

## **SPEECH BY THE MAYOR**

*Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,*

The area in which we are gathered tonight is an important element of the cultural heritage of our country and the region in a wider sense.

In 1840, with the help of the architect Cleanthe, the French Sophie De Marbois known as the Duchess of Plaisance came to Penteli after the death of her daughter.

The philhellenism (love of Greek culture) that had brought her to Greece a few years ago made her build her palace in the area on a land that belonged to the Monastery of Penteli.

After purchasing large amounts of agricultural land and signing the contracts, she engaged the Greek architect Cleanthe and engineer Alexander Georgantas to design a palace for her.

She eventually built houses like «TOURELLE» on Eleftheriou Street, totally-ruined nowadays, «Plaisance», «Maisonette» and the «Castle of Rododafni».

The Castle of Rododafni was used from 1950 to 1967 as the temporary residence of the heir of the Greek throne and later King Constantinos.

The main house of the Duchess in Penteli was the Castle of Rododafni, which was named after the great number of Rhododendrons and was made of Pentelic marble in Gothic Rhythm.

It was then granted to the Greek Tourism Organization and was later granted to our Municipality.

Further down the presentation I will develop some basic elements of the municipality of Penteli within the framework of the program.

## **SPEECH PROFILE:**

1. geographic data
2. administrative data
3. human-centered elements
4. Historical data
5. current situation and structures
6. strategic plan and prospects

### **Penteli the birthplace of the Parthenon**

#### **1. Geographic data**

The municipality occupies the southeastern part of Mountain Penteli with an area of 70,000 acres which is totally mountainous with small, semi-mountainous and lowland areas. The municipality has been a member of the Covenant of Mayors since 2015.

#### **2. Administrative data**

The population - about 80,000 - is divided into 3 municipal entities: Penteli, Nea Penteli and Melissia.

#### **3. Human-centered elements**

The human existence within the zone of responsibility of the community proves to be 3 to 4 millenniums B.C with the Paleolithic finds discovered in the basin of Kalissia and kept in museums in Greece and other countries.

In general, the living standards of the inhabitants are high especially in the entity of Penteli.

#### **Educational level**

The educational level of residents is very high. There are many acclaimed entrepreneurs and scientists.

#### **4. Historical data**

##### Paleontological period and finds of the basin of Kalissia

At the foot of Mountain Penteli many palaeontological finds have been discovered that testify the existence of life in the mountain long before Man appears. These findings, which correspond to more than 40 species of animals, are found in Athens Palaeontological Museum as well as in museums in Berlin, Vienna, Munich, London and Paris.

##### Ancient Greek period

In the 7th century B.C, in Thucydides and Herodotus the mountain is named «Vrilissos» while in the 3rd century BC it is mentioned by Pausanias as «Mountain Pendeli» but its name was even strengthened by the foundation of the ancient municipality of Pendeli by the quarriers of ancient times.

The ancient municipality was in the south of the present central square of the 'Holy Triad'.

##### **- Quarry**

In the 5th century B.C it was decided to reconstruct the Acropolis, replacing the limestone with marble in order to build a magnificent temple of Doric rhythm that would be visible even from Aegina.

##### **- Nymphaio (the Nymphs' cave)**

At an altitude of 800 meters a little above the ancient quarry there is the Nymphaeum, which is a very small cave and it is the only one in Greece to prove the existence of the Nymphs.

Thanks to the great findings - exhibit numbers 4465 and 4455 (archaeological museum of Athens) embossments of Hermes and Nymphs from 350 BC and 310 BC respectively were brought to light by archaeologist Ioannis Papadimitrios.

- **Besides the marble, the rich pine forests**

provided the Athenians with wood, strongly impregnated with resin, suitable for closing the joints with which the Trireme (ships) were constructed to protect Athens from sea.

- **Hadrian Aqueduct**

In the years of Roman emperor Hadrian, the second century A.D the first systematic water supply of Athens is achieved with the construction of Hadrian Aquarium, which began in 134 and was completed in 140. It watered the Roman neighborhood of Athens, today's Zappeion from Kallimarmaro to the Parliament.

### Christianity in Penteli

The mountain is also known as the mountain of Amomon ( 'the immaculate') with dozens of hermitage and small temples from the Ottoman domination and with dozens of monasteries.

### Recent times

- *The Castle of the Duchess of Plaisance*
- *The bridge with the 5 arches*

The bridge with the 5 arches was one of the many projects created after the sponsorship of the Duchess of Plaisance in the middle of the 19th century.

- *Bridges with an arbor or small bridge of the forest*

The small stone-built bridge is located in the ravine of Agia Marina at a short distance from the Aphrodite Spring

- *Penteli Observatory*

It has been located on Koufou Hill since 1937. The building is entirely built of Pentelic marble.

- *Years of German occupation*

During the years of the occupation, Penteli was shelter to rebels (greek resistance).

