

Rockaway Township Report



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Inside This Issue

Mayor's Budget Message	1,3
Images from the Easter Festival	2
Mayor's Special Recognition	2
Police Department Update	2
From the Tax Collector...	2
Changes to Permit Requirements	3
Review FEMA Flood Maps	3
Important Recycling Updates	4
What's Happening in Town	5
News from Engineering	5
Summer Gazebo Concert Series	5
Reporting Road Damage	6
Free Radon Test Kits & Education	6
Scenes from Spring Cleanup	6

Mayor's Corner: Budget Message



Every year, our Township Council is required by law to adopt a Municipal Budget. Within the Township of Rockaway's Mayor-Council, Optional Municipal Charter Law form of government, the Mayor and administrative staff are responsible for preparing and submitting a draft municipal budget to the Township Council in order to ensure that the adopted budget satisfies the needs of the community and serves the best interests of the Township and its taxpayers.

It was little under six years ago that I took my oath of office as Mayor. I recognized back then, from my corporate and Township Council experience, that our municipal government is a service provider. I understood that my responsibility, first and foremost, was to provide the highest quality of service to our community while maintaining or reducing cost. So almost immediately, we began to implement cost saving strategies, repositioning tax dollars to the areas that required additional funding to meet the demands of delivering that service while basing every decision on what is best for the needs of our community.

As I recently passed the halfway point in my second term, I submitted a comprehensive and exciting draft budget to the Township Council on February 22, 2018. This budget continued to improve the financial health of Rockaway Township and moved us ever closer to achieving a AAA bond rating. A bond rating influences how much interest the Township taxpayers incur annually on capital projects and infrastructure improvements. The draft budget, as submitted, continued to focus on maintaining the essential services we all are accustomed to, in conjunction with making critical investments in our infrastructure and recreational facilities. The draft budget would continue to build on the foundation for our community and enhance residents' quality of life for years to come.

The 2018 draft budget, as submitted, was not about me or the Council, but about you, the taxpayers. The 2018 draft municipal budget included all of the great municipal services that residents expect and deserve, with a decrease in total spending of \$265,071 from the 2017 budget. It also included a flat municipal tax levy and a reduction in the municipal tax rate. The new rate reflected \$2.88 per \$100 of assessed value (the 2017 rate was \$3.122, by comparison). Because of the reassessment, roughly 47% of the Township's taxable line items were decreasing, with 53% increasing. To put it in perspective, your home's market value went up dramatically, and 47% of residential taxes were reduced anywhere from \$1 to

\$4,558 per home a year. All of this was accomplished while maintaining another zero percent municipal increase for the second year in a row. Further, my budget continued sound fiscal planning in maintaining a responsible fund balance, establishing and maintaining reserves for known liabilities and, most importantly, continuing to provide a high level of service at no additional cost in the municipal portion.

As you may be aware, since the transmission of the draft municipal budget to the Township Council in February, the Township Council has made a number of significant operational changes in funding or cuts, resulting in a yearly tax saving of \$66 per \$300,000 assessment. The Council leadership has been reporting on social media that they cut approximately \$1,000,000 in wasteful spending. These so called wasteful spending cuts include reducing public safety by: eliminating two (2) police officer positions that were vacated on December 1, 2017; eliminating one (1) Police Sergeant position (this equates to a third patrolman minus a promotion); and cutting one (1) police/911 dispatcher position.

In addition, the Council made substantial cuts to the Department of Community Services by eliminating our Community Services Director position, removing field improvements (specifically, the installation of a reconfigured and redesigned basketball court at Peterson Field), and eliminating

(continued on page three)

Scenes from the 2018 Easter Festival



Update from the Tax Collector

The 2018 - 2nd quarter property tax payments are due on May 1, 2018 with a 10 calendar day grace period. The last day to make payments without interest is May 10, 2018. To submit your payment online, please visit the Rockaway Township website at www.rockawaytownship.org.

