

MAYOR'S MONTHLY UPDATE

JANUARY 2016

NEW TOWNSHIP WEBSITE

The new township website is up and running! The new site (<http://saddlebrooknj.us/>) works well on all screen sizes and is much more comprehensive than the previous website. Great websites do not just look good, they provide important, timely and useful information. They are continuously changing, growing, and evolving. If you are involved in a township organization or department and would like to have something published to the website, send it to Christine Genuario at CGenuario@saddlebrooknj.gov. Help make this the best, most informative town website in New Jersey (and beyond). If you have any questions, please contact Joe Obiso at JKO Consulting; jobiso@jkoconsulting.com or (201) 368-9355.

BUDGET UPDATE

On February 8, 2016, Business Administrator Peter Lo Dico, Chief Financial Officer Raymond Carnivale and I met with the Township Auditor Steve Weilkotz to review and assess the township's finances in preparation of our 2016 municipal budget. The auditor provided an overview of anticipated revenues, expenses, surplus and debt services. Commercial tax appeals caused by a reduction in property values is again a reason for concern. Settlement of these appeals has lowered the township's tax base to an extent where we anticipate starting the 2016 budget with a deficit.

GRANT WRITER UPDATE

Public Service Gas & Electric (PSE&G) Energy Efficient Grant

This application is still being processed and we should receive notification by March 1, 2016. Five (5) municipal facilities were eligible for energy efficient improvements under this grant including Engine Co. # 1, Hook and Ladder Co. # 1, Engine Co. # 2, the Department of Public Works and Police Department. These improvements typically include new lighting and heating / air conditioning upgrades. PSE&G will pay 100 percent of the cost to install the recommended energy efficiency measures with the participating customer repaying 30 percent either in a lump sum or interest free on their PSE&G bill over 36 months.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant 2015

This is a federal grant that provides financial assistance directly to fire departments to enhance their capabilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. Our grant writer assisted the Chief and Assistant Chief of our Volunteer Fire Department in preparing and submitting the grant application requesting approximately \$188,000 in funding. The town should be receiving notification of final outcome by the end of March 2016.

Other Grants Opportunities

We are considering applying for two grants that target sewer repairs, pumping station upgrades and catch basin repairs. The USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program assists towns with available long-term, low interest loans, and if funds are available, grants may be combined with a loan if necessary to keep use costs reasonable. The FY 2016 Economic Development Assistance (EDA) Programs offer grant or loan assistance of at least \$100,000 up to \$300,000 with awards generally not exceeding 50 percent of the total cost of the project.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection recently posted the availability of SFY16 319(h) grant money. The purpose of these grants is to reduce water quality impairment through implementation of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution control projects. This would include improved watershed plans and green infrastructure projects. Our grant writer is checking the township's eligibility for this grant, which has an application deadline of March 11, 2016.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

300th Anniversary Committee

Adopt a Spot Banner Program: The 300th Anniversary Committee has announced an "Adopt a Spot" banner program in honor of the town's tercentennial. The program allows a business or a person to purchase a banner that will replace one of the 60 banners that currently line Market Street, Midland Avenue, Saddle River Road and Pehle Avenue. These 30" by 60" vinyl banners will be affixed to utility poles from April to November 2016. The sponsorship of a banner is a good way for local businesses and/or individuals to show their support of the town's special 300th anniversary celebration. Whether it may be special and unique advertisement for their business, or for recognition like in memory of loved ones or even themselves,

it shows the sponsors are proud to be part of their local community. The cost of a banner is \$250.00, which is the cost to make one. At the end of the year, the banners will be taken down and presented to the person or businesses, acknowledging them and providing them with a keepsake. The sponsorship form for the banner program, which has more information, can be accessed by clicking this link: <http://bit.ly/300Banner>.

Mayor's Youth Group

The Mayor's Youth Group held a meeting on Saturday, January 30, 2016 and discussed upcoming events, including the Township Easter Celebration, which will be held on Sunday, March 19, 2016 from 12-2PM at the High School gymnasium. Also discussed was planned activities and events for the Township's 300th Anniversary Celebration including a dedication service at the First Reformed Church on Saturday, April 2, 2016 from 3-5PM. Volunteers from the Group will be needed to assist with set-up and clean-up for the refreshments to follow the service. The next Group meeting will be held on Saturday, February 27, 2016 at 1PM.

