

THE CITY OF SUMMIT

N E W J E R S E Y

CITY HALL 512 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE SUMMIT, NJ 07901

News Release

For immediate release

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Summit NJ Mayor Elizabeth Fagan Opening Address on January 3, 2024

Good evening. The spectacular town of Summit has been built on the work of thousands of volunteers. We must always acknowledge and thank them. The outgoing members of council have given their time and energy, and we thank you for leading the city. Mayor Nora Radest has been the consummate volunteer - thank you for your service to our community for decades but especially over the past eight years as our mayor. Retiring committee and board members and council women Marjorie Fox, Jamie Levine, Susan Hairston and Phyllis Sank, thank you for your dedication to the city of Summit. We are all grateful for your service.

As I stand before you this evening, as the new Mayor of our much-loved City of Summit, I am filled with a profound sense of responsibility and optimism. In my 23 years as a Summit resident, local physician and community volunteer, my focus has always been on serving people. And now, as your Mayor, I am committed to extending that service to every aspect of our community life.

Our city is an incredible place to live, work and raise a family. You may have heard the Together for Summit team say we believe we can make it even better. The Hilltop city can be the GOAT- the greatest of all time. Our priority is to ensure that every citizen feels connected to the services they need and has a voice in our government. This is not just an administrative responsibility; it is a steadfast commitment to each one of you.

As we reflect on the November election, Summit's citizens soundly embraced our platform of improving public safety, providing transparency in government, and promoting responsible development. This Common Council will deliver on those commitments by working with our administration and first responders to help our citizens feel safer, listening to all citizen's viewpoints, being transparent in our deliberations and protecting the character of our wonderful town. We will always discuss our objectives openly and with civility.

Health, both physical and mental, will be at the forefront of our agenda. A healthy community is a strong community. We plan to work closely with local non-profits, community groups and schools to create and implement programs that support our physical and mental wellbeing, starting with participation in the Mayors Wellness Campaign, a state-wide program focused on community wellness.

Safe neighborhoods are the bedrock of a thriving town. We will collaborate with our law enforcement, first responders and community leaders to ensure that safety is a reality in every corner of Summit.

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We will work with and encourage city administration to look for ways to utilize emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to enhance public safety, staff productivity and delivery of municipal services.

An essential aspect of my tenure will be partnering with and supporting our dedicated city staff - the individuals whose contributions are integral to our community's success.

Local businesses are the backbone of Summit's economy and community identity. We intend to foster an environment where new and existing businesses can flourish and contribute to the prosperity and vibrancy of our downtown and nearby business districts, and the well-being of our citizens.

Since our public schools are our crown jewel, we will look to elevate all our schools to the status attained by Lincoln Hubbard this year - the number one rated elementary school in New Jersey.

Our commitment is to be available, responsive, and actively engaged with all of you. We look forward to next year when we can look back on 2024 and report on all that we have accomplished together.

As we embark on this journey, we urge each of you to join us in fostering a community where kindness and collaboration are not just ideals, but our way of life. If we examine Summit's history, we see multiple examples of the community speaking up for what they believe: the Broad Street Parking Garage, moving the train tracks underground, the location of city hall, the turf on Investors Bank field, working with the county to create Glenside field and, most recently, the Broad Street West redevelopment project. We will continue conversations with all of you - within and throughout the community - so that we protect, preserve, and enhance the heritage of Summit over the coming years.

Most importantly, we believe in the power of listening and coming together as a city. We do not always need to think the same way, but we do need to listen to each other. In our differences, we find strength and new perspectives. It is through understanding and respecting our differences that we can truly be successful. Together, we can build a Summit that not only meets our community's needs today but becomes an even greater place to call home for generations to come.

Thank you for your trust and support.

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