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Greetings my Old Tappan friends and neighbors,

I hope everyone had a very enjoyable holiday season with friends and family and is settling into the new year ahead.

For those who don't know me, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Tom Gallagher, and I had the distinct honor earlier this month of being sworn in as the new Mayor of Old Tappan. I am almost a lifelong resident of Old Tappan and have been very active in the community throughout my time here. I want to thank former Mayor Kramer for his many years of service and wish him and his family well in their next chapter. I also want to congratulate Councilman Ron Binaghi on his reelection to the Council and welcome Christine Massaro as our newest Council member. I look forward to working with the entire Council and Borough staff over the next year.

During 2023, I had the opportunity to talk with many residents and listen to some of their concerns. They often asked what my "vision" was for Old Tappan and how we slow down the accelerated progress we are all witnessing. These topics have been top of mind for your entire Council and I would like to share our direction on a few of them;

- We are committed to providing a fiscally responsible municipal budget to all our residents. The Council, along with our Borough Administrator and CFO will be meeting throughout the first quarter to review each committee and department reviewing their needs for 2024.
- The Council is committed to a "sensible approach" to Affordable Housing for our seniors, returning grads and young families. Not sure who is aware, but currently, decisions pertaining to Affordable Housing are now being determined by the Supreme Court of New Jersey. This should not be the case!! Old Tappan recently supported legislation delaying the 4th round from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028. Shouldn't the State get through the 3rd round before mandating a 4th round?
- Open Space – Utilizing our Open Space Trust Fund and updating our Master Plan, we look to identify environmentally sensitive land and protect it for all to enjoy.
- Our emergency service first responders are there when we need them. The Council and I have unwavering support to our Police, Fire, EMS and DPW who are out there 24/7, 365 days a year in all sorts of weather and adverse conditions. Give them a thumbs up when you see them out there.
- We will continue to have the best parks, recreation programs and senior activities so all age groups can enjoy everything Old Tappan has to offer. Pickleball anyone!

In closing, I want to thank all the volunteers, coaches, committee chairpersons and board members for all you do to keep Old Tappan great. If you're reading this, and want to get involved, please reach out. We always need great people, and we would love to see you. Please come to a Council meeting held the first and third Mondays of each month to voice a concern, thank a group or individual that made you feel good or just to say hi.

Happy New Year to all!

Sincerely,

Thomas Gallagher

Mayor
Borough of Old Tappan