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VINELAND



Vineland Mayor Anthony Fanucci is enthusiastic and optimistic about the future.

MORE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mayor Anthony Fanucci talks on upcoming projects and priorities for the year ahead

Joseph P. Smith Vineland Daily Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

VINELAND – The city has enjoyed two years of economic development and the outlook in 2019 is for the trend to continue, according to Mayor Anthony Fanucci. Proximity to Route 55 is paying dividends to the city, especially in the case of its industrial park. Several projects started along Garden Road in 2018 should be completed early this year. Vineland, meanwhile, is looking for more industrial-suited acreage. Fanucci responded to five questions for the Business Review & Forecast about the year ahead.

Question: Your economic development director, Sandy Forosisky, says finding more land for industrial use is a major issue. How does that happen in the state's geographically largest municipality?

Answer: To put it in context, I believe Sandy was referring to land specifically along Route 55. With that said,

your question almost implies that we are in a bad situation. I would take an alternative view.

I am both enthusiastic and optimistic about what the future holds. We are in a period of sustained growth over the past two years because Vineland can offer competitive advantages over other potential locations. We have worked hard to spread this message, and we are seeing some of the benefits of that now.

At the same time, we have been actively planning for the future.

City-owned property and property owned by private developers remains available in and around the two existing industrial parks, and we have acquired privately held property contiguous to the industrial parks as it has become available.



"City-owned property and property owned by private developers remains available in and around the two existing industrial parks," the mayor said.

The old Developmental Center West Campus has been rezoned as a potential area for additional expansion, and most importantly, development of a new 285-acre industrial park off of Route 55 and Lincoln Avenue is underway. The project also features significant transportation improvements around the site, which will benefit the entire community including a revised traffic design for the Lincoln Avenue and Main Road intersection and an extension of Burns Avenue.

Q: The Vineland Municipal Electric Utility stood up the Clayville generating facility more than three years ago. At the time, the city pointed to it as the completion of a program to put in operation modern facilities. What if anything is in the offing for the utility in 2019 or following years?

A: Yes, we have been able to "modernize" our generation facilities while keeping our rates among the lowest in the state, which is an important part of the economic growth that we are seeing.

We also recently completed installation of new generators at our distribution building and our Public Works facility to fuel city vehicles and ensure operations during emergent situations.

Currently, the redevelopment of the 57 W. Park Avenue property is underway, which will include a new generation control operations center and administrative offices for the electric utility.

We are developing plans for the installation of a secondary oil fuel source for the Clayville Station. This will substantially reduce our risk of economic exposure during times of natural gas curtailment imposed by our suppliers, particularly in the winter months.

Upgrades to our distribution infrastructure, including replacing aging substation transformers, relays, and switching, are ongoing.

Additionally, we are continuing to replace older sodium vapor street lights with more efficient LED fixtures, as well as, upgrading or replacing older traffic light controllers.

Q: Vineland and the Cumberland County Improvement Authority appear to be wedded to each other's interest. What underlies the cooperation and where does it go from here?

A: To say we are "wedded" to each other's interests is a bit of an overstatement. I would say they are a valuable resource which previous administrations failed to recognize and failed to take advantage of.

The CCIA has broad bonding powers which we have been able to leverage in order to reduce the cost of financing critical development projects, thereby providing a direct benefit to Vineland taxpayers.

They also have a proven record of completing large projects on time and on budget.

Moving forward, we will continue to evaluate individual projects on a case- by-case basis and utilize the resources of the CCIA where it will save taxpayer dollars.

Q: Does your administration see any major changes needed in the master plan and related zoning realms?

A: As I said earlier, we have already rezoned the West Campus. Additionally, a review of the 2008 City of Vineland Master Plan is underway, which I am sure will include additional recommendations.

Q: What is the city's appraisal of the Murphy administration in terms of how its goals might affect the interests of Vineland?

A: From an operational perspective, we have been able to establish good lines of communication with the governor's office. They are responsive to requests and willing to listen to our concerns.

From a policy perspective, in most areas it is still too soon to tell. However, his decision to extend the UEZ program is a definite positive, especially now as we are seeing a surge in new development.

Also, his efforts to provide more school aid and to overhaul New Jersey Transit are critical for many Vineland residents.

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