

Rockaway Township Report



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Mayor's Corner



As always, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the residents of Rockaway Township for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor. I would also like to thank the dedicated employees, who spend their time making sure that operations run smoothly. It is the Rockaway Township staff who make our streets safe to drive on, our parks and neighborhoods safe to play in, and our organization exceptional for the wonderful residents of Rockaway Township.

I would like to bring special attention to Peter Tabbot, who serves faithfully as Rockaway Township's Health Officer, overseeing the provision of public and environmental health services to residents across five municipalities. On October 23, Mr. Tabbot was awarded the 2017 Dennis J. Sullivan Award, the New Jersey Public Health Association's highest honor, and on December 7, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association. Mr. Tabbot is an exemplary public servant and I would like to extend my great appreciation and congratulations to him.

It is extremely important to me that everyone takes appropriate

safety measures this winter. Please be careful in any inclement weather and if you can help it, please avoid traveling. Also, please avoid parking on the street when possible. This will allow snow plows to move effectively through each neighborhood.

To all of our resident snowbirds, please remember to winterize your home if you will be leaving for an extended period of time. If you are away from home this winter and your travels are brief, please remember to keep your heat on, turn your outdoor faucet off and make sure that your indoor valve is turned to the off position in order to avoid freezing pipes.

I am excited to let residents know that two retail food establishments recently opened in Rockaway Township. The Cheesecake Factory, located at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall, and Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen,

located at the Rockaway River Commons near the Rt. 46 ShopRite, are open for business. Please stop by our new eateries and have a meal.

I would also like to provide some Township reminders that may pertain to you. Dog and Cat owners are reminded it is that time of year again. Please remember to renew your pet licenses by January 30, and don't forget that Rockaway Township offers a convenient three-year licensing option now, provided your pet's rabies inoculation is compliant with statewide regulations. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Division of Health. Other dates you may want to keep an eye out for include Christmas tree pick up, which is performed the weeks of January 8 – January 22.

I wish everyone a healthy, safe and happy New Year.

Mayor Michael G. Dachisen



Clowning Around: Mayor Michael Dachisen presents a prize at the 2018 Rockaway Township Halloween Trunk or Treat. For more fun and frightening Trunk or Treat photos, see page six.

February is American Heart Month

There is much good news in cardiovascular and cerebrovascular health over the last several decades. Tremendous reductions have been realized in rates of fatal heart attack and stroke, with particular improvement to the leading cardiovascular cause of death, coronary heart disease (narrowing of the arteries).

While the death rate from heart disease has fallen considerably, the burden and risk factors remain alarmingly high. Heart disease is still the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women. Nearly 630,000 Americans still die of heart disease each year – one in every four deaths – at a cost in hundreds of billions of dollars in health care costs and lost productivity. And even though death rates have improved, cardiovascular operations and procedures increased roughly 28% between 2000 and 2010, and the trend continues.

February is American Heart Month, and the American Heart Association gauges the cardiovascular health of the nation by tracking the following key health factors and behaviors, a list of recommended practices referred to as 'Life's Simple 7':

Smoking: Globally, tobacco smoking is one of the top three leading risk factors for disease and contributes to an estimated 6.2 million deaths in 2010. Smoking is one of the leading risks for heart disease.

Physical Activity: One in three American adults reports participating in no leisure time physical activity. Among students in grades nine through 12, only 27% meet the recommended 60 minutes of exercise every day. High school boys report 60 minutes of physical activity on all seven days of the week at a rate twice that for high school girls.

Healthy Diet: Less than one percent of U.S. adults meet the American Heart Association's definition for 'Ideal Healthy Diet,' which includes a reduction in sodium intake and an increase in whole grains, among other things. Data shows eating patterns

among Americans moving in the wrong direction: Between 1971 and 2004, research indicates women increased daily calorie intake by as much as 22% and men by 10%.

Overweight/Obesity: Most Americans older than 20 are overweight or obese. Over 159 million American adults – or about 69% - are overweight or obese. In addition, 32% of children are overweight or obese.

Cholesterol: Approximately 43% of Americans have total cholesterol higher than 200 mg/dL. The highest rates are among white women and Hispanic men. Nearly one in three Americans has elevated LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol, commonly referred to as the 'bad kind.'

High Blood Pressure: About 80 million Americans suffer high blood pressure. Approximately 77% of these individuals take antihypertensive medications, but only 5% have their condition controlled. High blood pressure (above 140/90 mm Hg) places individuals at a significantly elevated risk for stroke, heart attack and congestive heart failure.

