

Public Safety

Keeping Parsippany Safe

JUSTIN 
MUSELLA
for Parsippany Mayor

musellaformayor.com

Over the past sixteen years, Parsippany has seen criminal behavior negatively affect businesses and residents - an issue that affects all of us.

As I talk to taxpayers in town, concerns on political interference in our public safety services, pedestrian and traffic safety issues, as well as a need for more effective communications, come up at almost every door.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

I believe we can support our police and fire services to better serve our residents.

If elected Mayor, you will see real concrete solutions to address these concerns.

Justin

Pedestrian Safety

Anecdotally, it appears that the residents of Parsippany agree that pedestrian safety is a top priority. Most of the complaints voiced by residents involve the lack of police enforcement for moving traffic violations (speeding, failure to obey traffic signs/signals), and the increased associated risk for pedestrians. Over the past few months, there have been three (3) pedestrian fatalities recorded in Parsippany. The lack of traffic enforcement has led to a degradation of the quality of life in Parsippany and this trend must be reversed.

I am committed to bolstering our Traffic Division to have enough Traffic Officers on the road both night and day. They would focus aggressively on distracted drivers, aggressive driving behavior, pedestrian safety both on the highways, county roads and residential neighborhoods.

I would also like to work with all officers of the PPD to bring back DUI Checkpoints and other focused checkpoints, such as pedestrian crosswalk safety enforcement, and distracted driver enforcement (cell phone) during summer months and during the highly traveled holiday season.

Members of the Traffic Committee should be appointed based on their expertise and willingness to serve, not on political connections. I would seek the assistance of our specialized traffic officers to help with the selection process to make it fair and unbiased.

Pedestrian and Roadway Safety

In 2024, there have been multiple fatal accidents involving pedestrians on Rt. 46. It is the responsibility of the Township of Parsippany and its police and engineering departments to keep it safe. Each accident involving the death or serious injury of a pedestrian offers insight as to how and why it occurred, thus with each incident we have the opportunity to take corrective action. We must actively partner with the state to find ways to manage the ever-increasing risk to pedestrians and drivers. Many township residents have offered specific solutions such as fencing, better lighting, increased police enforcement, lower speed limits and even the construction of pedestrian bridges.

For example, if these incidents are occurring primarily at night in low light conditions, enhanced lighting should be aggressively pursued. Under a Musella administration, we will partner with the state to conduct a comprehensive study to identify ways in which that highway can be made safer for pedestrians. We cannot wait for more fatalities to occur before taking meaningful action.

The intersection of Rt. 46 and Baldwin Road has experienced several serious accidents involving vehicles that have driven off the roadway onto the playing field on the SE corner (Smith Field). Temporary barriers have been erected by the Township of Parsippany but the state DOT must be held responsible for a more permanent solution.

Pedestrian Safety

The ramp leading from northbound Rt. 202 (Littleton Road) to Rt. 80 eastbound needs to be addressed. An observation of the roadway at the bottom of that ramp and on Rt. 80 reveals countless skid marks left by vehicles attempting to merge into Rt. 80. It's fair to say that a substantial percentage of vehicles traveling down that ramp are Parsippany residents. The design of that interchange is deeply flawed and dangerous, and will be addressed as soon as possible. As Mayor of Parsippany, I will request that the state DOT take immediate action.

The roadways surrounding Lake Parsippany are used by hundreds of people to walk with friends and family. The presence of speeding vehicles and pedestrians has greatly increased the probability of an accident. We will commission a study of the area and consider the feasibility of significant safety enhancements. Additionally, we will improve the walking track in Lake Parsippany Park in an effort to entice walkers to use that facility instead. Improvements will include the addition of better lighting and exercise equipment.



Better Communication

Justin Musella understands the need for more active communication between our public safety departments and residents/businesses. Just like in Town Hall, residents have a right to know how these essential pieces of our government are functioning. The nature and frequency of criminal activity occurring in town should be freely available to residents without having to go through a request process.

