

# Rockaway Township Report



65 Mt. Hope Road  
Rockaway, NJ 07866  
973-627-7200

[www.rockawaytownship.org](http://www.rockawaytownship.org)

Volume 11, Issue Two - Summer 2022

## Inside This Issue

Mayor's Corner	1
Message from Tax Collector	2
Mayor's Special Recognition	2
Summer Fire Safety	3
Gazebo Concert	3
Summer Fun in the Township	3, 6
Recent Happenings	4
Engineering Updates	4
Volunteer for the Township	5

## Mayor's Corner



I hope everyone has enjoyed the start to their summer! There are many engaging seasonal programs and activities that benefit all Township residents, and I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of them.

Summer is a wonderful time to explore Rockaway Township's ponds, lakes and hiking trails. For detailed information on these wonderful locations, check [our website](#). I look forward to growing our services, to make sure Rockaway continues to be a premier municipality in Morris County. Following are some recreational opportunities the Township is offering this summer:

- The beach at Mt. Hope Pond is open for the summer and looks beautiful! Mt. Hope Pond is open seven days a week from 10:00am to 6:00pm through Labor Day, and is open to Rockaway Township

residents only. Please contact the Division of Recreation at 973-983-2841 for information on how to join. Did you know that most of our ponds are also open for non-motorized boating?

- We've expanded our Dial-a-Ride program to include a 'walking club' for our senior residents. Contact our Dial-a-Ride coordinator at 973-983-2839 for details.
- Our Summer Playground program is underway and from what I've been told, everyone is having a great time!
- The summer Gazebo Concert Series at Parks Lake started on July 3. Concerts take place from 3:00pm to 5:00pm every Sunday through August 28. Be sure to visit for the music, scenery and company. Go [here](#) to review the concert schedule.

In addition to our summer programs, there are other important initiatives presently happening in the community. These include:

- Peterson Field improvements: The project is currently progressing on schedule. If you have a chance, stop by Peterson Field

and see the changes.

- Recognizing local businesses: Follow us on Facebook to find out about some of our local businesses and how you can avail yourself of what they have to offer. If you own a local business and wish to be recognized, contact Recreation Director Dave Dyer at 973-983-2841.
- Kings Road improvements: This project is in its final stages, and the restoration looks terrific.

As summer continues, please take the opportunity to spend some time outdoors in Rockaway Township – and don't forget the sunscreen. If you have any questions about municipal services, always feel free to contact our team at the Municipal Building. You can also visit us at 65 Mt. Hope Road or call 973-627-7200 for more information. Our normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and make [our website](#) one of your bookmarks. As always, I am honored to be your Mayor.

Joe Jackson  
Rockaway Township Mayor

**COVID-19 continues to affect us locally and regionally. The Division of Health can provide assistance to those who have suffered the effects of COVID-19 or who are otherwise vulnerable or underserved. For more information, call 973-983-2848**

## Message from the Tax Collector

Residents are advised that the 2022 third quarter tax payment is due August 1, with the last day for payment August 10. Please contact the Tax Collector's office if you need to know the amount due. Homeowners should have received an estimated tax bill for the third quarter. A final tax bill will be released in late August or September.

Residents in need of Senior Freeze (property tax reimbursement) assistance may call New Jersey's Senior Freeze hotline at 1-800-882-6597. Those in need of help with the New Jersey Homestead Credit may call 1-888-238-1233.

Residents may now make partial tax payments online through the Township website. Any partial payment must be enough to cover all interest due at the time of

payment. Any credit left will go toward the oldest principal balance. Please also allow two business days for the payment to process and for the account to be updated. If you have questions or are unsure about how to make a payment, please call the office.

For homeowners using their bank's website to generate a payment, please be aware that these are not electronic transfers between banks. Payments are in the form of material checks that are mailed to the Rockaway Township Municipal Building, so please allow enough time for the check to arrive. Your payment (check) is processed effective the date of receipt, and interest is charged accordingly.

When using your bank's website for payment, we ask that you:

- Please review the account information and update if necessary.
- Please do not use Rockaway Township as your payor, but instead, be more specific. Please use Rockaway Township Tax Collector, Rockaway Township Sewer Maintenance and Rockaway Township Municipal Utility.
- Please provide as much information as possible so payments are applied correctly.
- Payments cannot be held for over 24 hours, so please confirm the date of payment is appropriate or it will be returned to you.
- If you are making partial blanket payments, please reach out to the office so we can note your account. This will better ensure payments are applied correctly.