Blood Sugar/Diabetes: Data shows that 29.1 million Americans have diabetes, representing about one in 11 people. More than one in three million Americans – or 86 million – are pre-diabetic, which makes them high risk for developing Type II diabetes. Nine out of 10 do not even know they have prediabetes.

You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. To prevent heart disease and increase awareness of its effects, the Rockaway Township Division of Health is proudly participating in American Heart Month by providing literature, health promotion programs, hypertension screenings and other activities. Check the calendar in this newsletter and the Township website regularly for information about healthy heart initiatives in Rockaway Township and regionally.

Holiday Cheer in Rockaway Township



Left: Mayor Michael Dachisen tells Santa his Christmas wishes for a healthy, prosperous Rockaway Township in the coming year. Center: Santa Claus greets residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Municipal Building on December 1. Right: Santa and Mrs. Claus meet with one of the Township's charming young residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting.

Honor Flight Makes Spirits Soar

Love. Honor. Heroism. Mission #18 for the Hudson Valley Honor Flight was replete with all of the above on November 4, 2017. Hudson Valley Honor Flight (HVHF) is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for their sacrifices. HVHF transports our heroes to Washington, DC to visit our war memorials at no cost.

Sandra Leonard, Registered Environmental Health Specialist with the Rockaway Township Division of Health, went as a 'guardian,' helping ensure that every veteran has a safe and memorable experience. Guardian responsibilities included physically assisting the veterans at the airport, during the flight and at the memorials. Ms. Leonard's assigned veteran, Tom, served the Navy in Bermuda during World War II, working on radar and other tracking equipment.

Honor Flight Mission #18 coordinators, guardians and 86 chaperoned veterans began activities in Vails Gate, New York, where 100 members of the military, police and volunteer motorcyclists escorted veterans to Stewart International Airport. Nearly 1,000 local residents and the West Point band greeted the group at the airport around 6:00am for a grand send off to Washington, D.C. Another large crowd greeted the group after landing in our nation's capital.

United States Park Police escorted the Honor Flight group for a long day of memorable stops, including several war memorials and Arlington National Cemetery. Veterans were met at each stop by grateful citizens, who expressed thanks for their service. On the way back to New Jersey, Honor Flight veterans were provided another surprise. Mail call was conducted, just as it may have occurred during their service, but on this occasion veterans received thank you letters, cards and photos from friends, family, schools, houses of worship, organizations and individuals. Those in attendance were overjoyed to read words of thanks and to know their service was so appreciated.

Mail call, however, was not the last surprise for Mission #18 participants. Upon landing back at Stewart International Airport, another large crowd of approximately 1,000 was waiting to welcome the veterans back. All veterans who participated cited Honor Flight Mission #18 as one of the best days of their life, and expressed gratitude for the day's events. Honor Flight Mission #18 showed a substantial group of American veterans that this nation's grateful residents love them and will never forget the sacrifices they made to keep the United States safe.



Rockaway Township employee Sandra Leonard and her WWII veteran companion, Tom. Ms. Leonard was chaperone to Tom throughout Honor Flight Mission #18 activities on November 4.

Tax Collector Update

Residents are advised that first quarter 2018 property taxes are due February 1, 2018.

Homestead Benefits

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

Three Year Pet Licenses

Residents are reminded that per the directive of Mayor Michael Dachisen a little over two years ago, a multi-year licensing option is available for your pets.



The Division of Health implemented the three-year option for licensing Rockaway Township's pets in 2016, and this option is available to residents with companion animals meeting certain conditions. If applicable State and Township pet vaccination requirements are met, residents may opt to license their pets for a period of either one or three years. This new option is providing a new convenience for residents and is helping create efficiencies in the licensing process, through which 4,200 dogs and cats are registered with the Township.

License renewal is underway at this time, and 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 2018 license would require rabies vaccination that does not expire before November 1, 2018, and a three year license would require that the rabies vaccine does not expire before November 1, 2020.
- *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.

Winter Safety Reminders

Winter weather is here, and Rockaway Township would like to provide some safety tips for residents who wish to enjoy the many outdoor activities our area has to offer. Please be safe!!!

In General...

