

Rockaway Township Report



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www.rockawaytownship.org

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Mayor's Corner



As I write this September message, we continue to navigate our way through the global COVID-19 pandemic and these unprecedented times. I have addressed the pandemic at different intervals by providing comments during our virtual Township Council meetings over the last several months, and I appreciate feedback from our residents. Though rates of COVID-19 have been lower over the last few months, this is no time to forget the individual and community actions that have helped get us here. With the return of some students to our schools, the gradual reopening of our businesses and recreational spaces, and the onset of autumn weather, public health experts agree that we are likely to see a spike in cases both regionally and nationally.

In the absence of a vaccine and herd immunity, it is up to each of us to do what we can in helping control the spread of COVID-19, so I remind residents to please do your part. Though we are familiar with the most helpful actions,

it bears repeating: Please wash your hands, disinfect frequently touched surfaces, practice social distancing and use face cover when social distancing of six feet (6') cannot be maintained. Nothing is more important to me than the health and safety of our residents – please remember that as we continue to face the specter of community-wide disease transmission, your actions very well may preserve the health or save the life of a friend or family member.

Most recently, Township residents were affected by Tropical Storm Isaias, the center of which traversed our immediate area on August 4, providing inches of rain and damaging wind gusts of up to 70 miles per hour. We continue to live through challenging times, and it takes resilience, patience and collaboration from all of us.

Despite the hardships brought on by this novel pathogen and our societal response, as well as near hurricane force sustained winds and power outages, Rockaway Township has made tremendous progress in realizing and implementing community projects over the last several months. As your Mayor, I have been working diligently with residents, businesses, government agencies, schools and our municipal employees to move

the Township forward, despite the setbacks we have been facing. The Township has completed significant road paving, curbing and drainage improvements, and also is completing much needed repairs to our infrastructure, like our municipal well replacement/restoration project and the resurfacing of the municipal complex parking lot. We have also availed ourselves of grant opportunities, with the Division of Health securing nearly \$36,000 in COVID-19 grant support and the Department of Fire attaining an additional \$7,000 in funding.

After a number of years, my vision for improvements to Peterson Field is finally being realized, and upgrades will include a new playground, new tennis courts, refurbishment of basketball courts, and the installation of artificial play surfaces, among other improvements. Some of these upgrades are to be completed by the end of September, and other improvements are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2021. Please see articles within this edition of the *Rockaway Report* for more information on our latest work within the Township.

Very truly yours,

Mayor Michael Puzio

Please be advised that the Municipal Building will now be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30am - 4:30pm, with no appointments necessary. Residents seeking to apply for a marriage license, however, must call the Office of the Municipal Clerk AT 973-983-2834 to schedule an appointment.

On or about September 15, Rockaway Borough dam construction and lake dredging will commence at Park Lake and will continue through late spring 2021. For information and status regarding the project, please follow the Rockaway Borough Facebook page.

Meals on Wheels Seeks Volunteers

The Meals-on-Wheels Program provides nutritious food to homebound residents who are unable to cook for themselves. The Morris County Nutrition Project administers the program and provides the services of their staff and kitchens to prepare and supply the lunch-time meals. Morris County residents can enroll in Meals-on-Wheels by calling the Nutrition Project at 973-285-6856.

The Rockaway Township Division of Recreation coordinates the Meals-on-Wheels program for its residents and provides home delivery of the meals. The Recreation Department is located in the Municipal Building at 65 Mt. Hope Road, and the coordinator of the Rockaway Township Meals-on-Wheels program can be reached at 973-983-2839.

The Meals-on-Wheels staff wishes to thank our current and past volunteers for the many hours of service you have given to delivering meals to those in need. Rockaway Township truly appreciates its volunteers and their dedication and service to our community.

The Meals on Wheels program serves a very important role in Rockaway Township and is

always welcoming volunteer drivers. The program has openings for permanent positions of one day per month, as well as substitute drivers to work on an as needed basis. Meals are distributed from the Rockaway Township Municipal Building between the hours of 9:30am and 12:00pm. Volunteers need to complete a volunteer application. For more information, call 973-983-2839.



Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Puzio wishes to congratulate Edith Yates of the Rockaway Township Shade Tree Commission, who received a proclamation in April for over 40 years of community service.

Mayor Puzio also wishes to recognize Bob Conlon, who received a proclamation for over 30 years of community volunteerism, and also received the Citizen's Recreation Committee Walter Stasiak Coaches Award.

