

Rockaway Township Report



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Mayor's Corner: Annual Address Reflecting on 2024 and Looking Toward the Future



I hope all Township residents had a great holiday season and were able to share special time with family and friends. Some significant changes have taken place in Township management over the last several months, and I am excited to share these changes with you. I am also pleased to provide select highlights of our work over the last year, as well as a glimpse into some events and projects we look forward to engaging for the community in 2025.

The Township has experienced recent changes to two key leadership positions, resulting in a new look for Township management. I am happy to report that in June 2024, Lisa Palmieri, who has served as the Township's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the last 17 years, was also appointed Business Administrator for Rockaway Township. In addition, Robert Scherr, a member of

the Rockaway Township Police Department since 1999, became the Township's Chief of Police in September 2024.

I am excited to see these two longtime, respected Township representatives assume the highest positions in the Township's Administration and Police Department, respectively, and know they will give their very best in serving the community. To learn more about Ms. Palmieri's and Chief Scherr's career highlights, please see brief profiles of both in this edition of the *Rockaway Township Report*.

I am also pleased to report that 2024 was a very substantive year for municipal improvements and

achievements. I would like to highlight significant work of our municipal staff by mentioning some accomplishments of the past year:

Public Works: Roads, Parks & Water Utility

- Installed over 1,500 feet of pipe and numerous stormwater catch basins.
- Worked with contractor to micro surface 65,494 square yards of roadway, equivalent to approximately 4.8 miles of resurfacing.
- Cleared and maintained safe roadways through 14 winter storm events.
- Collected over 1900 tons of recyclable materials from curbside and recycling centers.

(continued on page three)



Parks Lake at the peak of fall colors, as photographed by Rockaway Township Health Officer Peter Tabbot.

Township Launches Mayor’s Wellness Campaign Activities

Mayor Joe Jackson renewed his continuing commitment to improving the health and wellness of Rockaway Township by signing the Mayor's Wellness Campaign Annual Pledge of Participation in 2024 and by introducing a number of wellness activities for residents to participate in during the year. The partnership between Rockaway Township and the statewide Mayor’s Wellness Campaign began last year in an effort to inspire residents to engage active living, community connectivity and healthier lifestyles.

In kicking off the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign, the Division of Health collaborated with Mayor Jackson to launch the *Let’s Walk Rockaway: Mayor’s Community Walking Challenge*

in the fall of 2024. Over 100 residents comprising over 20 teams participated in the six-week challenge, which established goals for daily movement and featured weekly bonus exercise opportunities for additional ‘points.’ The Walking Challenge included two regional walks with the Mayor, community cleanups and charitable donation drives.

Team and individual step totals were extremely impressive in the Walking Challenge, with the winning team, the Sole Sisters, walking a total of 2,354,062 steps during the six-week event. Individually, Rockaway Township resident Glen Campbell was consistently the big winner, boasting the highest single day step count (35,087), the highest weekly step

count (147,689) and the highest total step count (794,145). Resident Kristin Dunne completed the most bonus challenges during the walking competition.

The Mayor and the Division of Health are currently planning health initiatives for 2025, and residents are encouraged to check the Township website for continued Mayor’s Wellness Campaign activities in the coming months. Should you have any suggestions for community wellness events or if you wish to become involved, please reach out to Brittany Bernstein, Program Development Specialist and Local Health Outreach Coordinator with the Rockaway Township Division of Health, at bbernstein@rockawaytownship.org.

Semiannual Cleanup Day: Another Successful Event



The Township held its Fall Clean Up Day on Saturday, October 26, 2024. Several dozen volunteers came out to clean up the Mt. Hope Pond and Lake Ames areas. Pictured are Council President Howard Morrison, James Breiten of the Division of Health, David Crowell of the Division of Parks, Councilmember Adam Salberg, and some of the many volunteers who took time out of their busy weekend to make Rockaway Township glitter. Participating groups were eligible for New Jersey Clean Communities mini-grants and Township promotional items for their efforts.