## Mayor's Special Recognition

Mayor Joe Jackson wishes to congratulate the following Township employees on their retirements, and thanks them for their years of dedicated service to Rockaway Township's residents:

- Wade Ryerson, Police Department
- Brad Caron, Police Department
- Donna Murphy, Construction Department

Mayor Jackson wishes to congratulate the following individuals on their employment with Rockaway Township, and wishes each new member of the team a long, fulfilling career with the Township:

- Derek Simmons, Department of Public Works
- Jonathan Kazer, Department of Public Works
- Robert Fredette, Department of Public Works

- Michael Kabasakalian, Department of Public Works
- Andrew German, Department of Public Works
- Jamie Browne, Division of Construction
- Luca Flammia, Seasonal Worker, Department of Public Works
- Nicholas Barrientos, Seasonal Worker, Department of Public Works
- Kyle McPartland, Seasonal Worker, Department of Public Works
- James Suter, Seasonal Worker, Department of Public Works
- Jackie Bejarano, Department of Administration



## Gazebo Concert Schedule

Rockaway Township residents are reminded to come out and enjoy the Annual Summer Concert Series, held every Sunday afternoon from 3:00pm - 5:00pm at the Parks Lake Gazebo on Mt. Hope Road. *In the event of inclement weather, the concerts will be held at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall (Macy's Lower Level). In the event of rain, please call the Recreation Hotline at 973-983-2853 to confirm location.*

### JULY

- 17 Thunder Hill - Old Country
- 24 Jersey Girls - Dance and Party Music
- 31 Jersey Sound - Old Favorites



### AUGUST

- 7 Norton Small Band - Blues, Rock and Country
- 14 Reminisce - Music of the 50s and 60s
- 21 Rave On - Early Rock and Roll Favorites
- 28 Cameos - Oldies

## Summertime Fire Safety

Summer is a time for grilling, campfires and other outdoor activities that could involve the use of an open flame. Following are some simple tips to minimize the risk of a fire while enjoying the great outdoors.

- Move your grill away from siding, decking and other items that could catch fire
- Attend to your grill the entire time you're cooking
- Use long-handled barbecue tools when cooking on the grill
- Use a metal screen over wood-burning fires to keep sparks from igniting nearby items
- Turn off or put out fires before you leave the yard
- Build campfires at least 15 feet away from tent walls, shrubs or other items that could ignite
- Don't use fireworks – the best way to stay safe from fireworks is not to use them



## Summer Fun with Recreation

The Division of Recreation wishes to make residents aware of some fun happenings in Rockaway Township this summer.

### Gazebo Concert Series

The Gazebo Committee of the Rockaways is presenting its Summer Concert Series every Sunday of the summer, beginning July 3 and continuing through August 28. The concert series takes place at the Parks Lake Gazebo, located on Mount Hope Road, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Bring a blanket or beach chairs and enjoy the sounds of summer.

In the event of inclement weather, concerts will be held outside of Macy's, on the lower level of the Rockaway Townsquare Mall. Call the Division of Recreation hotline at 973-983-2853 after 1:00pm if poor weather is in the forecast.

### Take a Walk

Interested in a relaxing walk with friends and other Township residents? Join the Rockaway Township Senior & Dial-a-Ride walking club. The club will meet at Parks Lake from 10am to 11am on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, weather permitting. Enjoy a beautiful walk, socialize with friends, or relax and read a book on one of the many benches along the walking path. To participate, a residents must sign up and complete a registration release form. Interested residents may contact Dial-a-Ride manager Veronica Skewes 973-983-2839.

*(continued on page six)*



Rockaway Township, in collaboration with the New Jersey Clean Communities program, has supported the BagUpNJ campaign by offering residents free reusable shopping bags. Residents may visit the Division of Health at the Municipal Building to obtain one, while supplies last!

## Recent Township Happenings

### **Future Township Leaders**

Congratulations to Rockaway Township resident Tyler Esterly for becoming an Eagle Scout. As part of earning this significant accomplishment, Tyler completed a project that involved clearing a section of the hiking trail at Mount Hope Pond. Tyler will surely be a future leader!

