

Rockaway Township Report



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www.rockawaytownship.org

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Mayor's Corner: 2016 Address



It is my privilege to serve as Mayor of Rockaway Township, and I thank you for your continued support of me and my administration. I am pleased to tell you about some important milestones we have reached over the past year. I would also like to share with you some of our goals you can look forward to in the coming year.

Communicating with our residents and utilizing technology are very important to me, and that is why the Township continues to invest in modernizing the Township's webpage. Through the hard work of the Technology Committee, we are currently in the process of upgrading our webpage to a new, easier to use format. Once implemented, it will simplify user accessibility. Site navigation and information searches will make more and more information available to our residents, businesses and the public at the click of a button. Township officials will be able to retrieve information such as supporting documents, pending litigation summaries or attorney opinions through a secure site thus saving on expensive printer usage fees, paper, toner and printing costs.

I have continued to have the staff publish a quarterly newsletter about activities and events

throughout the Township. The newsletter is available online and printed copies are available in the municipal building. We also are making information available through the use of mobile device applications as seen in our recycling division. This use of technology lets residents know about improvements to our recycling program including a new, more efficient six-day collection schedule.

Taking advantage of the latest technology allows new options to now be available for dog and cat owners licensing their pets. A new, web-based work order system has been evaluated and recommended for implementation in the Department of Public Works.

I am pleased to announce the development and implementation of the Township's open budget platform that will be available on the Township's website. This expands upon my commitment to transparency and gives the public access to six years of budget information that can be viewed, analyzed, and downloaded. This is just a part of our good financial management which includes reducing our dependence on surplus funds, continuing sound debt management strategies, and positioning ourselves to maintain, if not improve upon, our strong double A1 bond rating.

Communicating accomplishments and utilizing technology to improve services are just a part of my administration. Significant investment in our infrastructure continues with the completion of the Peterson Field improvements that added 219 much needed parking spots, eliminating the need

for on-street parking, and creating a safer environment for residents and the visiting public.

Plans are being developed for a much needed concession stand renovation at Peterson Field. That project will be part of the Township's capital improvement budget. I had the opportunity to dedicate two new recreational fields, already being used and enjoyed by participants in the Township's recreation programs at the Enholm Field site along Green Pond Road; this unique management agreement with the State allows the Township to continue to use this resource for active recreation.

Preserving public safety is important to me. This has been accomplished by recently hiring four police officers, conducting emergency management exercises with the Rockaway Townsquare Mall, and coordinating police, fire, and emergency medical responses with Picatinny Arsenal.

The Township continues to seek grants from the State and County government for infrastructure and other improvements including road resurfacing, preservation of the Faesch House, recycling, and clean communities. In addition to these grant opportunities the Township strengthens its shared services with other local governments; notably the recent contract renewal with the Town of Boonton for health services to be considered by the Council this evening and the anticipated shared municipal court arrangement with Mine Hill Township. These agreements generate much needed revenue to the benefit of the local property tax payer.

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Annual Easter Festival at 10:00am on March 19 at the Copeland Middle School - Open to Township residents pre-school through fifth grade!

Congratulations and Welcome to the newly elected Councilpersons.

Mayor's Corner *(continued from page one)*

The Township continues to pursue innovative ways to bring in new ratables that are practical and beneficial to our community. Over the past several years my administration has provided the council economical budgets which have maintained fiscal responsibility with "zero" service loss while maintaining our infrastructure and cutting cost through eliminating unnecessary spending. I will continue to present such budgets to the Council with a strong financial plan while ensuring long term stability.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the department heads, supervisors,

employees and volunteers for the excellent services they provide to our community. I want to thank my friends on the Council for their continued support and welcome any guidance in our future endeavors. Finally, on behalf of the Township Council and myself, I would like to thank all of you for your continuing support and help in making Rockaway Township a great place to live, work and to raise a family.

I wish everyone a Healthy, Safe and Happy New Year.

Mayor Michael G. Dachisen

Frog Falls: Early Registration for 2016 Season

This year, Frog Falls is open for registration early! Insure your spot at the pool this summer and secure your membership. Frog Falls features two high velocity water slides, a zero entry leisure pool, a lazy river, six 25-yard lap lanes and a new child activity area for our youngest guests. Memberships are available to residents of Rockaway Township,

Rockaway Borough, Dover, Wharton, Jefferson, Randolph, Roxbury, Mine Hill, Boonton, Mount Olive, Mount Arlington, Denville, West Milford, Sparta, Hopatcong and Victory Gardens, as well as Emergency Services (Police/Fire/EMS). If you have any questions or are interested in membership, please call 973-983-2841.

