

From Mayor Josh Keenan



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Dear Neighbors,

### **Redevelopment and Business News**

We just received the latest sales figures from Ryan Homes for “Stratford Commons” on Berlin Road. They have sold 41 of their 49 homes. Over 80% of the homes are sold just six months after the grand opening. The last of the buildings will be coming out of the ground in December. All units will be occupied in the early part of 2024. The new homes are very lovely inside and out. Ryan Homes has been a pleasure to work with throughout the whole process.

At the Royal Farm location on the “Stratford Square” complex, the storm drains and the new roadway connecting to Rowan University have been completed. Royal Farms is responsible for the remainder of the site work for their portion of the site. The permits have been processed for the removal of the old store façade and walkway covering in front of the retail stores. A new more contemporary façade will be installed with a new front awning. The new owners of the old Bradlees’ site have completed their clean up of the interior space and installed a new roof. We are awaiting their application to the Joint Land Use Board for the new warehouse use of this space. We look forward to all the new tax revenue this site will be responsible for once each portion is completed. All this is part of a long-standing Redevelopment Plan and Agreement with the owner.

At the new Veterans Village complex on Colby Avenue, interior renovations continue. The new entry doors for each apartment have been installed. They are busy inside installing all the electrical, plumbing, etc. to create 21 one-bedroom apartments dedicated just for honorable US veterans. There is a large unmet need for housing of our veterans, and many veteran groups have expressed gratitude to Stratford for hosting this complex.

The Stratford senior living facility has been officially named. It will be called “Creekside at Stratford”. They have received some long-awaited approvals from the NJ Department of Health, and expects to start ground work in the early part of 2024.

Auto Zone is still working on interior work inside the old Pep Boys space. Pep Boys is also working on the auto bay side of the old space, finishing the new joint effort between these two national auto part companies. Auto Zone will be selling auto parts and accessories in what was the prior Pep Boys retail

store, but Pep Boys will still continue to operate their auto repair bay services on the Princeton Avenue side of the building.

The old Verizon Store located at White Horse Pike and Laurel Road has recently been sold to an owner who bought it simply as an investment. The new owner has the building up for lease, and is hopeful this prime corner will come to life soon.

The owner of the old Checker's site (prior Free Bryd Chicken) is talking to a few new prospective tenants. We are hopeful for this site to re-open and become a thriving food service.

The Desi Bazaar located at 35 South White Horse Pike, is planning to expand into the vacant prior Worknet Occupational Care space. Desi Bazaar finds a need for expansion, and we are happy to see vacant space filled.

### ***My Farewell:***

As I am now in the last few weeks of my time as your devoted Mayor. I have fully enjoyed and loved each and every moment in becoming part of Stratford's history as one of your Mayors. I came to Stratford 58 years ago, newly married, and made roots here for my family which included my three sons, and late wife Madge. I have always felt the need to be involved in Stratford, may that be in my church at St. Luke, in the schools especially my decades on the Sterling Board of Education, and in local groups. I was not involved politically prior to becoming your Mayor, unlike the Mayors who came before me. I felt it was time to take Stratford on a future course, on a new path, which had long been stagnated due to prior Mayors. In my heart I think and feel I have achieved my goal, and Stratford is indeed on that new path. Your newly elected Mayor, Linda Hall, will begin making her own history in Stratford on her first day. She will be the first woman Mayor of Stratford. I will never forget a group of local girl scouts came to tour the borough offices, and noticed a picture showing all the Mayors of Stratford. One young lady inquired, 'why there were no woman shown'. Well now there will be a woman shown on the wall of Mayors!

All my faith is in the new Mayor and the existing Councilmembers as I step aside. They have worked for years with me, as a united TEAM. They all have the same vision, to take Stratford forward, and to make it better for ALL of our residents.

I thank my past and present Councilmembers for their teamwork, and the many hours the position takes from their normal lives, and commitment to the residents. I want to also thank the many employees and so many of our volunteers. We have many volunteers in Stratford. We have those on our local boards and commissions, those who staff the fire, EMS, OEM, library, and not to forget the Stratford Athletic Organization, Tarkill, scouts, senior groups, school groups and religious groups. As a collected group we ALL make Stratford a better place to call *HOME*!

I ask you to continue to support Mayor Linda Hall, and her team of Councilmembers. Also please patronize as many of the local businesses who make up our community. They cannot survive without you.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming Christmas Tree Lighting on December 1<sup>st</sup> at Yellin School. Last year was the first time at this new location, and it was the best attended tree lighting ever. Come out and make it even better!

Josh Keenan  
Proud Mayor of Stratford