

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

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Hilton Orrington/Evanston

Evanston, Illinois

by

Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl

For nine years I have been talking about selling water to other communities. Well put up the Sold Sign and give Dave Stoneback a round of applause. It's easy to talk about it. It's not so easy to make it happen. Morton Grove and Niles are now going to purchase water from the City of Evanston, providing \$750,000 in initial revenue and \$70,000,000 over the next 40 years. Don't forget, last year Des Plaines bought water from us via the Northwest Water Commission bringing in \$500,000 in revenue. Skokie is negotiating a new contract and Lincolnwood is calling. Just wait a little longer. The news is great and going to get even better. And be sure to thank Dave. Where are you Dave?

The arrests of Mr. Crosby and Mr. Reid were examples of the need for diversity and de-escalation training accompanied by changes in police procedures. In June of 2015, three months before Mr. Crosby's arrest, the City Council had approved a contract with Evanston native, Doctor Gilo Kweisi Logan for Evanston Police Department Diversity and Inclusion Training. I tell you this not to be defensive, I am devastated by these events, but to tell you that the Council and EPD had been working on de-escalation and diversity issues before Mr. Crosby and Mr. Reid became examples of the need for that training and we will be working on these issues for years to come. They are difficult issues.

Policing is difficult. We have talented officers putting themselves in harm's way to protect us. We are continually trying to improve. All that in no way excuses what happened. My apologies to Mr. Reid and Mr. Crosby.

I do not apologize for the May 2013 Fifth Ward meeting where Chief Eddington discussed the need for targeting gang members with Stop and Frisk as his response to increased violence. Shots had been fired near the playground between Family Focus and Fleetwood in the afternoon when children were present. Watch the video of the shots being fired if you want to know why 120 residents were at the meeting and no objections were raised. The community wanted jobs and mentoring, which we are providing. Any stops that are not narrowly targeting gangs should and will be questioned. Driving while black must be safe in Evanston.

Not receiving as much press but noteworthy, in the last 18 months EPD removed 79 guns from the streets without a shot being fired. 50 of those guns were removed from cars that had been stopped. 19 more guns were purchased at the ongoing gun buyback program.

Violent crime has decreased by 7.2%. That means 141 fewer victims. Homicides decreased from 3 to 2. Success would be zero. There is a reason the violence in Chicago is not coming to Evanston. Last Saturday I learned four more guns: a Glock, 2 handguns and a semi-automatic were taken off the streets by the Evanston police. That same day, EPD's Officer Howard, the principal of Nichols School, Adrian Harries and Brian Harris held a community meeting at Gibbs-Morrison to kick off a mentoring program for middle school boys. That's community policing and it's working. Guns are taken off the streets and boys are learning to tie a tie.

Another view of EPD came from Sir Fraser Stoddart, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. When I gave him the key to the City, he took the microphone. I thought he was going to thank us for the award. Instead he said that his home was the site of an attempted break in. I'm thinking oh no. That's not what I thought he'd say. But he went on. His alarm worked. The police arrived immediately. The police were so professional, courteous and reassuring that Sir Fraser took out his checkbook and handed

\$1,000 to me for the Police and Fire Foundation. I was hoping all future recipients would think that was part of the ceremony but it hasn't always worked out that way.

One of the absolutely fabulous events that occurred in Evanston this year was Superintendent Eric Witherspoon writing a letter the day after the election. And what a letter it was. Thank you, Eric. I quote.

"You attend a school where we not only respect differences, we embrace our diversity." I won't quote all of it but it ends. "Never forget: you belong here at ETHS – each and every one of you. Today, I urge you to be kind and caring to one another. Redouble your support for one another. And even though we cannot always control what is going on in the larger world around us, we can define our own school, our own community."

City Council's definition of our own community is less eloquent but similar. By a unanimous vote we declared that Evanston is a Welcoming City. What does that mean? The first rule is "Don't ask. Don't tell." If the police stop someone, they are not authorized to ask about a person's immigration status. Second, we will not require the Evanston Police Department to hold Evanston residents awaiting deportation unless they have an active Federal warrant. To do otherwise would make the city less safe because undocumented residents would be afraid to cooperate with the police. It is not a way to embrace diversity and we are not going to do it.

Over 100 refugee children and their families are being resettled in Evanston through the U.S. State Departments' Refugee Admissions Program. The City convened a task force of representatives from the resettlement agencies, both school districts, Northwestern University, Evanston Public Library and other City departments, as well as local nonprofits to identify the needs of this diverse group from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Chad, Congo, Rwanda and Nepal. We are reaching out to our residents to help welcome the families to our city.

The Erie Health Center is part of our Welcoming City. The locker room attendant at a local health club had diabetes and her numbers were off the charts. She could not afford her medication which cost \$250 so she was not taking any medicine. Her family was afraid she would die. I was asked for help. I said "Go to the Erie Health Center and the social worker will help you to buy medicine at a price you can afford." She thought she could not go to Erie because she is an undocumented immigrant. None of that mattered. She was seen that day. The price of the medicine was reduced to \$25. All is well in the locker room. If people are afraid to get healthcare it puts us all at risk.

