

Final
Township Council Meeting
Community Update
May 26

- Welcome to the fifth Roxbury Township Council meeting in quarantine and conducted remotely. The Township Council and I hope you are all remaining well and safe.
- As most of you know, New Jersey remains under a stay-at-home order imposed by the governor because the number of confirmed cases of the Covid-19 virus continues. Although, there are signs new cases of the virus are slowing.
- For Roxbury, that means I must sadly report that the number of confirmed cases has increased to 275. The number of deaths thankfully remains at 12, but which makes the loss of those lives no less tragic.
- The one bright spot is that we have seen several days over the last few weeks – including today -- where the number of cases did not rise. It isn't a trend yet, but it is encouraging.
- The courageous health care workers and patients at Merry Heart as well as others on the front lines in other long term care facilities continue to need our thoughts and prayers as they battle with COVID-19 -- which seems relentless.
- Our Township Health Department continues to monitor their situation and to offer the Township's assistance
- While it continues to remain unclear how soon the stay-home order will be lifted, I want to once again take a few minutes to highlight how Roxbury's residents are managing through this unprecedented situation.

- Yesterday -- Memorial Day – our community honored its fallen service members who paid the ultimate price to protect our freedoms and liberties. But it was a stark reminder of the way things have changed because the COVID-19 virus.
- Councilwoman Jaki Albrecht represented the Council yesterday at a brief but important ceremony at our VFW Hall. Only a total of 25 people could attend. That was a far cry from the parade and ceremony usually held in Roxbury. It is a happy occasion – the beginning of summer. Our neighbors line Main Street and Hillside Ave. as our high school band, fire departments, EMS crews, little league and soccer teams march to Horse Shoe Lake.
- While we were forced to cancel that parade and ceremony, Councilwoman Albrecht reports that Monday’s ceremony was solemn and respectful. Even the pandemic did not prevent us from honoring our fallen service members and those that protect us today.
- More on that ceremony later.
- As a reminder now is not the time to relax the social distancing precautions that have helped us to slow the spread of the virus and to flatten the curve. We urge everyone to please continue to adhere to all the social distancing guidelines.
- Now let me turn to the Township’s plans concerning the reopening of certain businesses and township services.
- As you know, the Governor’s executive order closed most businesses throughout the state. I’m happy to report some of those businesses and other activities are being slowly reopened. The following items are now or will be open shortly:
 - As of May 20, Township tennis courts were reopened.

- As of May 18, non-essential retail stores were cleared for curbside pick-up. Orders must be placed in advance via the internet or telephone.
- As of May 18, non-essential construction could resume.
- As of May 17, charter boats and watercraft rental businesses reopened.
- As of May 22, archery ranges, batting cages, golf driving ranges, horse riding, shooting ranges and tennis clubs.
- As of May 22, groups of 25 may assemble outside while maintaining social distancing measures. Public and private campgrounds are now permitted to be open.
- In terms of reopening businesses and other activities, Roxbury Township follows the directives of the Governor and State – which, of course, is required. We continue to encourage the safe reopening of the business community at the earliest possible opportunity.
- As a reminder, the state previously allowed the following business sectors to reopen: golf courses; State and county parks; personal care services for relatives and close friends; pet groomers and boarding; and stores that sell religious articles.
- This is not meant to be a comprehensive list, which is extensive and complicated.
- The Roxbury Police Department and Health Department keep abreast of the permitted business openings to ensure the smooth reopening of these business sectors.
- These activities must be performed in compliance with personal distancing rules and requirements. As much as we all want to see things reopen and the

local economy to return to the strong position it was in prior to Covid-19, we must remember to remain vigilant and continue to practice social distancing.

- Like our other actions, the Council is making these decisions on an incremental basis – meaning, we look at everything on a case-by-case basis and make decisions and changes as they become necessary based on facts, guidance, and the best information available. Public safety is always our chief concern.
- As we have said in the past, please visit the Township’s website for up-to-date information about the virus and quarantine.
- Once again, Township staff continues to respond to residents’ questions and to keep our essential services running -- either remotely or by reporting each day to their jobs. They are available to answer resident questions by phone or by email. Please visit the township’s website for a complete staff directory.
- Township Manager John Shepherd and I continued our discussions with community groups, including the Interfaith Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Both groups are anxious to reopen and to once again serve our community. We have offered the township’s assistance.
- John Shepherd and I are happy to meet with any group. Please reach out to us.
- One of the most important contributions residents can make continues to be helping our most vulnerable citizens by supporting our Social Services Department.
- Social Services have always been there to help our families in need. They continue to do so and they continue to need our help. A current list of their needs is posted on our website.

- As a reminder, Social Services is open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Now, I'd like to address a resolution that we have on our agenda tonight that's directly related to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Resolution 2020-135 calls on the State of New Jersey to treat its smaller counties fairly in providing financial assistance.
- The resolution notes that \$3.44 billion has been allocated to the State of New Jersey from the Coronavirus Relief Fund, established by the CARES Act, which was signed into law by the President on March 27, 2020.
- The fund provides a direct payment to the State of New Jersey, as well as provided over one billion dollars of direct payments to New Jersey counties with populations greater than 500,000 individuals.
- Morris County, with a population that is just 1.6% below the threshold of 500,000, is not expected to receive a direct payment from the federal government, and thus will have to rely solely on a share of the state's allotment.
- Elected officials representing Morris County including our Freeholders, Congresswoman Sherrill, Senator Codey, and Senator Bucco have expressed this inequity to the State of New Jersey.
- Tonight, the Mayor and Township Council add our voices to those who have strongly urged the State of New Jersey to provide direct stabilization funding to Morris County from the Coronavirus Relief Fund in an amount consistent with the allocation made to counties that have populations slightly over 500,000, by utilizing the formula applied through the CARES Act. This funding is critical to Morris County's ability to continue its efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and work to keep our constituents safe.

- In addition, this resolution urges the federal government to adopt an aid funding threshold reflecting the true impact of COVID-19 for all future allocations, based on metrics indicative of the negative effects the virus has had on jurisdiction and the level of actions taken to combat the threats.
- As just one example of the enormous cost incurred by Morris County, the county built and staffed a huge testing center at the County College of Morris without any assistance from the state or federal government.
- Without this assistance, Morris County will likely suffer serious financial shortfalls, which impacts its ability to provide services on which we all rely.
- Finally, thanks to the efforts of Councilman Rich Zoschak, Eagle Scout Derek Dougherty is with us tonight to play taps. My understanding is that Derek is working to earn his bugling merit badge by playing taps once a week for three months.
- On Monday, Derek played taps at the small ceremony at the VFW. By all accounts it was moving. I want to thank Derek for playing taps and adding to that solemn ceremony. And, as I usually do, I want to thank Derek's parents because young men like Derek do not just happen.
- Derek, if you are ready, please play taps.
- Thank you, Derek.
- On behalf of myself, the Township Council and township staff, I urge everyone to remain strong, be safe and God Bless.

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