Please be advised that we have switched software programs and there are new account numbers. When paying online, you can use the block and lot with the owner's name as it appears on your bill. Homeowners using their bank's website to make payments should use block and lot. For new account numbers, please email taxc@rockawaytownship.org or call 973-983-2822. You will receive the new account number with your new tax bill when it is issued in July 2018.

The 2018 sewer maintenance bills will be mailed in May 2018 and will be due in June 2018. New account numbers will be on the new bills. To receive email notifications and reminders from the Tax Collector's office, go to the Township website, click on *Notify Me* and register for the finance notifications. By subscribing, you will receive quarterly reminders of your property tax due date. You may also sign up to receive the Township's quarterly newsletter and other department updates.

The 2017 Senior Freeze (Property tax reimbursement) filing deadline is October 31, 2018. If you need any assistance in determining eligibility or have any other questions, please call the State's hotline at 1-800-882-6597 or visit www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/.

From our Police Department

The Rockaway Township Police Department reminds residents to drive safely! Anti-distracted driving enforcement took place from April 12 through April 16. Residents are reminded: *U Text U Drive U Pay*. For more information, go to: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving>.

Click it or Ticket concentrated enforcement will take place from May 14 through June 3. For more information, to to: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/>



Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Dachisen would like to welcome the newest additions to Rockaway Township's staff: Richard Boulineau, Deputy Court Administrator, Anu Batra, Temporary Deputy Clerk, Katherine Fay, REHS, and Karen Mabey, Finance Accounts Payable.

Seldom do four Nor'easters strike our area in one year - and it is perhaps unprecedented to have four strike during one calendar month. Mayor Dachisen wishes to gratefully acknowledge representatives of the Department of Public Works for their tireless work in clearing snow and fallen trees during the winter storms of March 2018.

Mayor's Corner: Budget Message

(continued from page one)

one full-time Laborer position for field maintenance. The Council's budget also:

- Eliminates two (2) part-time recycling attendant positions, which would provide for oversight and maintenance at both recycling centers
- Reduces dial-a-ride funding
- Eliminates the Township's ability to pay the Township Attorney to levels below any billing in over five years
- Reduces funding in technology, limiting my ability to purchase state-of-the-art products to improve communications with the public

Additionally, funding for my cellular service and off-site secure computer access, which the Council referred to as a perk, was eliminated. This is an attempt to disrupt the way I conduct Township business during the day, as my cell phone is the principal way in which I communicate with residents and the

Township administration, especially during emergency events such as storms and power outages.

Some Council members are quite calculated in their representation of progress regarding tax stabilization, but have not the knowledge nor experience in taking action to achieve results, other than to eviscerate the budget. As stated, the goal in preparing the 2018 draft municipal budget was to put forth a *responsible* budget that maintains the high level of service that residents deserve, at the lowest possible cost. Rockaway Township has an *obligation* to provide services – there is much more to the Township than the \$66 reduction in a given tax bill.

There may be many unanticipated consequences as a result of these actions. Then again, the afore-mentioned reductions only represent some among many, and these cuts are still being analyzed to understand their full impact. As we move forward in the budget process and beyond, I will do everything I can for you, the residents, with the budget the Council has provided me.

Changes to Household Permitting Requirements

Effective March 5, 2018, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has made several changes affecting permitting in the state. Following are a few changes to some common household projects.

Permits will no longer be required for the repair or replacement of any amount of existing roof covering on *detached one-or two-family dwellings*. For other dwellings, roofing permits are required. Permits will no longer be required for the repair or replacement of any amount of existing siding on *detached one or two family dwellings*. One exception – the repair or replacement of *polypropylene siding* does require a permit. For other than dwellings, existing siding may be repaired or replaced with like material not exceeding 25 percent of the total building exterior wall. The installation of

any amount of polypropylene siding requires a permit.

