. Additionally, the Critical Response Team and Honor Guard fall within the Patrol Division's scope of responsibilities. Individually, each Tour, Bureau, or Program of the Patrol Division has a multitude of responsibilities that together allow the Montclair Police Department to present itself as a comprehensive response and service oriented organization.

The Investigative Division is responsible not only for the responsive follow up inquiries into crimes and incidents that have already occurred, but also for proactive activities such as the detection and prevention of such crimes as narcotics distribution, ABC violations, prostitution, gambling, Internet solicitation of minors, and fraud. The investigative branches have gained a well deserved reputation not only in Essex County but throughout the state for the thoroughness and professionalism in which investigations are completed and prepared for prosecution.

In addition to the police activities and responsibilities listed above, the Department must also address many of the newly mandated Homeland Security initiatives. One of the most significant of these is the requirement to staff a Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) as part of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). This team of officers (six members at this time) is part of the Essex County RDT, which is a specially trained team of police officers, equipped with specific gear for dealing with terror related incidents.

The Police Department faced a challenging year in 2006. A major feat was dealing with the July microburst that touched down in Montclair causing widespread damage and power disruptions. The Department also responded to a fire under Bloomfield Avenue that caused manhole covers to blow off and a significant loss of power to the central business district.

In addition to the more traditional day-to-day law enforcement activities, the Police Department strives to be a leader in community policing initiatives and programs. In 2006 the Department completed teaching over 212 DARE lessons to township middle school students. This also was the first year the Department began the G.R.E.A.T. program where officers taught over 77 lessons to middle school students on gang awareness, and gang violence issues. The Department also ran its own Junior Police Academy for children and a Citizens Police Academy for adults. Other community efforts included the initiation of a student intern program with Montclair State University and hosting numerous police/community meetings addressing crime prevention, community concerns, youth violence, etc.

The Montclair Police Department's main focus is to be a service-oriented Department. The achievements of 2006 reflect continuing improvement as an organization and the Department's commitment to excellence and the highest standards of the law enforcement profession.

Crime Rate Data:

In 2006 the Police Department experienced another year in which crimes in many major categories were reduced. The total 2006 Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system numbers were as low as for 2005 with a significant reduction in violent crime rates. One area where the community experienced an increase in incident numbers was in non-violent property crimes.

However a closer inspection of the statistics revealed that close to 80% of such reported incidents were due to unsecured, unlocked properties. The Department will be stepping up all efforts to combat these incidents.

Of notable interest is that violent crime was reduced in 2006 when compared to rates in 2005. Robberies dropped by 43%, rapes dropped by 50%, and aggravated assaults dropped by 18%. Another positive trend noted in 2006 crime reports is that auto thefts dropped by 42% to a total of 138 thefts which represents a thirty-year low for that category crime.

2006 UCR Report:

BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION MONTCLAIR POLICE DEPARTMENT													
Yearly part 1 offenses for the year 2006													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
HOMICIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
RAPE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ROBBERY	5	1	5	1	2	1	3	3	1	2	1	2	27
AGG. ASSAULTS	7	0	6	2	9	5	6	8	4	2	6	3	58
BURGLARY	21	28	19	19	19	10	13	17	32	26	25	22	251
LARCENY	45	35	51	52	57	49	48	58	70	92	47	58	662
ARSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
M.V. THEFTS	8	7	9	11	5	3	3	10	5	9	3	7	80
TOTAL INDEX	86	71	90	85	92	68	74	96	112	131	83	93	1081
ARRESTS													
ADULTS	76	82	92	67	69	54	68	73	100	70	56	64	871
JUVENILES	11	19	28	33	35	24	19	20	13	37	20	9	268

TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE		
2004	2005	2006
54,695	56,502	62,660
Average per Month		
4,447	4,709	5,222

Total Arrests 2006: 1139 – Adults: 871; Juveniles: 268.