Mayor Puzio would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Division of Health for successfully applying for \$36,000 in COVID-19 grant funding, and the Department of Fire for receiving approximately \$7,000 in COVID-19 grant funding. The grants are helping to defray the cost of COVID-19 planning and coordination, case investigation, contact tracing, and the purchase of items like hand sanitizer, personal protective equipment and face cover.

Mayor Puzio is pleased to welcome the following new additions (and perhaps future employees) to Rockaway Township:

- Nicholas, born to Cara Sileno-Weiberth, Chief REHS with the Division of Health

- James Patrick, born to Angela Skokandich, Public Health Nurse with the Division of Health

Mayor Puzio congratulates Liliane Ambrus, Clerk with the Department of the Tax Assessor, on her retirement after over 25 years of service with the Township.

Mayor Puzio is pleased to welcome the following new employees to Rockaway Township:

- Nicholas Lyasko, Laborer, Department of Public Works
- Hunter Cronk, Laborer, Department of Public Works
- Nicholas Wekilsky, Laborer, Department of Public Works
- Kimberly Johnson, Clerk, Department of the Tax Assessor

Finally, the Mayor wishes to acknowledge all the Rockaway Township employees and volunteers that have been working hard to keep our residents safe during the extended COVID-19 pandemic response.





Volunteer to Serve the Township!

Multiple Mayor's appointments for the Township of Rockaway are currently vacant. If you have interest in serving in any of the appointed positions listed below, please complete a Citizen Leadership form, which may be obtained at the Municipal Clerk's office either in-person or via email at Clerk@RockawayTownship.org. Thank you for your interest!

Parks & Recreation Planning Committee

Full Member: 1-year term – ONE appointment

Alternate: 1-year term – TWO appointments

Meetings are held the first Friday of the month at 9:00am in the Municipal Building.

Township Code 2-39. The Committee shall explore and recommend locations and areas suitable for the development of park sites and recreational facilities. The Committee shall plan and develop public recreational areas and facilities. The Committee shall recommend planned recreational activities and programs.

Planning Board

2nd Alternate: 2-year term – ONE appointment

Meetings are held the third Monday of the month at 7:30pm in the Municipal Building.

Township Code 54-5. The Planning Board may approve, conditionally approve or disapprove land use applications for the purpose of providing for the orderly and wise development of the Township and affording adequate facilities for housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, safety and the health and welfare of its population.

Shade Tree Commission

Full Member: 1-year term – ONE appointment

Meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 7:00pm in the Municipal Building.

Township Code 2-31. Duties may include reviewing construction site plans and making recommendations regarding tree removal and planting. Public education such as web page, Arbor Day and local community events. Construct five-year Rockaway Community Forestry Plan. Perform recertification tasks and submit annual reports to N.J. Forest Service. Keep abreast of invasive diseases and insects.

Citizen's Recreation Committee

Full Member: 1-year term – ONE appointment

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 7:15pm in the Municipal Building.

Township Code 2-40. Duties may include hearing various recreational programs; assist and advise the Director of the Department of Community Services regarding finances, administration, operations and development; enforce the Youth Sports Code of Conduct; approve program bylaws; conflict resolution.

Tax Collector's Update

Fourth quarter 2020 property tax payments are due on November 11, 2020 without interest. Residents are reminded to retain a copy of this tax bill for your records, for proof of property tax amounts when filing your 2020 income tax return for 2020. Please be advised that residents may now make partial payments online through the Township's website.

The 2019 *Senior Freeze* property tax reimbursement filing deadline is November 2, 2020, unless the date is extended by the State. If residents require assistance in determining eligibility and/or to check status on filed applications, please call the State's hotline at 1-800-882-6597. Residents who require assistance with the *Homestead Credit* may call the State's hotline at 1-888-238-1233.

Well Upgrades for Rockaway

The Department of Public Works is completing much needed improvements to the Township's water infrastructure, including rehabilitation of municipal well 7A and replacement of municipal well 6. The contract for work has been awarded and construction on the new 30" diameter, 130-foot-deep well is anticipated to begin this fall.

Township officials are eager to complete this project, as it has been many years since a new municipal drinking well has been constructed. Public Works officials worked with professional engineers and hydrogeologists to design the new well, which will augment the existing water system in helping the Township meet its demand for drinking water.

