

## Mayor's Message

Feb/March 2022

Well, we've had several snowstorms this winter and our Department of Public Works has, once again, been more than equal to the task of keeping our streets as clean and safe as possible. Here's hoping that we've seen the last of the snow and that we can begin the process of spring cleanup as soon as possible. If you are looking for a great way to say goodbye to winter and get your fix of carbohydrates at the same time, the Boy Scouts' annual spaghetti dinner, which was not held in December because of the pandemic, has been rescheduled for April 1, 2022 from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Port Au Peck Firehouse. This is always a fantastic event for the people of Oceanport to rub elbows (from six feet away) with each other in a relaxed atmosphere, and the Scouts always do a fantastic job of making sure everybody has a belly full of pasta before they leave. If you are lucky, you might be waited on by Oceanport's latest Eagle Scout, Aidan Weiss. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, this incredible young man became the latest in a long line of incredible young men from Oceanport to achieve the status of Eagle Scout. If you've noticed a few new, free mini-libraries about town, they are the fruits of Aidan's Eagle Scout project this past year. Those of us who are old enough to still read books thank you, Aidan!

Although you won't find it in one of the mini-libraries, a most interesting read will be FMERA's "MEGA-RFP" document that is expected to be issued shortly. Notwithstanding the fact that submission date for the "MEGA-RFP" (which is essentially comprised of all of the unsold land in Oceanport and Eatontown east of Route 35 on the Main Post) has been delayed until late May, redevelopment on Fort Monmouth is proceeding apace. Construction has begun on the Lodging District just north of the old officer's quarters and on Barker Circle on Oceanport Avenue. The Lodging District project is slated for approximately 143 high end, town home style units which will be offered for sale and 37 affordable housing rental units as required by statute. Barker Circle, which is comprised of 5 barrack-like buildings, the old firehouse and the old movie house, has also begun its transformation into active living and working space. Four of the barrack-like buildings are being converted into 75 residential units, 60 of which will be offered for sale as condominium units and 15 of which will be rental affordable housing units as required under the FMERA statute. The old fire house is going to be redeveloped and renovated as a restaurant and the old movie house will become art space. The Fort Athletic Club is up and running and Denholtz Properties has demolished all of the buildings that are not going to be repurposed in the Warehouse and Post Office parcels. Once again, I invite you to take a ride through the old Fort so that you can see all the progress being made.

Speaking of progress, the Borough of Oceanport now has the ability to accept pet license payments via credit card and e-check! Once you've submitted your application, a staff member will send you a request for payment with a link to complete your payment online for credit card and e-check. Cash and regular check will still need to be mailed or dropped off to Borough Hall. If you have not registered your cat or dog, as is required by our ordinances, you can now obtain a license by visiting the Borough's website at [www.oceanportboro.com](http://www.oceanportboro.com) and scrolling down until you see the pet licensing notice. We'd like to get as many cats and dogs registered as possible before April 1, 2022 so that we can fund programs related to animal control and assistance.



Recently, the County temporarily closed the bridge located at the corner of Oceanport Avenue and Main Street due to concerns about its safety. The County reopened the bridge (with a Jersey barrier) to vehicles weighing up to 15 tons (this includes school buses and emergency vehicles) after conducting a structural examination and determining that the bridge, while in need of some repair, was safe to travel upon. Having said that, it is expected that comprehensive repairs will be made to the bridge some time this spring to restore full vehicular capacity. It is expected that the comprehensive repairs may take up to 60 days to complete, so we can expect traffic to be temporarily re-routed by the County while the repairs take place. While inconvenient, these repairs are necessary to ensure the long term safety of those traveling over the bridge. The Borough will keep our residents updated and aware of any pending traffic disruptions prior to the comprehensive repairs taking place. We hope to have Buddy Brocklebank back re-directing traffic at that time.

On a sad note, longtime resident and World War II veteran Peter Bova passed away on January 8, 2022, we lost Volunteer Fireman Steve Widmaier on February 5<sup>th</sup> and Oceanport's first female Councilwoman, Miriam Smart Bryan, passed on January 26<sup>th</sup>. They were all part and part of the fabric of this community and they will be sorely missed.