- *Tuberculosis in 1950s*

The mountain in the 1950s was the actual lungs for the thousands of tuberculous patients who tried during the summer period mainly to make use of the well-oxygenated environment.

- *building and construction cooperatives*

Undoubtedly the destruction of the Pentelic environment in recent years with the residential development on the beautiful slopes of the mountain was connected with the development of the cooperatives. Thousands of acres of the mountain were purchased, integrated into town planning, built and thus made their owners rich.

- *hospital*

The highly oxygenated atmosphere due to dense pine forest has led the state to develop 8 public hospitals in our city

## **5. Current situation**

In the municipal administration of the municipality, we faithfully adhere to the principles of autonomy and self-sufficiency for every municipal unit.

### **a. Education**

Schools are believed to be a sacred place for us as children is the hope of our place. We have monthly coordinating meetings with the school directors and the presidents of the parents' associations.

We have instituted and are currently operating the institution of 'booster teaching' families and pupils who can not afford private tuition.

After 10 years of intensive efforts and after the concession of 13.5 hectares within the urban plan of the city in Kallithea, the Municipality managed to build the new school which has been operating since September 2017.

#### b. Civilization

Culture works hand in hand with volunteer groups in our area which are administratively subject to the Municipal Organization of Culture and Sport (OPATH) with excellent results and with no functional cost in all three cultural entities.

#### c. Social welfare

**«Volunteering and sponsorship are the basis for the success of the welfare system»**

social welfare and solidarity are the basis for ensuring social cohesion and through the harmonious co-operation with the Municipal volunteer group we support people in need by making use of sponsorships from our fellow citizens.

by coordinating a large number of social welfare and solidarity actions in all three entities, the municipal Organisation in charge (OKPA) holds under its supervision:

- 6 nurseries
- 6 homes for the elderly (KAPI)
- The Social Welfare and Care Center
- 'Home health care support'
- blood donation days and events

#### d. Sports

the best environmental conditions, modern licensed facilities and, above all, young people promote sport spirit and contribute to the development of sport and athletic competitiveness in our town.

with the provision of our facilities to clubs and colleges, we ensure their maintenance and we support their efforts with no expenses.

sports facilities operating through the Organization for Culture and Sport:

- swimming pool

- 3 indoor gyms
- open gyms in schools and local communities
- volleyball court in High Schools
- football courts

## **6. Strategic plan and prospect**

The town is purely residential.

Any businesses operating within its borders should operate so as to serve the citizen of the city, give jobs to local citizens and not burden them with traffic or harm the environment.

The great historical heritage and the significant monuments that exist in the area also 'impose' the development of tourist activity. Urban, suburban and mountainous areas are the objectives of conservation and developing actions.

The great slopes of Podonifti and Lykorema and the torrents that cross our cities are environmental monuments and the need to keep them open to the public and well-preserved is our first priority.

Rational waste management is done based on recycling at source, composting, minimizing household waste for the benefit of the family economy through municipal taxes.

The urban planning mainly in the newly constructed areas should be based on buildable lots and low building rates.

There is adequacy of educational, sports and cultural facilities.

And finally, we ensure the functioning of the municipality on the basis of the following principles:

- the focus of our attention and all our actions is the Citizen
- economic transparency
- no money waste
- goal settings, measurable results and control

- always remember that the word ‘man’ (in the sense of ‘help, support, solidarity’) should and must be the answer to whichever question
- social welfare is based on volunteering and sponsorship
- Employability and compliance with procedures in financial management

### ***PRIORITY AXES***

Axis 1: Environment

Axis 2: social policy health education culture and sport

Axis 3: Local economy and employment

Axis 4: Internal development of the municipal

Dear guests,

Both the city and the mountain are not an ordinary place. It is the place that has historically become best known for its contribution to mankind, to the environment and to Greek and world history.

*Pendeli...*

- **Is the birthplace of the symbol of Democracy-the Parthenon.**
- It is the place that provided Athenians with water for two millennia.
- It is the blessed mountain that gave shelter to Christians in the difficult years of the Turkish occupation.
- It is the mountain whose dense forests gave life to the sick in the 1950s.
- It is the mountain where the indigenous inhabitants (‘sarakatsanoi’) supported the hungry Athenians and the rebels (of Greek resistance) with milk and meat from the local sheep flock.

- It has also been a major economic factor in the areas of tourism, of mining and marble trading, supporting for almost 2 decades (the 50's and 60's) the internal migration of islanders and marble quarriers, and finally it has been a main holiday destination for the Athenians and Piraeus' residents.

**As an indigenous sworn defender of this place,** I would like to point out that the peculiarity of our place and mountain is widely expressed in hundreds of legends and mummers.

**In the framework of the educational program you will have the chance to get to know Greece, our place Penteli, the birthplace of the Symbol of Democracy - the Parthenon. I wish you a pleasant stay and success in your work.**

*The Mayor*

*Demetrios Stergiou Kapsalis*