

Community Update
July 14, 2020

- Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight. I hope everyone enjoyed their Fourth of July Holiday, despite the continuing need for social distancing.
- I would like to start on a happy note by congratulating the Roxbury High School Class of 2020 and the School District for three very nice graduation ceremonies that were held on Wednesday, July 8, at the Horseshoe Lake Band Shell. The three ceremonies were necessary to keep the size of the audience down for social distancing.
- By all accounts, the ceremonies went off smoothly – although a little rain slightly delayed the third session. Everyone seemed pleased. The township was happy to assist in helping the graduates and their families feel a little more normal.
- Now for our Covide-19 update.
- Since our last update on June 23, we received reports of 17 new cases of the virus in Roxbury. As of today, we have 303 reported cases. While the number of confirmed cases has dramatically slowed, we did see a slight uptick since our last report – a reminder that Covid-19 is not yet through with Roxbury.
- I urge everyone to continue to practice safe social distancing by wearing masks and staying six feet apart. Not only is that the right thing to do, it is now required by the governor. In addition to requiring masks be worn indoors, such as in retail stores, the governor has now

mandated that masks be worn outside in public spaces when staying six feet apart is not possible.

- This new mandate is in direct response to the Covid-19 surge being experienced in many states around the country.
- What does that mean for us? We ask that residents be considerate to others and practice social distancing in our parks and on our trails. We have received several reports that people are not keeping a safe distance when using our recreational facilities and are not wearing masks.
- Please remember that you wear a mask and practice social distancing to protect your fellow residents and it is very inconsiderate and potentially dangerous to others when you do not follow those rules.
- Frankly, it is not much to ask, and we simply do not understand why anyone would object.
- Township Manager John Shepherd has directed that new signs be put up in our recreational facilities reminding everyone to practice social distancing and other recommended practices.
- This is particularly important now because since the last update, we opened Horseshoe Lake Beach to the public – for people who purchase season passes -- on June 27. I am pleased to report that Township Manager John Shepherd tells me all is going well at the beach and for the most part, beach goers are practicing social distancing. We want to thank everyone for their cooperation while visiting the beach.
- We have been monitoring beach attendance, as we said we would, and staff has determined, based on their review, that we can offer a few day passes each day. Ten day passes will be available on days where

registration is otherwise not full. The passes will be available at the door on a first-come-first-served basis. The cost will be \$5 for a resident and \$10 for out of town guests.

- I would like to thank Councilman Tom Carey, who was the chief advocate for offering daily passes.
- Also, on June 27, our recreation fields throughout the township were open for low-risk sports practices. And, on July 6, those fields became available for games and competitions for low-risk sports.
- We also opened our playgrounds throughout the town on July 3. Once again, we urge residents to please practice social distancing and good hygiene while visiting the playgrounds. Be courteous of other residents and their children so overcrowding does not occur. As we have said in the past, if social distancing is not being followed, we reserve the right to reverse these openings.
- That said, I was personally incredibly happy to see children on our fields, running around and playing on our playgrounds. It made me feel things are finally beginning to return to normal.
- As we said in our last update, Township buildings were re-opened on July 1 to the public. Appointments are required, and people entering the building must wear masks. Another sure sign that things are improving.
- We held primary elections on July 7. Because of COVID-19, the only polling place in Roxbury was Town Hall. Township Clerk Amy Rhead reports that a steady stream of voters visited Town Hall to cast their ballots. We wish to thank all the poll workers, and especially Ms. Rhead and her staff, who made sure that in Roxbury, residents experienced a problem-free voting experience during a very challenging time. I would

also like to thank all the voters who participated in the primary either by mail-in ballot or in person.

- In another positive development, the Roxbury Public Library is now operating curbside pickup and drop off. Please visit their website to get details and to see the vast amount of content and activities they are providing to our community.
- The library also resumed its passport service on July 7.
- Last night, the Library held the first of its summer concert series in the Gazebo on the front lawn. Library Director Radwa Ali reports that about 60 people attended and that everyone had a great time and maintained appropriate social distancing. Nice to hear.
- Also since our last update, several more restaurants have applied for and received permission to serve customers outdoors – and in some cases serve adult drinks outdoors. They include:
 1. Outback Steakhouse 1070 Route 46 Ledgewood
 2. Pop's Bagels 131 Lakeside Boulevard Landing
- Eating alfresco in Roxbury almost feels like dining at a bistro in Paris – almost. We urge residents to continue to patronage our local businesses, which need your support to survive these extremely difficult times.
- As you may recall, the organizations Table of Hope and Habitat for Humanity, along with the township, sponsored a food pantry in Roxbury on April 28 and we served nearly 100 families at Horseshoe Lake.
- On Wednesday, July 8, Table of Hope and Habitat, held another food give-away in Habitat's ReStore parking lot in Randolph. They report

that 265 families were served. Our DPW Department assisted. Thanks to Rick Blood and his team for their help.

- This is just another sign that we are not out of the woods yet and families are still feeling the devastating effects of the virus and the quarantine shutdown.
- With that, we are planning another food give-away in Roxbury at Horse Shoe Lake. We will again be working with Table of Hope and Habitat and have confirmed Wednesday, August 12, for this important event. We will publicize more details soon.
- Meanwhile, our own Social Services Department, which has operated throughout the pandemic, has continued to meet the needs of our community.
- They are pleased to report that they are once again open on Mondays. Their hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are 8 a.m. to noon. Because of the need for social distancing, however, their door will remain locked and they ask that people wait outside.
- The Roxbury community has really responded to the food needs of Social Services. Right now, they could use donations of apple juice, white rice, canned tomatoes, tuna in oil, canned fruit, liquid dish detergent, and any-and-all paper products. As always, Social Services can always use \$10 gift cards for Shop Rite, WalMart, and local gas stations.
- I wish to thank the Roxbury community for consistently answering the call to help people with much needed donated food for those who are struggling during these difficult times.

- Now, I must turn to a very sad and tragic incident which took place on Lake Hopatcong recently. Curt Mulch, who worked with the Lake Hopatcong Commission for about a dozen years, was killed on Wednesday, June 24, when the weed harvester boat he was operating capsized in the Crescent Cove section on the southwestern side of the Lake.
- Mr. Mulch, a long-time Roxbury resident who lived in Landing, was removing weeds when his harvester overturned at about 10:30 a.m., according to state police. Police responded and searched the lake for hours. The incident is under investigation. Mr. Mulch was 68 years old and was one of the Commission's most experienced boat operators. He was also well-known in town and was a friend to many, including Councilman Mark Crowley and his wife Andi.
- The Township Council wishes to express its sincere condolences to his family. I ask that you please join me in a moment of silence for Mr. Mulch.
- Thank you. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.
- Finally, let me fill you in on something very nice that also happened in Roxbury recently and was posted on Facebook. Apparently, someone was attempting to get into the drive-through line at the Taco Bell during the evening dinner rush.
- After trying unsuccessfully several times, another customer took pity on the driver and let them jump ahead of them in the line of cars.
- When the person who let the driver into the line got up to pay for their order, they learned it had been taken care of by the person who they let into the line.

- It was a small gesture, for sure. But I cannot think of a better example of the type of kindness and consideration being practiced around town. Thanks to that anonymous person who paid this act of kindness forward and thanks to the driver who was considerate enough to let a stranger get into that line. Now, on to our meeting.