

Rockaway Township Report



65 Mt. Hope Road
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973-627-7200

www.rockawaytownship.org

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Mayor's Corner



I hope everyone had a great summer and was able to enjoy all the facilities and events the Township offered. As we enter fall, I hope you take advantage of the other opportunities to enjoy our community, such as:

- Fall sports programs are in full swing! Go to our website to find links to each sports program, along with schedules. Go out and enjoy a youth sports game.
- Explore our ponds, lakes and hiking trails to see some incredible foliage. Fall is a wonderful time to experience all of Rockaway's

beautiful landscapes.

- We have tentatively scheduled a Rockaway Day event for the fall - more details to follow!
- As we have in the past, we are co-hosting 'Dark Lake Spooktacular' with Rockaway Borough. The event will be at Park Lake on October 29 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.
- We've expanded our senior exercise services to include the 'A Matter of Balance' program.
- On November 12, we will unveil a new monument at the Park Lake Veteran's Memorial. Details appear on page seven of this newsletter, and on a flier that you can find on the Township's Facebook page and calendar.
- The Peterson turf field project is entering its final phase. Watch for a ribbon

cutting event this fall.

- We continue to recognize local businesses on our Facebook page. Please follow us to find out about their services and how you can take advantage of what they have to offer. If you own a local business and are interested in being recognized, contact Dave Dyer, Recreation Director.

If you have any questions about the activities above, feel free to contact the Municipal Building. You can visit at 65 Mount Hope Road or call us at 973-627-7200. Our normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Follow Rockaway Township on Facebook and make www.rockawaytownship.org one of your bookmarks.

As always, I am honored to be your Mayor.

Joe Jackson
Rockaway Township Mayor

Mayor's Special Recognition

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

- Chris Tom, Police Department
- John Reilly, Police Department
- Kellie Rumble, Construction Department

Mayor Jackson would also like to congratulate the following individuals on their employment with Rockaway Township, with wishes for a long, fulfilling career with the Township:

- Everett Falt, Office of the Clerk
- Connor Ronceray, Division of Parks
- Ty Aquillino, Department of Public Works

- Lou Turk, Construction Department
- Mary Rolph, Division of Recreation
- Catherine Vonk, Office of the Clerk
- Michael Mellifiore, Police Department
- Dennis Kihlberg, Police Department
- Alex Brandt, Police Department

The Mayor would also like to acknowledge the Division of Health, which just completed work on the year-long \$292,000 *Strengthening Local Public Health Capacities II* grant. The Division of Health successfully applied for the \$274,000 *Strengthening Local Public Health Capacities III* grant, and began performing work on the grant in August 2022.

Focus on Fire: National Preparedness Month

[National Preparedness Month](#) is observed each September, in an effort to stress the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies, which could happen at any time. This year's theme is 'A Lasting Legacy.'

Please see [ready.gov](#) for details. In just moments, you can sign up for alerts and warnings using systems such as

RAVE. You should know the degree of risk relative to where you live, make a plan before disaster strikes and take action as necessary.

Residents should practice emergency drills, test communication plans, safeguard important documents, know evacuation routes, assemble and update supplies, and document and insure their property.

Housing on the Rise

Rockaway Township's Department of Engineering, Planning and Construction has been involved with the issuance of over 175 Certificate of Occupancies (COs) of the proposed 340 residential units within the Rock Pointe development off Green Pond Road, and over 600 COs of the 1,050 residential units planned for the Pondview development on Route 15. Pondview is also advancing construction of the Rockaway Township Firehouse (pictured right), which is anticipated to be completed in fall 2022.



Calling All Ghouls...

Come to Dark Lake Spooktacular, jointly presented by the Rockaway Township Recreation Department and the Rockaway Borough Recreation Department. Dark Lake Spooktacular is a safe and fun event where children and families can walk around Park Lake, trick or treat at decorated booths and tables from local families and businesses, and play at various attractions. The event takes place from 5:30pm - 8:00pm on October 29. More details will be provided soon through the Rockaway Township website at www.rockawaytownship.org!



Special Event Permits

Did you know that Rockaway Township issues permits for certain events and gatherings, which are detailed in a municipal ordinance? What is a special event permit and does my event require one?



A *special event* is a meeting, gathering or group of persons, animals or vehicles, or any combination thereof, having a common purpose, design or goal, upon a private or public facility, street, sidewalk, park waterway, or other place, where the special event substantially inhibits the usual flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or which occupies any private or public area and impacts use in and around such area by the general public.

