

**STATE OF THE TOWNSHIP 2016**  
Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh, Ph.D., P.E., P.P.  
May 16, 2016

Thank you for coming to my 15<sup>th</sup> state of the township address.

15 years ago, when I was first elected Mayor, my vision for serving the West Windsor community had three objectives. First – A long-term, sustainable, financial system which would be predictable. Governmental decisions and actions taken one year and again the next have impacts on budgets and services going forward. Second – A park and recreational system that encourages family participation and enhances the quality of our environment. In addition, by preserving more open space, we reduce residential housing development and control our quality of life. And third – A well-run senior center that provides a venue for older West Windsor residents to socialize and enjoy their retirement with their families in the community.

Tonight, I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about our accomplishments in these areas.

It has long been a mandate of my Administration that we refrain from a policy of up and down "spikes" in our annual municipal budget. And we have been successful with only a few exceptions because of political contention. As you know, the Council majority has the final say in its ultimate approval of the annual budget.

The following is a summary of where we are regarding our financial status today:

1. In 2001 when I became Mayor, West Windsor had 171 full-time employees, and 17 part-time employees. As of today, we have 168 full-time employees and 16 part-time employees. Three of those full-time employees were hired after the dissolution of the Twin W Rescue Squad in 2015. During this same period of time, West Windsor's population increased by more than 27%.
2. The municipal portion of the property tax is about 15% of the total property tax bill over which the Mayor and Township Council have direct control. This covers all of the municipal services provided to residents, including public safety, open space acquisition and preservation, public works, yard waste collection, recycling, garbage pick-up, community development (code enforcement, engineering, planning and zoning) and human services (health, parks & recreation, senior & social services). Some other municipalities pay extra taxes to fire districts and pay extra for garbage pick-up; West Windsor is a full service community. And, West Windsor had the lowest

total tax rate (\$0.4 per \$100 assessed property value in 2013 and 2015) of the municipalities in this region. The 2016 adopted budget will go up to \$0.41 per \$100 assessed property value.

3. As shown in the article, titled “Mercer County Municipal Property Tax Changes from 2000 to 2015,” (by Kevin Shea, NJ.com, February 9, 2016) West Windsor residents on average, next to Princeton, paid the second highest total property tax in Mercer County in 2015 (based on the second highest property values in Mercer County); but compared to other local townships, we had the lowest percentage of property tax increase over the last 15 years. Among all 12 municipalities in Mercer, the average increase was 32.9% while West Windsor had a 13.9% increase.
4. In terms of the home sale prices, as shown in the article “Jersey Housing Market Recovering...” by Christina Rajas, Times of Trenton, March 27, 2016, West Windsor has the highest percentage of appreciation in Mercer County at 20.49% from the years 2005 to 2015, running an almost 10% increase consistently for every 5-year period.
5. Since November of 2007, West Windsor has gained and retained the highest possible bond rating, Standard and Poor’s AAA. Only 19 (3%) of New Jersey’s 565 municipalities have this rating, and West Windsor is one of the few of those, which are full service communities. Since 2007, the AAA rating has saved the Township about \$1.6 million in debt service payments. We estimate approximately \$200,000 in savings on an estimated \$10 million bond issue planned for 2016.

At this time, we have been mostly successful in accomplishing the budget objectives: “long-term financial planning and sustainability” as was agreed to at the first Administration and Council retreat in 2001. It is critical to continue to adhere to these financial policies and management practices.

To reiterate, West Windsor is recognized as a community with the following financial characteristics:

1. One of the municipalities having the lowest municipal purpose tax rate in the region delivering full public services;
2. Keeping annual property tax increases at a reasonable and predictable level;
3. Having the highest home sale appreciation in Mercer County over the past 10 years;
4. Retaining a Standard & Poor's AAA bond rating since 2007.

