

City of Estell Manor Mayor Joe Venezia State of Address

City Hall 148 Cumberland Avenue Estell Manor, NJ 08319

Good evening fellow residents and guests, and welcome to the 2019 Estell Manor City Reorganization. On behalf of our city council, I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year. I would like to start out on a positive note, and that everyday 'until June 21st, we are gaining 3 minutes of extra daylight as we try to leave the winter behind us.

As your mayor, it is necessary, and my job to discuss several things, that are most important to address. Some of the key most important tasks of a mayor, is to stay on top of and promote the public safety of our community, meaning that our city must be a safe environment for our children and residents. While we have no local police department, I will have an access code and key for the state police .to have access and use of our city hall

for the purpose of taking coffee breaks, writing reports, meeting with local residents •. and for access to our restrooms. This should be useful in seeing more of their presence. I am also open to having our building used as a substation if this can be possible.

Speaking of public safety, our city will post on our municipal website to start an active recruitment for our local fire department. I will personally see to it that we will find a successful grant writer for upgrades on their building and purchase of equipment. At the very least I will post an invitation for members and local residents to help assist with fundraisers, such as a sub sale, or other venues to raise money.

I believe that I heard there are several hundred million dollars For fire departments nationwide. It is known that this grant is very competative. I make no guarantees of getting any funding, but I certainly will do what I can.

Another important task of the mayor, is keeping a town an affordable place to live. I know there are several ways of reducing spending, but must have the cooperation of Council to not make it a contenious political battleground. ·

As one resident said to us as our last meeting in December, the people voted for us mainly in trust to do the right thing for Estell Manor. One thing that I will not allow to slip through is for our city to bond for a large amount of money, before that can be voted on, I will personally send out a notification to the entire city that council wants

to bond any money, which is basically to charge credit card debt.

I would like to quote a statement from a former presidential candidate, Ben Carson:

"We've been conditioned to think that only politicians can solve our problems. But at some point, maybe we will wake up and recognize, that it was politicians who created our problems."

Which now leads me to say that our city does have a new crisis, that I as the mayor have inherited. We have records and bill lists that show we have on our fixed asset inventory, equipment within our public works department. However, with those records, we see that tens of thousands of dollars of equipment, have an unexplained question: Where did the equipment go? Better yet, why have thousands of dollars of metal that were collected from our clean community grant program not deposited in the city general account?

Furthermore, nearly most of our equipment that we have left, not been maintained. Two 'dumptrucks, with two salt spreaders, all but destroyed from total neglect. A military truck that most towns receive and paid only a fraction of what we spent. The amount we invested in our G.I. Tow truck, could have bought a brand new truck with a snow plow, which would have a warranty.

Although the municipal tax increased 44%, we still have a very weak amount of surplus. This is also attributed to spending over \$120,000 to sue the fire company, and a hostile forcing out of our previous city clerk that cost us nearly, if not more than, \$100,000. †

Yes, we are in somewhat of a serious crisis here in Estelle Manor. I proposed to sell property we own on the corner of Cape May Avenue and Cumberland Avenue, that in fact has two buildable lots in a very prime area, but council will not even consider it.

We had tax liens we could have sold, which our city does not even own, yet council thought that too was a bad idea. Basically the city's chief main revenue source, is the homes we

live in and pay taxes to the city.

Yes, we have other revenue sources, such as the franchise taxes we receive from the gas, FIOS, electric, and phone utilities, however the state has skimmed annually a large portion. We also are receiving \$123,000 annually from P.I.L.O.T. Funding, but yet the state has short changed us \$200,500 for the last five years. I am still pursuing this money from Trenton. While many state officials in Trenton are aware of my complaint, I still have not gotten any answers yet. There are several more mayors working hard for our P.I.L.O.T. Funding shares. And we have all vowed to band together to continue this fight.

With the many problems our city is faced with, as well as the current issues I have inherited, I will state that our city can survive this crisis we are temporarily in. Yes ... temporarily in. With a *of* spirit~cooperation with all five members of council, we can in fact work our way through this. Cutting of spending, pursuing of grants, ending ways of creating litigation because of bad government and dirty politics, and simply doing what is best for our city and it's residents, instead of pleasing only just a select small hand full of residents.

We can become more financially sound, and strengthen our sovereignty. We must move away from a past administration's handling of our city by always finding a problem for a solution, with some members who have continued to embrace this concept. We must and will, find ways to strengthen our financial matters and work

towards letting Estell Manor be the reason why we have moved here, settled here,. and want the affordability to remain here. We can no longer be a governing body of red versus blue, but rather we all are a part of red, white, and blue. We all should run to get on city council for only one reason ... that being to improve the quality of life of Estelle Manor and all of it's residents.

I truly encourage our residents to attend our council meetings, which are held on the 2nd of each month, with the exception of the November and December meetings, which will be held on the first Wednesday of those two months. As for any resident who will read this city address on our municipal website, all are welcome to attend.

I want to end this address the way I started it, on a positive note:

Estell Manor is a great place to live, to raise a family, and to live in one of the safest towns in Atlantic County. There are many good families and people who live here, for it is these same people who give me the spark to share my time and dedication. May God bless Estell~ Manor and it's people and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you and best wishes for 2019.