The application of liquid-applied lining material inside an existing chimney does not require a permit. However, chimney liners made of stainless steel, aluminum or other approved materials require a permit.

In one and two family dwellings, no permits are required for the installation of a burglar alarm/security system. Additionally, doorbells may be installed or replaced without a permit. Plug-in landscape irrigation units under 30 volts may be installed without a permit.

Permits will no longer be required for the installation, repair or replacement of interior finishes comprising less than 25 percent of the wall area of the *dwelling*. This includes plastering and drywall

installation. Plumbing fixtures may be replaced with a similar fixture, provided there is no change in the piping arrangement without a permit. The replacement of existing plumbing piping with new and approved material of like capacity *does* require a permit.

Finally, the permitting requirements for garden type utility sheds also has changed. No permits are required for a garden type utility shed that is 200 square feet or under, provided it does not have electric, water, gas, oil or sewer connections. However, Zoning permits are still required for sheds of all sizes.

Please contact the Construction Department with any questions regarding permitting. We can be reached at 973- 983-2809 or via email at construction@rockawaytownship.org.

Review FEMA Flood Maps

The Township is in receipt of revised Preliminary FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). These maps are available for review by the public at the Rockaway Township Engineering Department Monday through Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm or online at <https://fema.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=16bb8a9ebcac47da913e6e9f4ecf30ab>. Anyone who lives in or near a flood zone or near a waterbody is strongly encouraged to review these preliminary maps to see if they are affected.

Additional resources can be found on the Rockaway Township home website under "FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) Information" under Popular Links.



FEMA

The Rockaway
Gazebo
Committee
presents its
Summer Concert
Series at Park
Lake from July 1
to August 26.
Please find
more details in
this newsletter!



Summer
Playground
Program
registration is
open! Locations
are Dwyer,
Birchwood &
KDM Schools.
Check the
Township
website for more
information

Update from Rockaway Township Recycling

Recycling News

Recycling calendars, flyers and other useful items are available on the Township website. If you haven't already visited the site, please go to www.rockawaytownship.org/189/Recycle, click on the *My Schedule* tab and input your home address. Here, you can view or print your personalized collection calendar and sign up for important alerts and reminders with Rockaway Township's *ReCollect App*. Not sure how to dispose of something? Click the tab for *Waste Wizard* and enter the material you are looking to dispose of. Click on the *Facilities* tab for information about our locations and hours of operation. For additional information, click on the *Print Flyers* tab to learn about single stream recycling, hazardous household waste drop off events and Rockaway Township's bulk clean-up and vegetative waste collections. Full printouts of the bulk and recycling calendars, flyers and stickers for labeling your receptacles are also available in the Municipal Building lobby.

Single Stream Recycling

Curbside collection of recycling is 'single stream' or 'no sort.' This means you may put cans, bottles, newspapers and cardboard out together. For large amounts of cardboard, you may also break down smaller boxes and place in one large box (three max). Recycling may be placed in tote-style cans (preferred) filled to capacity or in regular garbage cans loaded no heavier than 50 pounds each. Please label all recycling cans (stickers available at Municipal Building free of charge). With various collections of garbage, recycling and vegetative waste picked up on the same day in some cases, it is very important to label your cans to ensure proper collection. All the crews collecting these various materials appreciate your cooperation in this matter. *Please note that recycling brought to our depots is not single stream and must be separated into commingled (cans and bottles), cardboard and newspaper.*

Leaf and Brush Collection takes place weekly now through December 28. Please visit the aforementioned website and input your address for a collection schedule. Leaves must be in either brown biodegradable bags or cans labeled *vegetative waste* (stickers available at the Municipal Building free of charge), and brush must be tied and bundled, no heavier than 50 pounds per bundle and cut no longer than four feet (branches max 6" diameter).

