This address will begin with my expression of deepest appreciation to the voters of Stafford, and all who supported me, in accomplishing the resounding victory in the just concluded mayor’s election. And, I give to the Good Lord for the abundance of blessings He has bestowed on me not only during this campaign, but throughout my life—without which I would not be here tonight—my sincerest gratitude.

Before proceeding, there is a phenomenal team that must be recognized that assisted me immensely during this arduous campaign: Kathrine Ephraim, Rev. Roger Moore, John Ferro, Councilman Cecil Willis, Mauricio & Daisi Marin, Johnny ‘Elvis’ Biamonte, Mike O’Connell, Ed & Lali Castillo, Lana Hoesing, Mary Ann Smith, Lawaneda Banks, Kenneth Floyd, Harvey & Linda Koudelka, John & Marilyn Rose, Hector & Alicia Acevedo, Charles & Jean Court, Thomas Abraham, Neil Patel, Teresa Leal, Marina Beltran, Neil Kamat, Pastor James Ekanem and numerous others.
In preparing this message, a prevailing and disturbing thought kept crossing my mind: so many today think our country owes them something. Then I remembered that there is a monument at the front of City Hall with one of the most profound statements from any Inaugural Address: On January 20, 1961, John Fitzgerald Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” That statement should truly ring in our ears to place in context the direction this country, and indeed this City, should aspire.

With that compelling thought in mind, let us reflect on Stafford, which has a most storied and widely acclaimed past—and a future with incredible promise. The next four years will go a long way in determining our continuing success. In order to solidify a path of outstanding accomplishments and achievements commensurate with the glamorous array that has gained our City this esteemed reputation, namely: SMSD, zero city property taxes, the Stafford Centre, the 90-A corridor with underpasses, fiscal prudence, a powerful work force, a prominent business community, a broad and devoted religious establishment, and a most racially, culturally diverse population committed
to the principles that have made our City so unique and respected.

In view of that illustrious background, exactly what must be our pursuits to propel us into the future?

Throughout this just concluded campaign there was an unmistakable, overarching, very vocal and oft repeated message: the Stafford Municipal School District must find its way! What made this one of a kind district, founded against insurmountable odds, with the best test scores and a most racially diverse student body the talk of the state—has been lost. In spite of making several noteworthy achievements, no longer is it providing the optimum education to the children of Stafford, which should be its most cherished goal and was why the district was created. In fact, the children of Stafford no longer seem to really matter, with some even having been placed on waiting lists to get into the district. Instead and unfortunately, it has been diluted with a growing population of outsiders more interested in extracurricular activities than academics, and that has become its main pursuit. So exactly what changes, (which seems to be the operative word in today’s political vocabulary), do we make to SMSD to restore it
to what this City promised when it was created?

Specifically:

- We begin an aggressive, well funded and unwavering program committed to bringing as many of the children of Stafford as possible back to SMSD, which will substantially reduce the dependence on outsiders;

- We elevate the academics by getting the best teachers by providing them with today’s most sought after benefit: an excellent health care insurance program like that of our City employees, (which is on our agenda tonight), while simultaneously, reducing class sizes from 22 to 1 to 18 to 1, and, removing the hangers-on, who are simply here for the paycheck and have diminished the district for the past two decades; and

- We put in the curriculum, programs and accommodations needed to attract a diverse student body which correlates with this City’s most racially balanced population.

Having addressed that most critical component, we move to general City enhancements, and in conjunction with TxDoT, we begin with rejuvenating FM1092 into a very attractive, highly mobile and commercially
enhanced corridor to serve as an enticement to spark quality growth and development—and generate more resources.

With the heavy rains just last week, and going back to Hurricane Harvey, we saw by simply turning on the TV where our infrastructure is second to none, with the new drainage improvements for Missouri City Estates, Vaccaro Manor, Section 4 and Sugar Creek, performing better than almost anyone expected, which emphasizes the importance of our public works department continuing to refine our outstanding and superior facilities.

We must endeavor to maintain, and elevate, our excellent, award winning police, fire and finance departments, as well as our court, TV, IT, economic development, recreation, administration, and human resource departments so ably servicing our citizens and businesses.

We will increase our resources by the end of the year with the City keeping all of it, (instead of giving 80% away to promoters), when a healthy sum of revenues will be generated from the sales tax on internet sales as authorized by the recent U.S. Supreme
Court decision, which we worked to assure from the moment of its announcement with the Texas Comptroller and State Legislature.

We must endeavor to assist the much hyped GRID to succeed, as the City has far too much invested in the project on this iconic tract; however, by the developers own admissions they cannot meet their obligations detailed in the agreement with the City; consequently, before making more cash payments in the millions to them as required by the contract, revisions are in order to cover outlays necessary for the project’s well being.

The time is at hand: our citizens have declared that animal welfare has become a front and center—rather than an-oh-by-the-way issue—with personnel as well as volunteers being central to protecting our dogs and cats, and we should prudently move away from the shelter arrangement with Missouri City to a program for not only an excellent facility but a solid no-kill, spade-and-neuter, and adoption structure.

While unbelievably, some in this City still can’t understand the benefits of high paying, private sector jobs, we up the ante by creating and cultivating through
efforts already initiated, an enticing jobs program consolidating the attributes of the City, SMSD and HCC, which will afford our citizens, and especially our students, outstanding job opportunities with businesses right here at home—something other cities would kill for!

And in keeping with the reputation of this City for unique and innovative endeavors, exploratory research is underway for a monumental project expanding the Stafford Centre with an addition, while not being simple, inexpensive or happening over night, would truly transform Stafford and make it into point of destination.

We must naturally conclude our fervent pursuits with the one underpinning of this City embraced by all the candidates in the election, and extolled from the statehouse to the national capitol: preserving and perpetuating the Zero City Property Tax. Nothing better defines and distinguishes Stafford.

I look forward to the next four years as exciting, creative and with much anticipation for Stafford, and while some would have had you believe the best days
of this City were behind us unless we imposed onerous assessment measures and gouged our taxpayers, (and had they gotten control of this City it would have been a self-fulfilling prophesy), the future of Stafford is very bright indeed—and, with all races, cultures and creeds working together—we will continue as a beacon of prudence, fiscal responsibility and innovation.

Thank you for the opportunity to enhance my service to you, and to this truly wonderful City!