For a short period of time in 2024, the PPD began sharing general crime information on their social media channels. Unfortunately, this practice ended almost as quickly as it began.

Making it a policy that general crime information is once again posted on our social media channels and instruct the Parsippany Police Department to generate an overview document quarterly for posting to their website.

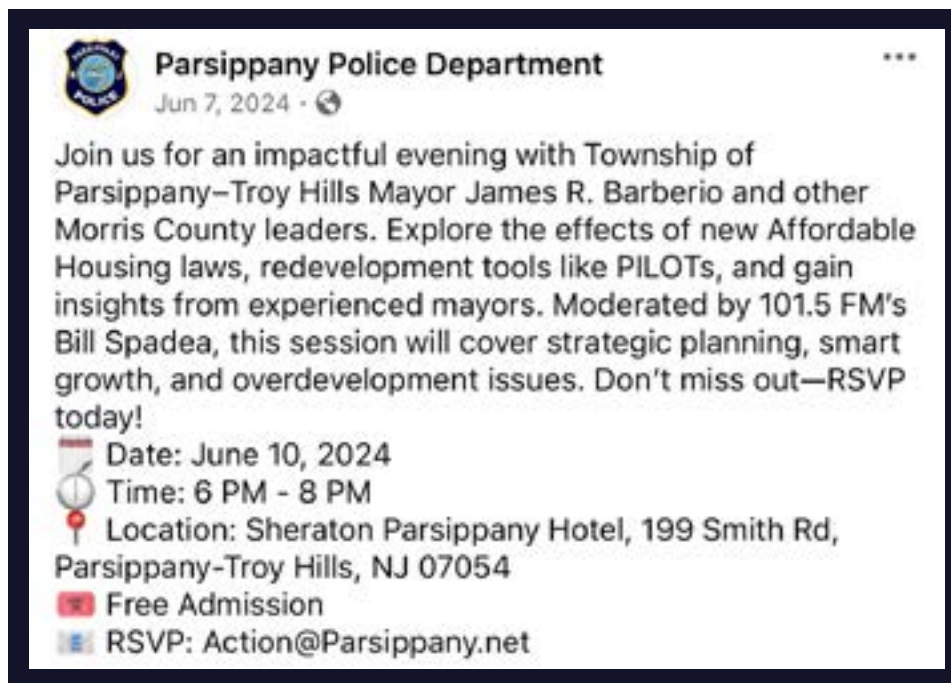
Ensure that the newly reconstituted Traffic Advisory Committee submit monthly reports on activity to the Mayor and Council for publication to the Township website.



Ending Political Involvement

The business of the police department should be conducted with minimal interference from Town Hall. Unfortunately, it has become clear that the current administration has exercised significant influence over all aspects of the PPD and this practice has resulted in poor performance, a lack of transparency and low morale among department personnel.

Last year, a post on the social media pages of the PPD encouraged residents to attend a political event hosted by the mayor, an event whose master of ceremonies was a declared candidate for governor. This kind of blatantly inappropriate behavior will not occur under a Musella administration.



Ending Political Involvement

Morale has suffered greatly under the current administration due to the clear and undeniable political interference by the current mayor, and that will stop.

Only the most qualified applicants will be hired as officers and only after a rigorous screening process lead by the PPD. Additionally, promotions within the department will be based solely on merit, not political connections. Since Parsippany-Troy Hills is a civil service township, hiring should follow their requirements to ensure fairness and accountability. As mentioned previously, the mayor will meet regularly with the Parsippany Police Department Chief to discuss expectations and accountability. Beyond that, the PPD must be allowed to conduct business with minimal interference from Town Hall.

In consultation with the Chief of Department, an assessment will be conducted to determine whether the current officer/supervisor ratio is appropriate. Adjustments will be made as needed.

