

## MAYOR'S QUARTERLY UPDATE JANUARY – MARCH 2019

### BUDGET

#### Preparation

Township Business Administrator Peter LoDico and I have met with all department heads to review their annual budget requests. A temporary budget was adopted by the township council, which was 26.25 percent of our yearly 2018 municipal budget. Mr. LoDico and I worked with our professionals to prepare a proposed permanent budget for the township council members to review.

#### Introduction of Proposed Budget

A proposed budget was presented to the township council at the council work session on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The proposed budget calls for a slight increase of 1.7 tax points or \$58.64 on a home with a new assessment of \$342.951. This budget is lean, but will maintain essential services. We will continue funding capital improvements for our road program and updating water and sewer infrastructure.

#### Budget Hearing

There will be a hearing on the proposed budget during the May 2<sup>nd</sup> council work session. Township Auditor Steve Wielkotsz will be present and available for questions concerning the budget and township finances.

#### Senior Tax Freeze

Township senior citizen homeowners, 65 years of age and older, may be eligible for a tax freeze program initiated by the State of New Jersey. For eligibility requirements and additional information, please call the state's regional information center at (201)791-0500.

## GRANTS

### Grants Submitted Pending Notification

#### **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.**

The application is for a generator at the Senior Center. It was resubmitted to FEMA for review December 27, 2018. The requested amount is \$81,000. The Saddle Brook contribution is \$27,000.

#### **Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

The CDBG application was submitted for road improvements requesting \$449,692.50. The township also filed an application for Saddle Brook VFW bathroom renovations requesting \$124,150. Announcement of the award is pending on road improvements. The township was notified by Bergen County CDBG that the VFW does not qualify for funding as a non-profit service organization, therefore the application was denied.

#### **Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)**

An application was submitted for three rescue boats for our fire department. The total project cost is \$90,660. Grant request is \$82,419 with township contribution of \$8,241.

#### **NJ Transportation Alternatives Program (NJTAP)**

The NJTAP application was submitted on August 22, 2018. The requested amount is \$434,798.00 for community improvements, specifically, streetscaping and corridor landscaping along Market Street.

### Grants Recently Awarded

**NJ Highway Traffic Safety, Distracted Driving: \$6,600;**  
**Recreational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities (ROID): \$10,000;**  
**Public Safety Foundation Firehouse Subs: \$11,250 for three AED units;**  
**Bergen County Open Space Recreation Trust Fund for Avon Park ADA Compliant Playground Equipment: \$15,000.**

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Community Partnership / Access for All Committee

The committee met on January 21<sup>st</sup>, February 25<sup>th</sup> and March 26<sup>th</sup>. In late January, Committee Chairman Chris Wolf, Coordinator Howard Weinberg and I recorded a public service announcement to raise awareness and perception of the committee. The message is currently airing on Our Town Cable TV and can be viewed on YouTube and the township website.

The Acme Supermarket of Saddle Brook donated funds to purchase two refrigerators for the Saddle Brook Food Pantry housed at the First Reformed Church. The committee facilitated the donation, in a big part, due to the persistence and hard work of Coordinator Howard Weinberg who worked with representatives of the Acme and Lowes Home Improvements in Paterson. The Pantry can now serve perishable goods to families in need. On March 21<sup>st</sup> committee members posed for a photograph at the pantry with representatives of Acme.

The township recently unveiled STIGMA-FREE signs at the entrances to the township. On Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, committee members posed for a photo at the intersection of Saddle River Road and Danna Way to mark the occasion. Saddle Brook became STIGMA-FREE in September of 2017. This initiative was an outgrowth of our Access for All Committee, whose mission is to address the needs of persons with disabilities within our community. Also, to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to promote an environment of accessibility. The STIGMA-FREE initiative aims to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. The township is dedicated to raising awareness of mental illness and creating a culture wherein residents who have the disease feel supported.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The committee has discussed hosting an impactful event to raise awareness and educate people about the subject of mental health and the stigma associated with mental illness. It is uncertain whether the committee has sufficient time to organize such an event to be held in May, so it is likely that the event will be put off until later in the year or possibly May of 2020.

### Mayor's Youth Group (MYG) – Meeting February 23rd

The group discussed the upcoming Easter Celebration on Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> and the group's overall role in helping prepare for the event. We also are considering a cleanup project at the playground next to the Saddle Brook Library as a possible Earth Day activity. Nominations for MYG officers were taken as well.

### EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Fire Department Installation Dinner – Saturday, January 5th

It was an honor once again for the second year to swear-in Fire Chief Christopher Sloma and Assistant Fire Chief Joseph Polizzotti at the Saddle Brook Fire Department Installation Dinner. New firefighters and officers were also installed and welcomed into the department. Congratulations and thank you to all our volunteer firefighters for the outstanding service they provide to our community. The members of the township council also attended the dinner to show their appreciation and support for the members of the fire department and their families.

#### Ambulance Corps. Installation Dinner – Saturday, February 2nd

I had the privilege of swearing-in the executive officers for the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps at their annual installation dinner. There were also certificates handed out to members for length of service and number of calls made in 2018. Our ambulance members deserve tremendous credit and recognition for all they do for the township. Members of the township council were also on hand to show their appreciation and support for the corps members and their families. The installation dinner is being broadcasted on Our Town Cable TV, YouTube and the township website.

#### Women in History Month

At the March 15<sup>th</sup> council meeting, five Saddle Brook women were recognized for making significant contributions to our community and for being an inspiration to all. The selection process was based on the recipient's contributions in one of four specific categories. These categories included Outstanding Citizen, Community Service, Business Leader and Excellence in Education.

