

Rockaway Township Report



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www.rockawaytownship.org

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Inside This Issue

Mayor's Corner	1, 2
Engineering Update	2
Township Cleanup	2
Senior Center Restoration	3
Mayor's Special Recognition	4
Summer Fun for Dial-a-Ride	4
Vaccine Mega Center Success	5
2021 Governing Body Members	5
Fire Prevention News	5
Peterson Field Phase One	6
Backyard Grill & Fire Pit Safety	6
Come to the Senior Picnic	7
Lyme Disease Protection	7
Safe Grilling This Summer	7
Public Works & Recycling News	8

Mayor's Corner: Reorganization Message 2021



As we start a new year, I want to extend my best wishes to everyone, along with my hope and prayers for a happy and healthy 2021.

2020 was a challenging year for all of us. It was a particularly difficult year for Rockaway Township as well as municipal governments throughout New Jersey due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the challenges were considerable, I am pleased to report that my Administration, with the cooperation and assistance of a majority of the Council, was able to make 2020 a year of good government and progress for the Township in many areas.

This is not the time and place to list each item of progress and accomplishment made over the past year. However, I encourage our residents to access the Township's Facebook page, where I have posted a short video reviewing all that we have achieved.

Our progress and accomplishments have cut

across all areas of Township government, including health and safety; recreational facilities; fiscal responsibility; senior services; and many other significant areas.

From my first day of service as your Mayor, my goal has been to provide responsible and open government benefitting all of the residents of Rockaway Township. I look forward to the continued opportunity to maintain and improve what I started, and will work responsibly with our Council to move forward the good work that has been taking place.

It is also important that I acknowledge and thank our business administrator, department heads and staff for their consistently hard

work throughout the difficult times we all endured in 2020 and will continue to endure until the COVID-19 pandemic is under control. Township employees have demonstrated steadfast commitment to their jobs and concern for the important role they play, individually and collectively, in making our Township government work.

The same goes for our professionals, who provide the Administration, staff and myself with needed assistance on a daily basis.

I am proud to have your confidence and to serve as your Mayor. Together we can look forward to great things for Rockaway Township in 2021.

Mayor Michael Puzio



Charles Foster, Andrew Perkins, Chad Reilly and Ryan Jackson were sworn into the Rockaway Township Police Department as new officers on January 6, 2021. Pictured (l to r): Charles Foster, Chad Reilly, Chief Martin McParland, Ryan Jackson, Andrew Perkins and Mayor Puzio,

Engineering Department Update

The Rockaway Township Engineering Department has been very busy over the last several months, with projects in progress across the Township. Working in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, the Department of Engineering applied for and received a NJ Department of Transportation Municipal Aid grant for approximately \$191,000, to complete improvements to Queens Road including drainage, curbing, ADA curb ramps and resurfacing.

The Township awarded the bid for the Lake Hudsonia Dam Removal Project and construction activities are underway. For several years, the Township has been working with top consultants in the industry, as well as officials from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Morris County Soil Conservation District, to develop the design and oversight for this project. Special attention has been given to the impoundment dewatering, sediment management and dam removal to mitigate detrimental impacts to both the natural environment and downstream communities. River Logic Solutions was successful in dewatering the lake and removing several hundred fish to Lake Ames, in anticipation of dam structure demolition. Due to environmental protection standards, the contractor will return to the site in September 2021 to continue this project. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Department of Engineering with any questions regarding this project.

In 2020, Rockaway Township maintained compliance with NJDEP regulations, including the completion of biannual dam inspections in accordance with Dam Safety requirements, submission of final design plans for Lake Ames reconstruction, and completion of digital mapping of the Township's stormwater outfalls for compliance with the Township's NJPDES stormwater discharge permit. In 2021, Township Staff will be updating the Township's stormwater control ordinance in

accordance with NJDEP regulatory updates. Presently, Lake Ames Dam is in the final design and permitting phase with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. The next phase will include posting the project for bid proposals. The Township Engineering Department is also in the process of completing a geotechnical investigation and conceptual design for Mt. Hope Pond Dam.

