



Borough of Chatham

BOROUGH HALL
54 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
CHATHAM, NEW JERSEY 07928
973-635-0674

Dear Chatham Borough Resident,

August 2017

This newsletter accompanies your 2017 tax bill and includes an overview of the municipal budget and other information that we feel will be of interest.

Thousands came to enjoy the festivities at the annual Fishawack Festival on June 10th. This year the Chatham Historical Society organized a commemoration for the 100th anniversary of America's entry into WWI. A tree was planted in front of Borough Hall to replace five oak trees that had been planted in 1920 to honor the five Chatham Borough residents who lost their lives in the Great War.

Beautiful weather encouraged thousands to come out and enjoy the 63rd Fourth of July Parade and the spectacular fireworks display, courtesy of the Chatham Fire Department Association. For many of us, this event is the highlight of the year. This fall, the Mayors' Wellness Committee and the Environmental Commission will conduct a Sustainability Fair on Saturday, September 9th at the Farmers' Market.

Volunteers are vital to our community. This year at Fishawack we recognized the following individuals for their commitment to the Borough: Paul Danenberg (Farmers' Market volunteer), Mary Keselica (Chatham Community Gardens), Ben Lampert (Environmental Commission), Helen Ann Rosenfeld (MyChathamNJ Advisory Committee), and Colleen Truppo (Shade Tree Commission). These five individuals, along with the scores of other volunteers in the Borough, deserve our thanks for devoting hundreds of hours of their "spare" time to serve our community.

I hope you are aware of our efforts to redevelop Post Office Plaza. An outgrowth of the re-examination of the Master Plan we completed last year, we retained a special planner, Topology Inc., to conduct an investigation of the area. That study recommended that Post Office Plaza and certain neighboring properties be designated as an "area in need of redevelopment". Both the Planning Board and the Borough Council accepted Topology's recommendation, and we have now begun the process of developing a redevelopment plan. This phase was kicked-off with a community visioning session held on June 15th, in which the public was invited to provide comments on the parameters of any redevelopment. This process will continue into the fall. Among other benefits, redevelopment will provide new ratables and contribute to the vitality of our downtown. Please see the Borough website for more information on this very important project.

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 Borough Hall, 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 website, www.chathamborough.org.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Harris
Mayor

2017 BUDGET

The total municipal budget for 2017 is \$14.58 million - \$299,645 more than the budget for 2016. General revenues increased slightly from \$5.69 million in 2016 to \$5.9 million in 2017. Net valuations of real property increased from \$2.074 billion to \$2.081 billion. Through careful management, we were able to limit the municipal tax increase to 0.80%. The total tax rate for 2017 will be \$1.986 per \$100 assessed value. The Borough's portion is \$0.377, or 19% of your tax dollar. The School District receives \$1.256, or 63.24% and Morris County \$0.298 or 15.01%.

The remainder goes to the Library of the Chathams 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. We are proud that we have been able to maintain the Borough's AAA bond rating. Please visit the Borough website for more information on the budget.

BOARD OF HEALTH

Chatham Borough's Board of Health provides guidance, oversight and leadership for the Borough's Health Department. Effective July 10, public health services are provided by the Westfield Regional Health Department. The Department will continue to focus on healthy living and disease prevention through restaurant inspections, vaccination services, health education, public health nursing and the investigation of environmental complaints. The Department will also offer free child health clinics and adult vaccination services to residents who are underinsured or uninsured. For more information on the services offered by the Department please visit www.westfieldnj.gov/health, or call 908-789-4070.

IMPROVING OUR PARKS

We have been improving Liberty Park, at the corner of Lafayette Avenue and Main Street. New plantings, benches and a new walkway will make this a more inviting spot.

We are also improving the area around Kelley's Pond behind Milton Avenue School. In addition to a new pathway circling the pond, and new benches built by Eagle Scouts, we will be installing a bubbler in the pond to keep water circulating, which will help prevent algae and keep the pond healthy.

And this summer we started constructing a 1/3 mile paved walking trail at Shepard Kollock Park. The trail will connect to the existing riverside trail, which will also be improved. Kiosks along the trails will commemorate the Borough's history and there will be an observation deck overlooking the Passaic River.

MAIN STREET AND ROUTE 24 TRAFFIC

We have been meeting with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) over the past year to discuss ways to reduce traffic on Main Street (Route 124), a state highway. We believe some relief is possible if improvements are made to Route 24. NJDOT has agreed to investigate the options. In addition, NJDOT is looking at implementing traffic management systems that will provide drivers with real time traffic information. There are no quick fixes to this problem, which has existed for decades, but we will continue to work with NJDOT to find solutions.

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY - GO FOR THE GOLD!

In 2018, we are up for recertification as a sustainable community through the Sustainable Jersey program (www.sustainablejersey.com). We qualified for Bronze in 2009 and were Silver certified in 2012 and 2015. We are seeking volunteers to help us with qualifying for Silver once again, plus, a newly created Gold certification. If interested, please contact Kate Murphy, Chair, Environmental Commission at kateonmurphy@gmail.com or Council Member Len Resto at lresto@chathamborough.org.

SENIOR SERVICES OF THE CHATHAMS, INC.

Senior Services of the Chathams continues to support the independence of our senior community by providing an enrichment center, transportation, 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 storm water management. To ensure the success of this effort, we ask that residents help in implementing the initiatives undertaken by the Borough to better manage storm water.

The Borough's storm water management program 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 into a storm sewer. Please visit www.chathamborough.org or www.cleanwaternj.org for more information on how to keep our streams and rivers clean. If you have any questions about storm water management, please contact Vincent DeNave, Borough Engineer, at 973-635-0674 x 270.

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 Fire Chief Doug Allan at 973-635-9090. To volunteer to serve on the Chatham Emergency Squad, 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 website under "Forms & Applications" and also at the Borough Clerk's office) and indicate your interest. A complete list of the volunteer opportunities is on the Borough website.

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

FINAL NOTES

Library of the Chathams. There were nearly a quarter million visitors to the Library in 2017. To better accommodate current and future needs, the library has developed a plan to Renovate, Modernize and Restore (RMR). See <http://chathamlibrary.org/> for more information.

Train Station Restaurant/Bar. The successful bidder continues to negotiate the lease arrangements with New Jersey Transit.

AlertChathamBorough. This is our primary vehicle for distributing emergency and non-emergency information. Visit the website 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. We have ordinances that restrict the use of water for lawn watering and use of power equipment outdoors to certain hours. In addition, engine idling for more than three minutes is against New Jersey law. Please see the Borough calendar and the website for more information.

MyChathamNJ. This committee plays a leading role in many community events, including the Spring Clean beautification and the White Lights during the winter holidays. Please complete the enclosed envelope if you want to volunteer or make a donation, or you can visit the website for links.

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