Traffic Enforcement:

Fifty arrests were made for DWI in 2006 compared to forty-three in 2005. A total of 8,912 traffic summonses were issued in 2006, an increase of 644 over 2005. These comprised 7,815 moving violations and 1,097 speeding, 2005 totals of which were 7,232 and 1,036 respectively. Motor vehicle accident data is as follows:

Crash Data	2004	2005	2006
Total Accidents	1412	1372	1335
Pedestrian	57	45	42
Bicycles	11	11	23
Injuries	458	365	262
Fatal	2	1	1

Department of Administration, Code Enforcement, & Environmental Affairs

The Department of Administration, Code Enforcement and Environmental Affairs continued in 2006 to maintain an active presence in the community and to play a strong role in preserving and promoting the quality of life in Montclair. During 2006, the Department focused on broadening and refining its efforts to address the responsibilities under its jurisdiction. Highlights of the Department's work and accomplishments include:

Administration:

- Working closely with the Montclair Civil Rights Commission, completed and published a new township-wide Affirmative Action Plan.
- Designed and implemented a strategy to identify and monitor the participation of minority, female and small businesses (MBE/WBE/SBE) in contracting and vending services let by the Township.
- Established a strong working relationship with the Garden State Joint Insurance Fund, (the Township's general/commercial liability and property protection provider) resulting in improved resolution of claims against the Township, and a reduction of the overall cost for risk protection services.
- Developed and implemented a "Certificate of Insurance" tracking and controlling system to ensure that the Township maintains adequate levels of liability insurance in the event of accidents or other losses.
- Developed and implemented a monthly Safety Awareness Training Program through use of audio/visual training resources furnished by the Township's insurance provider.

Housing and Property Maintenance:

- Responded to 599 Housing Maintenance and Zoning complaints, including associated re-inspections during 2006.
- Conducted 253 Certificate of Habitability (C of H) inspections and 44 C of H re-inspections.
- Conducted 313 (new occupancy) Section 8 inspections and 316 re-certification inspections during 2006.

- Conducted forty joint inspections with the Health, Fire, and Building Departments to gain compliance with township codes and ordinances.
- Appeared as the complaining witness in Municipal Court on sixteen occasions in support of violations adjudicated before the presiding Municipal Judge.

Code Enforcement:

- Issued a total of 1,770 Warning Notices and 915 summons/violations based on violations of various sections of the Montclair Township Code.
- Approximately 38% of the Warnings and 46% of Summonses were based on code violations in the Township's five business areas, including the Central Business District (BID) along Bloomfield Avenue and adjacent streets.
- Code Enforcement activity brought about a general improvement in quality of life conditions throughout the Township, and resulted in noteworthy recognition by the BID and its membership.
- Code Enforcement officers appeared in Municipal Court and served as the complaining witness on 107 of the summons/violations issued and adjudicated by the court.

Environmental Affairs:

- Completed sixty inspections and compliance reviews of multi-family buildings as part of an on-going effort to increase recycling (and a reduction of disposable waste) on a township-wide basis.
- Responded to approximately 900 inquiries from residents and constituents, and consulted with environmental program coordinators from neighboring towns and municipalities on recycling, electronics disposal, composting and other conservation program strategies utilized by Montclair. This communication was designed to increase environmental awareness and improve program participation on both a local and regional basis.
- Coordinated and hosted two major community environmental events including Computer Recycling Day, and a Compost Give-Back Day attracting more than 800 program participants.
- Provided ongoing research planning and program support, including grant application/preparation on township-wide initiatives including: Safe Routing School Taskforce; Master Plan (Conservation Element Team); the DCS Biodiesel Conversion (energy conservation) projects.

Department of Health & Human Services

Emergency Preparedness:

The Department was very active in 2006 developing a local preparedness plan as well as a county plan. The plan is a work in progress and is designed to handle all public health emergencies.

The Department also successfully applied for and won a grant to develop and implement a pandemic flu plan.

A Medical Reserve Corps was established and certified by the federal government making Montclair eligible for a federal grant which was approved. There are only three Medical Reserve Corps in Essex County. Montclair's is named the Greater Montclair Public Health Reserve Corps.

Vision Screening:

A new relationship was established in 2006 with the State of New Jersey Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. In recognition of Cataract Awareness Month (August) and Healthy Aging Month (September), the Health Department implemented a Vision Screening for adult residents during the fall of 2006. Vision changes occur naturally throughout our lives and as we grow older. With good vision being a fundamental part of feeling your best, the Department felt it was important to offer residents the opportunity to have vision screening with a Doctor of Optometry (O.D.). Participants were screened for Visual Acuity, Glaucoma, Retinopathy, and Cataracts. The 2006 screening was very well received and as a result the Department will continue to offer this screening annually, free of charge to residents.