Mayor's Annual Address *(continued from page one)*

- Over 70,000 tons of recyclable materials generated by Rockaway Township were reported to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Tonnage Grant Program.
- Collaborated with multiple local and state agencies during two major forest fire events to help provide access and support firefighting logistics.
- Provided response to earthquake and tornado, including assistance with downed trees, power outages and roadway access.
- Maintained Township athletic fields with grass cutting, weed trimming, leaf cleanups and snow removal.
- Performed restoration at Mt. Hope Pond, including painting of pavilion and storage building, provision of new benches, installation of fencing and extension of beach area.
- Upgraded water control system to better monitor supply and storage, and to more quickly respond to emergencies.
- Improvements to municipal water tanks, wells and booster pumps/stations.

Health

- Applied for and received \$168,000 Sustaining Local Public Health Infrastructure grant and \$75,000 Strengthening Local Public Health Capacities grant.
- Completed work on \$495,000 Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure grant, defraying salary for staff members and funding additional disease investigation and inspection capacities.
- Continued managing three-year, \$646,000 Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure grant.
- Provided services to four additional municipalities through revenue-bearing shared services agreements, generating \$188,763 in annual offsetting revenue.
- Worked with municipal partners to successfully apply for \$49,775 Morris County Community Development Block Grant for ADA improvements to Municipal Building.
- Received \$72,865 NJ Clean Communities grant to provide litter cleanup, education and enforcement.
- Coordinated 33 volunteer cleanups and awarded eight mini-grants to community groups.
- Performed over 500 inspections of retail food establishments, recreational bathing facilities, day camps, body art establishments, septic systems, wells and tanning facilities.

- Conducted 228 site visits involving 400 animals, provided 438 free dog and cat vaccinations, and attended to over 300 wildlife issues.
- Held 25 clinics, vaccinated 273 residents, provided 108 health education programs, and investigated 126 communicable disease and elevated blood lead cases.

Engineering, Planning, Zoning & Construction

- Broke ground on the new 8,100 square foot Municipal Utility building at 17 Old Middletown Road.
- Applied for and received \$25,000 in NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) funding and \$50,000 in NJ Highlands Council funding to support compliance with NJDEP's municipal stormwater requirements.
- Oversaw infrastructure upgrades in the Queens Road area – including a new water main, natural gas main and roadway/curb improvements, supported by \$415,000 NJ Department of Transportation grant.
- Began planning roadway improvements for Richard Street and Reservoir Road, supported by approximately \$630,000 in NJDOT funding.
- Issued 1,618 construction permits, 246 zoning permits and 44 driveway permits.
- Received and reviewed eight Planning Board applications and 13 Board of Adjustment applications.
- Worked with municipal partners to install mechanicals and utilities, including water service and septic, at the historic Ford-Faesch House, facilitated by grant funding.
- Initiated design of substantial Peterson Field improvements, including community garden, playground, pavilion and bocce ball/cornhole/horseshoes facilities.

Fire Prevention/Fire Department

- Fire Prevention conducted 376 smoke detector compliance inspections at one or two-family residences.
- Fire Prevention performed over 3,000 inspections at commercial, industrial and small businesses in Rockaway Township.
- Fire Prevention conducted six Cause and Origin Investigations, including two wildland Fires, in partnership with NJ Forest Fire Service and the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety personnel.
- Fire Department applied for pending FEMA Assistance to Firefighters grant for upgrade of radio communication systems.

Mayor's Annual Address *(continued from page three)*

- Fire Department responded to 649 calls for service.
- Fire Company #2 designed a new ladder truck to replace Mt Hope Truck 2, with delivery expected in March 2025.
- Fire Department applied for and received \$50,000 American Relief grant, to purchase large diameter hose.

Police

- Answered calls for over 33,000 incidents, activities and calls for service.
- Responded to over 4,500 motor vehicle encounters and crashes, and over 100 domestic violence incidents.
- Performed over 16,000 property checks and 995 alarm responses.
- Participated in approximately 100 community policing and public relations events.
- Conducted 130 adult arrests and issued 1,587 motor vehicle tickets.
- Graduated seven new officers from the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy and Passaic County Police Academy.
- Promoted six officers to higher rank and assigned two officers to the Detective Bureau.
- Received U.S. Department of Justice grant to replace officers' body armor.
- Continued department reaccreditation process.