- Check the weather forecasts. Winter weather can change quickly, so be prepared for anything. Carry backup clothing and supplies.
- Use the proper equipment. Be sure everything is in proper working condition before leaving home.
- Wear the proper attire. Use clothing and gear designed for the activity. Don't wear loose items that can be snagged or caught in equipment or machinery.
- Stay focused; commit 100 percent of your attention on the activity and the terrain you are on. Rest when you are tired. Hydrate often.
- Avoid alcohol. Don't drink before or during any outdoor activity. Alcohol

cools the blood and decreases body temperature. It increases fatigue and causes impaired judgment.

Skiing & Snowboarding

- Stay on runs that are appropriate for your level of ability. Ski-run ratings can vary dramatically by area.
- Ski or snowboard in control at all times; maintain the ability to stop to avoid people or objects.
- Obey all posted signs and warnings. Do not cross ski area boundary lines.
- Do not ski or snowboard alone. Stay where others can see you in case you need assistance.
- Wear a helmet. Most ski areas require them; some rent them. Use goggles rather than sunglasses.
- Take breaks, stay well hydrated and avoid alcohol. Don't overdo it.

Sledding

- Never use streets or roads unless they

are blocked off from traffic.

- Avoid sledding directly into wooded areas, onto ice or into water.
- Be aware of sledders at the bottom and those returning up the hill. Wait until the bottom of the run is clear before starting.

Ice Skating

- Skate in areas that have been approved and posted for ice skating.
- Avoid skating alone; stay where others can see you. Children should never skate unsupervised by adults.
- Remember that ice thickness is never consistent on lakes and ponds, and always beware of thin areas.
- Never skate after dark in dark areas.



Update from Engineering

New Construction

Rockaway Township staff are pleased to report that two new retail food establishments have opened in our community - Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen, located at the Rockaway River Commons near the Route 46 ShopRite, and The Cheesecake Factory, located at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall. Various municipal departments, along with the Rockaway Township Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment, were involved in different phases of the review and approval process. We hope you enjoy your dining experience at each of these new eateries.

Two new residential communities in Rockaway Township are currently under construction and have received certificates of occupancy for completion of a portion of the respective projects this year. Pondview Estates, located off Route 15 near the Township's western border, is a development that contains studio, two-bedroom and three-bedroom condominiums and townhomes for rent. The Hills at Rockaway is located off of Green Pond Road. The Hills contains two and three-bedroom townhomes that may be purchased. The Township welcomes these new developments.

The longstanding service station at the intersection of Richard Mine Road and Route 15 recently was furnished with a face-lift and new amenities. Site improvements were designed to improve vehicle egress from Route 15 and within the site, and drainage improvements were also implemented onsite. Perhaps most noticeable visually is the addition of a convenience store, inclusive of a Subway sandwich retail store. The site upgrades will not only serve Rt. 15 travelers, but neighboring residents, as well.

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has begun the process of updating Morris County *Flood Insurance Rate Maps* (FIRMs) and the Township is in receipt of revised preliminary FIRMs. These maps are available for review by the public at the Township Engineering Department, located in the Rockaway Township Municipal Building. Residents may also view the maps online by visiting the County of Morris Planning and Preservation webpage: <https://planning.morriscountynj.gov/firms/flood-hazard-maps/>. FEMA routinely maps flood hazard areas, including *Special Flood Hazard Areas* (SFHA), which is an area with a 1% greater chance of flooding in any given year.

(continued on page nine)



What's Happening

JANUARY

15th Martin Luther King Day
Municipal Building Closed

18th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am

FEBRUARY

15th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am

19th President's Day
Municipal Building Closed

MARCH

15th Blood pressure screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am

24th Easter Festival
Location TBD
10:00am - 12:00pm

30th Good Friday
Municipal Building Closed

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



Martin McParland, Rockaway Township Police Chief, and Michael Woomer, Adjutant of the Sons of the American Legion, deliver one of several trees donated by American Legion Post 344 to Rockaway Township families for Christmas.

Division of Health Reminds You to Fight Flu!

The Rockaway Township Division of Health wishes to remind you that it is not too late to receive a flu vaccination. Flu activity usually peaks between December and March, and the best way to protect yourself, your family and your co-workers is to get a flu shot. Receiving a vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctor visits, missed work and school, and also can prevent flu-related hospitalizations.

Flu vaccine is still widely available through venues like physicians, hospitals and pharmacies. Though the Rockaway Township Division of Health completed its series of flu clinics in November, there is a limited supply of influenza vaccine left and residents may contact the Division of Health to receive a free flu shot. Call the Division of Health at 973-983-2848 to inquire about a flu shot.