As of June 24, the Peterson Field project was completed. Tennis and pickle ball courts have been completed and are open for use, and the newly improved basketball courts were dedicated to the late Mayor Michael Dachisen at a ceremony on June 24 (see photos in this edition of the *Rockaway Report*).

The Engineering Department continues to inspect and review ongoing development of residential projects in the Township, including Pondview, Morris Commons, Green Pond Mews, Fox View and the Marriott Hotel. In addition, the department continues to work on the design and review of the Kings Road (Section I and II) and Queens Road (Section I and II) resurfacing projects, with construction anticipated to begin in fall 2021 and fall 2022, respectively.

With the aid of a significant Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from Morris County, and with collaborative efforts from the Departments of Community Services and Engineering, the Township, in 2020, completed its Senior Center roof restoration project. Leveraging fiscal support with another CDBG grant, the Township has commenced ADA-compliant improvements to the first floor of the Senior Center, including new flooring, ceilings, wall treatments, windows and refurbished bathrooms.

Finally, the Township is out to bid on the Kings Road water main replacement, and is expected to begin construction in summer 2021.



Clean Communities: Township Cleanup

Volunteers came out to clean the litter and make Rockaway Township glitter at the April 24 Clean Communities Clean Up Day. Left: Administration Clerk Tracie Kasko, Council Member Mary Noon and Clean Communities Coordinator/Chief REHS Cara Sileno-Weiberth work Clean Up Day at Mt. Hope Pond. Right: Armed with gloves, bags and debris grabbers, residents came out to clean up the Township.



Left: Michael Baeder is promoted to Sergeant on December 4, 2020. Pictured are wife Jacki, son Jackson, daughter Meika and Mayor Michael Puzio. Right: The Township conducts its rabies clinic on November 28, 2020, with COVID safety measures like social distancing, face cover and sanitizer in place.

Township Senior Center Receiving Upgrade to Interior

Township officials are excited to announce that the Rockaway Township Senior Center is undergoing cosmetic and ADA-compliant renovations to its interior space. With funding through a Morris County Community Development Block Grant, the upstairs meeting space, restrooms, kitchens windows and hallways are receiving significant upgrades that will make the space not only ADA-compliant but more aesthetically pleasing for residents who utilize the facility.

This renovation comes on the heels of several other grant-funded improvements to the Senior Center, including resurfacing of the front and rear parking areas, restoration of the entry and installation of a new roof. The renovation is scheduled to be completed in late July, and the space is expected to be open to the Township's seniors in the coming weeks. Grant-funded restoration to the lower level of the building is planned for 2022, with a design that corresponds with the upper level renovation.



L to R: Council Vice President Jonathan Sackett, Council Member Manny Friedlander, Mayor Michael Puzio and Council President Joe Jackson serve burgers and franks at the July 1 employee appreciation lunch.

Residents are advised that as of June 22, after the easing of State Executive Orders related to COVID-19, the Municipal Building reopened for regular business hours with no appointment necessary

Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Michael Puzio, employees of the Township and members of our community mourn the loss of Mark Burek, Rockaway Township Tax Assessor, who passed away on November 13, 2020. Mark was the Township's Tax Assessor for 26 years, and always performed his job with the utmost professionalism and attention to detail. Mark's passing is a significant loss to the Township Administration and community, and he will be missed.

Mayor Puzio would like to recognize the Division of Health for successfully obtaining \$433,000 in COVID-19 Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Program grants, and the entire Township Administration for assisting in a successful application for approximately \$294,000 in federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) grant funding. These grants have helped defray the cost of COVID-19 response and case investigation, are providing resources to help vulnerable and underserved residents in the Division of Health's five-town jurisdiction, and are providing for the purchase of items like hand personal protective equipment and other essential COVID-related supplies.

