

Mayor's Message

October/November 2022

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After being displaced for nearly a decade, the Senior Citizens Club of Oceanport is finally back home at the Old Wharf House on East Main Street. Shortly after Hurricane Sandy rendered the Borough's Municipal Building unusable, the Borough's administrative offices were moved into the Old Wharf House on a temporary basis. Temporary turned out to be about seven years, during which time the Senior Citizens Club of Oceanport was forced to use the Pavilion at Blackberry Bay as its base of operations. The Pavilion is not exactly the perfect setup for senior citizens, and they missed the Old Wharf House and all the comforts and conveniences it had offered since they opened it up in 1987.

Under the watchful eye of Board Member Barbara Scerbo and the direction of Borough Administrator/Interior Designer Donna Phelps, our Department of Public Works spent the better part of a year transforming the site from the Borough's "temporary" Borough Hall into a place where our seniors could, once again, meet, greet, and enjoy themselves. Barbara Scerbo, a Senior Citizens Club Board Member, was thrilled with rehabilitation efforts. "Much work had to be done to make this building usable again. The Borough Council, our B.A., Donna Phelps, and especially Steve Briskey and the entire Department of Public Works worked together tirelessly to give this building back to the seniors. And, at the end of the day, the building is absolutely better than it was before. The members of the organization are thrilled with how the building turned out and we want to thank all who helped make our return possible."

Members of the Senior Citizens Club filled the Old Wharf House as they and the Borough celebrated the re-opening of the building with a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 19th. The ribbon cutting ceremony was especially notable in that four Borough officials who were at the original ribbon cutting in 1987 --- former Mayor and retired Superior Court Judge Tom Cavanaugh, former Councilman/Freeholder/Senator and retired Superior Court Judge John D'Amico, former Councilwoman Mary Ann Becker, and everybody's favorite former Councilman and current man about town, Bill McNish --- were able to participate in this year's ceremony. Marie Quackenbush the club's longest serving member, and Barbara Nye, the club's oldest member (and proud of it!), were also on hand to enjoy the festivities.

Summer's End, our annual celebration of all things Oceanport, was, as always, an incredible success and the Borough's Recreation Committee deserves a round of applause (because we aren't going to pay them) for putting everything together and making the day run so smoothly. Buddy Brocklebank was in charge of the weather and, once again, he came through in the clutch. Thanks, Buddy, you are still Oceanport's ray of sunshine.

Maple Place School and Wolf Hill School opened in September and the much needed, long awaited, multi-year rehabilitation project of the two buildings is 50% complete and the Board of Education's October 13, 2022 ribbon cutting ceremony at Wolf Hill School marks the school system's celebration of the work done to date.

Wolf Hill School has new HVAC, sprinkler and fire alarm systems, new electrical and lighting throughout the building, a secure vestibule area, a renovated main office suite, all new bathrooms, doors and windows, a new roof and a 21st century LED outdoor sign. The Wolf Hill Gym was completely renovated and, most notably, the new addition (with a media center, cafeteria, restrooms, and staff offices) was completed. If you take a drive by Wolf Hill School, you'll also see that there has been a complete overhaul of the exterior, including two new playgrounds and a full basketball court.

Maple Place School has had both its gym, bathrooms and cafeteria renovated, and now has new roofing, a secure vestibule, a new façade, a revised front entrance and all new windows and doors. Additionally, classrooms in the rear of the building have been updated and all new lighting, fire/sprinkler and electrical systems have been installed. The exterior has been overhauled to include new storage space, an LED sign, lights, a larger parking lot, two basketball hoops and four-square courts.

The schools also now have roll-up capability for generators in the event of a wide-spread power outage (although we know that NEVER happens in Oceanport) and Oceanport's Office of Emergency Management will have more available options and space in the event of a serious storm or other disaster.

Monmouth Park Racetrack had a very successful run this summer. Over 365,000 patrons walked through the gates and there was an increase in both the total (+25.2%) and on-track (+16.07%) handles. And Oceanport's own Dave Gruskos ended up in a four-way tie for leading owner!

Sadly, we said goodbye to former Mayor Elwood Baxter and Michelle Perry Maida, both of whom passed away recently. Both Elwood and Michelle were part of the fabric of different generations of our wonderful community and our prayers go out to the Baxter and Maida families.

There is so much going on in Oceanport that the space this message affords me is inadequate to include everything you should know about. So, please take the time to attend or watch our Borough Council meetings on TV or on your computer. You can watch them live on the Verizon Fios Municipal Channel 28 or get the link from the Borough's website to watch them live or on your computer. You can even watch past meetings by going to the Borough's home page, scrolling down and clicking on "watch meetings." They may not be exciting, but they sure are informative. Enjoy the cool weather and see you in a few months!