



National Night Out: A Huge Success in Monroe

Mayor, Township Council and Residents Thank All First Responders For Their Service, Bravery and Dedication

The Monroe Township Police Department hosted its annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 3. National Night Out is a nation-wide annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and camaraderie to make neighborhoods safe and caring places to live.

The Monroe Township Police department partners with all Township first responders to further enhance the sense of community and underscore the teamwork necessary to maintain safety and security in the Township and to ensure the Township's ranking among the safest cities in America.

This year, thousands of Monroe Township residents ventured out of their homes for an

evening of fun, games and education in Thompson Park, including the first ever car and truck show.

Participants engaged with members of the Police, Fire, EMS and First Aid Departments while they played games, toured cars and trucks, took aim at the dunk tank, enjoyed delicious treats and much, much more.

Mayor Stephen Dalina, Township Council members and residents alike expressed appreciation and gratitude for all of the hard work, bravery and dedication shown by all Monroe Township first responders always – and especially throughout the pandemic.

Three cheers to Monroe Township heroes! Thank you for all you do to keep Monroe safe! ■



On August 3, residents enjoyed the annual National Night Out celebration at Thompson Park. The night included fun, food and games for all.



The Monroe Police Department enjoyed spending the night fostering positive community relationships.

Monroe Township is Ranked Among the Safest Cities in America Again

Mayor Stephen Dalina and Chief Michael Biennas report the Township once again ranks among the safest cities in the state and country.

Monroe Township earned top rankings in the Safest Cities and Towns in America 2021 Report by MoneyGeek, a personal finance technology company. According to the report, Monroe Township ranked 10th safest city in America

and fourth safest city in New Jersey.

“The safety of our residents, businesses and visitors is a cornerstone to the wonderful quality of life we enjoy here in Monroe.” said Mayor Dalina. “I am truly thankful to our men and women in blue who work tirelessly every day to keep us all safe. This recognition year after year is a testament to their hard work.”

The ranking is based on analysis of FBI standardized crime statistics and population data. Review the full report at <https://www.moneygeek.com/living/safest-cities/small-cities-and-towns-in-america/#full-data-set>

The Monroe Township Police Department comprises 66 sworn officers. The Department consists of a detective bureau, a

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2021

Property Tax Rate Remains “Flat and Stable”

Read article on page 3

TOWN HALL

1 Municipal Plaza • Monroe Township, NJ 08831
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ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor:

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Miriam Cohenmcohen@monroetwp.com

Council Vice President:

Elizabeth Schneidereschneider@monroetwp.com

Council Members:

Terence Van Dzuratvandzura@monroetwp.com

Leonard Baskinlbaskin@monroetwp.com

Charles Dipierrocdipierro@monroetwp.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Township Main Number(732) 521-4400

Animal Control(732) 521-0222

Construction Office(732) 656-4585

Court Administrator(732) 521-4020

Township Engineer(732) 605-9440

EMS & First Aid (non-emergency) (732) 521-1880

Health Department(732) 521-4400 ext. 192

Environmental Protection .(732) 521-4400 ext. 118

Monroe Township Library(732) 521-5000

Utilities Department(732) 521-1700

Office of Senior Services(609) 448-7140

Parks Department(732) 723-5000

Police (non-emergency)(732) 521-0222

Public Works(732) 656-4575

Recreation(732) 723-5000

Recycling(732) 656-4575

Tax Collector(732) 521-4405

Township Clerk(732) 656-4573

Traffic Safety(732) 521-0222 ext. 126

Transportation(609) 443-0511

Monroe Township Vaccination Rates Exceed State Averages In Every Age Category

Mayor and OEM Urge All Eligible Residents to Get Vaccinated as Positive Cases Rise in County and State

According to the latest vaccination reports forwarded by Middlesex County from the State of New Jersey Department of Health for the week of August 3, Monroe Township's vaccination rates exceeded state averages in every age category.