Stroke Screening:

In observance of National Stroke Awareness Month, the Health Department conducted a Stroke Prevention and Screening Program which 24 people attended. Participants were able to determine their risk of developing a stroke by having their cholesterol, blood pressure and carotid artery checked. Participants were also individually counseled by a physician.

Bloodborne Pathogen Training and Education:

Since 1993, public employers, by law, have been required to conduct a bloodborne pathogen training and education program for those employees who are at risk of being exposed to blood or bodily fluids while performing their job duties. Two Health Department employees were trained in the appropriate testing procedures by The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) Center for BioDefense. Beginning in 2006, township pool managers will be trained and fit tested in the use of N95 respirators.

Complete Blood Chemistry Profile:

Twice a year the Health Department offers a complete blood chemistry profile for a nominal fee. The blood profile includes total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and glucose level. These are important tests for residents to have in order to detect or monitor cardiovascular disease and diabetes. A public health nurse is also present at the blood screening to allow participants the opportunity to have their blood pressure checked. Approximately 190 residents participated. An easy to read document explaining the results and values was created and sent to the participants with their results from the laboratory. This document was drafted in response to calls to clarify and interpret results.

Breast Cancer Awareness:

The Health Department worked with Mountainside Hospital to participate in the breast cancer awareness walk in October. Approximately thirty people formed "Team Montclair."

Food Protection:

The environmental staff of the Montclair Health Department took part in a pilot project involving the NJ State Department of Health and the FDA. The project concerns a process for measuring the effectiveness of retail food establishment inspections. It entails staff training with federal inspectors. In 2007, a new NJ State Food Code takes effect. The local licensing ordinances were amended to reflect the changes.

Tobacco Age Of Sale Enforcement Program (TASE):

For the past ten years the Montclair Health Department has participated in the TASE Program sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. Through the TASE program, the Health Department conducts unannounced inspections of over-the-counter sites and vending machines to ensure that merchants are not selling tobacco to anyone under the age of 18. Forty-one TASE inspections were done in 2006, resulting in five summonses issued to noncompliant merchants.

Department of Recreation & Cultural Affairs

The Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs made 2006 the year during which it modernized operations through better uses of technology, while offering new and better programs and facilities for Montclair residents. Highlights include:

RecWare Implementation:

RecWare is a software program purchased by the Township to modernize recreation operations. The Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs office and the Clary Anderson Arena are now using RecWare for point-of-sale, program registration, and scheduling league games. The software makes reporting and sales tracking far more efficient than methods used in the past.

Jr. Baseball/Softball Program:

The Department established a collaboration in 2006 with the Montclair Baseball Club with the latter now running the T-Ball Division (5- and 6-year-olds). This arrangement allows for more individual instruction and clinic time, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience for younger players. Prior to this arrangement, the vast number of participants (1,500) did not permit sufficient one-on-one time to be dedicated to each child.

Fourth of July Fireworks:

Moving the fireworks to Mountainside Park in 2006 proved to be very successful. Record attendance (approximately 6,000 people) was achieved. The Department successfully secured New Jersey Transit as a source of transportation to and from the fireworks - a factor which greatly contributed to the event's success and also helped alleviate parking issues.

Installation of Credit Card Sales:

For the first time since using RecWare, the Department was able to directly accept credit cards for First Night ticket sales, with a total of \$17,515 in credit card transactions for the event. An additional \$9,363 of ticket purchases were conducted online. The services provided a great convenience for those who were unable to purchase buttons at our ticket sites.

First Night:

The Department added earlier shows beginning at 5:00 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. and offered more children's entertainment to accommodate families. This helped to greatly improve the opening procession and ceremonies. Overall attendance increased from 4,000 to 5,000 this year.

Arts Grant:

The Department applied for and was awarded a county grant for next year's First Night not only for the quality and popularity of the event but also because the nature of the event's programming appeals to all ages and to people from all of Essex County and beyond.

