

Community Update
August 11, 2020

- Thank you for joining us tonight. We hope everyone is well and safe. The past two weeks have been particularly challenging – to say the least. In addition to Covid-19 and social distancing, we also faced fires, accidents, and the worst tropical storm since Sandy, at least according to JCP&L. More about that later.

Covid-19

- Let's start with the Covid-19 update. As of today, we have 317 confirmed cases of the virus in Roxbury. That is up from 315 on July 28, the last time we reported. And that's great news because the rate of increase has once again significantly slowed. Also, we have begun posting our locally verified confirmed cases on our website rather than the county's numbers, which were slightly out of date.
- The slow down also means that our community continues to do a pretty good job wearing masks and social distancing. Nevertheless, I am still amazed at how many people I see around town without a mask or wearing a mask below their nose. I do not understand why anyone would oppose wearing a mask to help protect their neighbors. Not wearing a mask in public is an act of extreme selfishness and people who do not wear a mask should be ashamed.
- Local restaurants and other businesses continue to operate under difficult circumstances. It is still good to see people outside, going to one of our parks, ball fields, trails, walkways, and playgrounds.

- We ask that everyone continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, and stay safe. We also want to thank everyone for the tremendous cooperation residents have shown during the pandemic.

Power Outage

- Turning to the tropical storm that hit our area on Tuesday. In the aftermath of the wind and rain, more than 7,000 Roxbury residents were left without power. On Aug. 8 – four days after the storm – we still had more than 1,500 customers without power in Roxbury.
- By 5:45 p.m. on Saturday, the state’s three largest power companies were reporting more than 81,000 remaining outages; about 50,00 were for JCP&L.
- As I said, JCP&L claims this storm was nearly as bad as superstorm Sandy. That is one of the reasons they say it took more than five days to restore power to everyone in our community. Also, please note, it is possible that for a few residents, restoring power took even longer.
- Five days to restore power is unacceptable by any standard. Far too many people were left with no electricity for far too long.
- Township staff, who did a commendable job managing through this crisis, did what they could to clear roads quickly, but were often delayed waiting for JCP&L to turn off live wires.
- We have nothing but respect for the service people from here and out of state who worked tirelessly to restore power. They should be commended.
- However, at times it appeared the power company’s leaders were overwhelmed and confused by the storm damage. Their response was slow, inadequate, and uncoordinated.

- During daily meetings with area mayors over the past week with JCP&L executives, the company heard three consistent messages:
 - Slow to respond – utility trucks from other areas were not in our area in the first 24 hours after the storm. Why weren't utility trucks staged in our area sooner?
 - Communication with municipalities and residents from JCP&L often contained old and inaccurate information, or there was no communication at all.
 - Poor condition of the infrastructure – things like polls, wires, substations, etc., are said to be old and poorly maintained. This also included calls for more tree removal a trimming.
- Residents who have suffered through these power outages – especially those who are dependent on wells and septic systems -- are rightly angry and frustrated with JCP&L, which does not appear to have learned anything from recent past storms.

Resolution to Investigate JCP&L

- There are a number municipalities and people around the state who are calling for the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU), which regulates JCP&L, to conduct an investigation and public hearings to find out why JCP&L 's storm response is consistently slow and inadequate.
- I would ask this Council to consider a resolution calling for such an investigation.

Acts of Kindness

- That said, I need to take a minute to shine a light on the dozens of acts of kindness we heard about during the power outage. People sharing

generators, running water hoses between houses, opening charging stations (thank you Roxbury Library), sharing freezers, and food with those who were in the dark. Neighbors checking on neighbors. A GoFundMe page for the victims of a recent fire has already raised 20,000 -- \$10,000 more than was originally requested. These are just more example of how the residents of Roxbury take care of each other.

- I also want to thank Sen. Bucco and Assemblywoman Aura Dunn for lending their voices to our calls for assistances. Thanks also to Township Manager John Shepherd, who was out flagging down utility trucks at one point, Chief Palanchi and our police, DPW director Rick Blood and our work crews, and our first responders – fire, rescue, and especially Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Bob Hackett – for the important role they are played during the outage -- and every day.
- I should point out that in addition to the power outage, our first responders were also called on to several serious traffic accidents and two significant fires. Thankfully, no deaths or serious injuries.
- The township is very grateful for the dedication of the men and women who respond to our emergencies.