Rockaway Township Ordinance No. O-20-13 governs the conduct of special events, and residents may find the ordinance and an application for special events on the Township website. Look under the 'How Do I' header on the homepage for more information.

Businesses or residents who wish to plan an event meeting this description may contact the Division of Recreation at 973-983-2841 with any questions.

What's Happening

SEPTEMBER

29th Matter of Balance Exercise Program*
 Rockaway Township Senior Center
 September 29 - November 17
 11:00am - 11:30am

OCTOBER

29th Dark Lake Spooktacular
 Park Lake Walking Path
 5:30pm - 8:00pm (*tentative time*)

NOVEMBER

5th Free Rabies Clinic**
 Rockaway Township Public Works Garage
 9:00am - 12:00pm

DECEMBER

2nd Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration
 Rockaway Township Senior Center
 6:30pm (*tentative time*)

3rd Free Rabies Clinic**
 Rockaway Township Public Works Garage
 9:00am - 12:00pm

19th Menorah Lighting and Chanukah Celebration
 Rockaway Township Municipal Building
 7:00pm (*tentative time/location*)

* Pre-registration required. Please call the Division of Recreation at 973-983-2841 for more information.

** Pre-registration recommended. Please call the Division of Health at 973-983-2848 for more information.

NOTE: All dates are subject to change - Always confirm with the appropriate Township department.



Welcome Back to School!

With school back in session, the Rockaway Township Police Department encourages all drivers to slow down and obey speed limits. Remember: It is the law to stop for stopped school buses and to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

- New drivers and parents of new drivers - With graduated licenses, probationary drivers are allowed only one passenger in the vehicle at all times unless there is an adult in the vehicle or any person over the age of 21.
- Cell phones are not permitted to be used by probationary drivers, even in hands-free mode.
- Probationary drivers are required to display the identifying red sticker on the front and rear license plates.

Remember - driving is a privilege, so respect it by being safe and by abiding the laws. The Police Department will be aggressively enforcing speeding violations, cell phone violations, seatbelt violations and passing school bus violations - so please drive safely and enjoy the school year.

If you have any traffic related concerns or wish to report unsafe traffic conditions, please utilize our traffic form, which is located on the Police Department website at www.rockawaytwppd.com under the *traffic department* or *forms* links.

The Rockaway Township Police Department wishes you a safe and enjoyable fall season.



Tips for Safe Trick or Treating this Halloween

S - Swords, knives and similar accessories should be short, soft and flexible.

A - Avoid trick-or-treating alone – walk in groups or with a trusted adult.

F - Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you.

E - Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering before eating them. Limit the amount of treats you eat.

H - Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and to help others see you. Always *walk* and don't run from house to house.

A - Always test make-up in a small area first. Remove it before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.

L - Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible.

L - Lower your risk for serious eye injury by not wearing decorative contact lenses.

O - Only walk on sidewalks whenever possible, or on the far edge of the road facing traffic, to stay safe.

W - Wear well-fitting masks, costumes and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips and falls.

E - Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid eating homemade treats made by strangers.

E - Enter homes only if you're with a trusted adult. Only visit well-lit houses. Don't stop at dark houses and never accept rides from strangers.

N - Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/family/halloween/>.

From the Division of Health...

Clean Communities

Litter impacts our quality of life, and is harmful to our environment and wildlife. Participate in Township cleanups, while educating others about litter prevention.

To become involved, call 973-983-2848 or email:

csileno@rockawaytownship.org



COVID-19 Update

The Division of Health welcomes back students and wishes Rockaway Township families, teachers and school staff a fulfilling and fun 2022-2023 school year! COVID-19 is unfortunately still present in our communities, and the Division of Health continues to work collaboratively with school officials to help ensure a safe, healthy school year.

COVID-19 guidance for K-12 schools and child care centers was updated on August 29 and protocols have changed since the last school year. In summary, key updates include:

- The removal of student cohorts
- The elimination of test to stay programs
- Limiting quarantine for close contacts of COVID cases

Though these changes are substantial, high transmission rates and local outbreaks may prompt additional measures like temporary quarantine, cohorting of students, limited masking and other measures. In the event of heightened risk to COVID-19, school officials will work with your local health department to determine the best means of controlling risk.

Please be reminded that the best way to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission is to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination and booster, augmented by commonly known techniques like the use of masks and social distancing, if and when appropriate, as well as regular handwashing and hand sanitization. The Rockaway Township Division of Health recommends that every resident six months and older remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination, to ensure low COVID risk and a healthy school year.