Web:

The new township web site was launched the first week of May. In addition, a distinctive web presence for the Fourth of July parade was created as well as a separate First Night web site with content management capabilities. The Township's first electronic newsletter, *Montclair Right Now*, went out in December, in time to promote 2006 First Night activities.

CATV:

The purchase and installation of a test signal generator in 2006 helped identify the source of poor signal quality in TV34 broadcasts as being Comcast's responsibility, not the Township's, as had been previously alleged. State-of-the-art digital broadcast equipment was identified and purchased in order to cost-effectively transform the station into a 24/7 all-digital, file-based play-out operation. The new digital technology will allow TV34 to achieve a much greater level of automation and professionalism in the Township's broadcast programming.

Facilities:

The Department purchased new furnishings for township swimming pools in 2006 and also advanced numerous improvements to ballfields, the pools, tennis courts, and playgrounds, many of which will begin construction in 2007.

Department of Planning & Community Development

The Department of Planning and Community Development had one of its busiest and most successful years in recent memory. Among the Department's accomplishments in 2006 were:

- Successfully obtained a Smart Growth Planning Assistance grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions to prepare a Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.
- Worked with the Planning Board to adopt the 2006 Master Plan Reexamination Report.
- Worked with Township Council for designation of properties as local historic landmarks/districts: Upper Montclair Business District and 4 Duryea Rd.
- Worked with Township Council to adopt zoning ordinances to reduce sizes of homes.
- Worked with Township to downzone several multi-family zones to two-family zones where there was a predominance of one and two-family dwellings.
- Worked with Township Council to adopt Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance mandating that developers provide affordable housing units in any development of seven or more housing units.

- Guided the Township's receipt of \$560,290 in Community Development Block Grant funds for street improvements and social services.

The Department also worked with the Township's retained consulting firm, Louis Berger Associates, to advance possible redevelopment plans for the Glenridge Avenue, Lower Bloomfield, and Elm/Mission areas. The Department also rendered advice to the Township Manager and Council and others on planning and public policy issues, and provided assistance to the Manager in a number of RFP preparation assignments.

The Department of Planning and Community Development also houses the construction code permitting and enforcement function for the Township. Figures achieved in 2006 were:

- Total New Permits – 2548.
- Building subcode permits – 1913.
- Electrical subcode permits – 1211.
- Plumbing subcode permits – 1417.
- Fire subcode permits – 432.
- Elevator subcode permits (new) – 8.
- Elevator inspections (ongoing) – 450.

Subcode permits are not the same as total permits when totaled because many permits include more than one subcode. This office is extremely busy for a municipality this size. The total estimated value of construction inspected was \$120,185,263.

Department of Community Services

The Department of Community Services consists of the Public Works, Shade Tree, Engineering, and Water Utility Divisions. The Public Works Division is further broken down into the following work groups: Parks, Refuse/Recycling, Streets, Traffic, Garage, and Sewer Maintenance. Accomplishments during 2006 included:

Public Works:

- Continued with the reorganization of this division and redeployment of personnel and assignments. Reassigned existing personnel to provide more effective leadership at the foreman level.
- Continued with the bagged leaf collection program. Collected approximately 50% more leaves than last year and reduced overtime expenses associated with leaf collection. Remarkably, resident complaints were virtually non-existent and many compliments were received regarding the appearance and safety of township streets and the improved drainage during heavy rains. Residents seemed genuinely appreciative of the effects of this program.
- Reorganized record-keeping for refuse and recycling operations. This is important because it will provide a platform for improving efficiency and service in the future.
- Installed a new fuel management system for gasoline and diesel vehicles and equipment. All township vehicles and equipment will be fitted with the fuel control rings in 2007 and the system will be fully operational in 2007.

- Improved the vehicle fleet with the addition of two new multi-purpose dump trucks with snow plows and salt spreaders and one new garbage packer.
- Directly aligned the Parks Division with Public Works to reduce the overlap in operations and expand the available workforce for situational emergencies.

Shade Tree:

- Improved response times to resident concerns. Additional improvement remains to be made, however resident complaints have been reduced.
- Expended considerable time, effort and expense on the “micro-burst” which struck Montclair in July. Clean-up is generally complete, however restoration efforts will continue.