Helpful Information from Your Police Department

Connect to Safe Winter Driving

The Rockaway Township Police Department would like to remind residents that winter is upon us, and winter weather presents many driving hazards. Please drive safely, and consult the following links for useful driving tips:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/SafeDriving.pdf>

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-safety>

<http://ready.nj.gov/plan-prepare/winter.shtml>

Internet Safety Information

There have been many technological advancements in recent years, and our computers and the Internet provide a wealth of information with the click of a mouse. Although the Internet is a superhighway of information, it can pose unwanted threats and dangers. Always safeguard yourself and your family by following security guidelines. Please see the following links for useful information in helping protect yourself from Internet dangers.

<https://www.usa.gov/online-safety>

<https://www.fbi.gov/resources/parents>

<http://www.state.nj.us/nj/safety/internet/>

Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Michael Dachisen welcomes the following new employees to Rockaway Township, and wishes them fulfilling, happy careers serving the residents of our community.

- Lisa Florey, hired as Clerk I in the Division of Construction, effective November 6, 2017.



- Brandon Jack, hired as Water Sewer Repairer in the Water Department, effective November 11, 2017.

- Jennifer Borowik, hired as Accountant in the Finance Department, effective November 20, 2017.

- Susan Gaeb, hired as Recreation Aide in the Division of Recreation, effective January 8, 2018.



Peter Tabbot, Rockaway Township Health Officer, receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from officers of the NJ Local Boards of Health Association.

Trunk or Treat: Halloween Humor and Horror

The Annual Trunk or Treat was held on October 28, and Rockaway Township residents turned out in record numbers. Children and adults donned costumes, meticulously decorated car trunks (and truck beds) and enthusiastically participated in the annual costume competition. Contest winners were selected from several age groups, and some very creative, fun and spooky costumes were enjoyed by all. Winners in the costume and trunk decorating categories received prizes donated by local organizations and businesses. Mayor Dachisen and Rockaway Township staff who coordinated the event would like to thank residents who participated, as well as all the organizations who generously contributed to this event.



Municipal Reassessment in 2018

Rockaway Township has been approved by the Director of the New Jersey Division of Taxation to complete a municipal-wide reassessment for the 2018 tax year. Appraisal Systems of Glen Rock, New Jersey, will be assisting this office with completion of the reassessment.

What is a Reassessment?

A reassessment is a minimally invasive method of updating the values of all properties to reflect current market trends within the municipality. The last revaluation for Rockaway Township was completed for the 2012 tax year. Since that revaluation, this office – in conjunction with the outside firm – has been conducting inspections throughout the Township over the last five years.

No additional inspections need to be made prior to the completion of the reassessment. Based upon changes in market conditions since 2012 for the Township, the reassessment was applied for.

One of the major differences between a revaluation and a reassessment is the time frame to complete inspections of properties. In a revaluation, all inspections must be completed in the year before the revaluation, including a collection of all relevant property data. With a reassessment, the inspections are completed over a period of time and the current property information is updated on the property card.

Will the revaluation increase my Taxes?

Not necessarily. The effect of the reassessment on your tax bill may vary and there are a number of reasons why it is impossible to predict the impact on any individual property owner's tax bill.

The reassessment will not increase the total amount of revenue to be raised by taxation. The amount of property taxes is based upon the operating budgets of the municipal government, school districts, county government and state aid.

The reassessment will change the aggregate value of the properties in the Township; however, because the same amount of overall tax is to be collected, the tax rate will change. Until the reassessment is complete and the tax rate is computed, it will be difficult to determine your property tax bill.

The Law

New Jersey's real property tax is *ad valorem*, or a tax 'according to the value.' The State Constitution requires real property to be assessed at the 'same standard of value.' New Jersey Statutes Annotated (NJS) 45:4-23

establishes the standard to be the 'full and fair value' or 'true value.' True value represents the fair market value of the property or the price for which it would sell in an arms-length transaction between a willing buyer and willing seller.

The Process

Since the last revaluation, inspections have been taking place and the real estate market has been analyzed for changes. For the 2017 tax year, all assessments in the Township represented 90.74% of their true value. It was determined by the New Jersey Division of Taxation that for the 2018 tax year, the average ratio would be 85.64% of true value. The percentages indicate that the values in the Township have increased since 2012. By completing the reassessment, all values will represent 100% of their true value as of October 1, 2017 for the 2018 tax year.

