

Bridgewater News

FALL 2009 • PUBLISHED BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER

Mayor

Patricia Flannery

Township Council

Patrick Scaglione *President*

Bob Albano

Michael Hsing

Matthew Moench

Howard Norgalis

We're on the web!
www.bridgewaternj.gov

YOUTH RECREATION CENTERS NOW OPEN

Youth recreation centers are now open on Friday evenings from 5:30-8:00 at Bradley Gardens School and on Sunday afternoons from 2:30-5:00 at Adamsville School. All Bridgewater-Raritan students **grades 7-12** are invited to attend **free of charge**. These drop-in centers feature an open gym for **basketball** and **other games** and an **arts and crafts program** featuring popular activities like friendship bracelets and lanyard animals (key chains). **Pizza and soda** are served to all children who attend. Staffing is provided by the Bridgewater Recreation Department and Family and Community Services of Somerset County. If you have any questions, call Bill Veliky at (908) 725-6300 ext. 5080 or email Bill at grants@bridgewaternj.gov. (Please note that the Bradley Gardens Center will be closed on Oct. 16 and 30, Nov. 6 and 27, and Dec. 4 and 25 due to holidays and PTO events. That center will be open weekly after Jan. 1.)

Mayor's Message

This fall Bridgewater Township voters will be faced with an important decision. On the ballot for November is a question seeking to extend the Open Space tax for an additional five years at 1 cent per year.

In 1999, the voters passed a referendum to establish a dedicated tax to purchase properties for open space and recreation. This fund called for an annual tax of 4 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value to be placed in a trust fund for the purpose of acquiring open space properties within the Township. A home assessed at the Township average of \$457,000 in 2009 paid \$182 for the 4 cent dedicated tax for open space preservation. The reduced amount of 1 cent annually proposed in this November's election would equate to \$46 per year for that same home.

An Open Space Advisory Board was created to review, prioritize and make recommendations on various parcels throughout the municipality that would be suitable for open space purchases. To date the Township has acquired 28 parcels totaling over 293 acres.

The benefits of having a dedicated tax for open space purchases is that we are able to preserve open space, control development, and create opportunities for active and passive recreation, and we become eligible for matching County and State open space funds. These matching funds are used to leverage the value of our tax dollars and greatly increase the amount of land we are able to acquire. During this time frame we have received \$3,350,000 in Green Acres matching funds that have gone towards the purchase of open space properties.

By continuing our dedicated open space tax at the reduced amount of 1 cent per thousand of assessed property value, we will be able to preserve additional properties for open space, have additional funds to implement the active and passive uses of our properties, and continue receiving matching County and State funds, while reducing our tax burden.

On October 7, the draft Township Open Space and Recreation Master Plan element was presented at a meeting seeking public input. The consultant gave a presentation of several concept ideas for improvements to our active and passive recreational opportunities. If you would like to provide your input on these recommendations please visit our website www.bridgewaternj.gov. Comments can be entered for each conceptual design. The Plan is intended to serve as a guide for projects that may be undertaken within the next ten years. The final plan will be presented to the Planning Board towards the end of 2009 for their adoption.

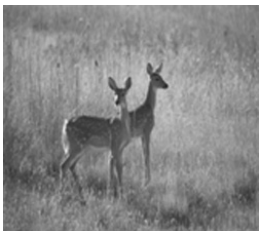
The municipal complex continues to progress nicely. Recently, a presentation was given by Veronica Finlay, Chair of the Monument Committee, detailing the work the committee has done to date. If you are interested in viewing this presentation, please find it under the news section of the Township website. The committee is comprised of interested residents from all backgrounds who have put forth a comprehensive review of what will be depicted on the monument to summarize Bridgewater's history. The monument will serve as an integral part of the overall complex - as an area marking Bridgewater's history and a place for gathering and reflection. I would like to thank Veronica and the committee members for their countless hours volunteering for this effort.

