

Hiltonia Association General Meeting, 7 pm, November 5, 2025

Hosts: Lori and Mark Emmerson, 8 Kensington Avenue

The meeting began with remarks from Mayor Reed Gusciora. He touched on a variety of topics, including:

The federal government shutdown and the suspension of SNAP benefits. In response, the city, in conjunction with Mercer Street Friends, is spearheading food drives in Cadwalader Park.

State aid to Trenton has risen from \$6 million during the Christie administration to a current level of \$55 million. The city will ask incoming governor Mikie Sherrill for an increase in that amount.

The mayor said by the spring Trenton will have hired 35 new police officers, with an eye to having a younger, more diverse police force going forward. Overall crime rates have decreased this year; as of September, Trenton has reported 14 homicides.

In the area of economic development, efforts to bring a viable hotel back to Trenton are underway, with the city receiving \$4 million from the state Division of Economic Development to purchase the existing building and turn it over to Trelmont, a developer based in North Carolina. Trelmont will give the building a \$20 million overhaul.

The empty Starbucks site downtown will be taken over by Ginger Peach, which currently has a store in Lawrenceville. Momo in Princeton has bought Maxine's and is in the process of renovating it. The former Bell Telephone building is being renovated into apartments, as is the Van Sciver building.

Mayor Gusciora discussed "challenges at Trenton Water Works," saying that "We've been spending millions on smart meters and replacing lead lines." He said the state Department of Environmental Protection "wants

to regionalize” the utility, which is worth \$700 million and is the second oldest water utility in the United States. He added that there is a \$100 million capital campaign for equipment and system updates. Trenton is also trying to collect money “in earnest” from the surrounding municipalities TWW serves, including \$1 million owed by Hamilton Township. Trenton has issued an RFP to hire middle managers for TWW. The mayor said TWW still must meet federal water standards. He said even with \$100 million in upgrades, rates will still be cheaper than they would with American Water and Aqua. The mayor said DEP wants a study about creating a regional water authority, but that it wanted Trenton to agree to a regional authority prior to the study.

The Department of Recreation has refurbished 24 of the city’s 60 parks, with sensory equipment installed at several playgrounds. A soccer field for Unity Park (formerly Columbus Park) is in the works. Jeannie Weakliem suggested a soccer field be installed at Cadwalader Park as well.

Other topics covered include the condemned Front Street parking garage, which the mayor noted “is an embarrassment” but is run by the Parking Authority, which does not fall under city control. Tira McCants asked about the former Mercer Medical Center site on Bellevue Avenue. Mayor Gusioria said a private developer from Long Island, NY, wants to turn the site into a retirement community. He said the former St. Francis Medical Center is being demolished and is going to be turned over to Trenton. Plans are to develop a retirement community like what is being planned at the Mercer Medical site.

He said that he would like city council to create penalties for developers who sit on properties, delaying redevelopment. The mayor said property values are rising in Trenton, and that the city had transferred ownership of 120 abandoned properties in the prior four months.

September 9 meeting minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Graff reported on the budget, which, as of September 30, was \$2771.88. The association's CD was \$5497.33 and was renewed with First Bank at an APR of 3.4% for one year.

Because of the extensive work done this year on the Association garden (on the grass side of Hilvista and Buckingham), Bill said the Executive Board was proposing that the garden budget be increased from the current \$100 to \$500. Bill also asked that the President's Discretionary Fund be increased from \$50 to \$250. Both measures were approved by voice vote.

The last expense for the year will be the printing of *The Hilltone*.

The proposed 2026 budget will be presented at the January general meeting.

Communications: Lily Knezevich said she will be asking the city to repair or replace the current bench at the Hiltonia Garden.

Civic: Paulette Ayres said that there was a mobile food pantry run by Arm in Arm operating on Brunswick Pike (Mercer County Library headquarters) in Lawrenceville. Freedom Skate Park, an indoor skating venue on Clinton Avenue will be temporarily closing on December 20 for building repairs.

Publicity: Linda Reid said *The Hilltone* would be delivered to all residents in December. She asked for volunteers to help with counting and sorting.

Membership: Suzette Price said there were 111 members.

Social, Children's: no report

Social, Adult: Jeannie Weakliem has offered to chair this committee and to work with the Children's Committee. Jeannie and her husband John will host the winter party. It will be a St. Patrick's Day party in March.

Worthy Projects: Chairs Maureen and Jacques Lebel asked that this year, instead of two organizations, Worthy Project donations be earmarked to a single food bank. Mercer Street Friends will be the recipient.

Communications: *Hilltone* editor Thomas Emerick, noted the December issue will be a print version in black in white and will be delivered to each home.

Cadwalader Park Projects: Chair Becky Taylor said The Cadwalader Park Alliance launched a new website; she asked that neighbors go on the site and share a memory of the park. *Trenton Walks!* (which has grown as an outshoot from The Cadwalader Park Alliance) has hosted 60 walks throughout the Trenton area since its inception in 2024.

Old Business: The Don Wallar Memorial Garden received a much-needed refresh over the summer. Karen Onda and Helen Dudar spearheaded the project, which includes new plantings under the *Welcome to Hiltonia* signage. Lily thanked all those who pitched in and who contributed funds to the project. She also thanked Irene Yostemibski who contributed a sizeable number of Belgian blocks. Gardening volunteers will be sought in the spring.

New Business: The Nominating Committee (chair-Tira McCants, Margaret Mason and Linda Reid) presented the following slate of officers for 2026:

****President:*** Lily Kenezevich (since no volunteers were found, Lily will continue as we look for a candidate)

First Vice President: Terri O'Prey

Second Vice President: Julie Kroons

**Treasurer:* Bill Graff (members approved his continued service in September)

Recording Secretary: Margaret Mason

Corresponding Secretary: Andrea Tingey

The slate will be voted on in January; only members with paid 2026 dues can vote.