This year's recipients were: Marie Guttuso and Angelina Karcich – Outstanding Citizens; Ellen Knautz Jacobson – Community Service; Philamena “Nina” Petrucelli – Business Leader and Elizabeth “Beth” Delvecchio – Excellence in Education. Congratulations to all the recipients and their families. I personally thank them for inspiring and making a difference in the lives of others.

#### Governor Murphy Visits Saddle Brook Senior Center – Thursday, March 28th

The township welcomed Governor Phil Murphy to our Senior Center to sign the Secure Choice Retirement Savings Bill, which was sponsored by Senator Joe Lagana (D38). This legislation authorizes the state to create a retirement savings program for certain private-sector workers whose employers don't offer a retirement plan. Employers are not required to make contributions to the program. They must provide payroll deduction arrangements and make deposits on behalf of its employees, who may opt out of the program if they choose to do so. The American Association of Retired Persons were ardent supporters and worked hard to ensure passage of the Secure Choice Bill.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### Annual Easter Celebration – Friday, April 12th

Resident of all ages are welcome to attend the event taking place at the Saddle Brook High School gymnasium from 6-8PM. There will be lots of fun games and a special visit from the Easter Bunny. Pizza and juice will be served in the cafeteria. The Mayor's Youth Group in conjunction with the Community Partnership Committee will be holding a canned food drive. A donation table will be set up in the gym.

##### Saddle Brook Little League Opening Day Parade – Saturday April 13th

The parade starts at 11AM from the corner of Fair Lawn Parkway and Schepis Ave and proceeds south to the end of Fair Lawn Parkway, left on Cambridge Ave to Nedellec Field at 639 Saddle River Road. The opening day ceremony and festivities begin as soon as everyone participating in the parade arrives at the field.

### Memorial Day – Sunday May 25th

Once again the township is celebrating our annual Memorial Day services and parade in remembrance of our veterans who have died defending our country and all those who have and currently are serving our country. I want to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Romaine-Sinniger VFW Post 3484 for hosting the parade along with the township. The parade begins at 1:30PM at the intersection of Fairlawn Parkway & Wilson Street. There are several ceremonies prior to the parade starting at 9AM. Please check the township website ([saddlebrooknj.us](http://saddlebrooknj.us)) for more information.

### Kiwanis Fishing Derby – Saturday June 15th

Come join the Kiwanis and the township for a fun-filled morning at Saddle River County Park, Otto Pehle Lake from 9AM – 12PM. All anglers receive trophies and there are special awards for the top three catches by size. Participants must bring their own equipment.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

#### Bergen County Senior Housing Building – 29 Caldwell Avenue

The building construction is nearing completion and the units should be fully rented by July. Interested parties will be notified how to go about filing a rental application with Bergen County Housing. They will also be informed of an upcoming meeting where county representatives will explain the application process and answer questions.

#### Proposed Municipal Complex – 55 Mayhill Street

The Township Council and I are considering purchasing the property at 55 Mayhill Street and renovating the existing structure on the site into a new municipal complex. The parcel is home to a vacant Home Depot, which closed nearly 10 years ago. The proposal is to purchase the 4.8-acre property for \$9.4 million and spend \$14.35 million to transform the building into a state-of-the-art two-story municipal complex.

On January 31<sup>st</sup> a special council meeting was held to publicly address this proposal. The municipal complex we envision would house all municipal offices (excluding PD & DPW), our Ambulance Corps., Hook & Ladder Fire Company, a municipal courtroom / council chambers and a recreation / civic center. Business Administrator Peter LoDico did a great job presenting the project to our residents and members of the community had an opportunity to comment and ask questions. The meeting was recorded and is airing on Our Town Cable TV and can also be viewed on YouTube and our township website.

The township council has adopted a resolution authorizing the township planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to declare the property at 55 Mayhill Street as an area in need of redevelopment. The planning board voted to move forward with the investigation and will be holding a public hearing in May. Once the property is determined to be in need of redevelopment, the township will proceed with the purchase of the property and subsequent renovations.

## OTHER

### Board of Education Liaison Meeting – Monday, January 28th

Business Administrator Pete LoDico, Councilman David Gieriek and I met with Saddle Brook School District Superintendent Danielle Shanley, Business Administrator Raymond Karaty and Board of Education members, President Stephen Quinn, Vice President Kelly Mahoney, Trustee Angela Robinson and Trustee Mariana Ianneillo. We discussed topics of mutual concern included shared services, opening communication channels by sharing information such as calendar events and activities, the township's Community Partnership Committee, the school district's need for additional space and their consideration of building a new middle school to replace Washington School. The meeting was productive and we plan to meet quarterly in hope of improving the communication and relationship between the township governing body and the school district.

### Read Across America

Council members, officers from our police department and I had fun celebrating Read Across America on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at our public schools. “Read Across America” is an annual event to encourage young children to read and to acknowledge the work of children’s book author Dr. Seuss. Several town representatives visited classrooms at local schools to have conversations and read books to the young students

### Congressman Bill Pascrell - Ninth Congressional District Mayor’s Meeting

On Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, Congressman Bill Pascrell met with 9th Congressional District mayors and public officials at the Marriott Hotel in Saddle Brook. Several issues facing our local municipalities were raised including the rising cost of healthcare and prescription drugs, tax reform, and public safety concerns. Elmwood Park Mayor Frank Caramagna, Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh and Garfield City Manager Tom Duch were present. Saddle Brook Police Chief Robert Kugler and Elmwood Park Police Chief Michael Foligno were also in attendance. Thank you Congressman Pascrell for working to improve our communities and for your commitment to the residents of 9th District.