

From the Desk of Mayor Coffey

April/May 2021

Spring is upon us and the Borough of Oceanport is once again going to be keeping our public parks and recreation facilities open to the general public. Our baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, Tennis courts, basketball courts, river access points and playgrounds remain open to all and we encourage our residents to enjoy these wonderful amenities. Monmouth Park Race Track will be re-opening soon and the Borough's Governing Body has done everything in its power to enable our local restaurants to offer outdoor dining consistent with what is allowed by the State of New Jersey under the existing state of emergency. Enzo's, Mia, Federico's, The Marina and The Blu Grotto are all offering indoor and outdoor seating for their customers. In short, Oceanport is open for business and open for recreation, and we want our residents to enjoy everything that Oceanport has to offer.

Speaking of enjoying what Oceanport has to offer, I am pleased to announce that our Recreation Committee has been burning the midnight oil making plans for the Borough's 2021 Memorial Day Parade on May 31, 2021. While there will not be a ceremony at the Port-Au-Peck Firehouse afterwards because of COVID-19 concerns, we are hoping that, after the trials and tribulations we have all encountered over the past year, this year's parade will be the best attended Memorial Day Parade ever. Councilman Deerin and the Recreation Committee are pulling out all stops to make this year's parade a most memorable one (Buddy Brocklebank will have his own car) and we would love for Oceanport's residents to turn out in droves along Monmouth Boulevard for this event. For those of you who are new to town, our Memorial Day Parade is a fun event for kids and represents all that is good about life here in small town America.

And Oceanport is going to be able to offer a lot more as the Fort Monmouth property continues to redevelop. If you take a quick trip through the Fort property, you will see that our Municipal Complex is, for all intents and purposes, completely finished and open for business. We hope to open the building up to the public in a COVID compliant fashion in May. The Dance Hall property's rehabilitation is well under way, Squier Hall is nearly complete (meaning that New Jersey City University will be up and running there this fall) and the former gym site is nearly completed. A substantial amount of work has begun on the commercial/professional space at the site of the Commissary/Post Office buildings (I would invite you to visit this site to see the beautiful wall mural that is currently under way) and the developer of this property, Oceanport resident Steve Denholtz, has advised us that two of the tenants in that project are "Bird's Mouth Brewery" and "Relish Your Chef" (a caterer's kitchen space). Finally, The Marina is now part of Oceanport since FMERA was finally able to complete the transfer of the property to the long time operator, Mario Criscione. While The Marina has been here for several years as a tenant of FMERA, I want to officially welcome and congratulate Mario, his family and his staff now that they are actually a part of the Borough of Oceanport. Your first tax bill awaits you, Mario! The Borough has also made a request to FMERA for a public benefit conveyance of both Greeley Field (the former "marching grounds" located behind Russel Hall) and Cowan Park (the large expanse of passive parkland located in front of Russel Hall as you enter Fort Monmouth from Oceanport Avenue). We are hopeful that both parks will soon become part of Oceanport's passive and active greenspace.

April was not kind to Oceanport in that Jim Slattery, Richard Gallo, Sr. and Joan Schiavone all passed away. They were part and parcel of the fabric of our community for many years, helped make Oceanport the great place it is today and will be greatly missed by all who knew them.

Last, but certainly not least, the Borough of Oceanport has introduced its 2021 budget and the public hearing is being held at the Borough Council's regular meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2021. This meeting is being held remotely. If you have any questions or comments about the budget, please avail yourself of the opportunity to attend this meeting. Instructions for remote attendance of our municipal council meetings can be found on the Borough's website. We hope to be back to in person meetings at the new municipal complex this summer after we dedicate the complex. I hope to see you all at the Memorial Day Parade!