

September Mayor's Message

Summer is almost over! Except for the two-week heatwave, I hope everyone had a few moments to enjoy the company of friends and family. My summer was a bit different, as my oldest son attended boot camp via the U.S. Army. So he experienced camping, hiking and target practice. We used to send him to YMCA summer camp, but I guess that got boring. I only had a few days at the Shore, no hiking or sleeping under the stars. And as my youngest son and his cousin own their own farm, we had no kids around...different indeed! Labor Day the family will be back together, so I look forward to that. And I am super proud of my son, and the sons and daughters of our residents who have chosen to serve their country and communities.

The Township recently transformed Roosevelt Park. It now has a dock to fish from and areas to sit and read or just take a nice walk to clear your head. As the summer temperatures would not allow us to finish the project, the landscaping will be completed this fall. This got me thinking...I would like to start a garden club! How nice would it be to have rose bushes and other plantings to complement the work that is being completed? There are other areas that could be worked on as well, like the end of East Franklin. If not I, one of our dedicated Committee members could run the club. A few volunteers would make all the difference. If you want to join or discuss, please leave a message for me at 609-877-2050, or even better attend a Township Committee meeting to give us your input.

The biggest community success this summer had to have been the Summer Concert Series held at the Red Dragon Canoe Club / Shipman Mansion. I must again give a hand up to John French and Norma Carter who, with their team of endless volunteers, worked to make the events amazing. There were resident volunteers like Phil Aronson cooking hamburgers and Sally Perkins running the concession table. So many folks to thank! We again offered a diverse musical lineup: classic rock, country, reggae, blues, Latin jazz. At our last concert I did a headcount of over two hundred and fifty people. Add up all those shows, and we had thousands of folks attend our concerts this year! Every year the concert series grows. I can't wait to see what we accomplish next year.

Regarding development in the community, the Exeter Warehouse is just about complete. Eagles Chase housing development is moving right along. The Gym at the former Pathmark is getting closer to being built. The old Getty gas station on the same location is now gone. The Curaleaf store is doing plenty of business, from which the town gets 2% of the earnings from adult use sales. The State has given McDonald's the approvals they need to build the new location. I'll have to see if the hamburgers will be better cooked on the new stove or the old ones? Soon a new self-storage will be built on Rt. 130. The township has very few developable spaces left. We, as a Committee, have only given one tax abatement, which was for the Pathmark site. All the new development and building sites are taxed at the normal rate. All of this means we will not have a significant rise in taxes, and we can move ahead with projects that affect the lives of all or our residents, like the new police station.

Have a great autumn!

Mayor William Belgard III