Turning to open space, today, after 23 years of our open space program, almost 50% of the township is preserved. This program has tremendously improved our quality of life in West Windsor. It prevented hundreds of potential residential housing units from being constructed, while at the same time it also allows us to expand and upgrade our recreational opportunities in the community. So far, we have developed seven community parks with recreational facilities. These facilities provide walking trails, playgrounds, sports fields, swimming pools, a skate park, tennis courts, basketball courts and dog parks. Early this year, an action was taken to acquire a 26-acre County property on Conover Road. This will now allow us to develop another park serving the youth recreational programs. The plan to develop this park will be established soon.

A new, standard Cricket Pitch field is expected to be open for public use this year. Also, in the past few years, West Windsor has been identified as a destination for many sports events such as baseball, softball, lacrosse, tennis, rowing, and dragon boating. Tournaments, such as the NCAA rowing, Babe Ruth Baseball, Dragon Boat competition, soccer, and triathlon are all being held in West Windsor.

This coming summer, we expect to see a formal opening of the 120-acre Duck Pond Park and the Cricket Pitch field in the 123-acre West Windsor Community Park.

Concerning the West Windsor Senior Center, it was the first municipal center in the state accredited by the National Council on Aging/NISC in 2002 and is continuously being accredited every five years. The initial building, which was half the current size, was constructed in 1989 and renovated/expanded in 2008 with mostly County and State grants.

As a multi-purpose facility, the Senior Center is a focal point of the community for older residents and offers comprehensive programs, activities and services. The importance of the Center goes beyond the recreational aspect. It is a “service delivery network” meeting the needs of the residents of the Township. As a central location within the Municipal Complex, the Senior Center is designated as a “Resource Center” for residents in emergency situations. The Center is equipped with a generator that provides power to the building in times of need.

The Center is, perhaps, the most popular spot in the Complex. For instance, daily average participation in 2015 was 145. In addition to the 40 ongoing programs and activities offered, 34 special programs were added on a one-time basis. 25 were facilitated or taught by volunteers. A mini-bus is also available to provide transportation for retirees.

Tonight, I’d like to thank all Township elected officials, employees, and volunteers for their efforts to make all of these accomplishments possible.

As I do every year, there are two outstanding volunteers I would like to recognize for their contributions to the community:

**Barbara Ingram-Edmonds, JD** – Barbara has served for over 10 years on the West Windsor Township Human Relations Council and 6 of those years as the Chairperson.

Ms. Ingram-Edmonds spearheaded a number of initiatives during her service as a member and Chairperson of the Human Relations Council, including the first community celebration of the birthday of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in January of 2009. This served as an opportunity to engage the community residents, the students of the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District, and other community and civic leaders in a dialogue on how to build positive community relations.

She also helped establish the Interfaith Community Bridge, which, after 4 years of operation, turned into an independent community organization. It serves as a tool to bring diverse faith and community leaders together to share resources and build positive and sustainable communication links and relationships with each other, the community, and the Township government.

Barbara is the former President of the West Windsor-Plainsboro African-American Parent Support Group. She presently serves as a sustaining member of the President’s Council of Cornell Women, which is an alumni organization that promotes advancement of women faculty, administrators, and students in leadership.

Barbara is a strong believer in our urgent need to create the “Beloved Community” that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for in his lifetime; building strong and sustainable positive community relationships crossing all boundaries.

Barbara is married to Reverend Dr. Cornell A. Edmonds. They reside in West Windsor, New Jersey. They have three adult children, Cortne, William and Isaiah.

Michael Hornsby – Mike has served on the West Windsor Environmental Commission as its Chair for over 14 years.

Mr. Hornsby has been leading the Green Team in its promotion of the Sustainable Jersey Program in West Windsor. Thus far, we have received silver certification from the Sustainable Jersey Program in 2010 and 2013. This is the highest certification at the State level offered by the Program.

The final opening of the Natural Environmental Education Center in 2013 as part of the West Windsor History Museum at Schenck Farmstead received the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) Achievement Award in 2014, and the first local Climate Action Plan also received the ANJEC Achievement Award in 2015.