Tea 'Party' at Townsquare



Mayor Michael Puzio and members of the Rockaway Township Council joined owner Naira Kasparian for the grand opening of the Tea Lady, a new tea and coffee specialty shop located on the upper floor of the Rockaway Townsquare Mall. Pictured from left to right: Councilman Manny Friedlander, Mayor Puzio, Naira Kasparian and Council Vice President Jonathan Sackett.

Public Works & Recycling

Dangerous Road Conditions

As a resident, you are the eyes and ears of our community. Should you see a dangerous road condition such as a pothole, downed street sign or tree/limb in the road, please contact the Public Works Department at 973-983-2891, or call the Police Department after 3:30pm and on the weekends at 973-625-4000 to report these issues. The Public Works Department appreciates your notifications, which help facilitate safer roads.

Berm Repair

You may have noticed some minor damage created as a result of snow plowing this past winter. If you see damage to the asphalt berm in front of your property, please contact the Rockaway Township Department of Public Works, and leave your name and address and the extent of 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.

Recycling News

Receptacles to be Labeled

Residents occasionally call to report that their receptacles have not been collected. It is imperative that residents label their receptacles, identifying the commodity that is in it. Rockaway Township makes 'YARD WASTE' and 'RECYCLING' stickers available to residents at the Municipal Building. If you are unable to pick these stickers up, please call 973-983-2891, leave your name and address, and stickers will be mailed to you.

The drivers who collect recycling, yard waste and trash sincerely appreciate the labeling of waste receptacles, as it eliminates the need for collectors to stop at every single receptacle, only to find that it doesn't contain the material they are collecting. In turn, it ensures proper collection for you.



Calendars

Collection schedules are available for recycling (Routes A-F), yard waste and bulk collections. If you haven't already done, so please visit www.rockawaytownship.org/189/

[Recycle](#) and 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 the Township's bulk clean-up and vegetative waste collections.

Single Stream Recycling

Curbside collection of recyclables is 'single stream' or 'no sort.' This means you may put cans, bottles, newspapers and cardboard out for collection together. For large amounts of cardboard, you may also break down smaller boxes and place them in one large box (three maximum).

Recyclables may be placed at the curb in tote-style containers (preferred) filled to capacity, or in regular garbage receptacles no heavier than 50 pounds each. No plastic bags or garbage may be mixed in with the single stream recyclables, and receptacles with plastic bags *will be rejected*. Please note that our recycling centers are *not* single stream, and recyclables must be separated into commingled (cans and bottles), cardboard and newspaper.

Grass, Leaf & Brush Collection

Brush and leaves are collected curbside weekly April through December. Please visit www.rockawaytownship.org/189/Recycle and input your address for a collection schedule. Leaves must be in either brown biodegradable bags or cans labeled *Yard Waste* (stickers available at the Municipal Building free of charge), *no heavier than 50 pounds per can or bag*. Brush must be no more than six inches in diameter, and tied and bundled in manageable four foot lengths weighing no more than 50 pounds each.

Dirt, rocks, mulch, stumps, plastic bags and garbage are not accepted with yard waste. If your yard waste collection day falls on a holiday, your materials will be picked up the following week.

Citizens Recreation Committee Honors Residents



On June 30, the Citizen's Recreation Committee honored two individuals with this year's Walter Stasiak Coaches Award. The award, formally titled the *Walter Stasiak Coaches Award: Educator, Coach, Nurturer and Reverent Citizen*, was presented Ray Velez and Robert Conlon for contributions to recreation in Rockaway Township.

Ray Velez of Christ Church was recognized for his fellowship, camaraderie, character, integrity, sportsmanship and undeterred graciousness to the children of Rockaway Township. Robert Conlon, the outgoing Recreation Committee Chairman, has provided guidance and advocacy to the community's youths and athletic programs for more than 30 years. Mr. Conlon was recognized for his commitment to character, integrity, sportsmanship and generosity, which has enriched the children of the Township.

Engineering Update



Municipal Complex Parking Lot Improvements

The parking lot at the Rockaway Township municipal complex has received a facelift. The Department of Administration, along with the Departments of Engineering, Public Works, Police, Municipal Utilities and the Division of Parks and Recreation, collaborated to complete this long overdue project. The work took place while the Municipal Building and Library experienced limited traffic due to COVID-19 restrictions. The scope of work included improvements to traffic circulation, drainage and the underlying subbase. Notably, this project helped to make better use of the existing area, creating nearly 60 new parking spaces.