Home Heating Message from Construction

Residents who are planning to use a pellet stove or wood burning stove to heat their home this winter are asked to contact the Construction Department regarding any permit requirements that may be applicable. We wish to keep everyone safe.

Please note that all home improvement contractors must be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs. Residents are

encouraged to visit the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs website to verify a contractor's registration status.

The Construction Department is here to assist you in following all applicable State and municipal regulations. Should you require any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at 973-983-2809, or email the Construction Department at construction@rockawaytownship.org.

New Additions to the Township Council



Rockaway Township Councilpersons Patricia Abrahamsen and Michael Puzio are sworn in as Council-at-Large members during the Township reorganization meeting along with Jeremiah Jedynak (not shown) on January 5.

Fire Danger: Cigarette Butts

If you smoke, be sure your cigarette is fully extinguished before properly disposing of it. The week of November 22 – 28, 2015, a fire caused damage to the back of a business where employees who smoke had been using a plastic planter that held mulch and dead plants to leave their cigarette butts. The planter and its contents burned. In another incident, a home was lost to fire, possibly started by a cigarette butt discarded in a plastic planter. Metal buckets filled with sand are appropriate containers for discarded cigarette butts. These must be cleaned periodically because the butts, themselves, become a source of combustible material.

Earlier in the year, several mulch fires ignited around the Rockaway Townsquare Mall. Each was started by a single discarded cigarette butt. Mulch burns downward then laterally spreads to a considerable area until it breaks through. The Fire Department needs to send an engine to these 'small' fires because they can be extensive and are very hard to extinguish. Other fires were started by a cigarette butt in mulch spread around the exterior of a home. Residents are reminded to avoid putting mulch right up to the side of your house, as devastating home and business fires have historically started in mulch, which provides fuel right up to the side of the structure. The best course of action is to stop smoking and remove the fire risk. All other times, please be sure your cigarette is completely extinguished before disposing of it. For fire safety questions, email: cbabcock@rockawaytownship.org.



Public Documents Online

Did you know that you may view minutes, agendas, resolutions and ordinances adopted by the Township Council as far back as 2012? To view Township records such as these:

- Go to www.rockawaytownship.org
- On the left hand side of the home page under Popular Links , click on 'Document Center.'
- Note the list of Rockaway Township Departments.
- The documents mentioned above can be found under 'Clerk.'
- Once you open the Clerk file, you will see a list of items that pertain to the Clerk's office.
- If you are searching for Council-approved minutes, click on *minutes*, followed by the year you are seeking. Once open, you will see meeting dates to select from. Meeting minutes are posted after they are approved by the Council, which is normally at the next regular scheduled meeting.
- *Agendas* and *resolutions* are generally uploaded to the Township website on Fridays prior to a Council meeting. To access these items, follow the directions above, selecting *agendas* or *resolutions* rather than minutes.
- *Ordinances* are posted after they are introduced by the Council, but prior to the public hearing and final reading.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Township Clerk's office at 973-983-2834.

Tax Collector's Office

Homestead Benefits

The deadline for homeowners to file their 2013 homestead benefit application has been extended to December 31, 2015 (the original due date was October 30). For information or any questions regarding your applications, please contact the State directly at 1-888-238-1233 or visit: www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/homestead/geninf.shtml

Property Tax Reimbursement:

For detailed information or any questions regarding your application or qualifications, please contact the State directly at: 1-800-882-6597 or visit: www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/index.shtml

Senior Center Parking Lot to be Paved

The Township was awarded a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$68,850.00 for the paving and repair of the Rockaway Township Senior Center Parking Lot. This work will include curbing, minor drainage, milling, paving, striping and signage. The work is anticipated to be completed next summer. This is the second phase of restoration work at Rockaway Township Senior Center. Phase one began with a grant in 2012, with improvements including doors, stairs, barrier free ramp, new sidewalk and restoration of the front parking lot.

Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Dachisen and Rockaway Township welcome Eugene Garabrant, our new Assistant Superintendent of Municipal Utilities.

Congratulations to Rockaway Township's new officers, Tom Camel, Nicholas Eresman and Kevin Shay, who recently graduated from the Morris County Police Academy, as well as Officer Gregory Albert. Good Luck and be safe!

