

## **Land Preservation, Economic Achievement, And Better Government; Suzanne Lagay's Legacy For Hunterdon County**

Preserving Hunterdon County's rural character, advancing sustainable economic development, and demanding accountability in government operations, Freeholder Director Suzanne Lagay has established a legacy over her six years as a member of the Hunterdon County Freeholder Board --- and that legacy has been recognized and honored.

Elected to the Freeholder Board in 2013, Lagay, a Holland Township resident, did not seek re-election this year. She served a Freeholder Board Director both in 2019 and in 2016, and was the President and CEO of the Hunterdon Chamber of Commerce for nine years, before being elected Freeholder.

With over 60 farms and 3800 acres of farmland preserved and nearly 2000 acres of open space reserved from development in the last six years, preserving Hunterdon County's agricultural heritage, beautiful vistas, and rural character has been one of the major accomplishments in the County during Freeholder Lagay's tenure.

And so has a successful and thriving economic development strategy that is focused on creating a sustainable and diverse local economy. Under Freeholder Lagay's vision there is ongoing opportunity for Hunterdon's citizens in the form of entrepreneurial support, high wage jobs, and the redevelopment of stranded assets.

From her first moments as a Freeholder, Ms. Lagay recognized that County operations and the taxpayers would benefit from improved organizational management. The Freeholder, an experienced organizational management consultant, worked many long hours with County employees to instill a new culture of personal accountability and responsibility with the staff.

"I have a passion for motivating people and organizations. The payoff has been individuals accepting greater responsibility for their performance, more efficient operations, lower budgets, and clean financial audits.

And all that has been accomplished since 2014, has come with the support and cooperation of my colleagues with whom I have served on the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders," Lagay said.

As she leaves elected office at the end of this year, numerous organizations have recognized Freeholder Lagay's commitment to the protecting the Hunterdon County way of life and dedication to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of County government operations for the taxpayers.

Freeholder Lagay received recognition for her Outstanding Contribution to the Community from goHunterdon, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable transportation in Hunterdon County, at the group's annual breakfast in September.

The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce Foundation recognized the Freeholder's exceptional leadership qualities, character, and civic involvement, with their Essence of Hunterdon Award, during the Foundation's gala in May.

At Hunterdon County's first ever Economic Development Summit in October, Freeholder Lagay's tireless work helping to launch the County's economic development initiative in 2016, and the Freeholder's impact on the direction and long-term success of the County's initiative, was recognized with the Economic Development – Leadership Award, presented by her Freeholder colleagues.

Lagay, completing her final Freeholder Board meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup>, stated, "The opportunity to serve the people of Hunterdon County over the last six years has been most gratifying. Leaving this role is bitter sweet for me, however, I have dedicated myself to making our County better. I'll leave it to others to determine if I have been successful."