

Community Update
11/10

- Good evening and welcome to tonight's Council meeting. We hope everyone remains well and safe.

VOTING

- I would like to start tonight by thanking everyone in Roxbury who took the time to vote in Tuesday's elections. I know that not everyone got what they wanted, and in few cases, we are still waiting for the results of several local elections. We live during difficult times.
- Whether your candidate won or lost, I think it is important to note that more Americans voted in this election than ever before. That is what our country is about – government by and for the people, and I again thank you for participating by casting your ballot.

COVID

- As I speak to you tonight, COVID-19 continues to infect our residents at a disturbing rate. It is clear we are going through a second wave of the disease in Roxbury, which is troubling.
- Since our last Council meeting on October 27, the number of confirmed COVID cases in town has again jumped from 428 to 485 – a disturbing 57 news cases.
- This makes the third Council meeting in a row where confirmed COVID cases has risen at an unacceptable pace – a rate that we have not seen since the early days of the pandemic.
- Yesterday, because of the rising number of COVID cases in the state, Gov. Murphy announced that restaurants and casinos must close indoor dining

everyday by 10 p.m. and indoor bar seating will be banned at all hours, starting Thursday, Nov. 12.

- Outdoor dining, takeout, and delivery services can still continue past 10 p.m. and the governor said restaurants can place tables closer than six feet apart if they are separated by barriers, and individual fully-enclosed dining bubbles may be set-up for outside use. Details are expected soon on the governor's website.
- The governor also scaled back indoor Youth Sports. Starting this Thursday, all interstate games, and tournaments for indoor youth sports – up to and including high school – are prohibited. Details on these restrictions are also expected soon on the governor's website.

County Testing Plan

- In Morris County, officials have been working towards the development and implementation of a County-Wide COVID-19 Testing Plan, using CARES money that was recently released by the state.
- Morris County's full testing plan will include both In-home and community centered testing. The in-home component of the Testing Plan is anticipated to become available toward the end of next week.
- More information on testing can also be found on the Roxbury Township website.
- All of this makes it clear that we must all recommit ourselves to practicing social distancing, washing our hands, and wearing masks both inside and outside, especially when social distancing is not possible.

- With the holidays approaching, I know this is not what you want to hear. It is certainly not what any of us was expecting these many months after the first COVID wave hit our community.
- We had our share of confirmed cases during the first wave and tragically, we also lost some lives, but Roxbury came through the first wave because it was strong and we all practiced social distancing, washed our hands, and wore masks to protect our neighbors.
- We need that kind of commitment again. With everyone's cooperation, I am confident Roxbury's strength and determination will get it through this second wave.
- I would like to conclude this update by once again asking that you keep the residents and the brave health care workers at Merry Heart in your thoughts and prayers.

Road Paving

- Now, making a sharp pivot to something a little more positive. I would like to bring you up to date on the Township's road resurfacing efforts. This year, we resurfaced 8.42 miles of road at a total cost of \$1.3million.
- 2.1 miles of that total were the result of gas main replacements or new installations.
- The areas of the Township resurfaced included:
 - Conkling and Mooney roads in Ledgewood.
 - Orben Drive in Landing.
 - Several roads throughout Kenvil due to gas main replacement.
 - A mile of Eyland Ave (NJDOT grant); and
 - Portions of Kings Hwy (CDBG Grant).

- In 2021, 10 miles of roads are slated to be paved including 5 miles in Landing due to new gas main installations.
- We ask that if residents intend to connect to natural gas they should do so before the roads in Landing are paved in the Fall of 2021. Please note that this paving does not include those roads where gas is being currently installed. Those roads will be paved sometime in 2022.
- Also, none of this paving and its costs includes the work on Route 10 to create a left turn lane onto Mary Louise and other road improvements for the new shopping center. The developers assumed all costs for that work.
- So, to put this in perspective, between 2010-2018 the average annual road paving was 3.5 miles per year. In 2019, 6.9 miles were paved and in 2020, 8.42 were paved.
- Much of the accelerated paving schedule was made possible after 2019 due to nearly \$1 million dollars a year made available because of our efforts to be debt free. We are no longer paying annual debt service of approximately \$1 million.
- I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Township Council to thank Township Manager John Shepherd, Public Works Director Rick Blood, and our dedicated public works employees for the outstanding job they did repairing and replacing our roads. Remember that much of the work we just discussed was accomplished during the pandemic.
- It serves as a reminder that in Roxbury, township staff kept our township services running with little to no interruption and they deserve our thanks for a job well done.

Kiwanis

- Finally, I had the pleasure over the past few days to talk to Cain Pope – a young Roxbury resident who has begun to reestablish a Kiwanis Club in Roxbury.
- Cain, who is 28, manages the Fuddruckers Restaurant on Route 10. He told me about his plans, and I was impressed by his enthusiasm and determination to do something to help the community. In my opinion, he is well on his way to accomplish his goal. No matter where you turn in Roxbury, there are young people like Cain trying to make a difference in the community.
- We are truly blessed.
- On behalf of the Council, I want to thank all of you for joining us tonight. Please stay well and safe. Now back to our agenda.