Tax Assessor

- Ratable base in 2024 was \$5,273,589,000; up \$326,928,000 from prior year.
- Brought in \$30,022,000 in added taxable value for 2024.
- County appeals in Township are at an all-time low, with only 20 appeals filed by May 1, 2024.
- Nine State appeals were settled, reducing Township's tax exposure by \$11,599,090 across multiple years.
- Provided property tax relief to 15 totally and permanently disabled veterans.

Recreation

- Awarded Local Recreation Improvement grant for Telemark Park restoration project.
- Helped coordinate numerous Township recreation events and activities, including National Night Out, Easter festival, Christmas tree and menorah lightings, inaugural 9-11 ceremony, gazebo concert series, Rampage Memorial Day softball tournament, Dark Lake Spooktacular Halloween celebration, Hometown Hero banner program and more.

- Collaborated with Division of Parks to repaint pavilion, provide new fencing, purchase new volleyball set and order new community message board at Mt. Hope Pond.
- Updated signage at Municipal Building and Senior Center.

Along with Rockaway Township's governing body and professional staff, I look forward to a number of initiatives, events and projects the Township will be engaging in 2025. Planning for the next phase of Peterson Field improvements is presently underway. This significant project will augment the recent Peterson Field restoration with a community garden, playground, pavilion and bocce ball/cornhole/horseshoes facilities.

Please see the update from our engineering department in this newsletter for more information regarding Peterson Field improvements, and look [here](#) for more details as further planning and progress materializes in the coming months.

I am very pleased to report that site work has commenced on the new Municipal Utility building at 17 Old Middletown Road. The Utility will soon have a new 8,100 square foot structure, which will be the home of the Department of Public Works' Water and Sewer Division. The site will include offices for the Water and Sewer superintendents and supervisory staff, a locker room, a three-bay garage and more.

I am also happy to advise that ADA improvements are planned for the front entrance of the Township municipal building, made possible in part by a \$50,000 Morris County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

We are excited about the return of Rockaway Township Day in 2025, and look forward to new and exciting community events, such as the upcoming Seniors' Prom and family movie nights. My administration also continues its commitment to promoting the growth of new business within the community, including one new business that may very well make Rockaway Township the 'Donut Production Capital of the United States.'

Between this past year's accomplishments and planned activities and projects for the Township in 2025, we have had much success and there is a lot to look forward to. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events or programs, so please join us.

I wish each of you a healthy, happy and prosperous 2025. As always, I am honored to be your Mayor.

Joe Jackson
Rockaway Township Mayor

Township Welcomes ‘New’ Business Administrator

In June 2024, Lisa Palmieri, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) with Rockaway Township, was named Business Administrator for the Township by Mayor Joe Jackson. Ms. Palmieri has been Rockaway Township’s CFO since April 2008, and has been a finance and accounting professional for over 37 years.

Prior to her appointment as Business Administrator, Ms. Palmieri spent 17 years managing the Township’s Finance Department, which also includes oversight of the Tax Assessment and Tax Collection Divisions. She manages staff in these divisions, and also manages the work of the payroll/pension coordinator, municipal treasurer, and several account clerks and clerical staff.

In her dual role as Business Administrator and Chief Financial Officer for Rockaway Township, Ms. Palmieri serves as the chief administrative officer for Rockaway Township, overseeing all Township departments and divisions, and

managing the day to day operations of the Township with advisement from Mayor Jackson.



Ms. Palmieri’s responsibilities include the preparation and maintenance of policies for approximately 175 employees, labor negotiations and cost analysis for the Township’s collective bargaining units, oversight of personnel matters, supervision of

the State’s pension plans and health benefits for municipal employees and the police, management of all financial transactions and municipal, water utility and capital budgets, management of grant expenditures and much more.

Before coming to Rockaway Township in 2008, Ms. Palmieri served as Chief Financial Officer for Roxbury Township and Assistant Finance Director with Randolph Township. Prior to her work managing municipal finances, Ms. Palmieri worked as a Senior Accountant/Auditor from 1987 to 1995, focusing on municipal and school board audits.

Ms. Palmieri earned her Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from Muhlenberg University, and has spent nearly three decades as an active member of the NJ Government Finance Officers Association, the NJ State Tax Collectors and Treasurers Association, and the Morris County Tax Collectors and Treasurers Association.