(continued on next page)

Mayor's Message (continued)

On September 3, the Chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) presented to the Planning Board the EDAC recommendations for zoning changes to enhance economic vitality along the Route 22 corridor. These changes will be reviewed and considered by the Planning Board and public input will be sought. Once approved, the changes will be given to the Council for incorporation into the Township's Zoning Plan and the associated land use ordinances will be amended. I would like to thank John Schmitt and the EDAC members for their hard work on this proposal. If you would like to view the presentation, please visit the website under news items.

I continue to work with fellow mayors to challenge the COAH rules that have unfairly burdened a township like ours that has provided many affordable housing opportunities during the past decade. The current rules and methodology are arbitrary and have the possibility to negatively impact Bridgewater well into the next decade. Over the summer, I have participated in countless meetings and conference calls to formulate a counter response that could change the way COAH determines how affordable housing growth is allocated. This has been an incredibly bureaucratic process but I am heartened by the bipartisan groundswell of communities that oppose the current rules. By working together, I hope we are able to create an effective counter proposal to the current rules that is both fair and reasonable to the many towns that have been affected by COAH edicts.



With school back in session and the active season for deer approaching, it is timely that we all remember to drive extra cau-

tiously when traveling throughout the Township. Please leave extra time to reach your destination whenever possible and be alert for animals that may wander into the roadway, particularly at dusk.

STAY HEALTHY DURING FLU SEASON

The seasonal flu is contagious and can cause mild to severe illness. Every year in the United States, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized for flu related complications. Protect yourself and others by:

- **maintaining a healthy life-style** through rest, diet, exercise and relaxation.
- **washing your hands frequently** with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- **using an alcohol-based hand cleaner** if soap and water is not available.
- **avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.** Germs spread this way.
- **covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue,** or cough and sneeze into your elbow. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.
- **keeping frequently touched common surfaces clean,** such as telephones and doorknobs.
- **not spreading the flu! If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home.** Symptoms of flu include fever, chills, *and* cough or sore throat. Stay home at least 24 hours after you are free of fever.
- **getting vaccinated against seasonal flu.** If you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 (swine) flu complications, you should receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available.

THANKFUL CONTRIBUTION

Have you ever heard the expression "Water, water everywhere but none to drink?" Well that certainly does not apply to the Bridgewater municipal facilities, where Daryl Flederbach has been providing free spring water for Township employees and visitors for over ten years. Daryl is a long time resident of the Township (born and raised) and believes in giving back to the community. As owner of Ace's Premium Spring Water, Daryl feels fortunate that he is able to do something that will benefit so many people. "Everyone in the community should pitch in a little bit," Daryl stated. He certainly backs that statement up by his actions. His water donations started with the public works department, where Daryl knew several employees. Then after 9/11, he began delivering water to the police department, and soon after, he added the municipal building to his list of free deliveries. In addition to his water contributions, which total about 150 gallons per month, Daryl donates annually to various causes around town and served for five years on the Bradley Gardens Volunteer Rescue Squad.

From all the appreciative employees and visitors in the municipal building and from residents around town, a heartfelt THANK YOU to Daryl for all his efforts.

TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS

With summer long gone and school in full swing, the Bridgewater Traffic Safety Bureau offers the following advice regarding the increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic near and away from school zones. According to New Jersey Motor Vehicle and Traffic Regulations drivers must yield the right of way to any pedestrian crossing the road in an intersection, whether or not a crosswalk is marked. Pedestrians are required by regulation to cross roadways within a crosswalk, or if no crosswalk, directly across the street rather than at an angle. Unless a pedestrian is in a marked crosswalk or an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection, they must yield the right-of-way to all motor vehicles in the roadway.



There are many other rules and regulations that govern the operation of a motor vehicle. The following are some reminders:

1. Maintain a safe distance between you and the other drivers.
2. Obey the posted speed limit.
3. No hand held cell phone or text messaging. Hands-free devices are allowed.
4. Look and signal before initiating lane changes and turns.
5. Wear your seatbelt. **It is the law!**
6. Anytime vehicle wipers are used in inclement weather, headlights must be on.
7. Make sure that you have all your current driving credentials (license, registration and insurance card).

