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New Assistant Township Manager

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All,

As many of you have likely heard yesterday or today, I have hired a new Assistant Township Manager to help with the increasing and, in some ways, overwhelming workload in the Manager's office. If you have not heard, the person is Adam Loehner, currently the Village Administrator in South Orange; more on him later.

Initially, I apologize for not informing you in advance. As I am sure you can appreciate, in light of his current employment, the matter had to remain highly confidential and within a very small circle of only myself and the Township Council.

Unfortunately, I was surprised late Tuesday to learn that South Orange intended to "announce" Adam's departure immediately to allow them to begin their search for his replacement. As the negotiation was only finalized on Monday, I had thought I had some time to inform all of you in advance.

Thai was compounded by the fact that I was out of the office on a family medical issue yesterday and today. In any case, I apologize that you had to learn from the newspapers or social media. Now to the substance of this exciting announcement.

As most, and I assume all of you, are aware, the level of activity and work in the Township is exploding, and nowhere has it been felt more than in the Manager's office.

We have been overwhelmed with over a dozen new developments required by our affordable housing settlement, and have many other commercial and mixed use developments in the works (self-storage, warehouse at CIT, new YMCA, two assisted living facilities, efforts to revitalize or reimagine the mall, etc.) On top of that we are planning the new DPW facility, redeveloping the current DPW site, and addressing the pools. Additionally, the water utility is dealing with major issues and capital projects associated with PFAS and other emerging compounds. All of this is on top of the day to day workload of managing the Township, i.e. budgeting, programs, collective bargaining, etc.

In short, there is way too much work to do and not enough time between me and Russ. As a result, in consultation with the Council, the decision was made to add another management level position in the Manager's office. In addition, I am a strong believer in succession planning to ensure seamless transitions within the Township and the various Departments, and that is perhaps most important in the Manager's office, where Russ and I obviously are in the latter stages of our careers.

After significant consideration of a number of options, I selected Adam Loehner to join the Manager's office. As noted, Adam has served as the Village Administrator in South Orange for the past four years, was my Deputy Village Administrator in South Orange for the five preceding years, and prior to that worked for Seton Hall University. I know Adam's capabilities, his work ethic and, equally important, how he fits within an organization and the positive relationships he develops with his colleagues and department heads. A number of you have already met and come to know Adam, and I hope that you agree with my assessment. Also important (in light of my current 5 to 7 year timeline for retirement) Adam is still relatively early in his career and anticipates working another 20+ years, presenting a great opportunity for succession planning and continuity within the Township; should the future Township Council find him to be the appropriate successor following my retirement.

Adam is not scheduled to start until July 1st, which is also why I thought I had more time to inform everyone prior to it becoming public. In any case, I again apologize that you found out through the papers or social media.

Nevertheless, this is an exciting development that will improve our overall efficiencies, allow us to complete projects and address issues more expeditiously, and one which will ultimately benefit the Township and each of your Departments. I am also confident that you will all come to know Adam as a colleague and a good fit as a member of the team. The Township has seen considerable change in my four years, with new leadership in the Police, DPW, Finance, Health and now Clerk's Departments, and all have been great additions to the leadership team. I am certain that Adam will prove to be another great addition. With this final piece, I am extremely confident in the team we have assembled and optimistic about the future of the Township.

In the coming weeks, I will coordinate with Adam to find some time for me to introduce him to those of you who have not met him.

Thank you all for all of your great work and continuing support of me and the Township.

Barry R. Lewis, Jr.

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