

Mayor's Message May 2021

From reopening plans, to the budget, to our sidewalk project and more – even a great Mothers or Fathers Day gift! - there's a lot going on in Little Silver.

Where to start? Let's talk COVID right off the bat.

The borough is **actively planning to reopen its buildings** to the public. Most of you know that, over that past 14 months, all of our services have been functioning, and our employees have all been active, working around the restrictions to continue to serve our residents.

Now, with the number of **new cases decreasing** (after a spike), the **number of active cases having gone from 56 to 22** in the last eight weeks as of the end of April, and vaccinations proliferating, we expect to be able to reopen our buildings to the public, although initially in a restricted fashion, in the next month or so. That includes our beloved Library, which continues its pick up and drop off service, and its remote access.

In the same vein, we fully expect to have an in-person **Memorial Day ceremony** to honor our war dead. What, exactly, that will look like is in flux, so please look for updates on Constant Contact, our website, our Facebook page, and sometimes by way of emergency alerts if the situation warrants.

And please keep up the great work everyone's doing to continue to push those COVID numbers down and out.

Looking back to April, the Borough Council adopted its **2021 budget**, with municipal purposes spending staying relatively flat, and a slight decrease in the tax rate. That said, overall spending increased slightly, though well within the two percent cap, and we expect that the owner of an average-priced home might pay a bit over \$60 more than last year in municipal purposes taxes, assuming an average increase in assessment over last year.

We want to thank our budget committee and our CFO, Laura Geraghty, along with administrator Kim Jungfer and all our department heads and volunteer services, for continuing to operate in a taxpayer-conscious fashion. There is an **excellent budget presentation** on the website that explains in lay terms how your tax dollars are spent. It's a yearly challenge, and planning for next year's budget starts now.

As a reminder, the municipal budget accounts for just under a quarter of your yearly tax bill, with the remainder attributable to school and county taxes, and a one-penny open space tax. Those numbers are still in calculation, with the final over-all tax rate likely due out in June.

Also in April, it was Little Silver's turn with the hot-patch machine we share with Rumson. Extending into May, our public works department has been working hard to **tackle some of the monster potholes** that opened up over our harsh winter – amazingly, using nearly 12 tons of asphalt so far! If you are aware of any that require attention, please call the clerk's office.

As to the ongoing **sidewalks project**, the north Prospect installation and Rumson Road replacement are both nearly complete at this writing, with Pinckney next on the list. We'll continue to let residents who are directly impacted by the project (focusing on main pedestrian and school routes) know the schedule as it develops, which is always subject to change.

For detours and lane closures associated with the project, please look for notices on Constant Contact, Facebook, and especially our **emergency alert system, Code Red**. If you are not signed up for it, you should be – so please take a moment to do so. Go to the website, littlesilver.org, and click on Emergency Services at the top of the page, or call borough hall for assistance.

Next, the **Parker Homestead** folks are graciously offering a perfect Mothers Day or Fathers Day gift: a wooden spoon with your family's name (or business name) that will hang in the kitchen of our historic treasure for years to come. Your donation of \$100 will support the kitchen's renovation, which will also serve as a Welcome Center.

For more information, see the details on the Homestead's facebook page, or on the website at www.parkerhomestead-1665.org.

And in a slightly different way to help your town: if you own or are aware of a home slated for demolition, please consider contacting our **all-volunteer Little Silver Fire Department** to offer the home for a live drill before it is demolished. The LSFd trains weekly, and always benefits by being able to use a real home for training and drills. If you're not sure who to contact, email me and I'll get you to the right person.

In school news, the **VPA Creative Writing majors** at Red Bank Regional High School have become published authors! Illustrated by Studio Art majors, *WonderStories: Imaginative Fables* by Fantastical Youth, is available now on Amazon. Congratulations to our students!

Looking forward, the virtual **Ridge Road 5k Run for Suicide Prevention** and Mental Health Awareness will take place from May 21 to May 23. Register at www.ridgeroadrun5k.org by May 7 to guarantee your race-day t-shirt!

In closing, it was terrific, especially after the year we've had, to see the **Easter Egg Hunt** return under blue skies (thanks to our recreation department and PBA Local 359), and our ball players back out on the fields in April. Signs of spring and recovery, with some added significance this year.

As we approach Memorial Day, please remember our men and women in uniform, and especially the **young men from Little Silver who lost their lives in battle**: Richard L.J. Conner and Henry G. Woodruff in World War I; John R. Toomey, a paratrooper killed during the Rhine jump in World War II; Tom Firth, who died in a gun battle in South Vietnam in 1965; Jordi Grez, who was killed by an IED in Iraq in 2005; and Tinker Dorn of Shrewsbury, killed by sniper fire in South Vietnam, and whose brother Dan, a Little Silver resident for many years and a U.S. Marine, assists in our ceremony.

On behalf of the governing body, we wish you blue skies and sunshine, cool nights, and a safe return to many of our in-person activities. As always, please call borough hall with any concerns, or contact me directly by calling my home phone at (732) 576-8595, or emailing me at bobneff80@gmail.com.