Engineering

Reconstructed the following streets (includes curb, drainage and resurfacing):

Street	Limits	Length, ft.	Length, mi.
Glenridge Avenue	N. Willow to Grove	1000	0.19
Greenwood Parking Plaza	Greenwood Ave between Glenridge and Lackawanna Plaza	300	0.06
Highland Avenue	Claremont to Edgewood Rd.	7,500	1.42
Lackawanna Plaza	Entire	600	0.11
Melrose Place	Entire	2,400	0.45
Myrtle Avenue	Orange to South Mountain	1,200	0.23
N. Mountain Avenue	Bloomfield Ave to Watchung Ave	5,900	1.12
Norman Road	Entire	1,100	0.21
		--	3.79

Constructed new or reconstructed curb only:

Street	Limits	Length, ft.	Length, mi.
Essex Avenue	Entire	3,500	0.66
Frederick Street	Entire	900	0.17
		--	0.83

Resurfaced the following streets:

Street	Limits	Length, ft.	Length, mi.
Bellevue Avenue	Grove to Bloomfield Twp line	1,800	0.34
Club Road	Grove to Yantacaw Brook	950	0.18
Cross Street	Entire	670	0.13
The Fairway	Entire	1,540	0.29
Lexington Avenue	Entire	1,140	0.22
Orange Road	Church St/Hillside to Bloomfield	1,400	0.27
Union Street	Mulford Lane to Lloyd	300	0.06
		--	1.49

The Engineering Division also assisted the Manager, Director, and Council in numerous assignments, such as traffic calming planning, bike and pedestrian safety planning, parking regulations, and traffic flow analyses.

Water Utility:

The following are highlights of the Montclair Water Utility's achievements for the year 2006:

- Built a small bridge (with I-beams and timbers) over Toney's Brook in-house to save money .
- Replaced eighty fire hydrants.
- Installed a new 10" pump control valve at the Watchung Ave pumping Station.
- Installed 3,994 new water meters to further enhance the accuracy of the Water usage and maintain a low unaccounted for water amount.
- Adjusted and maintained the proper pressures and levels throughout the Township so as to maintain firefighting capabilities and good service to our customers.
- Completely flushed both the Montclair and Glen Ridge water systems.
- Changed and/or installed eight major line valves.
- Met all sampling and DEP requirements for the year 2006 to provide township customers with safe potable water.
- Prepared and mailed the required Consumer Confidence Report for the Township.

Fire Department

The Fire Department enjoyed a successful year in 2006 and was challenged by two major events: the July “microburst” storm that caused widespread damage and power outages in the community, and the August underground fire in the central business district, which frightened many people, shut down businesses for several days, hurled manhole covers through the air, and generally created a formidable scenario. Fortunately, there were no life-threatening injuries or deaths from either event. With the new Emergency Operating Center (EOC) now located in the new Fire Headquarters, and the present Fire Chief having been appointed by the Township Manager as the Township Emergency Management Coordinator, the Department hosts the Office of Emergency Management and plays a vital role in Emergency Management activities.

In the area of Community Activities, the department recorded the following in 2006:

- Total Events – 170 with about 10,000+ people (7000+ children)
- Community visits to Headquarters, Station 2 and Station 3 – 34
- Fire apparatus and personnel to various public schools, private schools and daycares – 18
- Block parties and small fairs – 33
- Township sponsored events – 7
- Exclusive events only involving Fire Prevention Bureau personnel – 10
- Educational guest speaking for fire prevention, safety, and emergency preparedness – 14
- Conducted and/or attended various fire drills at community/public facilities – 15
- Various liaison meetings on fire prevention/safety/intervention/education – 39

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) also functions as a Training Center when not in use as an EOC. It had a recorded use of 85 times by various public agencies, township departments, and community organizations days and evenings.