On April 28, our future leaders visited the Municipal Building for Bring Your Child to Work Day. Visiting children learned about a number of professions in public service and saw, firsthand, the role their parents play in helping make Rockaway Township a great place to live and work.

The Rockaway Townsquare Mall hosted a Career Carnival for children on May 7, where kids had the chance to explore interesting careers with hands-on activities, demonstrations, games and giveaways. Members of the Rockaway Township Department of Administration and Police Department exhibited at this event, meeting with families and providing information.

### **Mindfulness with the Division of Health**

In May, Michael Hodges, consultant with the Rockaway Township Division of Health, provided seniors with a program regarding the power of positive thinking. This interactive presentation examined how our thoughts influence our moods and actions. The engagement was well received and inspired thoughtful discussion.



From left: Public Health Consultant Michael Hodges discusses mindfulness and the power of positive thinking with Township seniors; Rockaway Township Police Department representatives attend the Career Carnival at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall on May 7.

Mr. Hodges was joined by Health Officer Peter Tabbot, COVID-19 Generalist Grace Jensen and Public Health Outreach Coordinator Brittany Bernstein, who provided additional information and resources to residents. The Division of Health plans to provide additional health promotion programs to Rockaway Township's seniors.

The Rockaway Township Division of Health held its Annual Spring Cleanup Day and New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign on April 23. Armed with gloves, rakes, bags and other tools, residents canned the litter at Mt. Hope Pond, Egbert's Lake and Parks Lake. In addition, residents were able to pick up free tree seedlings to plant at home. Groups participating in the cleanup were provided T-shirts and promotional items, and non-profit groups were eligible for mini-grants. This annual event is held in collaboration with the New Jersey Clean Communities program.

### **And More...**

The Rockaway Township Library hosted its Spring Festival on April 24, with an estimated 1,500 in attendance. A fun, fulfilling time was had by all.

The State of New Jersey has eliminated fees to all New Jersey state parks, forests and recreations areas for summer 2022. This means Rockaway Township residents may go fishing, take a hike, swim or enjoy some sun at any of these State parks and facilities for free!





Project progress (left to right): The Hudsonia Dam removal nears completion; The turf field at Peterson Field, pictured on July 11, 2022, is taking shape. New sidewalks, landscaping and parking upgrades are included with this phase of the project.

## Engineering Updates

### **Turf Field Takes Shape**

Construction of the new turf field at Peterson Field is coming along nicely despite ongoing setbacks in the construction industry regarding material supplies and pricing. The retaining wall and a majority of drainage components are in, rough grade is set and new Musco lighting has been erected. The turf is anticipated to be delivered to the site and installed in July. The site improvements will wrap up with new sidewalks around the concession stand, and a new parking area and landscaping.

### **Infrastructure Improvements**

The utility and roadway improvements to Kings Road are nearly complete. New Jersey Natural Gas upgraded their gas line and the Township replaced its aging water main. Following these utility improvements, with the aid of New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) grant funding, roadway improvements were performed, including new curbing and driveway aprons, barrier free ADA curb ramps, drainage improvements and final milling and paving.

Final striping, several crosswalks and signage have been added to the area for increased pedestrian safety. The Engineering Department wishes to thank the residents of Kings Road and travelers for their patience while these much-needed improvements were performed. The next roadway anticipated to receive improvements will be Queens Road. Costs of this project will also be defrayed by NJDOT grant funding.

The Hudsonia Dam removal is almost complete. Over \$350,000 of native wetland species plants have been restored, bringing this high hazard, manmade impoundment back into compliance and restored to its native condition.

### **Housing Developments Are Booming**

Private housing developments are making progress despite the high construction costs, as the demand for residential units in Rockaway Township remains high. The Pondview development has completed 566 units of the 1,050 proposed, and is beginning construction on the second of two clubhouses. Rock Pointe (fka Morris Commons) has completed 111 of 345 units and opened the interior of their clubhouse.

### **In Other News...**

Cibao Meat Products, located at 92 Green Pond Road, will soon begin construction of its new parking area and solar panels project. A solar canopy is also being installed at the Atlantic Health Pavilion, located near the Rockaway Townsquare Mall on Mount Hope Ave. Speaking of the mall area, electric car charging stations are being installed at the AMC Movie Theaters and on the north side of the Macy's department store.