Grass Collection takes place weekly now through December. Check the aforementioned schedule for collection day and place at curb by 6:00am of designated day. Grass must be in either brown biodegradable bags or cans with a lid labeled *grass or vegetative waste*. Cans *must* be labeled. Cans up to 50 pounds each, with three cans maximum.

Bulk Collection/Clean Up Week

Once per month, residents may put out bulky items that would not generally be placed at the curb with your regular household garbage. Items may include, but are not limited to: mattresses, box springs, couches, toilets, hot water heaters, dressers, end tables, etc. The collection is intended for disposing of a few pieces per month, *not* for emptying a house when moving.

There is a limit to the amount that may be placed curbside – *not to exceed 150 pounds per collection*. Items must fit into the hopper of a garbage truck and must be able to be crushed. Items that are *not* acceptable include televisions, automotive parts, paint and building materials (hazardous household materials, sheet rock, spackle, tile, etc.). If you have a question regarding the suitability of items for bulk collection, either check the *Waste Wizard* or call 973-983-2891. There is no additional fee for this – it is a service included in your taxes. Bulk collection is contracted to Waste Management in 2017 and is picked up according to collection schedule. Please see the link above to check your collection day(s).

Street Sweeping Underway

Every Road in Rockaway Township will be swept one or more times as necessary over the course of the spring, summer and fall. Roads are swept systematically section by section, generally starting with areas surrounding bodies of water, to prevent run off into our waterways and natural resources. Please rest assured your road will be swept. Unfortunately, with a Township this size, there is no way to effectively notify residents regarding a sweeping schedule. If your property permits, please park vehicles off road when possible to allow to road to be swept in its entirety.

Grass – Cut it and Leave it

Grass clippings are a major part of New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream, and as with other highly recyclable materials such as aluminum and steel cans, glass bottles and jars, paper and certain plastic bottles, the recycling of grass clippings helps reduce the amount of waste being collected for disposal. As a New Jersey resident, you are already reducing the amount of landfilled waste by recycling a variety of materials. You can easily recycle the clippings generated each time you mow your lawn, and save time and money by doing so.

Doing your part is simple – just leave the clippings on the lawn when you mow. Grass clippings provide a natural and healthy fertilizer for a growing lawn. For more information, see the *Recycling* section of the Township website.

What's Happening

MAY

- 1st Summer playground registration open & ongoing
Online registration through Community Pass:
<https://register.communitypass.net/reg/>
- 1st Mount Hope Pond registration open & ongoing
Online registration through Community Pass:
<https://register.communitypass.net/reg/>
- 17th Free Blood Pressure Screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am
- 17th Skin Cancer Screening*
Rockaway Township Health Clinic, 419 Green Pond Road
6:00pm - 8:00pm
- 19th Health promotion: Depression/anxiety and coping
Robert A. Galdon Senior Building, 19 Mt. Hope Road
1:00pm - 2:30pm
- 28th Memorial Day parade
Starts at Edith & Fleetwood Drives; ends at Chestnut Street
11:30am - 1:00pm

JUNE

- 7th Blood chemistry screening: CHEM23, lipid profile & FBS*
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
9:00am - 10:30am
- 21st Free Blood Pressure Screening
Rockaway Township Municipal Building
11:00am - 11:30am

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

Gazebo Concert Series

Rockaway Township residents are reminded to come out and enjoy the Annual Summer Concert Series, held every Sunday afternoon from 3:00pm - 5:00pm at the Parks Lake Gazebo on Mt. Hope Road. *In the event of inclement weather, the concerts will be held at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall (Macy's Lower Level). In the event of rain, please call the Recreation Hotline at 973-983-2853 to confirm location.*

JULY

- 1 Soul Groove - Pop, R&B and Soul
- 8 Symphonics - Dance and Party Music
- 15 Carnage Street - 60s Magical Music
- 22 No Discipline - Reggae
- 29 Reminisce - Oldies and Dance Music

