

Community Update

Dec. 15, 2020

- Good evening and welcome to tonight's meeting. On behalf of the Council and Township staff, we wish everyone a Happy Hanukkah, a Merry Christmas, and a very safe and restful Holiday Season.
- I know we are all anxious to usher 2020 out. To say the least, it has been an extremely challenging year. But Roxbury has met those challenges with strength and an unprecedented outpouring of help and support for each other.
- Nevertheless, I must report again that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Roxbury has continued its surge, increasing by 180 new cases since our last Township Council meeting on Dec. 1 – from 726 to 906.
- News this week that a vaccine is finally begun to be distributed was certainly welcome. It appears we are beginning to see the light and the end of the tunnel. But we also heard that tunnel is still pretty long.
- Federal, state, county and local health care officials continue to urge that people practice social distancing, wear masks, frequently wash their hands, and avoid large gatherings.
- We are all tired of taking these precautions – especially as we enter the Holiday Season when families traditionally gather together. We urge you, however, to heed the warnings of health care officials. We have come too far to let down our guard now.
- Let me turn now to a couple of meetings that were held since we last reported.

Verizon

- During the past few weeks, Councilwoman Jaki Albrecht, Deputy Mayor Fred Hall, and I, along with Township, Manager John Shepherd met with representatives of Verizon in an effort to convince them to expand their service in Roxbury.
- While the Verizon representatives did not offer any immediate solutions – which was particularly frustrating -- they did offer to take a close look at how they might provide additional internet coverage in town. They promised to get back to us with some ideas.
- Tonight, we will be considering a resolution to press Verizon to make those improvements, Including:
 - That Verizon determine the feasibility of providing FIOS cable television and internet service to unserved areas of Roxbury Township.
 - That Verizon provide a realistic timeframe for when FIOS cable television and internet service is expected to be extended in Roxbury Township and also provide the limits of the extension.
- In addition, Roxbury Township committed to assisting and streamlining any municipal approvals and permits that might be required for the expansion of FIOS cable television and internet service.

JCP&L

- Councilwoman Jaki Albrecht, Councilman Crowley, John Shepherd, and I also recently met with representative from JCP&L We asked for the meeting in light of frequent power outages around town, particularly in Ledgewood.

- I am sorry to report that the JCP&L representatives offered little information of any use, and they seemed surprised and uninformed about recent outages in Roxbury.
- We asked them to provide us with a report on the condition of the wires, polls and other infrastructure in the Ledgewood area to see if they can address equipment problems before they cause future outages.
- The JCP&L representatives promised to conduct such a review and to report back. We have asked the Township Manager to continue to follow-up.
- While both Verizon and JCP&L offered no real solution – I wish I could report something more concrete -- we believe we have established channels of communication that may help us in the future. We will keep you posted.

Police Fraud Campaign

- Turning back to the Holidays, Police Chief Marc Palanchi has asked us to remind everyone that the holidays are unfortunately a time for fraud and deception.
- The chief urges everyone to be particularly careful about unsolicited calls and emails. The police have posted a wealth of information on the Roxbury Township Police website that can help consumers stay safe during the holidays.
- This also gives me an opportunity to thank our police for all that they do to keep our community safe throughout the year.

- Some of you may have noticed that this past week, we repainted the blue line on Main Street that recognizes the contributions of our police, and the red line for our first responders.
- We owe these brave individuals our thanks.

Snowstorm

- I know we are all worried about the snowstorm that is expected to hit our area on Wednesday and Thursday. Township Manager Shepherd assures us that our Public Works is ready for the anticipated significant snowstorm on Wednesday.
- Please drive carefully and be safe during this storm.

Social Services

- On Friday, Social Services will begin their toy distribution for needy families. The toys that are available are displayed in the gym at 72 Eyland Avenue. Social distancing protocols will be observed.

Tree Lighting

- None of us have enjoyed cancelling events during this Holiday Season. But this past Thursday, the Township conducted a Christmas Tree and Menorah lighting ceremony at Horseshow Lake as a virtual event.
- About 100 people viewed the event live, and since then, the event has been viewed approximately 2200 times. Special thanks to our Recreation Department and Deputy Mayor Hall for pivoting quickly from a live to a virtual event.

Rt. 46 and Rt. 10 (Circle)

- And while we talking about festive displays, I would like to thank Fullerton Landscaping for the beautiful Holiday display at the Rt. 46, Rt. 10

intersection – the old Ledgewood circle. It provides a nice splash of cheer in our community at an important time.

- For that matter, we all are enjoying the very impressive Holiday Light displays around town.

EDC/Chamber Shop Local

- I'm also excited to report an important joint initiative by the Roxbury Economic Development Committee and the Roxbury Area Chamber of Commerce, encouraging residents to "Put your money where your 'home' is! Shop Roxbury LOCAL." Starting this week, TAP Into Roxbury and the Roxbury Register will run ads with that message. In addition, the EDC and Township will use their social media platforms to post the ads.
- Our local merchants, restaurants, craftspeople, and professional services have always been there to help in our community. During this Holiday Season, let us show them how much we appreciate and support them. Like the ad says "Put your money where your home is!" Shop local.

Sad News

- Finally, some sad news, Joseph William Robortaccio, son of Mario and Gail Robortaccio, passed away unexpectedly December 7. Gail, who has served for many years on our Zoning Board, and Mario are great supporters of our community. On behalf of the Council, I offer our deepest condolences.
- Thank you again for joining us. We hope everyone has a pleasant and safe Holiday.
- Township's reorganization meeting will be at 7 pm on January 5th (still virtual).
- Now, back to our agenda.