Congratulations to Erin Murray, who successfully completed a Computer Aided Drafting course.

Rockaway Township received a NJDEP Recycling Tonnage Grant in the amount of \$56,534. Thank you to all Rockaway Township residents and businesses that participate in recycling. Recycling = grants, so keep up the good work and spread the word to *recycle!*

Congratulations to Health Officer Peter Tabbot for having an article on public health accreditation published in *Municipalities* magazine.

Thank you and best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement to Township employees Tom Stokes and John Hessler.

The 2016 Rockaway Township reorganization meeting was held on January 5. Mayor Michael Dachisen, and Council members Patricia Abrahamsen, Jeremy Jedynek and Michael Puzio were administered their oath of offices. Congratulations to all!

The Council approved Stephen Antonelli as Council President and Dr. Alexander Gellman as Council Vice President. Congratulations!

Certified lifeguards needed for Mt. Hope Pond! Please contact Community Services at 973-983-2841

Look for details regarding spring and summer programming in the next Rockaway Report!

Safety Tips for Playing on Frozen Lakes

Rockaway Township is fortunate to have many lakes and ponds within its 45 square miles. Many are privately owned by residents or a property association, so residents are advised to always make sure you have permission from the property owner before venturing out onto the ice. The Township maintains Parks Lake for public skating – all other publicly owned bodies of water are *off limits* to ice skating. While skating around on frozen bodies of water on a cold winter’s day is fun, it can also be risky. Here’s what you need to know to ensure a safe day out there, reprinted from www.theclymb.com/stories/tips/8-safety-tips-for-playing-on-frozen-lakes/.

First and Fore-most, Measure the Ice

There’s no way around it. While there are many visual cues that can help you determine whether or not it’s safe to step out onto the ice, the safest way to find out is to measure the stuff. There are a few tools you can use to measure ice. An ice chisel can be stabbed into the ice until it penetrates all the way through. Then, a measurement of the rod can be taken. You can also use an ice auger to drill a hole through the ice, then measure the depth with a measuring tape—gas, electric, and hand augers are all options. A cordless drill with a wood auger bit can also drill a hole through ice.

What is a Safe Thickness?

Anything less than three inches should be avoided at all costs. Four inch thickness can support activities like ice fishing, walking and cross country skiing. Five inches can support a snow-mobile or an ATV, while eight to 12 inches of ice is enough to support a small car. While these guidelines are

generic, ice conditions vary and the above is for newly formed ice. Make sure to read more on thickness before going out there. Remember to take thickness measurements in several areas to ensure the entire area is safe. Ice thickness can vary, even over a fairly small area – especially over moving water.

Assess the Area Visually

A visual assessment can help supplement your measurement, and can also help if you’re relying on someone else’s measurements. Watch for dangerous signs like cracks, seams, pressure ridges, dark areas (where the ice is thinner) and slushy areas. Even slight slush signals that the ice isn’t freezing at the bottom anymore, which means it’s getting progressively weaker.

The Color Wheel

Check out the color of the ice. Clear, blue or green ice might be thick enough to skate on. White ice typically has air or snow trapped inside, weakening it. Dark ice might be an indication that the ice is quite thin, probably too thin for skating.

The Fresher, the Better

New ice is typically stronger than older ice. As time passes, the bond between ice crystals decays even in very cold temperatures. When spring comes, find a manmade rink. Once the spring thaw begins, ice weakens considerably. It can be tempting to head out for one last skate in the event of a late season frost, but it’s safest to just say no. Even if ice fits the measurement criteria, it can still be very dangerous.

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Holiday Cheer on Display in Rockaway Township



Left: The Morris Hills Madrigal Choir regaled Rockaway Township residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Municipal Building on December 4. Right: Mayor Michael Dachisen, along with incoming Councilman Michael Puzio, Councilman Paul Minena and Council President Steve Antonelli, greets residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting.

What's Happening

FEBRUARY

- 1st Frog Falls registration open - For Rockaway and non-Rockaway Township residents
www.register.communitypass.net/rockaway
- 10th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 15th Municipal offices closed
President's Day
- 24th Taking Care of Yourself Inside & Out
Health promotion program
Rockaway Township Public Library
6:30pm - 7:45pm

MARCH

- 10th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 19th Annual Easter Festival
Copeland Middle School
10:00am
- 25th Municipal offices closed
Good Friday

APRIL

- 9th Opening Day Fishing Contest
Mt. Hope Pond/Hibernia Fire Co. #1
8:00am
- 9th Little League Opening Day Parade
Fleetwood Drive & Peterson Field
10:00am
- 30th Free rabies clinic
Rockaway Township Public Works Garage
9:00am - 11:00am

* Pre-registration required for some Township events. Please call the appropriate department for information.