Several other projects are advancing, though not as visibly to this point, but corresponding milestones may be of note by autumn. The Engineering Department, through the *Rockaway Report*, will keep residents informed.

## Volunteer for Rockaway Township!

Multiple Mayor's appointments for the Township of Rockaway are currently vacant. If you have interest in serving in any of the appointed positions listed below, please complete a Citizen Leadership form, which may be obtained at the Municipal Clerk's office either in-person or via email at [Clerk@RockawayTownship.org](mailto:Clerk@RockawayTownship.org). Thank you for your interest!

### Environmental Advisory Committee

*Full Member: 5-year term – FOUR appointments*

Township Code 2-33. The Committee shall accept assignments for review and conduct research with respect thereto. It shall keep an index of all open areas, including open marsh lands, swamps and other wetlands in order to obtain information and report on the potential environmental impact which may result from proposed use and/or development. The Committee shall also serve in an advisory capacity concerning open space preservation, water pollution control, air pollution control, solid waste management, soil and landscape protection, and more.

### Planning Board

*2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate: 2-year term – ONE appointment*

Township Code 54-5. The Planning Board may approve, conditionally approve or disapprove land use applications for the purpose of providing for the orderly and wise development of the Township and affording adequate facilities for housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, safety and the health and welfare of its population.

### Shade Tree Commission

*Full Member: 1-year term – TWO appointments*

Township Code 2-31. Duties may include reviewing construction site plans and making recommendations regarding tree removal and planting, constructing a five-year Rockaway

Community Forestry Plan and submitting annual reports to the New Jersey Forest Service.

### Citizen's Recreation Committee

*Full Member: 1-year term – TWO appointments*

Township Code 2-40. Duties may include hearing various recreational programs; assist and advise the Department of Community Services, Division of Recreation, regarding finances, administration, operations and development; enforce the Youth Sports Code of Conduct; approve program bylaws; conflict resolution.

### Open Space Advisory Committee

*Full Member: 1-year term – FOUR appointments*

Township Code 2-33.3. The Open Space Advisory Committee shall make an initial determination of which parcels of land may be recommended for acquisition in fee and/or those parcels of land from which the Township may acquire development rights only, principally in connection with the preservation of the Beaver Brook. The Open Space Advisory Committee shall submit to the Township Council a prioritized list of properties recommended for acquisition and/or properties from which development rights may be acquired.

### Library Board of Trustees

*Full Member: 5-year term – ONE appointment*

Township Code 2-28.1. The Library Board of Trustees shall hold in trust and manage all property of the library. It shall make proper rules and regulations for the government of the library and, generally, do all things necessary and proper for the establishment and maintenance of the library within the Township of Rockaway. The Board of Trustees shall annually make a report to the Township Council.

## Summer Fun with the Division of Recreation

*(continued from page three)*

### Recreate at the Beach or at Camp

The Mount Hope Pond beach season is underway, and badges are available for purchase via Community Pass. Residents may register for a beach badge [here](#).

Badges are \$25.00 per person, and are available to Township residents only. Children five and under do not need a badge. Badges may be picked up at the Municipal Building, 65 Mount Hope Road, on weekdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm.. The Division of Recreation thanks you in advance for helping keep Mount Hope Pond clean this summer.

The Summer Playground program is in progress at Birchwood, Dwyer and Katherine D. Malone Schools. This popular program runs Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 12:00pm, through August 5. Children may participate in a variety of daily activities, attend age-appropriate trips and participate in theme days.

### Meals for the Homebound

Rockaway Township's Meals-on-Wheels service provides nutritious food to homebound residents who are unable to cook for themselves. Morris County residents can enroll in Meals-on-Wheels by calling the Nutrition Project at

973-285-6856. The Township Division of Recreation coordinates the program for residents and provides home delivery of the meals. Find out more by calling 973-983-2839.

The Township always welcomes volunteer drivers for this important program, either on a permanent schedule of one day per month or as a substitute driver as needed. Meals are delivered from the Rockaway Township Municipal Building between 9:30am and 12:00pm. Those interested in delivering meals must complete a volunteer application. For more information about the Meals on Wheels program, please call 973-983-2839.