

Community Update
3/23/2021

- Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight. On behalf of the Council, we hope everyone is healthy and safe. I know we are all happy to see the weather improve, which has understandably brought out many of our residents to our parks and paths. It's been a long winter.
- Before we begin, please join us in a moment of silence for the 10 people, including a police officer, who were killed in the mass shooting near Denver, Colorado.
- Thank you. There has been too much senseless violence.

COVID-19

- Unfortunately, people getting out and getting together in the nice weather has also contributed to the relentless climb in the number of new cases of COVID in our community.
- Since our last Council meeting on March 9 the number of people who have contracted COVID has gone from 1,903 to 2,054 – an increase of 151 new cases -- which gives Roxbury the unenviable distinction of crossing the line of having more than 2,000 confirmed COVID cases since the start of the pandemic.
- I know that every week we urge residents to practice social distancing by staying six feet apart, wearing masks, washing hands, and avoiding large crowds. But it is clear from the rising rate of infection that we are not adhering to those guidelines as well as we should.

- We are all tired of COVID and we are even more tired of the lockdown, quarantining, and social distancing. We want to get out of the house and back to work and school. Personally, I would love to hug my grandchildren. But we must continue to be careful and diligent about social distancing for a little while longer. Please, we urge residents to continue to be patient and follow the social distancing rules that protect you and me.

Officers Recognized

- Roxbury Police Chief Marc Palanchi notified us that he has recognized the heroic efforts of three of his officers for likely saving the lives of several people at a recent structure fire.
- The officers -- Sgt. Ken Rocco, Patrolman Jon Edmunds, and Patrolman Nick Ponomarev -- acted “courageously and bravely” during the March 12 incident, according to the chief, when at about 11:20 p.m. that day, police were sent to a “structure fire with possible entrapment” at a multi-unit residential building in Ledgewood.
- When they got to the scene, Rocco, Edmunds and Ponomarev found heavy smoke billowing from the building. Several people outside the residence were yelling that there was still a male inside the apartment.
- By kicking in an apartment door, Edmunds woke up a sleeping man inside the unit. The patrolman, accompanied by the sergeant, quickly removed the resident.
- Rocco, Edmunds and Ponomarev went to the rear of the building and found another apartment with a locked door, which they also kicked in. They

were met with heavy, black smoke. Crouching down, they made their way toward the bedroom where they found a female laying on the bed.

- Police said the woman was unconscious and did not respond to commands from the officers who then pulled her from the bed and carried her out of the apartment to the rear patio where she regained consciousness.
- Rocco, Edmunds and Ponomarev remained at the scene and helped the displaced residents find places to stay.
- Chief Palanchi commended these officers for courageously and bravely entering the building and ultimately saving the lives of these two individuals.
- On behalf of the Council, I would also like to commend these officers. It was just another reminder that Roxbury has the best and most professional police department. I would also like to thank police from Netcong and Mount Arlington who quickly came to the scene to help that night.

Affordable Housing Ordinances

- Let me turn now to several affordable housing ordinances that had been originally scheduled to be on the agenda tonight.
- First, some background, on March 9, the Township Council introduced several zoning ordinances which are required to be considered in order to comply with the settlement agreement reached in the Township's affordable housing litigation.
- Notices of the public hearings for the ordinances at tonight's Council meeting were published. When the Council adopts these types of zoning ordinances, we are also required to mail notice of the public hearing to

certain adjoining property owners in the areas being rezoned. While notice was mailed to all the adjoining property owners, it was discovered that several owners of the property that are proposed for rezoning and who should have been notified, did not receive the required notification. It is important to the Township that everyone entitled to a notice, receives one as part of the procedural requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law.

- Consequently, the Council is going to reschedule the public hearings on these ordinances (#5-21, and #7-21 through #11-21) to the Council meeting scheduled for April 13, 2021, so that everyone can be properly noticed, and everyone will have an opportunity to hear all comments concerning the ordinances.
- Those of you who received notice of tonight's meeting will receive another notice for the April 13 meeting. Public comment on the ordinances will be welcomed at that meeting which will also be held virtually. In the meantime, if anyone has questions or is looking for some additional information regarding the ordinances or the process, they are welcome to contact our Township Manager John Shepherd.
- Comment by letter or e-mail, which can be read into the record at the April 13th meeting, will also be accepted because the Township Council meetings are virtual at this time. Correspondence can be mailed or e-mailed to our Township Manager John Shepherd and, if received no later than April 12th, will be read into the public record.
- Finally, the Township is under Court direction to proceed expediently with these actions, and we do not anticipate further postponement. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by the rescheduling but want to be

sure all procedural requirements are followed, that everyone entitled to written notice, receives it, in accordance with the law, and that everyone who wishes to participate is given an opportunity to be heard.

Teacher Appreciation Day

- Finally, here is something nice to end this Community Update. Our Recreation Department in conjunction with our Social Services Department, are holding Teacher Appreciation Days on March 25 and 26.
- Teachers are invited to come down to the Rec. Center at Horseshoe Lake between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. They will be able to pick out school supplies like crayons, pens, paper, binders, notepads, and much more. Things they and their students may need.
- I also understand they will have coffee and light refreshments.
- The Council applauds this great effort by Recreation and Social Services. And the Township is happy to support our teachers, especially now as they continue to face the challenges caused by the pandemic and remote learning.
- Thank you again for joining us tonight. Now, back to our agenda.

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