Township Breaks Ground on New Municipal Utility Building

Rockaway Township broke ground on its new Municipal Utility building during late summer 2024. The 8,100 square foot building, soon to be located at 17 Old Middletown Road, will be the new home for the Township’s Water and Sewer Division. Pictured in the left photo are Mayor Joe Jackson, Council President Howard Morrison, Councilman Jonathan Sackett, Councilman Jack Quinn, Business Administrator Lisa Palmieri, Andrew Bizub Sr. and Andrew Bizub Jr. of AB Contracting, LLC, and several Township senior staff members. For more information about the Water Utility’s new home, please see the Department of Engineering, Planning and Construction’s update in this issue of the *Rockaway Township Report*.



Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Joe Jackson typically uses the 'Mayor's Special Recognition' column as a way of bringing attention to Township departments and employees who go above and beyond, complete special projects, bring in cost-saving grants or distinguish themselves with special accomplishments.

Because Mayor Jackson has listed and highlighted many such 2024 accomplishments in his Annual Address, featured earlier in this edition of the *Rockaway Report*, he would like to devote this issue's recognition column to those who have made Rockaway Township their place of work since April 1, 2024, as well as those who devoted years to the Township and have retired from public service since that date.

Mayor Joe Jackson wishes to congratulate the following individuals on their employment with Rockaway Township, and wishes them fulfilling careers with the Township.

- Nelson Hernandez-Bernal, Department of Public Works
- Brian Shatzel, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Vincent De Rosa, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Maureen Weller, Division of Health
- Parker Campbell, Police Department
- Brandon Detaranto, Police Department
- Thomas Gilfedder, Police Department
- Patrick Sinegra, Police Department
- Brittany Dix, Division of Health
- Shannon McCarty, Department of Administration
- Edward Nunn, Jr., Bureau of Fire Prevention
- Michael Palazzo, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Bridget Saggese, Division of Health
- Joshua Thompson, Division of Parks
- Steven Tartaglia, Department of Finance
- Kyle Vreeland, Division of Roads
- Danielle Osellame, Division of Health
- Adele Wadleigh, Office of Township Clerk
- Michael Forrest, Division of Recycling
- Joseph Keuscher, Division of Roads
- Arnold Lopez, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Dominic Morello, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Jamie Underhill, Division of Roads
- Larry Allen, Division of Construction

Mayor Jackson also wishes to congratulate the following employees on their retirements, and thanks them for their years of dedicated service to our residents!

- John Bak, Division of Roads
- Stephanie Cicchetti, Division of Tax Collection
- Stephanie Emker, Finance Department
- Clifton Gauthier, Police Department
- Richard Guerra, Division of Roads
- Michael Hatzimihalis, Police Department
- Joseph Keely, Jr., Police Department
- Nicholas Lyasko, Police Department
- Anthony Masino, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- Martin McParland, Police Department
- Joan Quail, Division of Health
- David Stalter, Division of Water & Sewer Utilities
- David Swanton, Division of Parks
- Joseph Udina, Police Department

Landlord Registration Required

Please be advised that all landlords who rent properties within Rockaway Township are now required to register with the office of the Township Clerk. The Township ordinance requiring landlord registration facilitates better communication between the Township and landlords regarding property maintenance and resident concerns; enhances property standards, promoting responsible ownership and ensuring compliance with housing codes; and improves public safety in emergency response efforts.

The landlord registration form is available [through this link](#) on the Township website. Key information for the

registration includes property address(es), contact information (name, phone number, email address) and emergency contact information. Please be advised that failure to comply with the landlord registration ordinance may result in fines.

Should you have any questions or require assistance with the landlord registration process, please contact the office of the Township Clerk at 973- 983-2834 or by email at clerk@rockawaytownship.org. Rockaway Township encourages all landlords to register promptly to ensure compliance with this important regulation.

Familiar Face Takes Helm as Police Chief

Upon the retirement of former Police Chief Martin McParland, the Township was provided the chance to set a course for the next chapter of leadership in its Police Department. Township officials had to look no further than Captain Robert Scherr, whose 25 years of progressive management with the Rockaway Township Police Department and inspiring work ethic made him the perfect choice for Police Chief.

