



Borough of Chatham

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
54 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
CHATHAM, NEW JERSEY 07928

Tel: 973-635-0674

Fax: 973-635-2417

Dear Chatham Borough Resident,

July 2015

This newsletter accompanies your 2015 tax bill and includes an overview of the municipal budget and other information that we feel will be of interest.

We were graced with beautiful weather on June 13th for the annual Fishawack Festival. And this year we had the added treat of celebrating Chatham's Tricentennial. Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, State Senator Thomas Kean, Jr., Freeholder Hank Lyon and Chatham Township Mayor Kevin Sullivan joined us in singing "Happy Birthday" to Chatham and in eating a slice or two (or more) of strawberry shortcake. The periodic drizzles on the morning of July 4th did not deter thousands from enjoying the 61st Fourth of July Parade, and the weather improved in the afternoon so that it was perfect for cookouts and the spectacular fireworks display, courtesy of the Chatham Fire Department Association. This fall, the Mayors' Wellness Committee and the Environmental Commission will conduct a Sustainability Fair on September 12th at the Farmers' Market, and the Arts and Crafts Fair will return, on September 13th.

At the end of 2014, after months of study and analysis conducted by the Planning Board, the Council adopted amendments to the zoning ordinances to encourage mixed uses in the industrial districts along River Rd., the eastern ends of Watchung Avenue and Summit Avenue, and Commerce Street. The changes include allowing eating and drinking establishments and apartments, personal services and art galleries, and other uses that would allow the area – now referred to as Chatham Gateway – to evolve into a lively neighborhood. Developers have already contacted us to share their ideas for the area, and we expect to see formal proposals for new developments soon.

We continue to spruce up our gardens and planters downtown and our walking trails during our Spring Clean in May, and put the finishing touches on a renovation of Post Office Plaza, where we repaved the parking lot, fixed curbing and walkways, and added decorative street lights. We will repave Lafayette Avenue and, at our request, Morris County will repave Watchung Avenue and Fairmount Avenue from Watchung Avenue to Southern Boulevard.

Our labor agreements with the Department of Public Works employees and the Patrolmen's Benefit Association (police) expire this year and we are negotiating new agreements. Also, we will be issuing a Request for Proposal for garbage pick up, since the current contract expires this year. In response to suggestions from residents, we will consider proposals that provide garbage pick-up once a week instead of twice a week to see if there will be a significant savings.

The following information highlights what the Council and I, along with our Borough employees and volunteers, have been working on. We encourage you to share your questions, concerns and ideas with us by sending them to mayor@chathamborough.org, council@chathamborough.org, or to the Mayor or Council by regular mail to Municipal Building, 54 Fairmount Avenue, Chatham, NJ 07928. Or you can call me at 973-635-0674 x 213. And you will find a wealth of information on the Borough web site, www.chathamborough.org.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Harris
Mayor

2015 BUDGET

The total municipal budget for 2015 is \$14.1 million - \$71,000 less than the budget for 2014. General revenues decreased slightly from \$5.88 million in 2014 to \$5.66 million in 2015. Net valuations of real property increased slightly from \$2.057 billion to \$2.061 billion. Through careful management, we were able to limit the municipal tax increase to 0.99%. The total tax rate for 2015 will be \$1.911 per \$100 assessed value. The Borough's portion is \$0.368, or

19% of your tax dollar. The School District receives \$1.213, or 63% and Morris County \$0.272, or 14%. The remainder goes to the Public Library and to county and municipal open space funds.

The tax increase is within the 2% cap established by the Legislature. We continue to benefit from the numerous shared services arrangements we have entered into for 911 dispatch, the Joint Municipal Court with four other communities, our shared Construction Office with Madison, and other sharing arrangements. Please visit the Borough web site for more information on the budget.

SENIOR SERVICES OF THE CHATHAMS, INC.

Celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year, Senior Services of the Chathams continues to support the independence of our senior community by providing an enrichment center, transportation, and information and referral services. It operates a center at the Chatham Township Municipal Building at 58 Meyersville Road. For more information call 973-635-4565 or visit www.chathamseiorcenter.org.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Borough is working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to ensure our waterways remain unpolluted and viable through effective stormwater management. To ensure the success of this effort, we ask that residents help in implementing the initiatives undertaken by the Borough to better manage stormwater.

In 2006, the Borough adopted a stormwater management program that mandates that every resident and business properly dispose of pet waste. It also prohibits feeding wildlife on public property and prohibits dumping of any kind into storm sewers and disposing of wastewater to a storm sewer.

Please visit www.chathamborough.org or www.cleanwatermj.org for more information on how to keep our streams and rivers clean. If you have any questions about stormwater management, please contact Vincent DeNave, Borough Engineer, at 973-635-0674 x 270.

RELAXING FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

At the request of the Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Planning Board re-examined the zoning regulations relating to FAR, which limits the size of residential structures. The Planning Board will be recommending changes to the ordinances that increase the FAR limits and eliminate open porches, porticos and certain detached garages from the calculation of FAR. These changes will be presented to the Borough Council for adoption later this year.

COMMUNICATIONS

In June the volunteers on the Communications and Technology Advisory Committee introduced the first of what we hope will be a quarterly, electronic newsletter that provides a brief overview of Borough events. You can sign up for the newsletter on the Borough web site.

We have added streaming video of Council meetings to the web site – so you no longer have to wait to watch the rebroadcasts on Cablevision 21 and FIOS 32.

Also, after a hiatus of three years, we are going to give Twitter another try and use it to distribute non-emergency information. Follow us @chathamborough.

VOLUNTEER/INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers perform key roles in our community. Volunteers staff our fire department and emergency squad, our recreation programs, our Farmers' Market and our boards, commissions and committees.

To volunteer to serve on the Chatham Borough Fire Department, either as an adult or junior member, contact Steve Williams at 973-701-6807. And adults who want to serve on the Chatham Emergency Squad should contact the VP of Personnel at 973-769-8337 (or visit www.chathamemergencysquad.org

To serve on a municipal board, commission or committee, simply complete the "Application for Boards, Commissions and Committees" (available on the web site under "Forms & Applications" and also at the Municipal Clerk's office) and indicate your interest.

A complete list of the volunteer opportunities is on the Borough web site.

We continue to provide internships for high school and college students. Please contact Janice Piccolo at 973-635-0674 x 200.

CHATHAM - BRIDGING THE GAP

When we decided to transfer welfare assistance services to the county and abolished the Local Assistance Board in 2012, we also created a Cares and Shares Advisory Committee to provide assistance to those in need who might not qualify for state and federal programs. The committee members felt that a more independent organization would have greater flexibility in terms of fundraising and the services it provides, and they worked together to create a new, nonprofit called Chatham-Bridging the Gap. I encourage you to donate. For more information, visit www.chathambridgingthegap.org.

FINAL NOTES

Train Station Restaurant/Bar. There were no bidders to NJ Transit's Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2014. After meeting with interested developers, we made suggestions to NJ Transit to make the RFP more attractive. NJ Transit is preparing a new RFP and anyone interested in bidding was to submit an expression of interest by June 15th. **AlertChathamBorough.** This remains our primary vehicle for distributing emergency information, and also for non-emergency information. Visit the web site or call 973-635-0674 x 200 for information on how to sign up. **If we can't reach you, we can't alert you.**

Friendly Reminders. In Chatham Borough we have ordinances that restrict the use of water for lawn watering and use of power equipment outdoors to certain hours. Please see the Borough calendar and the web site for more information.

MyChathamNJ and White Lights. Visit the web site for links to make a donation to the Spring Clean beautification efforts or to provide White Lights during the winter holidays.

Distracted driving remains a problem. Remember: Texting and driving don't mix!