The real estate market trends are analyzed by conducting a sales study. This includes an examination of all sales that took place within the last three years of the reassessment, a delineation of neighborhoods and an analysis of any land sales that may have taken place during that period. Commercial properties are examined in terms of their income-producing potential, as well as any sales that have occurred. As a result of the research, the value of a given piece of property can be determined and market value may be established. By completing reassessments within the Township, changes in the real estate market can be accounted for on a more frequent basis, as opposed to waiting every 10 to 12 years to update values.

Valuation Notification

After the values have been determined, each property owner will receive a 'Chapter 75 postcard' on or before February 1, in accordance with NJS 54:4-38.1. The postcard will indicate the 2017 assessment and the new 2018 assessment. Please do not apply the current tax rate to the new assessment.

Since this is a reassessment year, *the deadline for filing an appeal is May 1, 2018.* Owners possessing properties with assessed values under \$1,000,000 must file to the Morris County Tax Board. Property owners with assessments in excess of \$1,000,000 have the ability to file directly to the Tax Court of New Jersey.

The Rockaway Township Tax Assessor's office is available Monday through Friday, from 8:30am to 4:30am. Please call 973-983-2819 with any questions you may have regarding the reassessment.

Residents are reminded that dog and cat license renewals are due January 31.



Residents are advised that first quarter 2018 property taxes are due February 1, 2018.

Public Works Winter Tips

Plowing Policies

With winter upon us, here are some 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
- If you wish 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

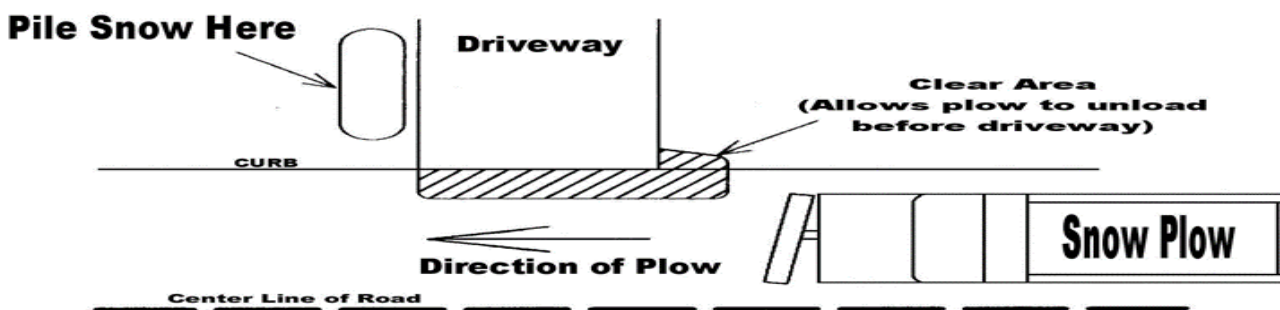
has fallen and accumulated, at which point an emergency shall be declared until the snow has ceased and the streets have been plowed sufficiently. Any unoccupied vehicles may be towed and impounded at the owner's expense. Please cooperate with plow crews by parking off the roads until plowing is complete. 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 Lights

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/service_requests/report-lighting-problem.html?form and completing their on-line form.

Driveway Plowing Policies



New Jersey Stomps Out Youth Tobacco Use

On November 16, 2017, the New Jersey Department of Health collaborated with the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout initiative to launch STOMP, a statewide tobacco merchant education campaign. The goal of the effort is to bring tobacco control advocates and retailers together to reduce tobacco use among teens and adults. The younger someone begins smoking, the more likely they are to become addicted and the more difficult it may be to quit, and tobacco retailers play a vital role in reducing youth tobacco use.

On November 1, New Jersey enacted a statewide law popularly known as 'T21,'

which prohibits the sale of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices to anyone under the age of 21. New Jersey raised the minimum age for purchasing these products from 19 to 21 years of age in recognition of the potential for long-term harm to the health of the young. New Jersey is the third state to enact such a law, following Hawaii and California in doing so.