TAX DATES REMINDERS

Important dates for tax collection are as follows:

Property tax due dates	Sewer Due Dates
Nov. 1, 2009	April 1, 2010
Feb 1, 2010	June 1, 2010
May 1, 2010	September 1, 2010
Aug 1, 2010	

Tax Sale Date: October 22, 2009

Also, the 2008 Homestead Rebate & Property Tax Reimbursement (Senior Freeze) deadline has been extended to November 2, 2009.



SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER HAPPENINGS

The fun is continuing this fall at the Bridgewater Senior Citizen Center, located at 455 Somerville Road in Bridgewater. The 2nd Annual Old Fashioned Hoedown will be held on November 6 from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. featuring square dancing with a professional caller. New this fall is a senior nutrition program presented by a certified dietician and includes actual cooking demonstrations. This program is held every other Thursday (starting October 8) beginning at 11:30 a.m. For more information about these or other ongoing programs, call the Senior Citizen Center at 908-725-8020, or visit the Bridgewater website at www.bridgewaternj.gov and click on Government, Human Services, Senior Citizen Services. A complete calendar of events is available on the website.

HELP US HELP YOU

Care of Drainage Ditches and Swales

Ditches and swales on or adjacent to private properties serve the important purpose of directing storm water away from habitable areas. They work best when unobstructed. The placing of brush, grass clippings, fill, and other materials diminishes the capacity of the swale or ditch to carry storm water. Please dispose of yard debris well away from the swales or ditches for everyone's protection.

Capital Budget Preparation

The Department of Municipal Services is gathering and analyzing information to be used in recommending a capital budget for 2010. In particular, road and drainage concerns are being prioritized, taking present condition and volume of use into account. Sidewalk repairs and new construction are also being studied. Since there is always a greater need for projects than there are funds available, a ranking system is used grading each potential project against all others in the Township. Residents are encouraged to make recommendations to the Engineering Division by email at rfricano@bridgewaternj.gov.

E-NEWS

In another of Bridgewater's Green Initiatives and to reduce costs, the Township is moving towards eliminating paper copies of this newsletter. If you want to receive future copies of this newsletter or other relevant news items by email, please forward your name, address, and email address to newsletter@bridgewaternj.gov. Once the Township receives 2000 email addresses, mailing of the newsletter will stop. We currently have 1,182 addresses.



Postal Customer

Bridgewater News

RECREATION NEWS

Bridgewater Recreation Department Seeking Volunteers

The Bridgewater Recreation Department is currently seeking volunteer assistants to shadow and assist people with disabilities in our various sport programs and camps. Volunteers will receive inclusion training, which includes disability awareness and sensitivity training. As a volunteer assistant you will play an essential role in helping participants be successful in programs and sports with their peers while having fun.

Interested in Swim Lessons through the Somerset Valley YMCA?

Sign up for Pre-School and/or Youth Swim Lessons sponsored by Bridgewater Recreation and held at the Somerset Valley YMCA (Garretson Road). To register for Winter Session & Mid-Winter Session classes please contact the YMCA at (908) 526-0688 or visit them in person at the YMCA.

Fall-Winter Registration

We are currently registering for Fall-Winter 2009-10 Programs. You can review all programs and registration forms on our website www.bridgewaternj.gov. Spring-Summer registration will begin in late February/early March. The Spring-Summer Bulletin will go out to all children currently attending Bridgewater-Raritan schools and will be available on our website.

You may contact the Recreation Department at 908-725-6300 ext. 5300 or at recreation@bridgewaternj.gov.

LEAF BAGS TO BE AVAILABLE OCTOBER 19

Leaf bags will be available for pick-up by residents beginning Monday, October 19 between 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the temporary Public Works facility located at 1450 Route 22 East. Township regulations require that leaves be bagged if they are to be picked up by the Township. It is not necessary to call Public Works to pick up your bags. The bags will be picked up starting the week of November 2nd and will continue to be picked up until March 15. Only leaves should be placed in the bags. Grass clippings, brush and other materials will not be picked up. The yard waste site for collection of these materials will remain open until January 15, 2010, and will reopen on March 15, 2010. If you have any questions, please call Public Works at 732-469-0555 ext. 221 or ext. 224 between 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