Township Holds COVID-19 Clinic

The Rockaway Township Divisions of Health and Recreation collaborated with Zufall Health Center to provide a successful COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Rockaway Township Municipal Building on August 19, 2022. The Township would like to thank Michelle Blanchfield and Zufall Health Center for making this convenient vaccination opportunity possible for our residents.

Free Rabies Shots for our Furry Friends

The Rockaway Township Division of Health will be offering two free rabies clinics for Township cats and dogs this fall. The first clinic will be held from 9:00am – 12:00pm on Saturday, November 5, and the second will be provided from 9:00am – 12:00pm on Saturday, December 3. The clinics will take place at the Rockaway Township Municipal Garage, located at 540 Green Pond Road. Dogs in attendance at the clinic must be leashed and cats must be in carriers.

Residents can save time at the clinics by calling the Division of Health in advance. Staff will begin completing a rabies certificate over the phone, which will make your visit to the clinics shorter. For more information or to begin this process, please contact the Division of Health at 973-983-2848. Please help protect the community by vaccinating your dogs and cats!



The multi-purpose turf field at the Peterson Field athletic complex is taking shape: Progress from June 10 to September 1.

2022 Annual Senior Picnic: Food, Fun and Fellowship

The Annual Senior Picnic was held at the Craigmear Recreation Complex on September 8. The weather was delightful, and approximately 300 senior residents attended. Many thanks to everyone who helped create another very successful Rockaway Township event! *Upper left and lower right:* Township seniors enjoy live music and conversation while being served lunch and snacks by the Township’s many volunteers. *Upper right:* Council Members Douglas Brookes and Pawel Wojtowicz and Council President Howard Kritz attend the Annual Senior Picnic. *Lower left:* Mayor Joe Jackson recognizes the Township’s seniors, as well as the volunteers who helped make the event possible.



Tax Collector’s Update

Fourth quarter 2022 property taxes are due November 1, 2022. The last day for payment is November 10, 2022. Please contact the Tax Collector’s office if you need to know the amount due.

Residents in need of *Senior Freeze* (property tax reimbursement) assistance may call the State’s hotline at 1-800-882-6597. If you require assistance with New Jersey’s *Homestead Credit* program may call the State’s hotline at 1-888-238-1233.

Residents are reminded that annual sewer *maintenance bills* were mailed in late May and were due in June 2022.

If you have any questions in reference to the above items, please feel free to contact the Tax Collector’s office at 973-983-2822.

Payment Information

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 about how to make a payment, please call the Tax Collector’s office at 973-983-2822.

Animals Around Us: Living Among Bears



Rockaway Township, like a number of area communities, sees periodic evidence of the area's bear population. Whether it is through the consumption of garbage, mild property damage or direct bear sightings in our residential or wooded areas, northern New Jersey bears are habituated and feel somewhat at home around our homes. Bears can be a nuisance and we must remember to be safe and smart to avoid any possible closer contact.

While municipal and State officials have regulatory and procedural limitations in any attempt to disperse or remove bears, there are some things that municipal representatives, State officials and residents can do to minimize the presence of bears. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Black Bear Research Project maintains sole discretion, legally, with regard to bear relocation or termination. Rockaway Township does, however – through its Division of Health and Police Department – perform particular activities in the event of bear sighting or activity. Township officials work closely with the State's Division of Fish and Wildlife in an effort to mitigate any possible bear issues, and the municipality and State exercise a multi-tiered approach in this regard.

In the event the Division of Health is advised of bear activity, the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's Black Bear Research Project is immediately notified. Rockaway Township officials – be it Health, Police or otherwise – have limited authority when responding to such a complaint, and as a rule we must defer to the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Municipal Response to Bear Activity

When municipal officials are advised of bear activity within the Township, there are a few different courses of action,

which are largely dependent on the nature of the bear activity. These actions are detailed as follows:

- When the Division of Health receives a report of bear activity from a Township resident or business, each report is documented on a *Bear Sighting/Incident Report Form* and is faxed to the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's regional office. If Division of Health staff ascertains that the bear activity includes any possible danger to humans or property, the Police Department is notified immediately.
- When the Police Department receives a report of bear activity, an incident number is assigned to the bear sighting and standard information is obtained by staff. If it is determined by the Police Department that there is potential danger to humans, staff members certified in *aversive bear conditioning* respond accordingly and have the ability to ward off a bear by discharge of rubber pellets from a gun.
- Township officials recognize that the bear population is particularly active in this area compared to some other communities, and officials routinely attempt to educate residents regarding issues like garbage storage, feeding of wildlife, safety, etc.
- While Township officials understand that the bear population can create nuisances and may raise periodic concerns from residents, officials are not permitted to remove a bear from one location to another. In fact, State officials – who assume overarching responsibility for the bear population – have very limited ability to remove bears, and this is outlined below.

