

March 2021

Town news and a Little Silver love story to follow, but first, a note of thanks.

Exactly one year ago, I wrote the March Message during a sunny, warm, and snow-less Saturday in late February: softball, lacrosse and baseball players filled our fields, bikers and dog-walkers were everywhere, and spikeball players (no jackets) were spiking away behind Borough Hall.

The snow-removal budget was untouched: no overtime, no dwindling sand supply, no exhausted public works employees.

And nowhere in the Message was any mention of the novel coronavirus. We weren't using phrases like 'social distancing' or 'herd immunity.' There had been some cases in Seattle, but lockdowns were unheard of, people were going to school and work, and COVID-19 hadn't come to Little Silver. Remember those pre-pandemic days?

What a difference a year makes.

When the pandemic did strike home ten days later, we recalled that we're Warriors, equipped for anything, and that's held true, with countless examples of selfless acts that eased the burden. And the snow? Our public works department has handled the snow storms this past month in stride, clearing our roads and making way for (almost) business as usual.

So as the vaccine supplies increase, and we look forward to living our lives with something approaching normalcy, take a moment to realize how far you've come in a year, how hard you've worked, and how well you've handled not just the piles of snow, but the rigors of day-to-day life during a long national emergency.

But **please also be patient with a frustrating and sometimes baffling start to the vaccine effort**, follow the daily changes in that process (we'll help where we can), and in the meantime continue to do all those things you've been doing to keep yourself and others safe, and to slow the spread. The number of new cases is decreasing in Little Silver and elsewhere, but we're not quite there yet, we're told.

So thank you for all you've done, and all you'll continue to do. As Seton Hall University's motto extoles, in the Latin: *hazard zet forward*.

As 2020 drew to a close, so did the long tenure of **John Chimento** on our Planning and Zoning Board. John's service began in the 1970s, on the Zoning Board, and continued when the planning and zoning boards were combined.

During that time, John brought both experience and common sense to board decisions. At the time of his retirement, he served as the Board's chairman, presiding over a number of controversial applications with professionalism. Applicants, objectors, and the public were all assured of a fair opportunity to state their case with Chairman Chimento at the helm.

So we want to extend (we're sure to John's great embarrassment) the Borough's thanks for those many evenings spent away from his personal life, and in service to our residents. If you see him (maybe at the beach) please wish the Chairman well. Thank you Mr. Chimento!

Looking forward, **Saturday, March 20 is Environmental Day**. From 9 a.m. to noon, the Environmental Commission will accept electronics for disposal (anything with a plug), paper for shredding, and gently used clothing and children's books for donation. Further details are in this newsletter.

This is a hugely popular event, held in the Womans Club parking lot, and we thank the EC for setting it up every year. Mask-wearing and social distancing will be required.

In Borough Council news, **it's budget time again**. Our CFO, Laura Geraghty, advises that municipal spending will remain relatively flat, thanks to sound departmental management, despite COVID-related costs.

The Borough has worked with the County to obtain reimbursement for expenses directly related to COVID, and will continue to do so. Some significant grants and a state low-interest loan program have also helped the Council manage our expenses. A spending package is expected to be introduced this month

The **former Fort Monmouth property** continues to be redeveloped, and Little Silver is monitoring the various proposals. Presently, a commercial/retail/office complex is proposed for the parcel running along the western side of Oceanport Avenue, from Parker's Creek up to the main entrance.

If you wish to learn more about that application, we have posted the notice on our Facebook page and on the website at littlesilver.org. Please note that there is a sign up process in Oceanport if you wish to be heard by the Oceanport Planning Board on any of the applications, as detailed in the notice.

Lastly, a **Little Silver love story**.

Sean and Suzanne Power have deep roots in Little Silver, having met at Point Road School as fifth graders. Thirty years ago, before they were married, Sean carved their initials in a tree inside a big heart in the woods in town, behind Suzanne's mom's house on Willow Drive.

Years passed, and they enjoyed watching the initials transform on their walks through the woods, and eventually during their walks to Grandma's house. But then Superstorm Sandy knocked down the tree, and the couple was never able to recoup the piece of the tree with that big heart. Years passed.

Recently, during a woodland stroll, Suzanne randomly flipped over a big piece of bark on the ground near their old tree - and there were the initials, intact, along with most of the heart. Here's a picture of the surprising find:

We wish many more years of love and happiness to the Powers (we hear a fresh set of initials has appeared, and that the old initials are being preserved), and to all of you. Little Silver can be a magical place.

With a nod to Ogden Nash, we wish you a pleasant 'month of wind and taxes.' 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.