Erie is the proud recipient of a \$1,000,000 gift from Paul and Mary Finnegan. With additional support from NorthShore University HealthSystem, Erie will be embarking on a \$1.7 million expansion of its Evanston Health Center. That will enable Erie which opened with 708 patients to meet the needs of the more than 6,600 patients they serve today. People used to wait three months for health care. We should celebrate our progress.

District 65 is placing a referendum on the ballot April 4. Expenses have outpaced revenues for some time. \$10,200,000 in cuts have been made. The number of students is increasing. There are 1,420 more children in District 65 this year than there were 10 years ago.

Why is this a difficult decision? It is because we all want to preserve diversity in Evanston.

If we increase taxes, some people will no longer be able to afford to live here. If we do not increase taxes, we will shortchange our children. People do not move here for the garbage service or the snow removal, good though they are. They move here for the diversity and the schools.

The city is working hard on economic development, water sales, job creation via partnerships with Oakton Community College, NU and Evanston Hospital and building inclusionary housing to protect diversity. I think it is up to the adults not the children to protect diversity. We can. We should and I

believe we are. People want jobs that pay a living wage. Then they can pay their share of property taxes. The goal is not mediocre schools and continued poverty. The goal is a new form of gentrification where jobs move people from poverty into the middle class. I believe we are beginning to make that happen.

In April 2017, the City and Northwestern will begin year 3 of the Skilled Trades Program. The program employs six men and women per year in a skilled trades apprenticeship program. Over twelve months, participants receive paid on-the-job training in a variety of skilled trades through the Northwestern University Facilities Management Department. To date, the program has a 100% employment rate most being hired at Northwestern. The way that NU welcomes these young people, then encourages them and takes pride in them means as much as the \$330,000 per year you are spending on the program, but please keep spending the money. One apprentice, a grown man, was so motivated that he went to his middle school math teacher for help. She worked with him and he is another success story. Thank you Morty Schapiro, Nim Chinniah and John D'Angelo and a District 65 middle school math teacher whose name I do not know.

When I have gone out from 10pm-12 on Saturday nights in the summer, the young men I met all said the same thing, I said "I am your mayor. What do you want from your city?" Jobs was the answer from one end of this town to the other.

Joseph P. Flanagan, Chairman & CEO of Acquirent LLC is the Chair of the Mayor's Business Committee. Joe is leading an effort with the City and NorthShore University HealthSystem staff to determine if the Northwestern University Skilled Trades Program Workforce model can be replicated at NorthShore. The replication of the program could lead to both training and employment in a variety of areas throughout the system. Once our young people see the vast number of careers available in health care, the sky's the limit for them.

Joe's efforts have also led to NorthShore University HealthSystem and Rotary International commitments to participate in the 2017 Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Annual Job Fair on March 11, 2017. Joe is awesome. Please help him.

The Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program employed 750 students ages 14 to 18, 600 in the summer and year-round 150. The 2017 Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program goal is 1,000 jobs for our young people. Every ETHS student can now have a summer job if they want one. The challenge is to increase the number of Wildkits who want a job.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, summer jobs programs for youth have been found to increase the likelihood of high school graduation to increase lifetime earnings and to reduce the likelihood of entering the juvenile justice system.

A shout out goes to the Moran Center for their work with us. 96 clients received expungement, criminal records sealing, and information on post-conviction relief. This program has helped to provide second chances for individuals to obtain needed employment.

Northwestern University Good Neighbor Fund - Funds two full-time City of Evanston Outreach Workers and much more. All of our outreach workers are amazing people. Thank you, NU.

How diverse is Evanston? The last census data comes from 2012 which has White 65.6%, Black 18.1 and Asian 8.6%. More recent information comes from the State Report Card site which has the following numbers for District 65: White 43.9%, Black 23.5%, Hispanic 19.3% and Asian 4.4%. The racial breakdown in District 202 is similar. Overall these numbers have remained the same moving up or down a few percentage points since 2012. We will know more at the next census, but the numbers confirm, we are diverse. The city is doing everything possible to celebrate, retain and increase diversity.

Evanston is rapidly becoming a sport's fan's destination. How about the last 17 seconds of the game between NU and Michigan? NU should be going to the dance. The ETHS boys' team is in contention for the state championship and ranked #1. We are a basketball town.

We had 86 businesses open, and 24 close in 2016. The commercial and industrial vacancy rate at the end of 2016 was the lowest in 10 years at 5% (according to CoStar Analytics). This comes despite the addition of new commercial space at Chicago Avenue and Main Street. Of the businesses that have shuttered in 2016, many are already slated to be replaced.

Autobarn opened a 128,000 square foot facility in the former Shure Brothers factory. It holds their certified pre-owned inventory and the service for their dealership. In expanding to this location and adding the Fiat/Alfa Romeo dealership, they added over 40 new jobs to Evanston.