In the area of Operations, the following were achievement highlights for the year:

- Trench rescue training was provided to Rescue Team members. Equipment and training was paid for through a Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant.
- A fee schedule was successfully implemented for In-Service inspections.
- A shared services study with the Orange Fire Department was completed. This involved a thorough review of departmental structure and operations, providing a good management tool.
- The Department responded to 2,738 incidents in 2006; 250 of these were in Glen Ridge. In total, this was a 5% increase over incidents in 2005.
- There were 33 structural fires in 2006. This represents a 13% decrease from 2005.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) completely updated the Township Emergency Operations Plan in 2006. The Emergency Operations Center was put into full 24/7 operation on two occasions: the July microburst and the August underground transformer fires; it performed up to expectations.

Municipal Court

The Montclair Municipal Court received recognition once again in 2006 from the Administrative Office of the Courts for its accomplishments. Among the achievements noted were:

- Backlog Reduction – Municipal Court statistics provided by the Essex County Vicinage revealed that this court once again exceeded expected goals, providing quality justice through proper case management.
- Video Conferencing – the arraignment of prisoners through television conferencing was implemented, thereby facilitating early disposal of cases and reducing prisoner transportation for the Police Department.
- Municipal Court Security Plan – the plan was developed by conducting a thorough risk assessment of the exterior and interior of the Public Safety Building. The plan outlines security compliance and future requirements and recommendations that will continue to ensure the safety of the judge, court staff and all persons conducting business in the Public Safety Building. Members of the Security Committee will meet annually to discuss risk assessment and security concerns.
- Complaint Processing – through team effort all criminal and traffic complaints initiated by law enforcement are entered into the state system daily, resulting in the immediate process of payments, quicker response to customer inquiries, and more efficient case scheduling and customer service.
- The Court accomplished the purging of all eligible criminal complaints in 2006.
- New Court Office – renovation of acquired space to accommodate the criminal section and the public defender video conferencing room has been completed.

Municipal Clerk

The year 2006 marked the 138th year of services provided by the Municipal Clerk's office. It was also both a productive and challenging year.

With the adoption of the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), the Township Clerk has been designated as the official custodian of public records. Throughout the year the Department responded to numerous requests for paper records, video and audio tapes. The office also coordinated requests to other municipal departments in order to facilitate timely responses. (Under OPRA the designated response time is seven days). Additional information regarding OPRA is maintained on the township website.

In 2006 the Clerk's Office continued a collaborative effort with the Montclair Parking Authority to address parking permit concerns. While parking shortages still remain, several waiting lists were exhausted and continued monitoring of all parking facilities allowed the Township to maximize usage. Beginning in 2007 all permit parking will be processed by the Montclair Parking Authority.

As part of Montclair's role as Sister Cities liaison, the Clerk's Office assisted the Council in 2006 in hosting a civic delegation from one of the Township's "twin cities," the London Borough of Barnet. The visit provided for an exchange of ideas concerning municipal recycling, alternative energy resources and agenda setting.

The Office also increased outreach efforts to civic, community and student groups. As part of the Montclair third grade "Know Your Town" curriculum, mock Council meeting sessions were again designed with students serving as "elected officials,"

“members of the press,” and “the public,” to address local problems, i.e., recycling, graffiti, etc. These discussions were always lively and the students’ solutions reflected imagination, creativity, and a wisdom that belied the age and experience of the participants.

The highlight of the year was the implementation of the Laserfiche electronic document management system. Installation of this document imaging system, overseen and supported by the Manager’s Office, has transformed the way that the Municipal Clerk’s office does business by allowing employees to view and retrieve documents quickly and easily without having to search for paper records. Thus far, the Clerk’s Office has scanned minutes, ordinances, resolutions, contracts and agreements into the Office’s database. In 2007, the Clerk’s Office anticipates expanding its base and providing web access for citizen retrieval of such records.

The Municipal Clerk’s office continues to serve Montclair Township and its community at large through a wide range of services and information.