Access for All

Committee Chairman, Councilman Andrew Cimiluca, has scheduled a local Assess for All Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 7PM at our Senior Center. The meeting will provide important information for committee members regarding the growing number of residents with disabilities in our area. Topics will include programs, transportation, emergency services and local problem-solving.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Fire Department Installation Dinner

On Saturday, January 9, 2016, I was honored to swear-in Fire Chief Thomas Dickman and Assistant Fire Chief Christopher Sloma at the Saddle Brook Fire Department installation dinner held at Biagio's Terrace in Paramus. New firefighters and officers were also installed and our outgoing Fire Chief Douglas Habermann received commendations for his two years of service. Congratulations and thank you to all our volunteer firefighters for the outstanding service they provide to our community.

Ambulance Corps. Installation Dinner

On Saturday, January 30, 2016, it was an honor and a privilege to swear in new officers of the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps. at their 2016 installation dinner. Besides the installation of line and executive officers, some ambulance members received length of service certificates. Several crew members and two Saddle Brook police officers were given life-saving awards for providing Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) to a motorist who collapsed on Saddle River Road in March of 2015.

UPDATE ON SPECIAL PROJECTS

DPW Roof

The work is complete and the final project cost ultimately came in approximately \$16,000 under budget.

DPW Salt Shed

The base of the salt shed and the interior floor are complete. The latest installation date for the roof structure is mid-February this year.

Veterans Field Bathrooms and Concession Stand

A sub-committee was formed to coordinate and plan project activities along with professionals. The sub-committee members are Council President Joseph Camilleri, Councilman Todd Accomando, Recreation Director Joseph Setticase, Business Administrator Peter Lo Dico and myself. A meeting was held on January 27, 2016 with the township engineer and the architect for this construction project.

Fifth Street Drainage

The township engineer re-issued the bid documents for the Fifth Street Storm Drain Cleaning Project. There was a pre-bid site meeting on February 5, 2016 aimed at clearing up any misunderstandings that may have resulted in the high pricing in the prior bid. The new bids will be opened on February 17, 2016.

Update on Road Construction Projects

PSE&G is still replacing gas lines in streets just north of Market Street between Saddle River Road and West Street as part of their Energy Strong Program. Since January 4, 2016, Saddle River Road has been closed at times between Market Street and Railroad Avenue from 7AM to 3PM, Monday through Friday causing traffic to be detoured. Construction is still taking place on Saddle River Road, but police traffic control officers are keeping the roadway open channeling vehicles around the work area. Motorists still have to expect some delays in the area.

OTHER

Snow Storm

On Saturday, January 23, 2016, New Jersey experienced a massive snow storm. I want to thank the residents of Saddle Brook for their patience and cooperation during this storm. Special thanks to all our Department of Public Works employees who worked long hours to plow our township streets, parking lots and walkways, despite snow falling about two inches an hour for much of the 16-hour storm. While some municipalities were hampered by the storm, Saddle Brook streets were all cleared by Monday morning allowing for ease of travel and our schools to have a delayed opening rather than closing for the day. I want to commend our emergency management team for planning and directing the storm response activities and keeping our residents informed with alerts and updates. I also appreciate the efforts of our emergency services personnel from the police, fire and ambulance who stood by and responding to calls during the storm. Lastly, I want to thank volunteers from our local boy scout troop 213 for assisting some of our senior citizens and disabled residents in need with shoveling their properties. After every major incident, our emergency management team evaluates the township's response in an attempt to improve our efforts the next time around. Overall, we did a very good job weathering Winter Storm Jonas, but I am confident that we will do even better in the future.

Mayor's Matter Meeting

On Thursday, January 14, 2016, I attended a breakfast meeting for local mayors hosted by Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco in the Commissioners Club in MetLife Stadium. The primary focus of the meeting was economic and workforce development, specifically working together to grow business, ratables and jobs in local municipalities. Initiatives to rehabilitate existing businesses and attract new corporations while controlling over-development and maintaining quality of life for our residents was discussed. Thank you County Executive Tedesco and staff for hosting the meeting and providing this valuable information to local mayors.

Senior Bus Extended Hours

The township recently announced an expansion of the senior citizen transportation services. We will now be offering bus transportation to play bingo at the Saddle Brook Senior Center Wednesdays and Fridays from 12-3PM. This service is available for Saddle Brook residents only. To reserve a seat, please call Senior Center Director Joe Lecce at 201-845-4594.