Chief Scherr became an officer with the Rockaway Township Police Department in 1999, after graduating from the New Jersey State Police Academy in Seagirt, New Jersey. Chief Scherr was assigned to patrol, and during his years as an officer, served as a bike patrol officer, a community policing officer, a D.A.R.E. officer and as part of the Emergency Services unit.

Chief Scherr was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and was assigned to the Patrol Division. As sergeant, he was frontline supervisor of a patrol squad. He was thereafter promoted to the rank of lieutenant. In 2018, Chief Scherr was promoted to the rank of Captain, and his assignments included service as Administrative Commander, Internal Affairs Commander, Community Policing Supervisor, Communications Center Liaison, Information Technology Liaison and more.

As a lifelong resident of Rockaway Township, Chief Scherr has always felt privileged to serve the community. Throughout his career, he has been involved in many of the Township's interesting and exciting community events, including Memorial Day parades, Little League parades, White Meadow Lake Festival Days, Rockaway Township Days, charity motorcycle runs, holiday events and much more.

Chief Scherr considers it a privilege to serve Rockaway Township as Chief of Police, and is honored to serve alongside an incredible group of police officers whom he knows serves the community with dedication, commitment and pride. Chief Scherr and his wife raised their five children in Rockaway Township, and he has a vested interest in the community he serves.



Your 2025 Governing Body

Mayor
Joe Jackson

Council President
At Large Council Member
Howard Morrison

Council Vice President
Ward 6 Council Member
Rachael Brookes

Ward 1 Council Member
Mary Noon

Ward 2 Council Member
Jack Quinn

Ward 3 Council Member
Douglas Brookes

Ward 4 Council Member
Jonathan Sackett

Ward 5 Council Member
Emanuel Friedlander

At Large Council Member
Adam Salberg

At Large Council Member
Pawel Wojtowicz

Township's National Night Out a Summertime Success



Rockaway Township held a National Night Out event at Peterson Field in August 2024, which featured free food, entertainment, activities for children and adults, and interaction between the Township Police Department, municipal employees and the community. Pictured, left to right: Recreation Director Dave Dyer helps serve hot dogs and snacks to residents; members of the Police Department gather casually to meet with residents; Police Department staff clown around at National Night Out.

From the Department of Engineering, Planning & Construction

Upcoming Redevelopment in the Township

The Rockaway Township Planning Board has recently approved several applications. The retail space within the former Christmas Tree Shop location will soon be divided into two retail locations, one of which will be an Aldi Grocery Store. The applicant indicated that there is no intention of closing the existing Aldi Store in Rockaway Borough at this time. The second retail space is not known at this time. Dunkin Donuts manufacturing has been approved to occupy the building that contained the former Party City Headquarters and Little Learners Academy on Green Pond Road. With apologies to Township Dunkin devotees, there will be no retail at this location or free samples.

Affordable Housing

With deadlines related to the fourth round of Affordable Housing legislation rapidly approaching, Rockaway Township Administration has been working closely with their professionals to analyze the Township's affordable housing present and prospective needs. To that end, this year the Township will be completing a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, which will be published on the Township's website upon completion. For more information, contact the Department of Engineering, Planning and Construction at 973-983-2810.

Open Space and Recreation Plan

With the aid of grant funding received from the Highlands Council, The Township has retained the Land Conservancy of New Jersey to complete an update to its Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Plan, which provides the Township continued eligibility for a number of grant opportunities, is anticipated to be completed in 2025 and will be viewable on the Township's website. For more information please contact the Township Division of Recreation at 973-983-2841.

Stormwater

Rockaway Township recently received \$25,000 of grant funding from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and \$50,000 of grant funding from the NJ Highlands Council to support the Township's efforts to remain in compliance with NJDEP's Municipal Stormwater regulations. The majority of this funding will be utilized to map the Township's stormwater infrastructure in accordance with NJDEP requirements. Please see pet waste/stormwater pollution information on page 11 of this newsletter.

FEMA Flood Mapping Update

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 2 Office and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) have finalized the draft

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) database for Morris County. The draft maps are a collection and analysis of initial engineering data and reflect the latest calculation of where water will collect and flow during a flood. Residents may review the draft maps [here](#), at the Morris County NJ Draft Flood Hazard Viewer. You may also view the Flood Hazard Viewer [here](#), through the Township website. Residents with feedback, questions or comments related to FEMA's draft maps may contact Morris County or the Township of Rockaway Department of Engineering, Planning and Construction at 973-627-7200, ext. 2023 or by email at rteng@rockawaytownship.org.

