



BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS
2021 YEAR IN REVIEW & THE STATE OF THE BOROUGH

22 Snug Harbor Avenue, Highlands NJ 07732
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 7:00 PM

As we end year two of COVID-19, I want to share this year in review. During the year, I worked with Council to address past issues as well as plan for Highlands' future for both residents and businesses. We were very successful in terms of gaining grants as well as other funding sources to help fund Infrastructure projects and updates to our open spaces.

Grants and other funding sources awarded in 2021 are in the grid below. We were able to use existing Open Space grant funding to update playground equipment at Huddy, Snug Harbor and Veteran's Park. See R-16-163 award of \$125,000 and R-19-078 award of \$150,000 for details. Had we not made these upgrades, we would have lost these grants. The largest dollar amount is the forgiveness for the Sandy Community Disaster Loan. The loan forgiveness equates to \$500,000 dollars less in taxes we need to raise in taxes to repay the loan.

2021 Grants & Other Awards	Amount
FEMA Hazard Training	\$ 11,050
Community Development Block Grant to repair Marine Place	\$ 179,605
American Rescue Plan	\$ 246,703
NJ Transportation Municipal Aid	\$ 165,000
FY 2021 Police Body Camera Grant	\$ 38,722
Sandy Community Disaster Loan Forgiveness [loan + interest]	\$ 2,860,000
Body Armor Grant	\$ 38,722
DEP Green Acres Grant \$149,754+ Low Interest Loan \$449,260 for Skate Park	\$ 599,014
DOT Various Roads Grant	\$ 212,800
Monmouth County Open Space for Skate Park	\$ 200,000
Total	\$ 4,551,616

The state of the Borough at the end of 2021:

- Our community continued to pull together during this pandemic. Residents, staff, businesses, charitable organizations, and clergy all worked together to get us through more surges of the biggest health crisis of our lifetime. Food, clothing and toy drives showed how amazing our community remains.
- The Municipal tax rate lowered for the second straight year. The combined valuation of all properties in the Borough increased to \$764,886,141. This was an increase in valuation of \$32,542,083. This will result in another rate decrease for 2022.
- Two new businesses opened in town: Wolf Claw Ceramics and Highlands Co-Work.
- Out of the 53 municipalities in Monmouth County, Highlands has the lowest vaccination rate. We are working with the County to run vaccine clinics. COVID-19 testing will begin every day starting January 10th at the Community Center.

Mayor & Council Goals that were accomplished in 2021:

- Drafted a comprehensive flood mitigation plan and began proposals for grants to pay for it.
- Purchase and install new apparatus at all Borough parks.
- Categorized and scanned records.
- Updated Registered Open Space Inventory [last done in 1992].
- Cleaned up Frank Hall Park.
- Made the first step of entering the Community Rating System [CRS] program for lower flood insurance by naming the engineer and sending to the county for approval.
- Engineering and contractor awarded for North St upgrades.

- Engineering awarded for Waterwitch Pump upgrades.
- Engineering awarded for Overlook Park on R36 [empty lot diagonally across from OLPH]
- Updated electric and water at Veterans and Cornwall Square parks.

Mayor & Council Goals we are looking to accomplish in 2022

- Collier will be providing GIS mapping of stormwater & sanitary sewer systems, stormwater outfall inspections and bulkhead mapping for the entire town. This will greatly help our flood mitigation program.
- Complete Phase 1 of the 2019 Waterwitch Area Sanitary project.
- Complete upgrades to North St pump.
- Complete repairs and paint to Marine Place Bulkhead and cap.
- Complete upgrades to Huddy, Snug Harbor and Veteran's Parks playground areas.
- Create new skate park.
- Complete North St pump improvements.
- Complete Waterwitch Pump upgrades and install backup generator.
- Break ground on building the Municipal Building.
- Negotiate Developer Agreements.
- Continue to resolve inequities in tax assessments.
- Continue to address runoff issues at Monmouth Hills once we have their engineering report.
- Create Overlook Park on empty lot diagonally across from OLPH.
- Make upgrades to Ederle Park
- Continue the process of entering the CRS program for lower flood insurance.
- Validate all Borough owned property.
- Update slope ordinance.
- Replace trees on the slope with sea grass [seek forestry grant].
- Remove unused phone and cable lines throughout the Borough.

Sadly, we lost many friends and Highlands' legends in 2021. Some due to COVID-19, some because of issues surrounding the virus and others with no relation to it. May each of their lives be cherished, honored and may they all rest in peace.

- Nina Flannery
- Carol Bucco
- Ray Goddard
- John Burton
- Joe Amiel
- Frank McGarry
- Anthony Ciazza
- John Murphy
- Dawn Hartsgrove
- William "Gipper" O'Neil
- Wendy Glester
- Joe MacDonald
- David "Buzz" Buzzelli
- Osborn Sickles
- Michael Shamliam

All the best to you and yours in 2022,
Mayor Carolyn Broullon