

## From the Desk of Mayor Coffey

Jan/Feb 2020

The past few months have involved lots of change in the Borough of Oceanport. At the Borough Council's January 1st reorganization meeting, three new council members were sworn in: Bryan Keeshen, Thomas Tvrdik, and Meghan Walker. These three individuals have chosen to volunteer their time and energy for the betterment of the Borough and they have hit the ground running. Councilman Keeshen, as Chair of the Public Safety Committee, Councilman Tvrdik, as Chair of the Planning & Development Committee, and Councilwoman Walker, as Chair of the Health & Human Services Committee, have adapted well to their new positions and are actively reaching out to and meeting with Oceanport's citizens, volunteers, and employees in an effort to maximize the potential of their committees. All three council members offer specific skill sets related to their respective committees and it will be exciting to see what the committees bring to the Council and the Borough in 2020.

In December, the voters in Oceanport and Sea Bright passed a referendum approving the expenditure of 33 million dollars for improvements to both Wolf Hill School and Maple Place School. The referendum was passed by a margin of 61 to 38 in Oceanport and will allow for the first substantial upgrades to both facilities since Buddy Brocklebank was a young man. Maple Place School's renovations will include, but is not limited to, its STEM wing, cafetorium, locker rooms, media center, and guidance center. Wolf Hill School, which will undergo much more substantial renovations and improvements, will see the addition of 6 classrooms, a new cafeteria and media center, a revised bus drop-off, new toilet facilities, and ADA compliant spaces. Both schools will be upgrading their gyms, lighting, roofing, flooring, classroom furnishings, fire alarm & sprinkler systems, and security systems (including cameras, secure vestibules and safety glazing on the windows). At the end of the project, both schools will also have substantially improved mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Oceanport, because of its teachers, administrators, and involved parents, has long been one of the best school systems in the State of New Jersey and soon we will have facilities that will augment that high level of education and allow for Oceanport's school system to thrive for years to come.

As far as Fort Monmouth's redevelopment goes, the "400 Area" – the land to the right of Oceanport Avenue as you drive into Little Silver --- is, in all likelihood, going to be placed up for sale in February. There is an Open House on January 29th for potential developers and the tour/presentation is already fully booked by interested developers. As noted in my last message, the 400 Area is just under 80 acres in size. 25 acres are going to be designated for residential use, 25 acres are proposed to be used for commercial/mixed use, and 30 acres will be dedicated to open space. All existing buildings on this property are to be demolished.

Sadly, Oceanport lost one of its most dedicated and respected civil servants when former Police Chief Robert D. Joyce passed away on January 6th. Chief Joyce served the Borough of Oceanport in various capacities for over forty years. He was admired and respected by all who worked with and for him and Oceanport will forever be indebted to him for his tireless commitment to our community. His wife, Georgianna, and family have our deepest sympathies.