

Greetings and salutations, my Friends. I know that calendar says "February", but I'm already looking towards April (or sooner) to break ground on projects to further beautify our Canal Park along the Lehigh River.

First and foremost, we'll be starting construction of the first phase of the "Riverfront Garden" as soon as the colder weather breaks. This Garden, located on Canal Street immediately behind the Hungarian Hall, will feature a wide variety of colorful and native plantings in the seven-thousand-square-foot area. There'll also be plenty of seating included for you to relax and take in the peacefulness of the park. We plan on expanding this park exponentially as grants and other financial concerns are met, but we'll be off to a great start once this first section is completed.

On the north end of the Canal Park, Borough Manager Leroy Brobst joined me there to discuss the projected "Welcome Center" site. This building will serve as a "comfort station" to the many travelers on the D&L Trail, along with informational maps. We plan to feature two large maps, one highlighting local businesses where food, drink and other amenities can be found and one of the D&L Trail route itself. Additionally, an eye-catching "Welcome To Northampton" sign will be proudly, prominently displayed, completing the picture. As of now, our engineers are compiling building plans for Council to review. As soon as that phase is complete, I'll update you on the progress of the site.

Now, let me draw your attention to the efforts of my dear Friend, Reverend Jerry Mraz. Even at 90 years old, Jerry has the energy and passion of a teenager. Currently, he's working on a "Monarch Butterfly Way Station" project. This lofty initiative involves placing specific plants and flowers in individual plots, roughly five feet by fifteen feet in area, promoting Monarch Butterfly feeding, proliferation and growth. These sites are becoming more popular across the country as the Monarch population is dwindling. The overall intention of this project is to have these sites placed immediately alongside of the Canal pathway, from the gazebo at the north end, to the Riverfront Garden, at the south end, roughly a mile. These individual sites could be donated by Northampton residents as a memorial or such. Knowing that these sites will take additional work through the warmer months, he's also trying to form a beautification committee, a garden club of sorts, to perform weeding and caretaking tasks at the Canal Park. If you just love to work outdoors, enjoy getting your hands dirty, or have a talented "green thumb", please contact Jerry at 610-442-8156 or email him at farar@ptd.net OR Councilwoman Judy Haldeman at judi.haldemannbc@gmail.com for further information. You'll be glad you joined in this project to beautify our town!

Lastly, as you may have noticed, our street lights are being upgraded to the much more efficient and economical LED lights. We look to save at least 33% on our electric bill with this upgrade. Now, reviews have been mixed as these lights are much brighter and whiter than the current, warm orange lights we've come to know. While it may take some getting used to, the lights are there to provide for the safety of our citizens, safer traveling conditions and thwart criminal activity. This upgrade excels at providing for all three of these conditions, and then some.

For now, do enjoy these longer days as we creep closer to Spring and all of these outdoor activities we've put on hold. Happy Valentine's Day ... Happy President's Day ... and may God bless you !

Mayor Tony