Spring Cleanup and Permitted Outdoor Storage

Let's all be good neighbors and help keep Rockaway Township clean. Chapter 54 of Rockaway Township's [Land Use and Development code](#), includes regulations related to outdoor storage within residential and nonresidential districts. Please review the municipal code for compliance and contact the Rockaway Township Zoning Officer at 973-983-2814 with any questions. Should you have any questions regarding material disposal and recycling, please contact the Department of Public Works at 973-627-1700.

Landlords Must Register Rental Properties

All landlords who rent properties within Rockaway Township are now required to register with the office of the Township Clerk. The municipal ordinance requiring landlord registration facilitates better communication between the Township and landlords regarding a variety of issues, and improves public safety in emergency response efforts by providing and maintaining accurate and up-to-date contact information for landlords. Please see the article entitled 'Landlord Registration Required' in this newsletter for more information.

New Municipal Utility Building Groundbreaking

The Rockaway Township Municipal Utility is excited to see construction begin on its new 8,100 square foot building at 17 Old Middletown Road. The Municipal Utility building, which has been in the works for some time, will be the new home for the Township's Water and Sewer Division. The Division presently operates out of a comparably modest structure that doesn't feature running water, located at the Township's wellfield off Green Pond Road.

In addition to running water, the new Municipal Utility building will contain offices for the Township's Water and Sewer Superintendents and supervisory staff, a locker room, a storage room for parts and a three bay

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From the Department of Engineering, Planning & Construction

(continued from page eight)

garage. Water and Sewer customers will still be received at the Municipal Building, located at 65 Mt. Hope Road. Site improvements are also planned nearby at the Utility's existing vehicular, equipment and material storage yard, which is adjacent to the Old Middletown Road Salt Dome. Stay tuned for future updates!

Improvements Completed on Queens Road

The Township wishes to thank residents in the Queens Road area for their patience during recent infrastructure upgrades and roadway improvements completed in this neighborhood. The Municipal Utility, Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering collaborated in designing and installing a new water main and service connections, coordinated with NJ Natural Gas for a new natural gas main and identified needed stormwater upgrades. New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid grant funding helped support the installation of new curbing, ADA curb ramps, driveway aprons, and final milling and paving.

Ford Faesch House

In 2024, utilities were installed at the historic Ford Faesch House, located at 629 Mt. Hope Road. The most recent phase of renovations to the Ford Faesch House include grant-funded installation of mechanicals, a lavatory facility, a well and a septic system. As the interior of this historic structure is restored to period specifications, it is vital to ensure proper interior conditions for preservation of the work. Equally important are onsite accommodations for patrons of this historical structure. The Historical Society looks forward to seeing our residents at future Ford Faesch House events.

Forthcoming Roadway Improvements

NJDOT Municipal Aid grant funding will aid in the construction of road improvements consisting of curbing, drainage, ADA ramps and driveway aprons on Richard Street. This work is slated to begin during spring 2025.

In other planned work, the Department of Engineering is currently working on planned improvements to Reservoir Road with the Township Department of Public Works and Municipal Utility, as well as Morris County and the NJDOT. These improvements will lead into the Pedestrian Safety & Connectivity improvements proposed in the area of Copeland Middle School and Stony Brook Elementary School. The Township successfully applied to the NJDOT for a \$1.2 million dollar Safe Routes to School infrastructure grant to complete this project.

Parks

The Division of Parks, Division of Recreation, Department of Public Works and Department of Engineering are working together on several exciting upcoming park projects:

- Beginning this winter, Telemark Park will be closed for improvements including upgrades to the roller hockey/ basketball court and playground.
- When weather permits, the path encircling Egberts Lake will be improved, with planned work including a new pedestrian bridge to replace the existing wooden one. Improvements to the parking area at Egberts Lake are also planned subsequent to the path restoration.
- With significant public input resulting from a community-wide survey conducted during fall 2024, the design of the next phase of Peterson Field improvements is underway. Plans include a community garden, playground, pavilion and bocce ball/cornhole/ horseshoes capacities. Construction is slated to begin spring 2026.