Kings Road Improvements

Rockaway Township received a NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid grant to complete improvements to the lower section of Kings Road. Work at this location will include drainage, curbing, ADA ramps, milling and paving. Plans also include the addition of a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Kings Road and Marilyn Place. Construction activities are anticipated to begin this fall, though this project may be completed during spring 2021, depending on the weather. The Township also received a NJDOT Municipal Aid grant to complete improvements to the upper portion of Kings Road, which is anticipated to begin with the completion of section one improvements.

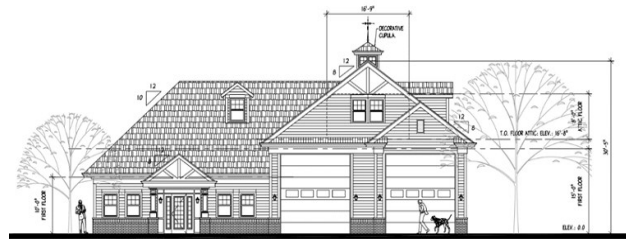
Residential Developments

Construction at the Pondview Estates project on Route 15 continues. Approximately 300 units of the development's

1,050 units have been completed and are occupied. Residential units at Pondview Estates are for rent. Ground has been broken at the Morris Commons residential development off of Green Pond Road. This project, composed of nine buildings, includes 345 residential units and a clubhouse. The construction at Morris Commons is expected to take three years to complete. Please be advised that rock blasting will be conducted as part of construction activities, after necessary authorizations have been received from State and local authorities. RAVE notification is anticipated to be issued prior to blasting activities.

Pondview Estates Firehouse

The Engineering and Fire Departments are working alongside Pondview Estate's Engineers and Architects to move forward plans for the development's new firehouse. As proposed, the 3,000 square foot building will contain two garage bays, office space, and laundry, decontamination and lavatory facilities for Rockaway Township's first responders. The Fire Director is working closely with the developer to ensure the building is equipped to support the latest communication technologies and other vital components of a fire station. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2021.



Fresh Pavement

The Department of Public Works is completing its 2020 milling and paving program, which includes sections of Fleetwood Drive, Congress Street, Titer Street, Christopher Street, Stephen Street, Swede Mine Road, Decker Road, Comanche Ave., Cherokee Ave., Mt. Pleasant Ave., Lake Denmark Road, Stonybrook Road, Caruso Road, Pasha Court, Hibernia Road, Lakeshore Drive and Lakeside Drive.

Senior Picnic Postponed Due to Pandemic Concerns

Due to the continuing pandemic and the risk of COVID-19 in our communities, the Mayor decided to postpone this year's Annual Senior Picnic. Our seniors are the cornerstone of the community, and keeping their health, safety and welfare in mind is of utmost importance. While it is Mayor Puzio looks forward to celebrating with our senior residents in 2021.

Right: Thanks to an anonymous donation, hard working Rockaway Township employees recently enjoyed a shaved ice treat.



Smoke Alarm Safety

Smoke Alarms at Home

SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.



SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- ❗ A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ❗ Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ❗ Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

Stop the Spread of Germs!



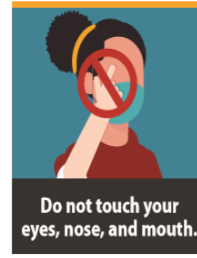
Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.



When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.



Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Ribbon Cutting at Rocco's

Mayor Michael Puzio helped open Rocco's Cuts and More, a new full service hair salon at 321 Mt. Hope Ave. (Rockaway Townsquare Mall Ring Road), on August 24. Pictured front and center and surrounded by salon staff at the ribbon cutting are Councilman Jack Quinn, Mayor Puzio and owner Rocco Lopomo.



Welcome Back to School

With school back in session, we encourage all drivers to slow down and obey speed laws. Remember it is the law to stop for stopped school buses and to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

- New drivers and parents of new drivers: With graduated licenses, probationary drivers are allowed only one passenger in the vehicle at all times unless there is an adult in the vehicle or any person over the age of 21.
- Cell phones are not permitted to be used at all by probationary drivers, even in hands free mode.
- Probationary drivers are required to display the red sticker on the front and rear license plates.

Remember - driving is a privilege, so be safe and abide the laws. The Police Department will be aggressively enforcing speeding violations, cell phone violations, seatbelt violations, and passing school bus violations - so please drive safely and enjoy the school year.

If you have any traffic related concerns or wish to report unsafe traffic conditions, please call the Rockaway Township Police Department at 973-625-4000. The Rockaway Township Police Department wishes you a safe and fun fall season.