On Howard Street, the owners of Ward Eight purchased their building from the City. We look forward to North Shore Cidery, Evanston's first Cider business and a performing arts space on Howard Street.

Evanston based ZS Associates is one of the world's leading sales and marketing consulting firms with 3,400 employees and 22 offices globally. With the City's financial assistance, ZS has expanded its Evanston world headquarters to 47,000 square feet in the Rotary Building.

Major new business openings in Evanston in 2016 include the arrival of Accuity, a financial services firm that relocated its headquarters from Skokie, bringing an estimated 200 jobs to the 1007 Church Street building in Downtown Evanston.

Throughout 2016, unemployment hovered around 5% or less and remained lower in Evanston than in Chicago or the state of Illinois.

Evanston is an attractive place to live, but often, too often it is not affordable. To help, we have an Affordable Housing Fund. The building at 1815 Ridge, a 163-unit senior living building contributed \$400,000 to the fund and will include two affordable units. 824-28 Noyes, a 44-unit mixed-use building, will include four on-site affordable units. 112 affordable housing units in Evanston were rehabbed. 38 households received rental assistance. The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program provided rental assistance for up to 24 months to 26 homeless families with children in Evanston

schools. The community is committed to keeping Evanston as affordable as possible and so is the Council that represents you.

The Federal Infrastructure Bill is a mystery to me, but we cannot afford to ignore it and we are not. At the U.S. Mayors Conference, Vice President Pence told us it was going to be the biggest Federal Infrastructure Bill ever. The problem is, as best I can tell, no federal money is going into the infrastructure bill. It will all be private money. Selling parking did not work well for Chicago. There may be no grants, just a fire sale of city assets. If that's what's happening, we will not participate, at least I hope we will not. Short term political gain comes at horrific long term costs.

Fundraising for a new Robert Crown Center is going well. We have a very generous community and this is our most used community center. Thank you all for giving so generously and don't stop.

Evanston has too much debt. Total debt is estimated at \$415 million. That's down from 2008 when it was \$508 million. The challenge is to continue to decrease our debt levels. The temptation is to increase them. In 2008 the fire pension was funded at 41.2%, now it is 43.8%. Police was 42.9%, now it is 46.6%. We have paid more than the actuary required, changed actuaries, lobbied for pension consolidation, lobbied against even more pension sweeteners, reduced the expected rate of return on investments and what it all means is that 44% of the tax levy for the City goes for Police and Fire Pensions, 44%. Those numbers are a threat to everything we love about our city. They have to continue to improve. Future City Councils deserve our praise if they move the funded levels higher.

The library expanded their partnership with the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department as they continued to produce the Summer Reading Program at park locations and brought books to parks to support twenty minutes of reading each day during the summer camps.

They expanded their partnership with District 65 and the Youth Job Center to serve a larger number of rising kindergarten children and hired a larger cohort of teens to produce the ABC Boosters

summer program. ABC Boosters provides additional support to strengthen letter recognition for the youngest readers.

Wherever I go in the community, EPL is likely to be there.

This summer, the White House asked me to attend a meeting in Beijing. The idea was to have Chinese and U.S. Mayors who are doing good work on climate change meet with one another and share ideas. The White House could not pay for the trip because Congress would not appropriate any money for anything to do with Climate Change. The Bloomberg Foundation paid. Cities have to take responsibility for the environment because no one else will except for occasional help from someone like Mr. Bloomberg. Reducing our carbon footprint takes on an even greater urgency. We cannot look to Washington or Springfield for help. We need to solve our own problems and we need to solve them before we are all walking around like the people in Beijing with masks over our faces to help us breathe and a sky we cannot see.

Five years ago, the City Council approved a contract for 100% green power for Evanston residents and small businesses. This shift to electricity from renewable sources has been key to meeting our climate action goals. Our current electricity aggregation contract will expire this August. I believe the new Council should renew Evanston's commitment to sustainability by again contracting for 100% green power.

Evanston has a long standing tradition that has served us well. We passionately challenge everything we do, but when an outsider criticizes us, we band together. Travel bans, deportations, unravelling the Clean Air Act are more than criticism. They are threats to our community. It is time to band together, to be good to one another, to help one another more. If we are going to have the beloved city Rev. Nabors discusses, we have to earn it. Evanston has to be earned each day.

Now it's my turn to thank some people who earn Evanston each day. The Earner in Chief is here today, Lorraine Morton. I have been so honored to work with this Council, a supportive, talented

Council and with a professional, idealistic and smart city staff led by a brilliant city manager. I've been helped by the World's Greatest Congresswoman, Jan Schakowsky, the World's Greatest Senator, Richard Durbin, the World's Greatest University President, Morty Schapiro, and wonderful state legislators: Daniel Biss, Laura Fine and Robyn Gabel, NorthShore University HealthSystem, is always there for us all as is a vibrant business community and a large number of not-for-profits. My family, which includes Dar Francellno, has been fabulous. Each and every one of you here today have made the last 8 years a wonderful experience. I have loved every minute of it. You put me in this position. I hope I have done you proud.

Thank you.