AUGUST

- 5 Thunder Hill - Country
- 12 Due South - New Country
- 19 Dave and the Waverunners - Jimmy Buffet/Margaritaville Music
- 26 Cameos - Oldies

News from Engineering

Taylor Street Improvements

Rockaway Township applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$290,000 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid Program for the Taylor Street roadway improvements. This grant will help Rockaway Township continue efforts to preserve and improve the condition of the roadway infrastructure within the Birchwood section of the Township. Proposed improvements include curbing and driveway aprons, drainage and ADA Curb Ramps, along with milling and paving. The project is anticipated to go out to bid during late spring or early summer, with construction beginning in the fall of 2018.

Accessible Ramp Improvements at Peterson Field

Plans for construction of an accessible ramp from the middle parking lot at Peterson Field down to the lower ball fields (PI-P4) have been finalized and are anticipated to go out to bid shortly. This ramp will improve accessibility for those using Peterson Field, including persons with disabilities and persons with baby carriages. The Rockaway Township Departments of Engineering, Construction and Community Services worked closely with the design engineer to develop an accessible ramp that meets applicable codes and regulations while being aesthetically pleasing and complementary to the existing conditions at Peterson Field. Construction is anticipated for summer 2018.

Richard Mine Road Drainage Improvements

With the Township Council's recent approval of the temporary access easements ordinance to conduct the approved work within the waterway, the Richard Mine Road Drainage Improvement Project is anticipated to go out to bid this spring with construction anticipated to begin in late summer. This is a long awaited project that involved detailed engineering design, as well as land use permitting through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The Township is excited to begin this project and improve the condition of the drainage and roadway within this section of Rockaway Township.



Residents are reminded to join Rockaway Township for its annual Memorial Day Parade, to be held from 11:30am to 1:00pm. The parade begins at Fleetwood Drive and Edith Drive, and ends at the gazebo on Chestnut Street.

More Public Works News

Spring is upon us! With the end of winter, you may have noticed some minor road damage created as a result of snow plowing. If you notice that the asphalt berm at your driveway/road threshold has been damaged, please contact the Rockaway Township Department of Public Works and leave your name, address and extent of the damage. A supervisor will assess the damage and your property will be placed on a list to be repaired as soon as weather and material permit.

You are the eyes and ears of our community. Should you see a dangerous road condition such as a pothole, collapsing storm drain, downed street sign or tree/tree limb in the road, please contact the Rockaway Township Department of Public Works at 973-983-2891, or call the Police after 3:30 and on the weekends at 973-625-4000 to report these issues. The Department of Public Works sincerely appreciates your notifications, thus enabling us to help provide safer roads.

Radon Education & Free Tests

The Rockaway Township Division of Health is pleased to present an educational program on radon risk and will offer a limited number of radon test kits to Township residents. The free test kits, available on a first come, first serve basis, were made possible through a cooperative grant and promotion with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The radon test kits will first be made available at a program entitled 'Radon Awareness,' which will be held at the Rockaway Township Public Library at 7:00pm on Monday, June 25. Division of Health staff will discuss radon, simple ways to detect it, and how to mitigate radon risk in your home. Radon is a colorless, odorless gas that is estimated to cause about 21,000 lung cancer deaths nationwide every year.

The program is free but registration is required. To register, call the Division of Health at 973-983-2848.

Rockaway Township Spring Clean Up Day 2018



Rockaway Township staff and volunteers clean up Parks Lake. From left: Will Ferrante, Police Chief Martin McParland, Jeff Meudt, Mayor Michael Dachisen and Catherine Dachisen.



Township Animal Control Officer Daniel McDonald gathers some of the collected debris at Copeland School. The Township holds its cleanup days with support through the NJ Clean Communities grant.



Clean up day is a family affair: Rockaway Township Principal Allison Ferrante and son smile for a photo.



Several hundred pounds of litter and recyclables were collected from Parks Lake, Copeland School and Mt. Hope Pond.