The Arts & the Montclair Arts Council

Township Council provided a strong platform for collaboration between the Township and the arts community via its approval of a special services agreement with the Montclair Arts Council (MAC). The Township Manager and many other departments continually interact with the MAC to give it support and cooperation and to enrich the community. The MAC leads, incubates, coordinates, inspires, manages, explores, and makes plans to continually nurture and advance the community as a center of and for the arts and culture. Some of 2006’s noteworthy achievements of the MAC were:

- The first MAC-led public art project was unveiled in January at the new Crescent Parking Deck. Mosaics were created by Montclair artist Anne Oshman; commissioned by the Montclair Parking Authority under agreement with the Township of Montclair.
- The second MAC-led public art project was awarded in 2006 to artist Cadence Giersbach for tile murals at the Siena on Church Street, which will be installed in 2007; commissioned by Herod Development under agreement with the Township.
- The hiring of a full time Executive Director, Jim Peskin – 2006 marked his first year on the job.
- Produced the Montclair Emerging Filmmakers Festival with the Montclair Economic Development Corporation, Montclair Parking Authority, Montclair Adult School, Montclair Art Museum and Luna Stage. Premiered sixteen films by emerging filmmakers, with attendance of over 300.
- The first “Gallery Walk” was held in October of 2006. This was a joint project of Montclair’s art galleries and museums. A Gallery and Museum Map was created. More gallery walks are planned.
- The second “Artfull Living” program was successfully implemented with the downtown Business Improvement District. This program brings artists and retailers together for their mutual benefit while creating an exciting arts-based activity for the community.
- Unveiled the first MAC electronic newsletter with nearly 1,000 subscribers; developed the most comprehensive arts calendar of events in Montclair.
- In October, MAC received its official approval as a 501(c)3 non profit corporation.
- Created the Montclair Gallery Group, a network of art galleries and art museums.

- Created the Montclair Film/Television Professional Network.
- Created “Passports to Remembrance,” an oral history/photography project documenting lives of Montclair seniors created by seniors.
- Organized the Non-Profit Arts Organization Group, a network of all Montclair's non-profit arts groups dedicated to collaboration, information sharing and joint marketing.

All of the above initiatives will help the MAC move forward with many activities in 2007, including the unveiling of a dedicated MAC website with an artists' registry, and membership programs and discount benefit programs; additional public art projects; further collaborations within and among all arts disciplines; and development of a destination marketing plan.

Economic Development & the Montclair Economic Development Corporation

The Montclair Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that was formed in 1995. MEDC has a full-time executive director, a part-time office manager and is governed by a seventeen member board consisting of nine council appointees and eight MEDC appointees for three-year terms. MEDC is supported by funding from the township government, grants and fundraising. Township Council has approved a special services contract between the Township and the MEDC which allows for collaboration in the public interest.

While there is occasionally some debate over the best way to fund MEDC, there is no debate over the dedication and commitment of the organization and its leadership and staff.

Noteworthy accomplishments of the MEDC in 2006 included:

- Assisted the Township by consulting on town-wide regulations and ordinances including Sidewalk Cafés, site usage and real estate development.
- Managed a multi-year Montclair State University Business Census and Economic Indicator Study of Montclair. MEDC partnered with the MSU Business School, the MSU library, students and professors to conduct a business census, economic indicator and a demographic data study for Montclair. Currently, comprehensive data and information of this nature is not available without a cost. This information will help develop public policy and can help private business owners, shoppers, taxpayers and others. This is a cutting edge project with data exclusive to Montclair. Publication and distribution is slated for 2007.
- Sponsored and administered the Montclair Farmers' Market in the Walnut Street Business District from June to December 2006.
- Sponsored and advised on “Project Excellence,” a youth job training and employment creation program with the United Way, Board of Education and participating churches and congregations in Montclair by finding job placements and hosting an entrepreneurial tent for the students at the Farmers' Market in the summer of 2006. This program focuses on job development and training, an important component of economic development.
- Acted as an umbrella organization for all business districts by providing organizational and administrative support and coordination among district needs in the Township.
- Helped market the South End Business District by sponsoring new banners, soliciting sponsorship for new gateway signage, coordinating with the Township for a new bus shelter, and targeting potential new businesses to fill real estate vacancies in the area (i.e. a sit-down diner, or convenience store).

