

MAYOR'S MONTHLY UPDATE FEBRUARY 2016

NEW TOWNSHIP WEBSITE

The Township website (<http://saddlebrooknj.us/>) has been adding content for Departments, Community Organizations, Events and Video. Check out the Community Calendar on the website Home Page. We are continuously adding Events as we receive them. If you have an upcoming Event, and would like to have it published to the website, email the text, photo(s), links, etc. to Christine Genuario at CGenuario@saddlebrooknj.gov. We will post it to the Calendar and to the Saddle Brook Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/SaddleBrookTownship>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/SBrookTownship>) pages. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Obiso at JKO Consulting; jobiso@jkoconsulting.com or (201) 368-9355.

BUDGET UPDATE

Budget Process

On March 1st, the 2016 proposed municipal budget was submitted to the township council for their review and adoption. This budget was prepared after meetings with all department heads reviewing their requests and careful consideration of the taxpayers of Saddle Brook. The proposed budget is up slightly for all line items that fall within the 2% CAP and a total increase of 2.74%. The bulk of the tax increase is due to the ongoing tax appeal process, which has deeply impacted the ratables of the township. In spite of all these appeals, the increase in taxes on an average home assessed at \$296,125 is \$111.05 for municipal purposes. I look forward to working with the council in formulating a spending plan that is realistic and affordable for our residents.

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Rebate / Reimbursement

Several years ago, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) established a Municipal Rebate Incentive Program. The Program is a cooperative effort between PVSC and municipal construction code enforcement offices to identify projects that are subject to a connection fee under PVSC's rules and regulations. This program helps PVSC control the costs associated with the operation of its treatment works. As a direct result of our cooperation and support, PVSC issued a rebate check to the township in the amount of \$4,046.11. PVSC is also reimbursing the township for overpayment fees of approximately \$20,500.

GRANT WRITER UPDATE

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

I'm happy to report that our application submitted under the Direct Install Grant Program was approved for three township buildings. We have been awarded approximately \$30,000 for the DPW garage, \$17,350 for Engine Company # 2 Firehouse and \$12,380 for Hook and Ladder Fire Company. The funds are to be used for new energy efficient lighting and heating / air conditioning upgrades. PSE&G pays 100 percent of the cost to install the recommended improvements with the township repaying 30 percent either in a lump sum or interest free on their PSE&G bill over 36 months.

POTHoles / ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The DPW has begun an aggressive pothole repair plan with crews working to fill numerous potholes on local streets. There are some bad potholes on county roadways, especially N. Midland Avenue, which the Bergen County Roads Department has started repairing. The 2016 municipal budget calls for capital improvements to implement a road improvement program. The emphasis will be on first replacing aging water mains and infrastructure under the roadways that are most in need, then resurfacing those roadways once that work has been completed.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

School Liaison

The Committee met on Monday, February 22nd at the High / Middle School. Agenda items included summer programs, lightening detection system, Coolidge School historical site grant, use of area vacated by portable classrooms at Washington School, re-establishment of the School Resource Officer and taping of Board of Education meetings.

300th Anniversary

The Committee met on Tuesday, February 23rd at the Senior Center. Items for discussion included the Adopt-A-Spot Banner Program, historic document poster presentation at our March council meeting by Bergen County Clerk John Hogan and other upcoming events. Also discussed was commemorative items, school programs, dedication Tri-Centennial Park and creating a historic photo journal.

Access for All

The Committee had its first meeting on Wednesday, March 2nd at the Senior Center. Bergen County Freeholder Maura Denicola was in attendance to provide insight as to available County assistance and also made recommendations regarding the implementation of various start-up programs and projects for consideration. There was discussion about committee positions, mission statement and priorities and goals for 2016.

MEETINGS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Mayor's Youth Group

The Mayor's Youth Group held a meeting on Saturday February 27th and discussed upcoming events, including the Township Easter Celebration and 300th Anniversary Dedication Service at the First Reformed Church on Saturday, April 2nd from 3-5PM. I want to thank all Group members for helping our Projects and Activities Committee stuff eggs on Saturday, March 12th in preparation for our Easter Celebration on Saturday, March 19th, 12-2PM, in the High School gym.

AARP

On Monday, March 7th during the monthly AARP meeting at the Senior Center, Bergen County Housing & Development representatives did a presentation about our senior housing project.

Shared Services

Business Administrator Peter Lo Dico and I met with Bergen County Shared Services Coordinator Tom Richards and others on Tuesday, March 8th at town hall to discuss projects related to flood remediation and drainage improvements. The county is considering providing workshops and personnel to assist local municipalities in improving their Community Rating System (CRS) by implementing floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. By implementing CRS floodplain management best practices, flood losses are reduced, public safety is enhanced, and the cost of flood insurance is decreased.

UPDATE ON SPECIAL PROJECTS

DPW Salt Shed

The base of the salt shed, interior floor and roof structure are complete. The door structure was delayed due to shipping issues, but should be completed within a week of this report.

Veterans Field Bathrooms and Concession Stand

A sub-committee was formed to coordinate and plan project activities along with professionals. A meeting was held on January 27, 2016 with the township engineer and the architect for this construction project. Architectural plans were received on March 11th and will be reviewed at a special council budget meeting on Wednesday, March 16th.

Fifth Street Drainage

There was a pre-bid meeting on February 5th. The second round of bids was opened and the bids continue to be higher than the cost estimate for the work. The township rejected those bids as well in hope that negotiations with the bidders will result in more reasonable proposals in the future.

Update on Road Construction Projects

PSE&G is nearly complete replacing gas lines in streets just north of Market Street between Saddle River Road and West Street as part of their Energy Strong Program. They anticipate they will be finished in the early part of April 2016.

UPCOMING EVENTS

300th Anniversary Pancake Breakfast

There will be a pancake breakfast for our tri-centennial on Saturday, March 19th from 9-11AM at the Dynasty Buffet. Breakfast will include pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, hash brown potatoes, orange juice and coffee. Tickets are \$5.00 per person in advance, \$7.00 per person at the door. If you are looking to purchase tickets, please message the tri-centennial Facebook page or contact any committee member.

Easter Celebration

We are hosting our annual Easter celebration on Saturday, March 19th from 12-2PM in the High School old gym. All ages welcome! Join us for fun and games with a special visit from the Easter Bunny!

Ambulance Corps. Fish & Chips Dinner

It's that time of year again! Our Volunteer Ambulance Corps will be holding its Annual Fish & Chips Dinner at the squad building on Good Friday, March 25th between 5-8PM. Tickets are \$12.00 for Fish or Chicken dinner and can be purchased from any member or at the squad building any night at 93 Market Street between 7-11PM. We hope to see you all there!

300th Anniversary Dedication at First Reformed Church

There will be a special dedication service for our township's tri-centennial on Saturday, April 2nd at 3PM at the First Reformed Church, which is located at the corner of Saddle River Road and Ackerman Ave. This service will feature presentations, special music from the adult choir with help from other voices throughout the community, and a special message by Pastor Christopher Wolf. There will also be a presentation on the history of the First Reformed Church, which is the oldest active church in present-day Saddle Brook. There will be refreshments to follow the service downstairs in the Van Wyk Fellowship Hall, located in the church's basement. Copies of the township's history book, written by the late Jack Wasdyke, will be available for purchase for \$15.00 after the service.