

Community Update  
Aug. 24, 2021

- Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight for our Roxbury Township Council meeting. On Behalf of the Township Council, we hope everyone is staying safe and healthy, and able to enjoy these last few days of the summer. Hard to believe we are approaching the end of the summer.

**COVID**

- Our township continues to experience a steady increase in the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases. Since our last meeting on Aug. 10 – two weeks ago – the number of cases in town went from 2,653 to 2,725 – 73 new cases. Another significant jump.
- As we have reported in the past two meetings, the highly troubling increase, which nevertheless remains lower and slower than other areas, has been attributed to the highly contagious Delta variant, spread by people who have travelled to Covid-19 hotspots, some breakthrough cases, and people who have not been vaccinated.
- Once again, we urge residents to get vaccinated and to wear masks, especially while indoors. This is the only way to beat back this surge and eventually eliminate the virus. It is also the best way to protect our unvaccinated children and the most vulnerable among us.
- As a result of this surge in Covid-19 and the rapidly spreading Delta variant, Township Manager John Shepherd has implemented a change to Roxbury Township's workplace protocols, effective Monday, August 30.

- Starting Monday, all township employees will begin wearing a protective mask while in indoor workspaces such as offices and vehicles if traveling with others, and while Township employees are on service calls at homes or businesses.
- Mask wearing while in a private office with no other employees or guests is not required, as was our practice earlier this year when mandatory mask wearing was in effect.
- Employees will not be required to wear masks while outdoor.
- In addition, all visitors to any Township building will be required to wear a mask. New signs will go up at all building entrances with the new instructions.
- Masks will not be required indoors while employees and guests are eating or drinking. Disposable masks will be provided by the Township for all employees and guests.
- We do not take these steps lightly and we know how frustrated people are with mask wearing. But these steps are necessary to ensure that our employees and guests are confident that our Township facilities are safe. We appreciate everyone's continued cooperation as we work to fightback against this new surge and attempt to keep everyone safe.
- The Council once again commends our dedicated Township staff and the residents of Roxbury for their dedication, commitment, and cooperation during this time.
- We will continue to monitor this situation and will revise this policy as necessary. Once again, thank you to our Health Department and to Public Health Nurse Jim Craig for working with the Township and the School District

to keep us apprised of the latest information from federal, state, and county Health Care officials.

## **STORMS**

- Turning to the recent storms, tropical storm Henri dumped about 5 inches of rain on Roxbury. Thankfully, we did not experience widespread flash flooding, as some other areas did, according to Rick Blood, our head of DPW. However, due to the high amount of rain and saturated conditions, the Black River and its tributaries are taking their time to drain.
- Regarding trees and power outages, a power circuit from Netcong was out affecting Port Morris and some of Ledgewood and about a half dozen trees came down in various parts of town. A couple of them interfered with nearby wires and one pole was damaged. Those areas of town are in the process of being cleaned up.
- According to JCP&L, about 2,00 customers in the Landing area of Roxbury and Netcong lost power during the storm. The power utility informed us that everyone's power was restored by 7:30 p.m. However, if you are still without power, please contact Township Manager John Shepherd.
- We are continuing our efforts to have JCP&L improve its service to our community – especially in the Landing area -- including its program to remove trees that threaten power lines.

## **Fireworks**

- Meanwhile, hundreds of Roxbury residents attended the Township's annual fireworks display at Horseshow Lake on Friday, Aug. 13. And it was wonderful to see so many of our neighbors – especially our young people –

enjoying themselves outside in our beautiful park after so many months of COVID restrictions on gatherings.

- Roxbury's own Madison Pisani, who travelled from Nashville to be part of our celebration, entertained the crowd and was a big hit.
- On behalf of the Council, I would once again like to thank Rotary Club's Steve Alford and our many sponsors for helping to raise the money that allowed us to offer the fireworks spectacular to the community without charge. Please remember to patronize our sponsors, many of whom have helped fund the fireworks for several years.

### **Fire Department**

- I'd like to give a special shout out to Chief Bobby Hackett and our fire department and EMS for inviting me this past Saturday to be part of their department picnic at Horseshoe Lake. Because of COVID, the fire department has had to forego its annual banquet. The picnic was a wonderful substitute event. Thanks to our firefighters and EMS for all they do in our community.

### **Back to School**

- Finally, it's time for families to get ready for back to school. Whether in a virtual or in-person experience, families will have their list of needs to prepare their children for a return to school. In support of our community, I am very pleased to share with you that County College of Morris will once again partner with Table of Hope for a backpack distribution to residents of Morris County. The event takes place Saturday, August 28, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Parking Lot 1 on the CCM campus, 214 Center Grove Road,

Randolph. Volunteers will begin to arrive at 8:30 am. Table of Hope expects to distribute 1000 backpacks to ensure that no child in our community begins the new school year unprepared.

- All Morris County residents are welcome to come for the easy, contactless drive-through distribution. Individuals and families will be given backpacks filled with school supplies as well as healthy snacks provided by Alstede Farm.
- Assisting with the distribution include volunteers from Table of Hope, County College of Morris, and Morris County Sheriff's Office.
- Thank you again for joining us tonight. On behalf of the Council, please stay health and safe.
- Now back to our agenda.