

## Mayor's Message

Nov/Dec 2021

Based on the volume of posts on the Oceanport Residents' Facebook page involving lost dogs and cats, I would estimate that humans are outnumbered two to one by cats and dogs within the Borough. Oddly, however, although we have a little over 6,000 residents and about 2,000 properties in town, only 435 dogs and 14 cats were licensed with the Borough this year.

Under Borough Ordinance No. 127-1(A), "Each and every dog shall be duly licensed and shall bear evidence of such license at all times in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey." Under Borough Ordinance No. 127-10, "any cat which has attained the age of seven months, or which possesses a set of permanent teeth" must be licensed. Based upon my latest conversation with Buddy Brocklebank, I have come to learn that "possesses a set of permanent teeth" doesn't mean the cat has ownership of the kind of teeth my grandfather kept in a glass of water on his dresser when I was a little kid. Having said that, however, it is readily apparent that **the vast majority of our residents' dogs and cats are not properly licensed.**

The license fee is \$11.00 for each unneutered cat, \$8.00 for neutered cat, \$18.00 for each non-spayed or non-neutered dog, and \$15.00 for a spayed or neutered dog. Those are minimal fees, so the lack of properly licensed cats and dogs in town really isn't about the money. Under our ordinances, moreover, the Governing Body can appoint an Animal Control Officer or enter into a contract for animal control services to enforce licensing compliance. This is Oceanport. A very small town where everybody knows everybody. We shouldn't have to spend money on something like that. The funds we collect from these fees would be better utilized to implement projects and protocols designed to make Oceanport more pet/animal friendly. So, if you are a dog or cat owner, I am asking that you stop by our new Borough Hall at your earliest convenience and ensure that your pets are properly licensed. Once we've tackled that problem, maybe we can deal with the foxes, racoons, weasels, opossums, and deer that dominate the remainder of our local Facebook posts.

As the weather begins to change, leaves begin to fall and brush begins to die, please remember that (1) sticks and brush must be tied and bundled for the garbage contractor to remove them, (2) our DPW does not pick up logs, stumps, or branches, (3) leaf collection is for just that: leaves. The NJDEP does not allow us to place anything in our leaf compost facility except leaves. As such, don't put plants, pots, stumps, bricks, logs, or grass in your leaf piles. All of this is especially important this fall and winter because our DPW is cleaning storm drains and running street sweepers now more than ever before and debris in the roadway causes the storm drains to clog and the street sweeper to operate less efficiently.

On Saturday, October 16, 2021, all the hard work the individual members of the Oceanport Historical Committee have put in on behalf of the Borough of Oceanport for close to two years was finally rewarded at the Borough's Centennial Gala in the Turf Room at Monmouth Park Racetrack. Well over 100 residents and friends of Oceanport --- most dressed in their finest 1920's attire --- enjoyed a fabulous 4 hours of dining and dancing as Oceanport celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in grand fashion, albeit a year late. Frank Baricelli, John Bonforte, Robin Kelly, Rosanne Letson, Tom Cavanagh, Barbara Cavanagh, Barbara Sheppard, Paula Lombardo,

Mike MacStudy, Toni Sverapa, and Ric Siciliano are all owed a debt of gratitude by our residents for volunteering so much of their free time to this event. Pictures from the Gala can be viewed on the Oceanport Centennial Facebook page.

The Historical Committee's book "Oceanport in Retrospect, Volume 2" will be coming out shortly and it will be the definitive history of Oceanport's first hundred years. Every coffee table in Oceanport should have one. If you don't have a coffee table, order one now because 'Oceanport in Retrospect, Volume 2' is going to be bigger than Cosmo Kramer's Coffee Table Book.

Many of you have read about Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority's MEGA-RFOTP (Request for Offers to Purchase) for the unsold properties in Eatontown and Oceanport, totaling about 289 acres. Bid submissions are due on January 12, 2022, and FMERA is seeking a large scale development that would generate jobs and substantially increase the economic impact on the region and State of New Jersey. If you would like to learn more about the MEGA-RFOTP, you can visit FMERA's website at <https://www.fortmonmouthnj.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Mega-RFOTP-Final.pdf>. The two main parcels in Oceanport are the McAfee Center (the Army's old high technology building on the Eatontown border) and the 400 Area (the land located on your right as you drive to Little Silver on Oceanport Avenue). There is a map attached as Exhibit A to the MEGA-RFOTP that provides a fantastic visual overview of the proposed project.

I would also invite you to take a ride through the old Fort Monmouth property so that you can see all that has gone on over the past few months. New Jersey City University and The Fort Athletic Club have opened, Denholtz Properties has demolished and removed all of the old, dilapidated buildings on its site and will begin construction of new commercial space shortly, and "The Loft" (formerly the Fort Monmouth Dance Hall across from Triumphant Life Church) is almost complete. It's an amazing, ongoing metamorphosis that we can watch in real time by driving through the property. We've also resumed in person Municipal Council meetings in the Clement V. Sommers Municipal Building at 910 Oceanport Way, and we'd love to see more residents at them going forward.

On a sad note, Walter J. O'Neill, Sr. and John Raymond Carroll, the patriarchs of two of Oceanport's most revered and active families, passed away on October 13, 2021 and September 27, 2021, respectively. Heaven's gain is Oceanport's loss, and our collective condolences go out to the O'Neill family (his wife, Judy, and their five children, Walter, Mark, Michael, Donna, and Paul) and the Carroll family (children, John, Kenny, and Nancy). If you are of a certain age, you know how intertwined these families are in the fabric of Oceanport.

And the fabric of Oceanport was prominently displayed on November 11, 2021 as our Municipal Council Chambers were filled to capacity for the Borough's celebration and veneration of our armed forces on Veterans Day. Oceanport's Rusty Kleiberg, a veteran of the Vietnam War, gave the keynote speech and Maple Place 8<sup>th</sup> grader August Zilincar, winner of this year's Veterans Day essay contest, provided his personal perspective on those who have served and currently serve our country and protect our way of life. The Oceanport Veterans Day celebration is one of the special, small town events that underscores how lucky and privileged we are to live in the United States. Special thanks to our Borough Clerk Jeanne Smith, Kim Parent, Amy Parent, Federico's, Anna's Flowers and Gifts, and our Business Administrator, Donna Phelps for helping to make the day a fabulous one

Our kids are back in school, youth and high school sports have started up again, Summer's End was, as always, an unqualified success and Halloween was celebrated this year much like it was before COVID-19 hit. While we're still a little bit unsure about everyday social interactions (Fist bump? Handshake? Ankle tap? Elbow bump? Hug? No hug? Mask? No mask? Is it ever going to be OK to cough or sneeze in public again?), the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hannukah holidays are right around the corner and, given what we have all gone through since March of 2020, I hope and pray that we get to celebrate them freely and happily, unencumbered by any sense of foreboding or worry, and that we all remember that we have more things in common with each other than we have differences. Enjoy Thanksgiving, have a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hannukah, and a VERY Happy New Year. Toodaloo till '22.