



Town Council Opening Remarks November 9, 2021

(The following remarks were delivered by Councilwoman Linda Habgood as Acting Mayor at the November 9, 2021 Town Council meeting.)

Good evening, everyone, and thanks to all who are joining us in person and online tonight. I'll be presiding over tonight's meeting, as Mayor Brindle is unable to join us. On behalf of the Mayor and Councilpersons Dardia, Contract, Mackey, and myself, thank you to the community for your vote of confidence and the privilege to serve Westfield for another four years. We are very enthusiastic about the opportunities that lie ahead and eager to work with you to build upon the foundation we've established.

As a reminder, public comment will be accepted in person only tonight. As always, the replay will also be available afterwards on Facebook, YouTube, and TV 36.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

Our annual call for volunteers is underway! We have openings on our many Boards, Commissions, and Mayor's Advisory Councils, and encourage you to get involved. As always, we are grateful for the dedication and talent of our residents who step up to benefit the community. Applications are open through November 29 at westfieldnj.gov/volunteer.

PUBLIC SAFETY

As Mayor Brindle reiterated in her weekly update last Friday, public safety is the absolute top priority of this administration, and we are all very grateful to the residents who have reached out to us expressing concern over recent acts of criminal activity.

While the data shows that most types of crime are down in 2021 in Westfield, that does not dismiss the reality that recent, more violent acts reflect criminals who are emboldened, and are very disturbing and frightening for our residents. We share these concerns, and are working closely and regularly with the Police Department on additional mitigation efforts.

This morning, Mayor Brindle met with Chief Battiloro, Town Administrator Jim Gildea, and Councilman Dardia who Chairs the Public Safety, Transportation, and Parking Committee, as part of their ongoing discussions regarding police activity. This included an updated look at regional crime trends and public policy, as well as an evaluation of our current police resources and Nixle alert policies.

You have heard and seen reminders about securing your property as part of our community efforts to deter crime, but this is clearly not and never has been our exclusive area of focus. We are also working on an updated, three-pronged approach centered on emphasizing policy reform at the state level, securing additional resources needed by the Police Department, and implementing a more streamlined communication strategy -- all of which need to work in tandem to meet our shared goal of reducing crime and improving public safety for the community. You can expect to hear more about these efforts in the coming weeks and months as we ensure that all available resources are being utilized properly to address this issue.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

Please join us on Thursday at 11:00 AM at Monument Circle for the annual Veterans Day ceremony. Thank you to Allan Betau and Randy Grizzard of the Martin Wallberg American Legion Post 3 for organizing this important event where the community can come together to recognize our veterans and their tremendous service to our country. As a reminder, Town Hall will be closed on Veterans Day.

TOWN TALK

If you are starting to think about the holiday season, join Mayor Brindle on Facebook Live tomorrow at 6:00 PM for another Town Talk session, hosted by Westfield resident Les Trent. DWC Executive Director Bob Zuckerman will be on hand to share details about the holiday festivities planned for downtown this year. In addition, the Mayor will also discuss the administration's priorities for the next four years, and any other topics that are on your mind. You can submit your questions on the live feed, or in advance at towntalk@westfieldnj.gov.

FACEBOOK LIVE WITH STREETWORKS

Also on Facebook Live, don't miss next week's panel discussion hosted by Streetworks: "Offices: It's Time To Go Back To Work!" Mayor Brindle will be joined on November 18 at 7:00 PM by Westfield resident, workplace futurist and founder of SWAYworkplace Denise Brouder; renowned architect Michael Green; Planner Phil Abramson of Topology; and both Christian Michel & Richard Heapes of Streetworks Development. The conversation will include information on current local office trends, new live/work places, the impact of green initiatives on work spaces, and the opportunities for post-pandemic office development here in Westfield. Questions can be submitted through our website or in the live feed.

TONIGHT'S AGENDA

We have several items on the agenda tonight. Most notably, as Jim mentioned, we will be voting tonight on a resolution to award a contract for curbside recycling collection to Grand Sanitation, providing us

with a lower increase than we've seen in recent years' bids, as well as a consistent price point for the next three years in our budgetary planning.

Before we get to the agenda, I will turn the meeting over to Councilman Contract for the presentation of the Adopt-A-Drain awards to recognize resident participants in various categories in helping to grow the success of the program.

As a reminder, I will be enforcing Robert's Rules this evening to ensure we stay on topic and the meeting runs efficiently.

Thank you.