

BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS, N. J.

INCORPORATED 1900



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Mayor's Message & The State of the Borough 2021 September Monthly Report inclusive of 9/30/21

We continue to work closely with the Administrator and Department Heads, we continued to balance the management of the health crisis and do the Borough's business.

The September Report is as follows:

- Working with the Marine Engineering team at Colliers Engineering and Design [formerly Maser], the 2021 Flood Mitigation Resiliency Plan was released. This comprehensive plan targets four major areas:
 1. Veteran's Park – Living Shoreline & Bulkhead Combination
 2. Snug Harbor Avenue Pump Station – New Pump Station
 3. North Street Pump Station Upgrades and Storm Drainage
 4. Steel Bulkhead adjacent to Captain's Cove – Painting of Water Side Only

The plan will include the following grants: US Department Of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI), FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), and NJDEP Shore Protection Program.

- The twentieth anniversary of 9-11 was acknowledged in a solemn ceremony at Veteran's Park at noon that day. We also participated in the County's "Light Up the Shore" as Highlanders took to the parks and beaches and used their cellphones to light up the skyline at 8:46 p.m.
- Awarded Construction Manger Service for the new Municipal Building to MFS Construction.
- Submitted a grant application to Monmouth County Open Space to aid in updating the skate park to poured concrete.
- Partnered again with Vitalant for a town Blood Drive at the Community Center.
- Adult Crafts at the Community Center begins.
- Kids on the Move returns at the Community Center.
- Released the PK-12 Regionalization Survey to gain opinions of all in Atlantic Highlands, Highlands and Sea Bright.
- The Locals' Summer Luau was a tremendous success. The event included a fire thrower, hula dancing, DJ, bonfire, pulled pork, hot dogs, pineapples and cole slaw.
- Ordinances passed:
 - Updated use request for the Community Center
 - Amended Short Term Rental to allow for two units in mixed use.
 - Updated parking amendments.
- As of 9/30 Highlands COVID-19 Vaccinations are below, new cases = 15.

	Total	12+	18+	30+	65+
1 shot	55%	61%	62%	64%	76%
Complete	50%	56%	57%	59%	69%

The state of the Borough at the end of September 2021:

- Our community continues to pull together during this pandemic. Residents, staff, businesses, civic/charitable organizations, and clergy continued to work together to get us through the biggest health crisis of our lifetime.
- The Recreation Department as well as other Borough organizations embraced the lifting of the gathering bans by filling the month with events, games and music.
- **Our Sandy Community Disaster Loan was forgiven through a Congressional bill. This means we do NOT have to pay back \$2.4 million dollars to the Federal government.**
- This month, I participated in the following calls/meetings: 1 with Federal representatives; 1 with State representatives; 2 with County representatives and 4 Municipal to make sure Highlands received all information, grant opportunities and awareness of programs being offered.

The Governing Body's Goals for the remainder of 2021 with updates [highlighted]:

- Create Overlook Park at old Stymie's property [empty lot diagonally across from OLPH] – reviewing proposals – working with the Environmental Commission.
- Enter the Community Rating System [CRS] program for lower flood insurance - getting proposals from engineering.
- Validate all Borough owned property/Update Open Space Plan [last 2008] & Registered Open Space Inventory [last 1992] – Open Space Committee & legal will complete this year.
- Update the Steep Slope Ordinance – with Shade Tree Commission & Environmental Commission for update recommendations.
- install higher riprap [rock wall in front of boardwalk] at Vets Park – **The 2021 Flood Mitigation Plan was released.**

Status on other priorities:

- Replace trees on the slope with sea grass – grant writer looking for grant.
- Remove unused phone and cable lines throughout the Borough – waiting for response from both Verizon and Comcast.
- Move electric out of flood zone in Borough parks – waiting for quote.
- Address inequities in tax assessments – looking into different software, must work with County on this.
- Address runoff issues from Monmouth Hills – on-going discussions with State, County and Middletown officials. Monmouth Hill's hired an engineering firm to try to solve the problem. Waiting for that to be given to us.
- Complete North and Valley St pump improvements [including Valley pipe to the bay] – this is with engineering. **Notification to go out to bid was listed in the Asbury Park Press on 9/28.**
- Complete Waterwitch Pump upgrades and install backup generator – engineering is working with FEMA.
- Waterwitch and Bay Avenues sanitary project – waiting for DEP to sign off on the change below so we can go to bid. We added the following streets to Phase 1: the entirety of Waterwitch Ave [from R36 to Marine Place], North St, Gravelly Point Road, Ralph St, William St, Ocean Ave and Beach Blvd. We expect DEP to approve these added streets to Phase 1 as the larger project will make a greater impact to improve water quality. We also added Barberie, Sea Drift and both sides of Marine Place to Phase 2. **Expecting to hear from DEP in October, then we can go out to bid.**

All the best to you and yours. We will get through this together.

Mayor Carolyn Broullon