Mayor Puzio wishes to congratulate the following Township employees on their retirement, and thanks them for their

years of dedicated service to Rockaway Township's residents:

- Valeri Schreck, Administrative Clerk in the Engineering Department
- Gene Garabrant, Superintendent of the Municipal Utility
- Rafael Sanchez, Sergeant with the Police Department
- Michael Rossi, Officer with the Police Department
- Christopher Hulsman, Officer with the Police Department

Mayor Puzio wishes to congratulate Township Clerk Christina Clipperton on the October 30 birth of her daughter Avery Marie.

Mayor Puzio wishes to congratulate the following individuals on their employment or promotion:

- Michael Baeder, promoted to Sergeant in the Police Department on December 4, 2020
- Charles Foster, Andrew Perkins, Chad Reilly and Ryan Jackson, sworn in as new police officers on January 6, 2021
- Tyler Gronau, hired as part-time Zoning Officer on January 4, 2021
- Monica Morris, hired as part-time Clean Communities representative on

January 4, 2021

- Shelley Kahn, hired as Engineering Clerk on December 2, 2020
- Michele Moran, hired as Personnel Officer on November 9, 2020
- Erin Murray, promoted to Administrative Assistant on November 2, 2020
- Elizabeth Peterson, hired as Deputy Municipal Clerk on October 13, 2020
- Bonnie Lambert, hired as Tax Assessor Clerk in April 2021
- Emily Kassar, hired as Police Department Records Clerk in April 2021
- Jennifer Hopley, hired as part-time Police Department Dispatcher in April 2021
- Robert Scanlon, hired as Public Works Laborer in May 2021
- Tyler Treible, Benjamin Davies, Sean Bruseo and Joseph Iannuzelli, hired as Public Works Laborers in February 2021
- Brian Russell, hired by Public Works in January 2021
- Linda Rivera, hired as Dial a Ride Driver in June 2021



Dial-a-Ride Seniors Take to the Water for Summer Fun

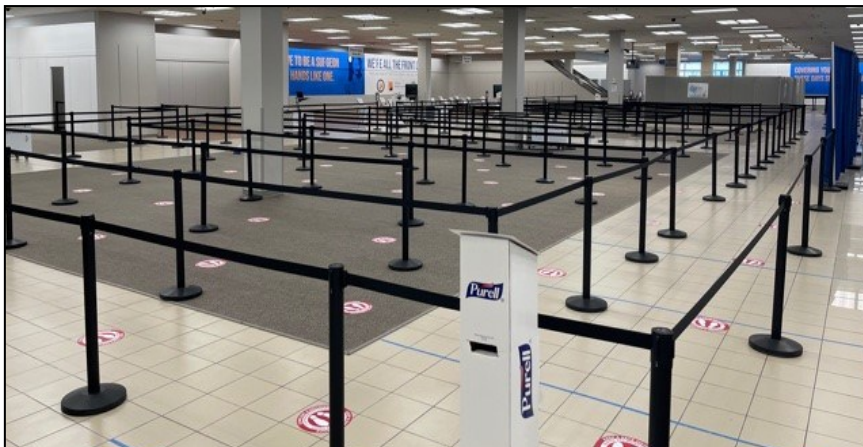
Rockaway Township's senior Dial-a-Ride participants had a wonderful time boarding Miss Lotta, Lake Hopatcong's largest boat, for a two-hour dinner cruise. Rockaway Township's passengers enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner, beautiful views of the lake and time with friends. In addition, Township seniors

learned a bit of Lake Hopatcong history from the captain while aboard Miss Lotta. Dial-a-Ride seniors look forward to future outings, including lunch at the Windlass Restaurant, Lake Hopatcong, on August 31 and a day at Lake Mohawk in Sparta on September 21.



