

Remarks to the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce

Introduction, the two envelopes

Thank you, it is always a pleasure.

All of you have read where the outgoing Mayor of Boston, Tom Menino, left the new Mayor, Marty Walsh a note. The press is wondering what the note said. I happen to have a copy of that note. I know that there are three new Mayors with us today for the first time, Mayor Rivera in Lawrence, Mayor Gray in Amesbury and Mayor Elliot in Lowell. I am going to share with you the advice that Mayor Menino shared with Mayor Walsh.

This advice was actually passed on some time ago from an outgoing Mayor to a new one. The old Mayor took the new young Mayor aside and said, everything is going to go well for a time. You are going to have a honey moon period. Even the local papers will cheer you on. But this will not last forever. Keep this envelope in the top drawer of your desk. When nothing else seems to work, take out this envelope.

When that stops working, use the second envelope.

For awhile, everything was going great, even the Trib loved him—but after a while, people were getting angry. Nothing seemed to work. He went to the top drawer of his desk and took out the envelope and opened it. It said only two words. “Blame me.”

Within a short time, the honey moon was back. Everyone was cheering again when they realized that the old Mayor was responsible for everything—taxes going up services, going down, potholes, everything.

But that only worked for awhile. Then that honey moon was over too. Everyone was on him, he tried everything, nothing seemed to work, then remembered. He went to the top drawer of his desk and took out the second envelope and opened it. It said simply: Make two envelopes.

So for Mayors River, Gray and Elliot if you could come up please. I have for each of you one envelope—and my fervent hope that you never need a second one.

Haverhill Great things in 2013, more to come in 2014

We have had a lot of great things happening in Haverhill in 2013 and we are very hopeful for 2014. We have a wonderful asset to our city, his name is Brian Dempsey and he is responsible for bringing a number of grants and good programs to our city.

Finances

In the area of finances, we have continued to hold the line on spending, and we reached agreement with all of our unions on what we think are very reasonable compensation packages, basically amounting to 1.5% cola's for 2013 and 2014. We were also able to reach agreement on some health care changes that will save us a net of about \$1.9 million a year. In October, Standard and Poor's, raise our bond rating two notches, to the highest it has been in our history to AA. We are very proud of that.

Two other cities had their bond ratings go up—Lawrence and Amesbury. Both of their Mayors were rewarded by being replaced at the polls. When Standard and Poor's raised our bond rating my wife sent me an email that said simply: "so long sucker!"

Downtown

In downtown Haverhill, over the past several years, we have had a renaissance. We have had \$150 million in new public and private investment, including a new parking garage, a new boardwalk, 550 new housing units, and with them 850 new residents. We have in our downtown 22 restaurants of every type and Haverhill has become the best dining area north of the north end.

New Market Rate Housing Downtown

Our downtown renaissance continued on 2013 with the purchase of two new buildings.

Market rate – DHCD, new law leader etc.

The old Haverhill Music center, a building close to my heart since my grandfather once operated his grocery business there, and has been permitted for 12 new housing units with a restaurant or retail on the first floor.

37 Washington St has been approved for 19 units and restaurant on the first floor.

New Waterfront zoning law

Encourages market rate housing, sweeping rezoning etc.

Merrimack Street

Encouraged, one building bought, etc. Money for boardwalk \$5 million, and we thank Rep. Dempsey—and our vision is that someday etc.

Other side rail trail—part of our vision.