

## Mayor's Message

April/May 2024

With winter behind us and warmer weather on the way, you will notice a lot of activity here in beautiful and bustling Oceanport. Our public parks have been upgraded and expanded over the past year and they are being utilized more than ever by our residents, children, and adults alike. Please keep in mind there are more children out and about as you are driving through town. Please, please, please SLOW DOWN and drive to the speed limit. Our police department is actively employing radar guns and other speed measurement apparatus, and speeders will be ticketed.

The multipurpose fields at Maria Gatta Park are being used every single day by residents of Oceanport and beyond. In fact, for the calendar year 2024, the Borough has already received to date over \$190,000 in revenue from field rental fees. Keep in mind the total debt service for the year is approximately \$235,000. Given the fact it is only April, the fields will once again generate revenue in excess of the debt service thereby allowing for more improvements to be made to Gatta Park and, notably, to parks all throughout Oceanport.

Later this year you will see permanent lighting being installed on all three fields at Gatta Park. This particular improvement, however, is being funded by our portion of sports wagering revenue from Monmouth Park, a county grant, and open space funds. The installation of permanent lighting will improve both the overall safety of the park and allow the Borough to generate additional revenue. Kudos to Councilmen Deerin, O'Brien, and Keeshen for spearheading this project.

Throughout town we have amazing volunteers who work tirelessly for the betterment of Oceanport through their service on various committees. Currently, our Water Watch Committee is looking for members to help with the water testing. If you are interested in participating in the water testing efforts, you can go on the Borough website and respond to the Borough's "volunteer application," or email me directly at [mayor@oceanportboro.com](mailto:mayor@oceanportboro.com). Oceanport's Community Garden next to the municipal complex is coming together nicely. If you are interested in signing up for a spot in the garden, applications are available on [Oceanportboro.com](http://Oceanportboro.com) under News and Announcements.

As I drive around town, I have noticed that residents and their landscaping companies are putting out their spring cleanup debris. While this is an annual occurrence and the Borough's Department of Public Works (DPW) is, as always, ready, willing, and able to collect these materials in an orderly and expeditious fashion. DPW's Juan Carlos Marino asked me to remind everyone, however, that the Borough DOES NOT TAKE STICKS OR BRANCHES as part of its collection program. The proper way to dispose of sticks, branches, and most other materials can be found on the Borough website by pulling down the Departments tab and clicking on Public Works. Also, if you use a professional landscaper, make sure the landscaper is registered with the town. First, our ordinance requires them to register with us and, second, when they register, they will receive all the necessary information as to how to dispose of yard refuse and other materials.

Opening day for Monmouth Park racetrack is right around the corner. The live racing season begins May 11th. Oceanport box passes are available through the Borough Clerk's office on a first come, first served basis. The Oceanport box passes are available to all residents free of charge.

Most of you have noticed the construction equipment along Port Au Peck Avenue outside of Monmouth Park in the parking lot. The developer is currently digging test pits to not only do soil boring samples, but also establish the median high-water table. CAFRA permits have been filed and the proposed 298-unit, age restricted (55 and over) development is scheduled to break ground in the summer of 2025. The updated development plan can be found on the Borough website.



Last month, the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority's board unanimously approved what is known as "Plan Amendment20." This is a major milestone for Netflix's purchase of the Mega Parcel on the Fort Monmouth site. Netflix is currently working on design and site plans, which they are anticipating will be presented to both Eatontown and Oceanport's planning and zoning boards. In all likelihood, Netflix will introduce phase 1A this summer, and then proceed with the rest of the development three months thereafter. Once Netflix obtains the necessary approvals from both municipalities, the next step would be to close on the property. I will keep everyone up to date as soon as I receive the information for the planning/zoning applications. It is also likely you will see demolition of existing buildings in the 400 Area (along Oceanport Avenue) prior to Netflix taking ownership of the property.

As the redevelopment and revitalization of the old Fort Monmouth property progresses, Baseline Social has emerged as one of the premier sports bars in the northeast. In the beginning of the year, Baseline Social hosted New York Yankees manager, Aaron Boone for a Q&A session and a "meet and greet." I was privileged to meet with the Yankees' manager that day and, with the assistance of several youngsters from Shore Regional Little League, present him with a proclamation declaring January 27, 2024, to be "Aaron Boone Day" in the Borough of Oceanport. After receiving the proclamation, the Yankees' skipper offered his hopes to come back to Oceanport next year on Aaron Boone day to celebrate a New York Yankees World Series championship right here at Baseline Social. You can watch this entire event on the YES network's New York Yankees yearbook. Who knows? Maybe young Finn Schwarz will be wearing the Pinstripes one day.

Oceanport Basketball Association's U-12 Knights Girls brought home its second Mid-Monmouth County Championship in the last three years, defeating Marlboro in an exciting come from behind win in the finals. Kudos to head coach Dennis Coyle, assistant coach Jonathan Doherty, and all the young ladies on the team. I look forward to seeing what you do next year and throughout your high school basketball careers. Speaking of high school basketball, the Shore Regional High School Girls won their third straight Group 1 Sectional title this year and three of the team's starters (Ava Coyle, Conley Smolokoff, and Reese Fiore) are from Oceanport and played for the Oceanport Knights.

Oceanport suffered another tremendous loss with the passing of Paddy Brocklebank. Paddy is the embodiment of what makes Oceanport so great. Her kind spirit and infectious smile will always be remembered by everyone that had the privilege of knowing her. I have incredibly fond memories of her at both Wolf Hill School and Maple Place School. No matter what the occasion, Mrs. Brocklebank was always there. My deepest condolences to Buddy and the entire Brocklebank family.

Finally, we have a busy municipal calendar coming up, please do not miss all that is happening!

Oceanport's own annuals include Boy Scout Troop 58's Spaghetti Dinner Sunday on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 - 7:30 PM at the Port Au Peck Firehouse, Mini Golf Tournament on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 - 7:30 PM at Blue Grass Monmouth Park, (rain date is Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup> 4:00-6:00 PM). Let's see who can defeat defending champion Mike O'Brien. And, Oceanport's proud and patriotic Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> with at step off @ 9:30 am.