Vaccine Mega Center Runs in Rockaway

State and County officials operated one of the State's six COVID-19 vaccination 'mega centers' at the vacant Sears store in Rockaway Township, located at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall, from January 8 through July 16. The site provided vaccinations to as many as 4,000 people per day during peak operation. The mega site opening was attended by Governor Phil Murphy, Congresswoman Mikie Sherill and other dignitaries. Governor Murphy is pictured at the site opening, with Rockaway Township Mayor Michael Puzio and Health Officer Peter Tabbot.. Also pictured is the indoor vaccination registration/staging area.



Your 2021 Governing Body

Mayor
Michael Puzio

**Council President,
Council-at-Large**
Joe Jackson

**Council Vice President,
Ward 4 Council Member**
Jonathan Sackett

Ward 1 Council Member
Mary Noon

Ward 2 Council Member
Jack Quinn

Ward 3 Council Member
Douglas Brookes

Ward 5 Council Member
Emanuel Friedlander

Ward 6 Council Member
Tucker M. Kelley

Council-at-Large
Howard Kritz

Council-at-Large
Adam Salberg

News from Fire Prevention

Fire Department Recognizes Officers

The Rockaway Township Fire Department proudly recognizes its 2021 department officers: Chief Joseph Aragona, Deputy Chief Jim Russo, Assistant Chief 1 Carlos Pais, Assistant Chief 2 Sean D'Amico, Assistant Chief 3 Kurt Pederson, Assistant Chief 4 Stephen Sperry, Assistant Chief 5 Tom Garvey, and Assistant Chief EMS Brian McCormack. Fire Director Jeffrey Heintzelman looks forward to a safe and successful year for the men and women of the Rockaway Township Fire Department.

Check Your CO Detector!

Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors should be verified as

operational in all homes and businesses in which they are installed. Please test CO alarms at least once a month and replace them as necessary according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the Rockaway Township Fire Department. If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move outdoors or near an open window or door, where you may access fresh air. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to reenter the home.

Slam Dunk: Peterson Field Phase One is Done!

The completion of the first phase of Peterson Field improvements was celebrated with the June 24 dedication of the restored basketball courts in memory of the late Mayor Michael G. Dachisen. Numerous Township officials and many residents turned out to honor the late Mayor and to shoot some hoop. Pictured clockwise from upper left: Members of the Township Council join Mayor Michael Puzio and Cathy Dachisen in the ribbon cutting ceremony; Cathy Dachisen and Mayor Puzio frame the sign that stands aside the basketball courts; Mayor Puzio, Cathy Dachisen, Council Vice President Jonathan Sacket and a couple of skilled young athletes take one of the first shots on the new courts; Contractors pave on May 17 as the courts near completion.



Up in Smoke: Keeping Your Home Safe from Outdoor Fires

Home fire safety doesn't stop at the door. There are many fire risks outside the home, and you may even have these in your backyard. Here are some ways to keep your home safer from outside fires.

Grilling

Summer months mean grilling! Make sure your home is protected. Keep grills three feet away from your house and anything that can burn.

- Make safe outdoor cooking a priority
- Move the grill away from siding, decking and other items that could catch fire

- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill when it's hot
- Stay with the grill the entire time you're cooking
- Keep your grill clean of leftover grease and fat

Backyard Fire Pits

Permanent and portable fire pits bring fire danger to your home. You can prevent fire or injury with these steps:

- As with a grill, be sure the fire pit is at least three feet away from your house and anything that can burn
- Closely watch children when the fire

pit is in use

- Use a metal screen over wood-burning fires to keep sparks and ash from drifting
- Turn off or put out fires before you leave the backyard
- Store matches and lighters in a way that is inaccessible to children

Fireworks are dangerous to people and pets. Using them puts your property at risk. The best way to stay safe from fireworks is to not use them. Instead, attend a public fireworks display put on by professionals.