What is the Municipal Utility?

The Rockaway Township Municipal Utility is a division of the Public Works Department. The Utility's primary mission is to operate and maintain the potable public water supply and distribution along with the sanitary sewer collection systems to ensure for the continual, safe and adequate water supply to homes and businesses, as well as the continual and safe discharge of wastewater for Rockaway Township.

With winter and cold weather upon us, we wish to remind residents to provide protection to their water pipes and the water meter in their house. This can be done by providing adequate insulation and heat to areas of your house, basement and crawl spaces in particular, where water pipes and the water meter are located.

Naturally, along with winter comes snow. We ask that all residents with fire hydrants located along their property or with elderly neighbors having a fire hydrant abutting their property do not pile snow on the fire hydrant when shoveling their driveway or sidewalk. If the hydrant is located along the road, please shovel a three (3) foot area around the hydrant to keep it accessible to the fire department.

Home Heating Message from Construction

Residents who are planning to use a pellet stove or wood burning stove to heat their home this winter are asked to contact the Construction Department regarding any permit requirements that may be applicable. We wish to keep everyone safe.

Please note that all home improvement contractors must be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs. Residents are encouraged to visit the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs website to verify a contractor's registration status.

The Construction Department is here to assist you in following all applicable State and municipal regulations. Should you require any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at 973-983-2809, or email the Construction Department at: construction@rockawaytownship.org.

Utilize These Resources!

Stay connected to the Township by subscribing for e-newsletters, weather updates and the most up-to-date information. Visit www.egovlink.com/rockaway/subscriptions/subscribe.asp and subscribe today, and like us on Facebook!

With the Township's new registration process, you may also create an account on Community Pass. Go to <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/> to register for Community Service programs.

Safety Tips for Frozen Lakes *(continued from page four)*

Know Proper Rescue Techniques

Anyone with activity on ice outdoors should have knowledge of ice rescue technique. Even children should be familiar with protocol, so be sure to educate them ahead of time. If someone in your party falls through the ice, the first thing to do is call 911. Anyone still on the ice should slowly lie down, distributing their weight over a larger area.

Reach the person in the water using a long reaching assist – a large stick, rope or ladder are all good options (READ: have these things ready before you start). The person in the water should be instructed to kick and slowly ease their way out of the water. Once they make it to the surface, they should crawl or roll away

from the broken ice area. Anyone on the ice, including the victim and rescuer, should avoid standing up until they are far away from the broken ice. As soon as you can, get the victim into dry clothing and treat them for hypothermia.

Watch Your Dog!

If you're out sliding around on a frozen lake, your dog will likely follow. Keep an eye on your companion to ensure that it remains in safe areas. If you can't rely on your dog to stay close and come when called, you're best option is to keep it on a leash. If your dog does fall in, phone 911. Rescue professionals have the equipment needed to keep everyone safe; if you try to rescue the dog yourself, chances are you'll fall under, too.

Sports Organizations Web Links

Residents who wish to register for spring sports programs should check the following websites:

Rockaway Township Baseball Association:

www.rtbaseballweb.org

Rockaway Township Girls Softball:

<http://www.rtgirlssoftball.org/>

Rockaway Township Lacrosse:

www.renegadeslax.org

Rockaway Township Soccer Association:

www.rtsa.org

Rockaway Township Track:

www.rtracers.com

Snow & Ice Removal Tips

With winter upon us, here are tips to avoid snow plowing rage!

- Park cars off the street
- Don't shovel driveways out to the street until plowing is complete
- Don't shovel driveway snow onto the street – This is a violation of Township Ordinances and creates a hazard
- Don't shovel sidewalks onto street – this is also a violation of Township Ordinances and creates a hazard
- Per Township Ordinance, residents have 24 hours to remove snow from sidewalks in front of their home
- To file a claim for damage to your vehicle caused by the use of Township equipment, you must have a police report

Avoid towing and impound charges: Township Ordinance 7-6.3 (a,b) imposes temporary parking prohibition when snow has fallen and accumulated, at which point an emergency shall be

declared until the snow has ceased and the streets have been plowed sufficiently. Any unoccupied vehicles may be towed and impounded at the owner's expense. Please cooperate with plow crews by parking off the roads until plowing is complete. This will ensure safe, clean streets.

