

From the Desk of Mayor Coffey

February/March 2021

On July 31, 2017, the Borough of Oceanport purchased 13.25 acres of land and about 40,000 square feet of office space from the Fort Monmouth Economic Redevelopment Authority for \$1,053,000 so that the Borough could build a new municipal center to replace the one that had been destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in October of 2012. For the better part of the decade after Sandy, the Borough housed its police station in an old fire house on Fort Monmouth, held its council meetings at Maple Place School and conducted its daily business at the Old Wharf Meeting Place. The Borough's 2017 purchase was the start of a long, laborious, often contentious pandemic delayed process that involved demolishing several buildings and rehabilitating two buildings so that the Borough could, once again, consolidate its quarters in one convenient, modern complex.

In early January of 2021, our police department began the process of moving into its new quarters at the old State Police barracks at 930 Oceanport Way. A few days later, our municipal workers began moving into the new municipal building at 910 Oceanport Way. With the exception of the Municipal Court/Council Meeting room, the municipal complex is now fully operational. We expect the Municipal Court/Council Meeting room to be completed within the next few months. Inasmuch as the Court and Council are operating remotely, however, this delay hasn't prevented the Court or Council from conducting business at all. Due to COVID restrictions, the interior of the Municipal Building, for the most part, remains closed to the public, but in-person deliveries and payments can be made through the front entrance. We'll be having a dedication ceremony for the new complex as soon as COVID permits. If you have a few minutes, take a drive over to the new complex, familiarize yourself with it, and then explore the rest of the Oceanport section of Fort Monmouth. Councilman Bill Deerin will be leading a bike tour of the Oceanport section of the Fort in the spring, but in the interim take a car tour on your own.

But make sure that you take the car tour AFTER the roads are plowed! This winter has been especially rough from a weather standpoint, but our Department of Public Works has been more than up to the task. Max Lopez, Rich Arlt, Jorge Segura, Mike Natale, Juan Merino, Milton Zarate, Steve Tagerty, and Wes Sherman have brined, salted, and plowed the streets, municipal and school lots more this year than the past five years combined, and we should all be grateful that we have such a dedicated, talented, and determined group of men in our employ. In case we have a few more snow events this winter, though, I want to remind everybody that (a) you should wait until we've completed plowing at the end of the snowfall before you shovel your sidewalks, (b) our ordinance requires you to clear your sidewalks of snow and ice within 48 hours after a snow event and (c) there is NOTHING we can do about the plows putting snow in front of your driveway two minutes after you've finished clearing it. We tried to get Buddy Brocklebank to clear

everybody's driveways after we plow, but he is too busy with his interpretive dance theater obligations.

Finally, we've had a lot of complaints about people who fail to clean up after their dogs. Here's the poop on dog waste: a single gram can contain 23 million fecal coliform bacteria (the bacteria that can make humans sick), as well as parasites, excess nutrients, and other diseases. Dog waste is not only unsightly, but it is a human health hazard, and environmental pollutant. Dog waste left on surfaces in town is carried by stormwater into local waterways, where we wade, swim, paddle, fish, boat, and otherwise recreate. Please, if you walk your dog, bring a bag, clean up and dispose of it properly (i.e., not in somebody else's garbage can on the street).

See you at the new municipal building!