In addition to his full-time job as Chief Technology Officer at the State Board of Public Utilities, and part-time job as Adjunct Professor at NJIT, he also serves as Lieutenant with the Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Company.

Mike lives in Berrien City, West Windsor with his wife Angela and daughter Nicole.

This concludes my 2016 State of the Township address.

Thank you again.

Good night.

**Mayor's State of the Township Address**  
 May 16, 2016

**3 Objectives -**

- A Long-Term Sustainable Financial System Which Would be Predictable
- A Park and Recreational System That Encourages Family Participation
- A Well-run Senior Center for the Elder Residents

**Table 1- Municipal Tax Rate Comparisons Year 2013**

Municipality	Municipal Open Space Tax	Fire District Tax	Municipal Library Tax	Municipal Purpose Tax	Total Tax Rate	Trash Collection Included in Municipal Tax
East Windsor	0	0	0	0.431	0.431	No
Ewing	0	0	0	1.272	1.272	Yes
Hamilton	0	0.16 - 0.883	0.054	1.149	1.373 - 2.003	Yes
Hightstown	0	0	0	1.125	1.125	Yes
Hopewell Boro.	0.01	0.06	0.031	0.46	0.561	Yes
Hopewell Twp.	0.03	0.074	0	0.318	0.422	No
Lawrence	0.03	0	0	0.94	0.97	Yes
Pennington	0.01	0.03	0.033	0.404	0.477	Yes
Trenton	0	0	0.042	3.783	3.825	Yes
Robbinsville	0.05	0	0	0.522	0.572	Yes
West Windsor	0.02	0	0	0.38	0.4	Yes
Plainsboro	0.01	0.05	0.035	0.333	0.428	No
Princeton	0.017	0	0.036	0.418	0.471	Yes

Unit: \$ Per \$100 Assessed Property Value

**Table 2 - Municipal Tax Rate Comparisons Year 2015**

Municipality	Municipal Open Space Tax	Fire District Tax	Garbage District Tax	Municipal Library Tax	Municipal Purpose Tax	Total Municipal Tax Rate	Trash Collection Included in Total Municipal Tax Rate
East Windsor	0	0	0.123	0	0.431	0.554	Yes
Ewing	0	0	0	0	1.312	1.312	Yes
Hamilton	0	0.170 - .880	0	0.056	1.224	1.45 - 2.16	Yes
Hightstown	0	0	0	0	1.162	1.162	Yes
Hopewell Boro.	0.01	0.06	0	0.034	0.520	0.624	Yes
Hopewell Twp.	0.03	0.079	0	0	0.362	0.471	Yes
Lawrence	0.03	0	0	0	0.527	0.557	Yes
Pennington	0.01	0.041	0	0.034	0.417	0.502	Yes
Trenton	0	0	0	0.0395	3.898	3.938	Yes
Robbinsville	0.05	0	0	0	0.531	0.581	Yes
West Windsor	0.02	0	0	0	0.380	0.40	Yes
Plainsboro	0.01	0.049	0	0.034	0.355	0.45	Yes
Princeton	0.017	0	0	0.036	0.433	0.486	No

Unit: \$ Per \$100 Assessed Property Value

**Table 3 - Mercer County Municipal Property Tax Changes from 2000 to 2015**

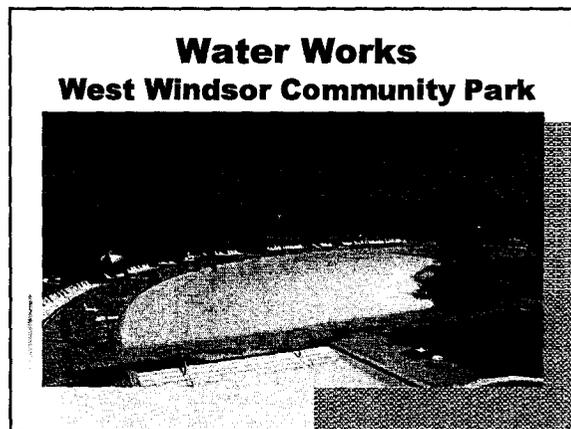
Municipality	2015 Avg.	% Change 2000-2015
Princeton	\$17,699	37.84%
West Windsor Township	\$13,466	13.78%
Pennington Borough	\$12,892	34.81%
Hopewell Township	\$12,439	38.81%
Hopewell Borough	\$10,917	38.08%
Robbinsville Township	\$10,550	61.65%
Hightstown Borough	\$8,633	33.12%
East Windsor Township	\$8,032	46.90%
Lawrence Township	\$7,576	32.02%
Ewing Township	\$6,500	22.01%
Hamilton Township	\$5,829	23.42%
Trenton City	\$3,610	12.80%
Average		32.94%