The Mayor Invites Residents to the Annual Senior Picnic

Mayor Michael Puzio cordially invites all Rockaway Township senior residents to the Rockaway Township Annual Senior Resident Picnic, scheduled from 11:00pm - 2:00pm on Thursday, September 9 at the Craigmear Recreation Complex. Delicious food, entertainment and good fellowship will be offered to the Township's senior residents. The Annual Senior Picnic is open to all Rockaway Township seniors,

and proof of residency will be required at the gate. No pets or children will be permitted at this event. For additional information, please contact the Office of the Mayor at 973-983-2800. We look forward to seeing you there! Please note: Rain date is Friday, September 10. In the event of inclement weather on the day of the event, please call 973-983-2853.

Tick...Tick...Protect Yourself Against Lyme Disease

The spring and summer seasons of 2021 have proven, thus far, to be very active for our tick population. Rockaway Township residents are reminded to protect themselves against tick bites.

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is a tickborne disease that has been bugging New Jersey residents since 1978, when it was first found in the State. While Lyme disease is now known to occur in the United States, Europe and Australia, most cases are found in the northeastern states. Although many species of ticks are found in New Jersey, only the Deer (Black Legged) Tick and the Lone Star Tick are known to transmit the disease, with the Deer Tick being the most prevalent. Female Deer Ticks are about ¼ inch in length and are black and brick red in color. Males are smaller and all black.

What are the signs and symptoms of Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is often difficult to diagnose because it has numerous symptoms. The most common early symptoms of Lyme disease include a rash that resembles a bull's eye (*erythema migrans*), fever, headache, fatigue and muscle/joint pain. If not promptly treated, other progressive

symptoms may develop in some patients. Early detection of Lyme disease and prompt antibiotic treatment is critical and usually prevents more severe health problems.



When the larva or nymph feeds on an infected animal, the tick picks up the spirochete, carries it through the next stage, and transmits it to the host the next time it feeds. Humans may get Lyme disease when an infected tick begins to take blood and passes on the spirochete to them. *Infected deer ticks generally must feed for at least 12 – 24 hours* before they can begin to transmit the Lyme bacterium, so frequent self-examination and removal of ticks is useful in preventing the disease.

How are ticks involved in Lyme disease?

Ticks spread Lyme disease by transmitting the spirochete (a type of bacterium) that causes the disease.



If bitten by a tick, what do I do?

Using small forceps or tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and apply firm and steady backward pressure. Never try to remove the tick by burning it or smothering it with noxious chemicals. These methods do not work and may cause injury to the skin. After the tick is removed, avoid infection by applying antiseptic to the wound. You may call the Morris County Rutgers Cooperative Extension office at 973-285-8300, and can make an appointment to have your tick identified by specialists under a microscope. If you develop symptoms, contact your physician.

How can I avoid being bitten by a tick?

Take the following steps to reduce exposure when outdoors:

- Wear light-colored clothing
- Wear long pants tucked into socks
- Avoid tall grass and shrubby areas
- Remove brush from your property
- Keep grass mowed
- Thin out low shrub vegetation
- Apply tick repellent (with *permethrin* or *DEET*) according to directions
- Perform 'tick checks' every few hours

Barbecuing: Safe Grilling in the Summer

As residents light their barbecues on a routine basis, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing foodborne illness. Use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely!

Defrost Safely

Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can microwave defrost if the food is

placed immediately on the grill.

Marinating

Meat and poultry can be marinated for several hours or days to tenderize or add flavor, but food should be marinated in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve that portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it.

Cook Thoroughly

Cook food thoroughly to destroy harmful

bacteria. Meat cooked on a grill often browns fast on the outside. Use a *food thermometer* to be sure it reaches a safe temperature. Please adhere to the following minimum internal temperatures when cooking: Whole poultry - 165°F; Hamburgers - 155°F; Ground poultry - 165°F; Beef, veal & lamb steaks - 145°F; Roasts & chops - 145°F; Pork - 145°F.

For more information on safe summer food handling, contact the Division of Health at 973-983-2848.



Teach the children well: The Copeland Middle School 2021 graduation ceremony was held at Peterson Field on the morning of June 17. The easing of statewide COVID Executive Orders and the hard work of the Rockaway Township Division of Parks helped make it possible.

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.