State Response to Bear Activity

The State of New Jersey has almost exclusive jurisdiction over bear management activities. Following are some of the State's responsibilities in

managing the bear population, as well as steps the State takes when receiving complaints of bear activity:

State policy generally precludes the relocation of bears. The State utilizes specific procedures, entitled *Black Bear Rating and Response Criteria*, when considering relocation or killing of a bear. Bear trapping is practiced on a very limited basis, according to State officials. Bears are only trapped if they are aggressive or if they pose a demonstrated risk directly to humans or other animals. Per State policy, this type of activity is labeled *Category I*.

Category II bear activity includes nuisances such as the presence of bears near homes and other locations where humans or animals reside, as well as bear activity in or around garbage or food. In the event of *Category II* activity, trained police may discharge rubber pellets to condition bears to stay away from such activities. Municipal officials may also survey areas to see if litter isn't being maintained or if food sources are available.

Category III activity would include the observation of a bear conducting normal activities in the wild (i.e., noting a bear in the woods, behaving as bears generally do). State officials advise that under very limited circumstances, the State technically *could* trap a bear – but it would necessarily be released nearby and often will find its way back to its original site of activity.

New Jersey has enhanced its educational efforts, focusing on presence of human food and maintenance of garbage. Township officials are doing their part by providing residents with any available information regarding attractants to bears and other wildlife, and ways to minimize same. Please do your part to minimize bear activity in Rockaway Township!

Update from Engineering, Zoning and Construction

Peterson Multipurpose Turf Field on Schedule

The Engineering Department is pleased to report that the completion of the turf field and adjacent amenities at Peterson Field are progressing nicely. Utilities have been completed, drainage is installed and the synthetic turf surface has been placed.

Residents should watch for the completion of fencing and the installation of sports equipment, including soccer and lacrosse goals, scoreboards and bleachers. Final site elements should be completed in the fall. Please keep an eye out for an upcoming ribbon cutting ceremony, with details to be provided soon.

Infrastructure Improvements

The improvements to Kings Road, with the exception of minor punch list items, have been completed. Through strong municipal collaborations, the roadway improvements – which were partially funded by a NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) grant – included curbing, accessible ramps, driveway aprons, drainage, and final milling and paving. Prior to this work, NJ Natural Gas performed upgrades to their gas line, and the Township Municipal Utilities replaced an aging water main and service connections within the neighborhood. The Rockaway Township Municipal Utilities and Engineering Department wish to thank Kings Road residents for their patience during this project.

In August, Rockaway Township received five bids for the Queens Road Section One Improvements project, which will be partially funded by a NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant. The project limits stretch from the intersection of Queens Road and Fleetwood Drive to the corner of Queens Road and Doreen Court, and work will include curbing, accessible ramps, driveway aprons, drainage and final milling and paving – much like the Kings Road project. The bid for this project should be awarded in September, with construction slated for spring 2023. The Township is presently completing design plans for Queens Road Section Two improvements, which will include Doreen Court, Carla Court and Lois Court cul-de-sacs. Township officials anticipate construction to commence during fall 2023.

Renewable Technologies

The Engineering Department is pleased to advise that additional electronic vehicle (EV) charging stations have been constructed in the area of the AMC Rockaway 16 movie theaters complex and the Macy's Backstage retail store. In other renewable energy news, solar canopies are being installed over the parking areas at the Morristown Medical Center Health Pavilion, located on

Mount Hope Avenue near the Rockaway Townsquare Mall. Additional solar panels are being installed at Cibao Meat Products on Green Pond Road.

