

**AT THE TOWN HALL-INTERVIEWING THE MAYOR
WORKSHEET 4**



- What's your name? Where you born in Serres? What is your job?

My name is Petros Aggelidis, I come from Serres and I am a vet.



- How many years have you been a mayor?

I have been a Mayor of Serres since 2011, for almost 8 years

- Why did you decide to be a mayor?

It has been my dream since I was very young to participate in the community and offer as much as I can. We created a team with my colleagues and we believed we could improve things in our town with lots of ideas, hard work and the help of the citizens. The citizens believed in our dream, supported us and voted for our team twice.

- How often do elections for mayors take place and who can be a candidate?

Municipal elections for mayor and municipal council take place every 4 years and the candidates can be all Greek citizens over 18. There is a new law which may change that and we have municipal elections every 5 years.



- When is the next election? Are you going to be a candidate?

The next elections for Mayor and municipal council in Serres will take place on May 19, 2019. I'm not going to be a candidate because I believe that 8 years of work as a Mayor are enough for me and I have worked hard to change a lot in the town with my team. I believe that this should be a law: a mayor can be elected only twice and then give way to new people with fresh ideas. I am happy that I have been an independent mayor and I

only worked for the good of the town and citizens, without following only the ideology of a certain political party.

-What is the population of our municipality? How many towns and villages does it consist of?

Serres municipality consists of the town Serres and 27 small or bigger villages around it. The population of the inhabitants written in the municipal registers are 77,000 but there are at least 15-20 thousand more people who live in the municipality but come from other areas.

- What is the history of this building?

The municipal building is an old building of more than 100 years and the first mayor who built it was a Turk during the last years of Ottoman occupation. At first, it was small, just the office of the mayor but then more and more wings and offices were added until it covers a whole block. There are shops downstairs and two arches in the shape of a cross. It has no architectural value and the previous mayors wanted to demolish it but we decided to keep it and renovate it as a building of “cultural memory”. First, we renovated the roof and this room, the conference room and then we will renovate the whole building, the arches, the shops. The shops will belong to the municipality and sell traditional products and food. In the next years, the office of the mayor will go to another historical building and this old town hall with the clock will remain as a symbol of the town, with offices to help the citizens.



-Why do the citizens of the town come here?

Citizens come to the offices of the town hall to take care of different personal issues, to ask for personal documents and to discuss about projects they are doing for the municipality

-Which are the most important problems in our municipality?



I believe that all problems in the town have their roots in the citizens' way of thinking, their attitude to the community and even worse their indifference and lack of knowledge. When we change these to the better we can improve all the problems in the town, such as rubbish, stray animals, traffic problems, traffic infringements. Changing our attitude of thinking only about us and think as members of a whole community is real culture.

-Which are the ideas or initiatives you have taken to improve life in Serres?

The last 8 years, my team and myself as mayor have spent 50,000,000 euros on works and projects to improve the quality of life and welfare of citizens. We have renovated the central streets of the town to be friendly for walking, cycling, easy movement of the disabled, shopping and recreation. We have created streets with bioclimatic interventions for the hot summer months, like trees, street fans, running water that drop the temperature at least 5 degrees. We have formed a large central park for the citizens with space for walking, cycling, municipal café, open theatre, a refreshing pond, open events, concerts, fan park, ice skate ring and Santa village during Christmas holidays. We have created 32 "green" schools which are heated with renewable sources of energy and produce their own electricity needs with solar panels on the roof. Finally, we have already found 20 more million euros to continue the improvement of the town.

-Which are your everyday duties?

A mayor hasn't got a certain daily schedule like other employees. I usually come to my office at 8 am and go back home at 12 at night with 1-2 hours break in the afternoon. I spend most hours during the day in meetings and conferences, visiting areas where there is a specific problem or issue and attending events and celebrations to be near the citizens and participate in the town life.



-Are there superiors who ask you what to do or check the work done?

Of course there are superiors who check our work and where the municipal funds go. Every decision of the municipal council is studied and approved by many committees and institutions. All the works or projects are checked too at every step of their implementation. The final judge is the people who approve or disapprove our work with their vote every four years.

-What is the municipality doing to help schools and education in the municipality?

Education and school buildings maintenance is one of the priorities of the community. All the services of the municipality are a priority for schools, like cutting trees and grass, collecting leaves, washing the yards etc. The municipality receives certain funds for the operation and maintenance of school buildings and we decide how to divide them after the suggestions of the school committees.

-Is there democracy in the municipality? How do you take decisions? Can the citizens participate in the decisions and how?

Democracy starts with the election of the mayor and 41 members for the municipal council by the people who live in the community every 4 years with secret voting simultaneously in all municipalities of Greece. Decisions are taken in the municipal council meetings with voting and the law of the majority. Citizens can attend the municipal council but they can't vote. If they have an issue or idea to suggest for the council meeting, they either present it to the mayor and he/she decides if the issue is discussed in the meeting or find 8 members of the council who agree that the issue is important to discuss it in the meeting.

-Can you tell us which cultural or social events or actions will take place in the municipality this year?

There are about 30 cultural and social events which take place in the town every year mostly concerts, traditional products/dance/music, thematic events like Christmas etc.

The ones which you students can participate are:

The "Town of Wishes" and Santa's village at Christmas

Musics of the World

Decorate my town

Eco Festival

Wrestling and martial arts competition

Street sports and Street Basketball Days

Running race round the town
Bougatsa Day
Carnival celebrations
School and University theatrical teams
Cleaning and tree planting campaigns

-How can citizens help or offer volunteer work in the town?

There are a lot of ways citizens can offer volunteer work for the good of the community. For example, you can offer supplies or/and help to the municipal grocer's for people in need. You can offer help in structures like the "Woman's House" or the "Child's House" like keeping company and playing with the children who live there. You can also participate in "Eco Festival" and "Let's Do It Greece!" cleaning campaigns.

-What do you feel and hope about the future of Serres?

I feel and hope that the future of our community will be even better and that the next mayor and municipal council will keep and continue all the good things we have achieved and correct the mistakes we have probably done. I want to see you children have the education and way of thinking as active citizens which will reduce the problems in our community.



The Mayor of Serres accepted us in his office on October 13th 2018, listened to our letter, answered our questions and our suggestions for a better community, gave us a tour of the Town Hall and useful advice. We thank him so much!