The Rockaway Township Division of Health is doing its part in promoting the new law and educating tobacco retailers. Division of Health officials visited local tobacco retail shops and provided educational material regarding the new law, which became effective immediately

upon its passage. To learn more about New Jersey's tobacco control program, visit: nj.gov/health/fhs/tobacco/



Engineering Update *(continued from page four)*

In addition, FEMA has issued a *Flood Hazard Mapping Status Report* for Morris County, along with other materials, which may be found online through the link below. A 90-day appeal period will be initiated by FEMA through publication in a local newspaper, and the adoption of these new maps will take 18-24 months. For additional information, please visit County of Morris website <https://planning.morriscountynj.gov/firms/>

The Township received a \$172,500 grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid Program to continue improvements along

Daniel Street and to enhance pedestrian safety at the intersection of Daniel, Taylor and Art Streets within the Birchwood section of the Township.

A main focus of the project was improving pedestrian safety at this busy intersection, which is heavily crossed by children and guardians walking to and from Birchwood Elementary School. As part of this project, the crosswalks were realigned and painted for higher visibility. In addition, the sidewalk along Art Street was widened and provided with a new split rail fence, along with a new guide rail.



Overall, this valuable municipal road project consisted of barrier free ramps, curbing, milling, resurfacing, drainage and intersection improvements. With help from a significant NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant, the Township was able to improve upon infrastructure and pedestrian safety in this highly traveled neighborhood.

Your 2018 Governing Body

Mayor

Michael Dachisen

Council President

Jeremy Jedynak

Council Vice President

Patricia Abrahamsen

Ward 1 Council Member

Victor Palumbo

Ward 2 Council Member

Jack Quinn

Ward 3 Council Member

Phyllis I. Smith

Ward 4 Council Member

Jonathan Sackett

Ward 5 Council Member

Emanuel Friedlander

Ward 6 Council Member

Tucker M. Kelley

At Large Council Member

Michael Puzio

Low Income Energy Assistance

To help customers with utility bills during the winter season, Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L) and the Affordable Housing Alliance are promoting the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) programs.

LIHEAP is designed to help low-income families and individuals meet home heating and medically necessary cooling costs. For more information regarding LIHEAP, call 1-800-510-3102. PAGE is an assistance program designed to help low-to moderate-income households who experience economic hardship pay their electric and natural gas bills. For more information on this program, visit www.njpoweron.org or call 1-732-982-8710.

Several registration events were held at JCP&L office locations in central and southern New Jersey during December, allowing customers to work directly with representatives from the assistance organizations to easily submit the required applications for these assistance programs. Similar events are to be scheduled in January. Customers who wish to see if they qualify for the programs may visit <http://www.njpoweron.org>.

Historical Society Map Night

The Historical Society of Rockaway Township presented Map Night on October 2. Members of the Historical Society dug deep in its collection of old area maps, including those representing mines and earlier settlements. Map Night was open to the public at no charge, and attendees discovered many area 'hidden treasures' in the scrolls.



Mayor's Address *(provided at the 2018 Township Reorganization meeting)*

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and welcome all of you to Rockaway Township's 2018 reorganization meeting. It is my continuing privilege to serve as your Mayor, and I am eager to highlight some of my Administration's accomplishments from 2017 and share with you my vision for the future.

The Township of Rockaway is a customer service organization. With the help of all our volunteers, staff, professionals and municipal officials, we work together to serve our customers – you, the residents. I am proud of the high level of service we provide, and look forward to elevating current services to greater heights while keeping the 2018 municipal tax rate flat for the second year in a row. The draft budget I will be submitting to the Council for consideration will again contain 'no increase in the municipal portion of your tax bill.' This proposed budget is based upon years of good financial planning and significant reductions in spending, without cutting any services that you, the taxpayer, is accustomed to. As I stated last year, this is a 'good story' for Rockaway Township. This brand of success comes over a period of time, requiring the cooperation of the Mayor, Administration and Township Council.

The Township's website and all that it contains continues to be a model for the region. Rockaway Township was one of the first municipalities to have a government transparency page. Year after year, we add information, provide more reports and expand the website's usefulness for residents – reducing the need to take time out of your busy schedule to come to the municipal building.

This year, with the implementation of state-of-the-art integrated municipal management software solutions, we will modernize the Construction, Zoning and Recreation functions of the

Township, giving residents the ability to register electronically and/or pay for more services online.

In addition to the website, residents are kept informed through technology and our quarterly newsletter. Residents have increasingly signed up for reverse 911 notifications, received informative Nixle notices, viewed updates on our website, friended or followed the Township's Facebook page, and downloaded an app providing vast amounts of useful solid waste and recycling information. Those who prefer to receive information the old fashion way, on paper, still receive one of our quarterly newsletters directly via mail each year.