To report an ice condition, call 973-983-2891. To report a snow or ice related emergency off hours, please contact the Rockaway Township Police Department at 973-625-4000.

Street Light Outage

Street lights are maintained by Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L). As a courtesy, the Township can report a street light outage to the utility company if you provide us with the exact street address. Outages and street light issues may also be reported directly to JCP&L by dialing 800-662-3115, or by visiting www.FirstEnergyCorp.com and completing their on-line form.

Eagles Fly High in 2016

The Division of Recreation would like to extend its thanks and congratulations to Mike Nichols of Boy Scout Troop 113. Mike is an Eagle Scout candidate who coordinated the construction of a display podium for the official anvil of Rockaway Township, and the anvil is now prominently displayed outside the front door of the Rockaway Township Municipal Building. During Superstorm Sandy, an evergreen next to the steps at the Municipal Building was uprooted. The spot was backfilled and nothing replaced the tree. Thanks to Mike's project, this location will display a historic artifact for years to come. The project complements the skip (mining) car completed earlier in the year, which is also on display outside the Municipal Building, and both illustrate the Township's mining heritage.



Rockaway Township Recycling

Exciting Recycling News

This time last year, the Township introduced a brand new recycling schedule and app for smartphones and tablets called Re-Collect. We are pleased to say it has been a tremendous success! If you have not heard about or utilized this system, there is no time like the present. Simply go to the Township website and click on the green recycling symbol on the home page. You will be taken to the recycling page, which hosts an interactive database complete with collection calendars, a waste wizard (search engine of how to dispose of everything), facilities information and a printable flyer tab that lists all the information for single stream recycling, bulk and vegetative waste collections. You may even register to receive important alerts such as collection notifications and advisories of disruptions in service for reasons such as truck break downs or inclement weather. You may also report problems with collection or request more information from this page.

Re-Collect is also available at your fingertips as a smartphone or tablet app. This new system has replaced the annual recycling brochure, so please take advantage of the wealth of information Re-Collect has to offer and visit our webpage or Facebook Page for the link to our Township-specific site. For your convenience, collection calendars will still be available for pick-up at the Municipal Building lobby and in the Town Planner. *Almost all residents have a new route number – please check your address for the new route number.*

Label All Collection Receptacles

Residents are reminded to please label all collection cans. We have 'Recycling' and 'Vegetative Waste' stickers available for your convenience at the Municipal Building and the Public Library. Because various collections are held on the same day (i.e., garbage, recycling, and vegetative waste) there are multiple cans curbside. Please label you cans to ensure proper collection.

Curbside Recycling

Please remember that curbside recycling is single stream (no sort) recycling. If you bring your recyclables to either of the recycling centers, the materials must be source separated (cardboard separated from cans and bottles, newspapers and junk mail). Plastic bags are *not* permitted in single stream collection or at either of our recycling depots.

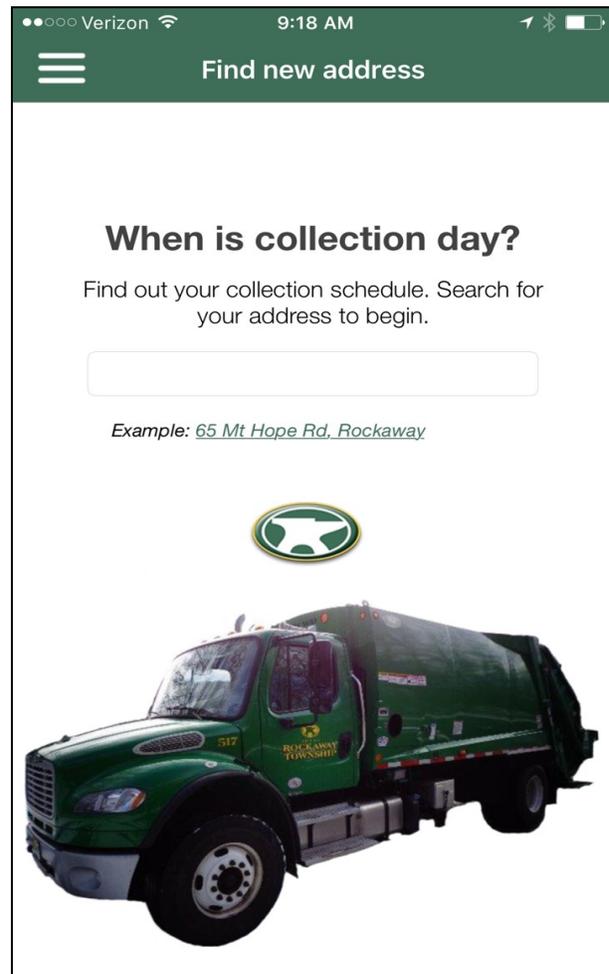
Inclement Weather and Holiday Collection