ADA Improvements to Municipal Building

The Township successfully applied for a \$50,000 Morris County Community Development Block Grant, which will help fund ADA improvements to the front entrance of the municipal building. Activities associated with these improvements are planned for 2025, and your patience during construction is greatly appreciated.

Mayor Celebrates Deepawali with the Community

One of the appealing aspects of Rockaway Township is the diversity of our community. On November 9, Mayor Jackson and his wife, Susanne Jackson, were able to celebrate Deepawali, also known as Diwali in parts of India, with many members

of the Township's growing Hindu community. Deepawali is known as the Festival of Lights. At the November 9 event, the clothing and decorations were beautiful, the food was delicious and the ceremonies were very meaningful.



Lead-Based Paint Inspections Required

In 2024, Rockaway Township adopted an ordinance to fulfill the requirements of lead-based paint inspections for all applicable rental dwellings, in accordance with NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) regulations and N.J.A.C. 5:17.

The ordinance, entitled ‘Lead Paint Inspections in Rental Dwellings,’ was added to Chapter 28 of the Township’s *Revised General Ordinances*. To assure compliance with this regulation, the Township requires a lead-based paint certification from landlords/owners of residential rental properties built prior to 1978. These requirements are based on N.J.A.C. 5:28A – *Lead Based Inspections in Rental Dwellings*.

In accordance with the regulation, all single-family, two-family and multiple rental dwellings must be inspected, with the exception of dwellings listed as exempt in N.J.A.C. 5:28A-1.3: *Applicability and Exemptions*. In addition to the inspection requirement – the fee for which is payable to the lead evaluation contractor of the landlord’s choice – a DCA-required inspection fee of \$20 and a \$30 Township administrative fee are payable to ‘The Township of Rockaway’ for each affected rental unit.

For more information about the DCA’s lead regulation and Rockaway Township’s corresponding ordinance, and to find a DCA list of certified contractors, visit the Division of Health’s lead webpage [here](#).

Students Recognized for Exemplary Service

Students from several different Rockaway Township schools were presented with awards by the Rockaway Township Board of Education on February 12. Among several award categories, some students were recognized with the ‘Certificate of Exemplary Service’ award.

This award honors students who go above and beyond to demonstrate ‘H.E.A.R.T.’ through their regular activities. This acronym stands for the school district’s core values: Heart, Empathy, Acceptance, Respect and Trust. Pictured below with Mayor Jackson is award winner Ryan Kasko.



Fire Department & Partner Agencies Contain Fall Forest Fires

The Rockaway Township Fire Department and Green Pond Fire responded to two major wildfires during the fall season. The first, the ‘Microwave Fire,’ located near Jacobs Road in the area of the high elevation radio towers (and namesake of the event), began on October 19, 2024.

During the ensuing seven days, this fire burned nearly 75 acres, and

received assistance from 31 mutual aid departments.

The second fire, entitled the ‘Craigmear Lookout Fire,’ began on October 31, 2024, and burned 202 acres over a four-day period. This fire saw mutual aid from 86 different fire departments from across Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Sussex and Somerset Counties, along with representatives of the Newark Fire

Department and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Forest Fire Service. All assisting departments were generous and selfless partners to Rockaway Township during these incidents.

The Township is pleased to report that during these two events, no structures were damaged, no equipment was lost or broken, and no notable injuries were suffered.

Recycling News from the Department of Public Works

Holiday Makeup Schedule for Recycling

Residents on recycling Route A are advised of a very *important update*: Recycling holiday makeup days are scheduled for *the Friday before your usual Monday pickup*. For a copy of your schedule, including makeup days, go [here](#), click on the 'My Schedule' tab and input your home address. From here, you may view your current month, and you may click on 'Get a Calendar' to view and print the entire annual schedule on a page. We strongly encourage all residents to sign up for important alerts - click 'Get a Reminder' to sign up for reminders and alerts, such as cancellations or postponements.