New Township Businesses

Poke Café is now open at 321 Mount Hope Avenue (the shopping plaza in the area of the Rockaway Townsquare Mall, near Olive Garden). Buffalo Wild Wings, located nearby at 343 Mount Hope Avenue, has completed renovations activities. The following businesses have successfully secured building permits from Rockaway Township's Construction Department and will soon be open to the public:

- Crumbl Cookies, a national retail cookie chain, will soon open in the Target/Dick's Sporting Goods plaza near the Rockaway Townsquare Mall
- Mezza Grille, offering Mediterranean cuisine, will also open at the Target/Dick's Sporting Goods plaza
- Hickory Farms will open a store within the Township shopping plaza containing a Best Buy store
- Spirit Halloween is opening in the former Sears location at the Rockaway Townsquare Mall
- New Jersey Tattoo will open at 405 Rt. 46, the plaza containing Tony and Vinnie's Italian Bakery and Deli



The Rockaways to Recognize Four Star General on November 12

Rockaway Township and Rockaway Borough, in conjunction with Rockaway Township UNICO and American Legion Post 344, will dedicate a commemorative stone for Four Star General Raymond Odierno. The ceremony will take place at the Park Lake Gazebo in Rockaway Township at 11:00am on Saturday, November 12.

The ceremony will include honor and rifle guard, music and wreath laying. Lunch will be served by Rockaway UNICO at American Legion Post 344, 321 Chestnut Terrace, Rockaway, following the ceremony. Residents are invited to honor General Odierno and all of our brave veterans!

Cooperative Curbside Collection & Snow Removal

Leaf and Brush Collection

Leaves and brush are collected weekly through the end of the year. Items should be placed at the curb by 5:30am on your designated day, which may be found by searching the ReCollect calendar at www.rockawaytownship.org/189/Recycle. Leaves must be placed in biodegradable paper bags or reusable containers labeled 'yard waste' only, no heavier than 50 pounds - neither plastic nor plastic biodegradable bags are accepted. Landscape barrels *may not be used*.

Brush must be placed curbside and bundled/tied in four foot lengths. No stumps or branches over six inches in diameter will be collected, and no dirt, rocks, concrete or garbage may be mixed in with yard waste. *All containers must be labeled*. Yard waste and recycling stickers are available at the Municipal Building, or you may call 973-983-2891. Leave your name, address and request for stickers and they will be mailed to you.

Brush and leaves are also accepted from Rockaway Township residents at the McVeigh Recycling Center. Commercial landscapers, tree services and dump trucks may *not* dump leaves or brush at the recycling center. The McVeigh recycling center is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 7:00am - 5:00pm, and on Saturdays from 7:00am - 3:30pm. Both Township

recycling centers are closed on Sundays,

Inclement Weather/Holiday Collection

Should recycling collection be canceled due to inclement weather, your recyclables will be collected the next *scheduled* pick up day. *There is no make-up day* when a route is canceled due to inclement weather. However, if your collection day falls on a holiday, there is *always* a make-up day. Please refer to the online ReCollect calendar (search by your home address) to see the date of the make-up collection.

Residents are also reminded to assist with snow and ice removal this winter. You may do so by parking off -street until plowing is complete, reporting ice conditions to 973-983-2891, shoveling out fire hydrants to ensure emergency access, and seeking a police report to file a claim regarding damage to your vehicle caused by Township equipment.

Plowing Policies

We are entering the fall months and winter isn't far away. Here are some tips to avoid snow plowing rage!

- Park cars off the street
- Don't shovel driveways out to the street until plowing is complete
- Don't shovel driveway snow onto the street – This is a violation of Township Ordinances and creates a hazard

- Don't shovel sidewalks onto street – this is also a violation of Township Ordinances and creates a hazard
- Per Township Ordinance, residents have 24 hours to remove snow from sidewalks in front of their home
- If you wish to file a claim for damage to your vehicle caused by the use of Township equipment, you must have a police report
- Please help the Fire Department by shoveling out fire hydrants, keeping them free of snow and ice to ensure that rescue personnel can access hydrants in the event of a fire

Avoid towing and impound charges: Township Ordinance 7-6.3(a,b) imposes temporary parking prohibition when snow has fallen and accumulated, at which point an emergency shall be declared until the snow has ceased and the streets have been plowed sufficiently. Any unoccupied vehicles may be towed and impounded at the owner's expense. Please cooperate with plow crews by parking off roads until plowing is complete. This will ensure safe, clean streets.

To report an ice condition, call 973-983-2891. To report a snow or ice related emergency off hours, please contact the Rockaway Township Police Department at 973-625-4000.

Three of the Township's Finest Call it a Career

Rockaway Township congratulates Captain Wade Ryerson, Lieutenant Christopher Tom and Patrolman John Reilly on their recent retirements. Mayor Joe Jackson, Chief Martin McParland, Captain Rob Scherr, and all Township employees and residents thank Captain Ryerson, Lieutenant Tom and Patrolman Reilly for their many years of dedicated service!