\*Taken from "See what town had the highest property taxes in Mercer County" by Kevin Shea, NJ.com, February 9, 2016

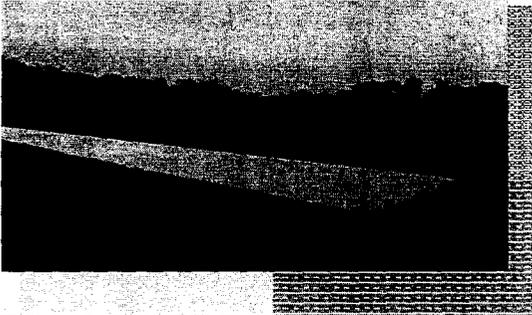
**Table 4 - Town by Town Average Home Sale Prices in Mercer County**

Municipality	2005	2010	Change 2005-2010	2015	Change 2005-2015	Change 2010-2015
East Windsor	\$256,860	\$281,651	9.65%	\$287,602	43%	-4.9%
Ewing	\$222,868	\$220,935	-0.86%	\$206,575	-7.31%	-4.50%
Hamilton	\$225,395	\$237,750	5.49%	\$232,440	3.13%	-2.29%
Hightstown	\$286,655	\$227,841	-15.19%	\$213,305	-20.60%	-6.58%
Hopewell Boro.	\$463,365	\$391,750	-15.53%	\$378,460	-18.37%	-3.19%
Hopewell Twp.	\$494,969	\$318,070	-35.75%	\$316,293	-35.99%	-0.24%
Lawrence	\$301,151	\$313,882	4.23%	\$316,679	5.14%	0.89%
Pennington	\$478,136	\$426,875	-10.72%	\$394,228	-16.64%	-18.12%
Princeton	\$816,599	\$776,091	-4.89%	\$976,668	19.40%	23.75%
Robbinsville	\$334,649	\$362,003	8.17%	\$362,339	8.27%	0.09%
Trenton	\$ 85,829	\$ 89,454	4.22%	\$ 87,896	2.41%	-1.74%
West Windsor	\$470,988	\$514,468	9.23%	\$567,473	20.45%	10.30%

\*Summarized from the article by Christina Rojas, Times of Trenton, March 27, 2016



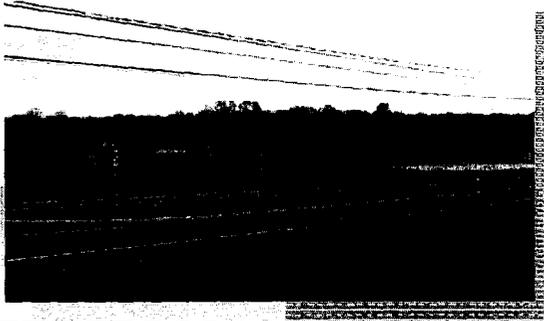
**Cricket Pitch Field  
In Progress**



**Caspersen Rowing Training  
Center (Lake Mercer)**



**New Recreational Facilities  
in Duck Pond Park**



**Old Senior Center  
Before 2008**



**Nationally Accredited  
Senior Center**



**VOLUNTEERS  
OF  
THE YEAR 2016**

- **Barbara Ingram-Edmonds, JD**
- **Michael Hornsby**