In 2017, we made significant progress in resolving several items of litigation that have weighed upon us financially for years, if not decades. The Pondview project, a point of contention for almost a generation, is under construction and had its first tenants move in late last year, generating revenue for the Township. Additionally, the Council authorized a 2017 settlement agreement with Morris Commons, concluding years of legal fighting due to a court-imposed builder remedy lawsuit, which falls under the State Constitution and New Jersey's Fair Housing Act. When the courts allowed the builder remedy against the Township, our Planning and Zoning Boards lost all zoning influences on the property in question. Contending with lawsuits is never a desirable position, but it is always positive when we, as a community, can move forward.

Over the past year, we have remained committed to improving and maintaining infrastructure while maximizing grant opportunities to minimize impact on taxpayers. Some successful examples of grant-supported projects include the following:

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Holiday Cheer in Rockaway Township



Left: Mayor Michael Dachisen tells Santa his Christmas wishes for a healthy, prosperous Rockaway Township in the coming year. Center: Santa Claus greets residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Municipal Building on December 1. Right: Santa and Mrs. Claus meet with one of the Township's charming young residents at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting.



Mayor Michael Dachisen attends the Annual Installation of Officers at Hibernia Fire Company #1 on January 1, 2018.

Mark Your Calendar! Township Spring Events

Easter Festival
March 24

Opening Day Fishing
April 7

Little League Parade
April 15

Memorial Day Parade
May 28



Mayor's Address *(continued from page 10)*

- We completed the town-wide gypsy moth suppression program, which was supported by a \$29,240 grant from the United States Department of Forestry. The suppression program has been so successful that a report was received indicating no additional treatment is necessary in 2018.
- The Senior Center parking lot was restored, supported by a Community Development Block Grant of \$68,850.
- The second phase of Daniel Street resurfacing and improvement was completed with support from a \$172,500 NJ Department of Transportation municipal aid grant.
- We broke ground on the Ford-Faesch West Wing project, which will allow us to add heating, bathrooms and proper climate control to this historic site for future interior restoration. This collaborative effort between the Township and the Historical Society was supported by a \$210,000 grant from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust.

Beyond these projects, we made a number of other improvements that were planned, budgeted for and completed on time, including renovation of the Peterson Field concession stand, installation of new backstops and fencing, demolition of the deteriorating Lake Ames recreation building, and many other accomplishments that are too numerous to list.

Moving forward in 2018, I look forward to completing restoration of Taylor Street, which is phase three of the Daniel Street initiative, along with replacement of the Senior Center roof. Both projects are supported by grants. The Township municipal building parking lot is in need of resurfacing and we plan to reconfigure the lot for additional, much needed parking space. However, the most highly anticipated project is the addition of a new Football sized utility field near the upper parking area at Peterson Field, funded in part by a \$575,000 endowment my administration has negotiated with Pondview Estates. Site plans and costs are currently being drafted and will

be reviewed once received. We are also adding a new state-of-the-art fire engine to our fleet in the north end of town.

With anticipated support from the Township Council, we will be moving to the construction phase of a joint vehicle wash facility with the Board of Education. This is a great example of two public entities working together to save the taxpayer money.

Rockaway Township has had a productive year with regard to other shared services initiatives. The Township of Jefferson was added as the newest of four municipalities that contract with Rockaway Township for public health services, which generates a total of \$230,000 annually in revenue. The Township has a long-standing tradition of providing public health services, but in 2017 also began providing the services of Qualified Purchasing Agent to the Township of Mine Hill, which we currently provide court services to, as well. These combined services generate roughly \$80,000 per year in revenue. With constraints on municipal budgets, it is imperative that we work with neighboring municipalities and towns in the region to share resources and realize efficiencies for taxpayers. I am committed to exploring every opportunity to engage in shared services that make sense for the Township and its residents!

Anyone with experience in customer service knows that people are of paramount importance. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the efforts of all volunteers that make Rockaway Township the great place it is today. Additionally, I want to thank the Township staff, without whom we would not be able to continue to provide the level of service that residents expect. Lastly, I wish to thank past and present members of the Township Council, and wish all the new Council members luck in 2018. I look forward to continued work with you for the betterment of our community.

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

Mayor Michael G. Dachisen