

MAYOR'S MONTHLY UPDATE MAY, 2015

BUDGET UPDATE

On Tuesday, May 12th, the township council held a public hearing for an amendment to the budget. On June 4th at the council meeting a public hearing on the budget was held and following that hearing a budget was adopted. The budget is below the two percent tax-levy cap excluding specific exceptions under the law. The average tax increase for property owners on the municipal side will be \$95.00 for a home assessed at \$300,000.00. \$34.00 of the increase is related to the overall decrease in township ratables from 2014-2015, as well as the number of tax appeals filed by property owners. The remainder of the increase, \$61.00, is based on the budget.

ROAD PROGRAM

The town engineer and DPW have conducted an assessment of our town roads and the infrastructure (water & sewer) under those roads to determine which are in most need of repair. There are a number of streets that have been identified as being most in need of repair and are considered a priority. The road project will be funded as a capital improvement allocated through bonding. The council and I are committed to re-establishing an annual road improvement program and this year will be considered Phase I.

RE-DESIGN OF TOWNSHIP WEBSITE UPDATE

The township website re-design is progressing as anticipated. JKO Consulting has met with most of the township departments to review their needs and current online presence. The color scheme has been determined. JKO is conducting extensive research on how the top municipal websites are organized. Content and functionality checklists will be sent out to each individual department in the middle of June. Communications to township organizations will be sent by the end of June offering to place their contact information and other content onto the new township website.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Flood Advisory Committee has scheduled a meeting for 8:00PM on Tuesday, June 23rd at town hall. In regard to the Access for All Committee, I am in the process of assigning members from our township police department, emergency management office, fire department, ambulance, DPW and requesting representatives from the board of education, Saint Philip the Apostle Church and Kessler Institute of Rehabilitation to participate. I'm also going to issue a press release to the Community News requesting members of the public who have family members with disabilities to join the committee as well. The purpose of the Access for All Committee, headed by Councilman Andrew Cimiluca, is to foster equal access to community life and activities for people with disabilities. This would be accomplished by educating the public to raise awareness about the needs and rights of people with disabilities and the importance of increased accessibility, housing and facilities in our township.

GRANT UPDATES

The Bergen County Central Region Community Development Committee has recommended that the township be approved to receive \$84,642.00 in Community Development Block Grant funds. We are also awaiting final approval for funds from applications submitted to the Bergen County Open Space, Floodplain Protection Trust Fund. I attended an Open Space Grant public hearing on May 26th. There was no public comment on our township's application, which will now go before the Bergen County Executive and Board of Freeholders for final review and awarding of the funds for our proposal.

MEETINGS

I attended a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) meeting on Thursday, May 21st held at town hall by Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC), Chief of Police Robert Kugler and Deputy EMC Donald Jervis. Ideas for future training and use of CERT members for specific events and activities were discussed. Chief Kugler plans on having quarterly CERT meetings and events to keep members current and updated on training and certification requirements.

POLICE PROMOTIONS

At a special swearing-in ceremony held in town hall on Tuesday, April 21st, I had the honor of administering oaths of office and promoting Thomas Johnson to Police Lieutenant and Jeffrey Panagia to Police Sergeant. Earlier in the day, Douglas Habermann and David DeGennaro were reinstated to the rank of Sergeant, promotions they received back in December 2014. Lieutenant Johnson is a 20 year veteran of the police department and has served in both the Patrol Division and the Detective Bureau. He is the department's Juvenile Officer, Megan's Law representative and is a member of the Bergen County School Security Task Force. Sergeant Panagia is a 22 year veteran of the police department assigned to the Patrol Division. He is a member of the department's Honor Guard, a LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) instructor and has also worked as a school resource officer. Congratulations and best wishes to the promoted officers and their families

RE-DEDICATION OF VETERAN'S FIELD

With the turf project nearly complete except for a few off-field items, the township re-dedicated Veteran's Field to our local veterans and groups on Saturday, May 23rd. The ceremony was a tribute to all our young men and women in the military who have fought to protect our freedom and preserve our way of life. The symbolic ribbon-cutting was done on the field on the 50 yard line. Two local children, Jonathan Curry and Enzo Russo, held the ribbon while it was cut by Saddle Brook VFW Post 3484 Commander Raymond Heffernan. He was joined by Charles Krejci of Jamros-Baker-Schneider American Legion Post 415 and Commander Kenneth Green of the Taejon Chapter 170 of the Korean War Veterans. Afterwards, hotdogs and ice cream were served at the concession stand for all in attendance.

ANTI-NEPOTISM ORDINANCE

The anti-nepotism ordinance that was introduced in April 2015 was voted down by the township council on second reading by a 3-2 margin. The measure would have barred parents, siblings and children of certain officials from holding municipal positions. Such family members of council members and the mayor would not have been allowed to hold any position in the local government. Relatives of township employees were excluded from working in the same department where their family member is employed. I have every intention of amending and reintroducing the ordinance – one that, at the very least, restricts hiring of relatives of the Mayor and Council. If supported by the council, I would be in favor of expanding the ban on hiring family members of department heads and division heads as well.

BLUE MASS

A special Blue Mass was held on June 3rd at Saint Philip the Apostle Church honoring all law enforcement personnel and agencies for their dedicated service to their communities, especially those officers from NJ who recently lost their lives helping others. The roster included NJ State Trooper Anthony Raspa, who was killed in a car crash the weekend before the mass; Bergen County Sheriff's Lt. Brian Beutel, who collapsed and died March 18th during a charity basketball game; and Saddle Brook dispatcher and Special Police Officer Gregory "Goose" Korczak, who died of a heart attack suffered while preparing for his family's Easter celebration on April 5. They joined Waldwick Police Officer Christopher Goodell, Cliffside Park Police Officer Stephen Petruzzello, Jersey City Detective Melvin Santiago, Newark Police Officer Reinaldo Arocha and Ocean County Prosecutor's Detective John Stevens, who all died last year. The celebrant was Fr. Theemas Pankiraj, pastor of St. Philip, with co-celebrant Fr. Thomas Norton, chaplain of the Bergen County Police Chief's Association. Police Honor Guards from Saddle Brook, Bergen County Sheriff, Cliffside Park, Fair Lawn and Waldwick were present. Members of the Bergen County Police Pipes and Drums band and bag piper Raymond Curry of Saddle Brook were in attendance and performed "Amazing Grace."

ENERGY SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Business Administrator Peter Lo Dico and I met with a representative of Lime Energy. Lime Energy has a program to replace lighting, HVAC and appliance controls with more energy efficient fixtures and equipment. About 70 percent of the cost is paid by NJ Clean Energy. Lime Energy has the state contract to provide service to municipalities and commercial businesses for NJ Clean Energy. Lime Energy is currently in the process of doing an assessment of our town buildings to determine their energy efficiency and whether we qualify for the program.

Business Administrator Peter Lo Dico and I met with representatives of Jersey Energy Group to discuss cost saving benefits of the township using solar energy. Jersey Energy Group agreed to submit a report outlining the pros and cons of going solar. Jersey Energy Group also proposed the township purchasing energy from a secondary provider at a lower rate. There would be significant savings if our township residents were to also purchase energy from the same supplier. This arrangement could be negotiated with the approval of township residents. It was suggested that Jersey Energy Group do a presentation before the council sometime in the near future to discuss some of their proposals.