Storm Debris

- The Township began collecting storm debris yesterday. Instructions to have your debris removed are on the township's website.

ISAIAS STORM DEBRIS CLEAN UP

BEGINNING MONDAY, AUGUST 10 THE ROAD DEPARTMENT WILL BEGIN CHIPPING STORM DEBRIS THROUGHOUT THE TOWN. THE TOWN WILL CONDUCT ONE SWEEP TO REMOVE DEBRIS.

TO ENSURE THAT DEBRIS IS COLLECTED IN THE MOST EFFICIENT, SAFE, AND TIMELY MANNER WE RECOMMEND YOU FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE GUIDLEINES:

LARGE PIECES OF DEBRIS: (less than 8" in diameter)

- SHOULD BE PLACED WITH THE CUT END OF THE DEBRIS FACING THE ROAD.
- PLACE THE DEBRIS AT THE CURB (AS CLOSE TO THE STREET AS POSSIBLE).

SMALLER PIECES OF DEBRIS:

- IF YOU HAVE SMALLER QUANTITIES OF BRUSH, PLEASE PREPARE THE MATERIAL AS REQUIRED FOR WEEKLY COLLECTION FROM OUR HAULER.
- (BRUSH *MUST BE NO LONGER THAN 4 FT. IN LENGTH, NO MORE THAN 6" IN DIAMETER AND MUST BE BUNDLED AND TIED OR PLACED IN AN OPEN CONTAINER FOR CURBSIDE COLLECTION*).
- VEGETATIVE WASTE THAT IS COLLECTED IN OPEN CONTAINERS FOR WEEKLY COLLECTION CAN NOT BE HIGHER THAN 2 FT. FROM THE TOP OF THE CAN.

OUR CREWS ARE HARD AT WORK.
PLEASE BE PATIENT AS THEY TACKLE THE LARGE AMOUNT OF CLEAN UP THAT IS REQUIRED.

- And, Roxbury's recycling Center on Dell Ave. has resumed original weekend hours – Sat. and Sun. 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Drive-In

- Just a quick word about our Drive-in Movie Night, which is completely sold out. It's this Friday, August 14. The rain date is Saturday, August 15th.
- Once again, the movie will be Frozen II and will begin at 8:30 p.m.
- I wish to thank our sponsors once again:
 - William C. Diamond Plumbing
 - Tammy Abrusci, Re/Max Heritage Properties
 - Gary Ribe Remax American Dream
 - A Brilliant Solution Power Washing
 - Mt. Freedom Printing
 - PJ's Auto Body
 - Nisivoccia LLP Accounting & Consulting

- Valley Pharmacy & Surgical Supply
 - The Roxbury Diner
 - Alford Financial Group
 - Luigi's Pizza
 - Legend's Car Wash
 - Fullerton Ground Maintenance
 - Equity Home Mortgages
 - Tim Smith & Family
- Because of their generosity and commitment to the community, we were able to not charge for Drive-In Movie Night.
 - Instead each car that registered made a \$10 donation to the Roxbury Social Services Department. We expect to donate \$1,500 to Social Services, so all proceeds will go to help families that are in need.
 - Please remember that we will be practicing social distancing and following guidelines for wearing masks. Movie goers will not be allowed to get out of their cars during the movie other than to use the portable bathrooms.

Food Distribution

- Next, a reminder that the Township in partnership with Table of Hope and Habitat for Humanity, are will hold their second Mobile Food Giveaway tomorrow, Wednesday, Aug. 12. It will be held at Horseshoe Lake on Wednesday, August 12 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon.
- The food giveaway features groceries, fresh produce, dairy, and canned goods. We had a good turnout at our last event.

Rockaway Officer

- Finally, on a sad note, we lost a Roxbury resident recently. His name is Tony Eresman. He served his country as a U.S. Marine and he served his community as a police officer in Rockaway Township. I wish to express condolences to his family on behalf of the Mayor and Township Council.
- Please join me in a moment of silence.
- Thank you. Back to our agenda.