Ending Political Involvement

The current mayor is driving a vehicle that was purchased by the PPD (2023 Chevrolet Tahoe SUV), a purchase that cost the PPD approximately \$65,000. This vehicle was outfitted with a complete police package (emergency lights and siren) as well as full window tinting. I find it unnecessary that the mayor needs a vehicle equipped with emergency lights and a siren when he is not a qualified police official who has been trained in the use of such equipment. Further, the funds spent by the PPD for the mayor's new vehicle could've been used for expenses critical to the needs of the police department,

Under the Musella administration, the mayor will drive his personally owned vehicle between his home and Town Hall, and should the need arise for the mayor to respond to an emergency situation within the township, he will use his own car. If feasible, he will travel to Town Hall and obtain one of the Township fleet vehicles. Routine (official) business conducted by the mayor will be accomplished using a Township fleet vehicle. The 2023 Chevy Tahoe will either be sold or sent back to the PPD for their use.

Vehicle Theft and Residential Break-Ins

Our officers are tasked daily and nightly, to patrol our residential neighborhoods, answer calls of service, conduct traffic enforcement, calls of basic service, render medical aid and along with many more tasks. We have witnessed a significant increase in the number of vehicle thefts occurring in our state and beyond, theft patterns that initially targeted specific vehicles (BMW, Audi, Mercedes, etc.) parked in driveways with keys left inside. As vehicle owners responded to the threat by removing their keys and storing them inside their homes, we witnessed a shift in tactics on the part of the criminals whereby they would break into occupied homes during pre-dawn hours (4am-6am), locate the keys and then steal the vehicle. There have been multiple instances throughout the region where residents were confronted by intruders in their homes. department, like training and equipment. According to experts, these thefts are being committed by organized gangs who specifically target suburban towns.

Much has been said about “bail reform” and its impact on crime. The current administration has done nothing to address this issue but under a Musella administration, I will convene a meeting of regional mayors to form a powerful coalition that can impact statewide policy. A joint statement to the Governor can have a powerful impact on state policy. Additionally, I will meet with our elected state legislators to discuss what we can do politically to create positive change.

Vehicle Theft and Residential Break-Ins

I will strongly encourage our elected state legislators to press for the passage of new laws that stiffen the penalties for intentionally using juveniles to commit vehicle theft, for carrying firearms during the commission of a vehicle theft or residential burglary, for substantially more prison time for committing a 2nd vehicle theft offense and for entering a residence for the purpose of obtaining keys in furtherance of a vehicle theft. Further, I will demand that laws governing the resale of vehicle parts (especially catalytic converters) be considerably strengthened with criminal penalties for those who violate.

I will take inventory of any license plate readers (LPR) under our control, to include those currently in our police vehicles and those at fixed locations. Once completed, I would direct our police department to apply for grants that could pay for additional LPR equipment. These devices should be installed in every patrol vehicle AND on all roads leading into Parsippany from major highways. This technology is highly effective in identifying stolen vehicles in real time, thus allowing a more effective and immediate response.

In consultation with the Chief of Police, I would review how police manpower is deployed to ensure that adequate resources are on duty during periods when these incidents tend to occur (4am-6am).

Active Shooter Preparedness

Since the tragic shooting at Columbine High School in April 1999, police departments throughout the country have taken extraordinary steps to prepare for such an eventuality in their communities. As we witnessed during the shootings in Uvalde (TX) and Nashville (TN), the level of preparation and training of local law enforcement agencies makes all the difference.

Multiple attempts to determine the level of preparedness of the Parsippany Police Department have failed to produce results so upon taking office as mayor, I will direct the Chief of Police to provide a copy of their “active shooter plan” for an independent review to determine if our officers have been adequately trained and equipped.

I will ensure that every on-duty officer has immediate access to ballistic shields and long rifles. Further, I will direct my Chief of Police to partner with the local office of the United States Secret Service and the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), to take full advantage of any training opportunities they may offer to our officers, including our School Resource Officers. Previous offers from the USSS/NTAC to police departments and Boards of Education throughout the country have been ignored by this administration. That will not continue.