Should your recycling collection be canceled due to inclement weather, materials will be picked up the *next scheduled collection day*. The Township will post cancelations of recycling collection on

the Re-ollect app (alerts will be sent directly to you), Rockaway Township Facebook page and the Township website. There is *no make-up day* when the route is canceled due to inclement weather. However, if your collection day falls on a holiday, there is *always a make-up day* – please refer Re-Collect for collection dates.



Council President and Mayor Michael Dachisen prepare for the January 5 Reorganization Meeting.



Above is the image residents will see when using the Re-Collect app on their smart phone. Re-Collect makes recycling easy!

The Division of Health will be holding its free rabies clinic at the Public Works Garage on April 30 from 9am - 11am. Please remember to vaccinate your pet!



Three Year Dog & Cat License Introduced

During his annual address to the Rockaway Township residents in January 2015, Mayor Michael Dachisen made a commitment to improve the Township's animal licensing program. Key to this was the goal of introducing a multi-year licensing option by the 2016 licensing renewal period.

The Division of Health is pleased to announce that it has implemented a three-year option for licensing Rockaway Township's pets in 2016. Provided that applicable Statewide and Township pet vaccination requirements are met, residents may now opt to license their pets for a period of one or three years. Township officials are confident this new option will provide a new convenience for residents and will help create efficiencies in the licensing process, through which 4,200 dogs and cats are registered with the Township.

In early 2015, Division of Health staff spent considerable time

researching the various options by which Rockaway Township residents may license their dogs and cats. Staff examined policies, programs, cost and licensing software used in dozens of municipalities throughout New Jersey and beyond. In addition, numerous towns were surveyed for satisfaction with product/services and license fees, and the Division of Health met with several vendors for licensing product demonstrations. After this thorough review, a licensing program was selected that is cost effective, easily adopted by personnel, and conveniently used by residents in the licensing and license renewal process.

Residents are reminded of these important items when renewing their dog and cat licenses, regardless whether it is for a one or three year period:

- In accordance with New Jersey law, your pet's rabies vaccination must be good through 10 months of the last

year in the licensing period.

For instance, a one year 2016 license would require rabies vaccination that does not expire before November 1, 2016, and a three year license would require that the rabies vaccine does not expire before November 1, 2018.

- Look over the entire license renewal form when you receive it and update as necessary with current information.
- Remember to let us know if you no longer have your pet, whether it no longer resides in Rockaway Township or is deceased.
- Provide an email address, microchip number and phone number, if applicable.
- Payment may be made by check or cash, payable to Rockaway Township.

Should you have any questions about the licensing program, please call the Division of Health at 973-983-2848.

Don't forget the Annual Little League Baseball Parade at 10:00am on April 9! Look for updates and more information on the Rockaway Township website!

WHEN TEMPERATURES STAY BELOW FREEZING:

- Give pipes a helping hand**
If pipes run through cabinets or vanities, open the doors to let warmer room temperatures flow in.
- Keep water working**
Keep water moving through the pipes by allowing a small trickle of water to run. The cost of the extra water is typically lower than the cost of repairing a broken pipe.

BUT IF YOUR PIPES DO FREEZE:

- Shut off the water immediately**
Don't attempt to thaw pipes without turning off the main shut-off valve.
- Thaw pipes with warm air**
You can melt the frozen water in the pipe by warming the air around it with a hair dryer or space heater. Be sure not to leave space heaters unattended and avoid the use of kerosene heaters or open flames.
- Be careful turning water back on**
Once pipes are thawed, slowly turn the water back on and check pipes and joints for any cracks or leaks that might have been caused by freezing.

Graphic courtesy of NJ American Water