- Acted as a coordinator with the Montclair Parking Authority and business community to provide input about parking issues (with an emphasis on rate issues and future financial projections), in the Township.
- Sponsored “Holiday Parking” with the Township and the Montclair Parking Authority to bag meters for free parking during the holiday season to help encourage shoppers to come to Montclair.
- Supported business development and business district economic vitality through a small business district grant program for marketing and promotion, technical assistance, business training and other services. Grants included: signage and banners for the South End Business District; banners for the Walnut Street Business District; holiday marketing initiatives for Montclair Village, Montclair Center and Watchung Plaza.
- Researched economically viable models for a multi-use building with a significant arts component, including review of the Wellmont Theatre building.
- Worked with the Montclair Arts Council to create programs and initiatives with the business community that promote Montclair as a regional destination for entertainment and shopping.
- Collaborated with the Montclair Arts Council to expand the MEDC’s pilot film festival (which debuted at the Celebrate! Montclair event in 2005) to produce the Montclair Emerging Filmmakers Festival, a festival and educational program that took place at the Montclair Art Museum and Luna Stage on November 3 and 4. (Film festivals are proven tools for economic development.)
- Developed specialized information on Montclair real estate vacancies, real estate development opportunities, demographic data, financing, township information and business assistance seminars on marketing, promotion and franchising, provided to any interested parties for economic development purposes.
- Provided business assistance, resources and training for Montclair businesses through the federal government Small Business Association SCORE program, the NJ State Department of Labor and NJ State Economic Growth and Tourism Commission.
- Participated in the Township’s Master Plan evaluation as well as assisting its implementation on issues such as parking, arts, redevelopment, business recruitment and an overall vital economy.
- The MEDC acted as a sponsor and coordinator to bring the CSPAN Book TV Bus to Watchung Plaza on October 6. This opportunity included national air time and commercials that marketed Montclair and included a live interview segment with Montclair authors from Watchung Booksellers.
- The MEDC was active in recruiting businesses to Montclair. The MEDC provided information about Montclair, real estate sites and development areas in efforts to recruit businesses like Trader Joe’s and GNC to Montclair to help diversify our economy. It served as a liaison for the Township, private developers and businesses for communication and information. The MEDC also worked on a call and referral basis to any local shop owner or business looking for space in Montclair.
- The MEDC committed a significant amount of time to assist the Township by providing research and developing a process for a potential Wayfinding Project for Montclair. The Township Manager appointed MEDC to assist him in the RFP development and evaluation process. Wayfinding is a recognized community development tool that has been and is being implemented by many cities, towns, and villages. Even though currently on hold, this project can play an important role for the community in the future.
- The MEDC also provided *ad hoc* assistance to the Township on matters such as ordinance preparation, data gathering, information research, and third-party referrals. It remains committed to community service, as well as to extended projects pending the needs of the community at any given time.

Montclair Parking Authority

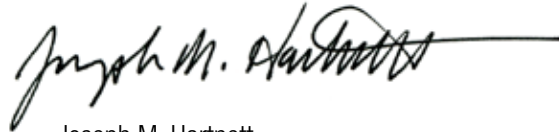
In 2006, the Montclair Parking Authority continued to transition to a full-fledged independent body. Major highlights of the year were:

- Bay Street Parking Deck – Construction of the 262-space parking deck began in 2006. Completion is on target for March of 2007. In 2006, the Montclair Parking Authority successfully negotiated a final cost for the project, which involved expanding the deck in size from the original 225 spaces to the current 262. In addition, Del Sano Contracting was selected as the general contractor for the project.
- Amended and Restated Intralocal Agreement – The Township of Montclair and the Montclair Parking Authority entered into a new agreement in which all fee-based parking operations will be handled by the Montclair Parking Authority.
- Parking Rate Studies – The Montclair Parking Authority spent considerable time developing a new parking rate structure that would be implemented town-wide in 2007. A public hearing was held and a great number of meetings, both one-on-one with members of the public as well as larger stakeholder meetings, took place in order to craft a plan that would best work for the community.
- Crescent Deck at Montclair Center – The Montclair Parking Authority continued to fine tune the operations at the Crescent Deck, exceeding expected usage figures in the first full year of operations.

CONCLUSION

Tested by nature, continually reinventing its structure, boldly advancing in communications and technology, and reaching out to community partners and to all citizens, Montclair municipal government enjoyed a highly successful 2006 and confidently embraces further change and whatever challenges the future brings.

Respectfully submitted:



Joseph M. Hartnett
Township Manager