Curbside Recycling

Curbside recycling is single stream (no sort) recycling. If you bring your materials to either of the recycling centers, the materials must be source-separated (cardboard separated from cans and bottles, newspaper and junk mail). Plastic bags are *not permitted* in single stream collection, nor are they accepted at either Township recycling center. Weight restrictions are in

effect for single stream recycling. Please use either a toter style recycling can with the bar on the back, filled to capacity (preferred) or if you opt to use regular style receptacles, they may weigh no more than 50 pounds each (including can). Additionally, please make sure your recycling is free of garbage, Styrofoam and plastic bags. All cans must be labeled. Failure to follow these procedures may result in your can being rejected. It will be stickered accordingly to reference why it was not collected.

Label All Cans

Residents are reminded to label all receptacles before placing at the curb. The Township has 'Recycling' and 'Vegetative Waste' stickers available for your convenience. Because various collections are held on the same day (garbage, recycling, vegetative waste), there are multiple cans at curbside. Please label your receptacles to ensure proper collection. If you would like labels mailed to you, please call 973-983-2891. To make a request, include your name and address, and a packet will be sent to you.

Pet Waste & Water Pollution

Rockaway Township has adopted and enforces an ordinance requiring immediate and proper disposal of pet waste deposited on any property not owned/possessed by the pet owner or keeper. See the ordinance [here](#).

Pet waste is carried by rain, melting snow and ice to storm drains that empty into rivers, lakes and the ocean. It also reaches reservoirs that supply much of New Jersey's drinking water. Pollution from pet waste negatively impacts swimming, boating and fishing in these water bodies. Pet waste contains microorganisms that can cause bacterial diseases, roundworms and infections.

In addition, pet waste contains harmful levels of nutrients that promote excessive algae and plant growth. This can rob a waterbody of oxygen, potentially killing all aquatic life in the area. Such nutrient pollution also causes waters to become cloudy and green.

Pet waste may be properly disposed by placing it in the trash or by flushing it down the toilet. That said, please do not flush bags, debris or nonbiodegradable items. Rockaway Township appreciates you doing your part to keep New Jersey's waters clean!

For more information, view the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's *Municipal Stormwater Regulation* [here](#), or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *Polluted Runoff: Nonpoint Source Pollution* document [here](#).

Rockaway Township Day!

Save the Date:
Saturday, June 7, 2025
12:00pm - 6:00pm

Peterson Field
Rain or Shine

Consider joining us as a non-profit organization & promote your services

Food Trucks
Obstacle Course
Ax Throwing
Beer Garden
Games & Rides
Live Music

Contact:
Shannon McCarty
smccarty@rockawaytownship.org
201-452-0288

Rockaway Township Awarded ‘Healthy Town’ Designation

Mayor Joe Jackson is pleased to announce that Rockaway Township was named a New Jersey Mayors Wellness Campaign ‘Healthy Town’ winner for 2024. This recognition is bestowed upon New Jersey municipalities that go above and beyond to improve health and wellness in their communities through innovative programs in areas such as exercise, healthy eating and mental health awareness and education.

‘I am extremely proud that Rockaway Township has earned a 2024 Healthy Town designation,’ said Rockaway Township Mayor Joe Jackson. ‘My administration, through the collaborative planning of engaging community programs and events, has embraced the Mayors Wellness Campaign and has found it to be a very valuable way of demonstrating our commitment to health, wellness, and social connectivity in our community.’

Rockaway Township’s Healthy Town designation comes after a year of targeted health programming by Mayor Jackson and the Township’s Division of Health. Initiatives have included nutrition and exercise programs, mental health workshops, wellness activities and a community walking challenge that brought out over 100 residents and resulted in 31 million steps among participants.

‘We look forward to the Township’s continued participation in the Mayors Wellness Campaign, and further success in helping elevate the physical, social, and mental health of our residents,’ added Mayor Jackson. The Mayors Wellness Campaign is a program of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities. The goal of the Campaign is to inspire New Jersey’s towns to make their communities healthier places to live, work, age and play.

Below: Scenes from two organized ‘Walk with the Mayor’ events that were led by Mayor Joe Jackson during the Let’s Walk Rockaway: Mayor’s Community Walking Challenge. Participants walked and talked for one hour at Parks Lake on Saturday, September 2, and walked together during the Mayor’s community walk at Lake Telemark on Saturday, September 28.