"Our vaccination rates are good, but with the increasing spread of the Delta variant, vaccines are more important than ever. That's why we must get as

close to a 100% vaccination rate as possible and continue to follow guidance," Mayor Stephen Dalina said. "We must continue to work together to protect the entire community as we have done throughout the pandemic. Getting vaccinated is the best way to help."

The state report provides vaccination statistics for municipalities in each county according to the

following population categories: 12 years and older, 18 years and older, 65 years and older and 80 years and older. Monroe Township vaccination rates saw a two percent increase over the last four weeks in the 12+ and 18+ categories and a one percent increase in the 65+ and 80+ categories.

The following chart illustrates Monroe Township vs. NJ State vaccination statistics:

Age Category	Monroe Fully Vaccinated	Monroe 1st Dose Complete	Monroe Total	NJ State Fully Vaccinated	NJ State 1st Dose Complete	NJ State Total
12+ year olds	75%	6%	81%	65%	8%	73%
18+ year olds	79%	6%	85%	68%	7%	75%
65+ year olds	86%	5%	91%	85%	6%	91%
80+ year olds	87%	6%	93%	78%	6%	84%

Anyone wishing to get a vaccine may contact one of the following local providers: Franklin Pharmacy (Pfizer, Moderna, J&J), Texas Road Pharmacy (Pfizer, Moderna, J&J), Stop & Shop Pharmacy (J&J), Walgreens Pharmacy (Pfizer), Point of Care Pharmacy (Pfizer, Moderna,

J&J), Marlboro Medical Arts Pharmacy (Pfizer, Moderna, J&J) and CVS Pharmacy, Monroe and Jamesburg (Pfizer)

Additional vaccination information can be found at <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>.

Those interested in

tracking local case counts may visit the Middlesex County Coronavirus Dashboard at <https://discover-middlesex.com/total-cumulative-cases/>. This site is updated Monday - Friday at approximately 4pm daily. Visit the NJ Covid-19 Information Hub at <https://covid19.nj.gov/>. ■

More Information to follow from Office of Emergency Management regarding third shot/booster availability in Monroe Township.



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Mayor Stephen Dalina

I'm proud to say I developed my work ethic from my dad, Stephen "Pete" Dalina.

He owned Dalina's Tavern in Fords, which was a local landmark. I grew up cleaning tables, washing dishes and everything in between. As "Pete's boy," I was expected to serve as an example that began with my grandparents who were always there cleaning everything in the establishment; I learned very quickly that

A Message from Mayor Stephen Dalina

there were never corners to cut. Mom and Dad made sure of it.

I bring that same work ethic to Town Hall. There are incredibly hardworking and talented people here – from our amazing police department and EMS to our public works employees, parks and recreation, library, senior center and administrative staff – all of whom recognize that they are directly accountable to the public.

At a time when many often dwell on the negative, I want to focus on all the great things that make Monroe such a wonderful place to live, to raise a family and to retire. There was a clear reason as to why we all decided to

move here, and there are other great reasons as to why we choose to stay.

Monroe is one of the safest municipalities in the nation, based on the annual review of crime data. Year after year, as far as I can remember, Monroe has been lauded for its superb police force and other emergency responders. This is a community that watches out for one another, evident in such continuously low crime stats.

Monroe is also very well run, with low municipal debt. We enjoy a AA+ bond rating, which, as you will read in this issue of the Monroe News, allows us to borrow money for capital expenditures with very, very low interest rates, saving substantial taxpayer money. We also have the second-lowest municipal tax rate in Middlesex County – another stat that has remained consistent over the years.

Our community is squarely focused on maintaining open space and

fighting against overdevelopment. In fact, the only real residential development that is being built is because of a court-mandated affordable housing settlement. When you see home construction, it is not from town hall. It is from the State of New Jersey, which is forcing Monroe, as well as hundreds of other towns in the state, to build more affordable housing.

My Administration is steadfast in ensuring that 50% of the land in this municipality is preserved forever as open space.

Monroe is a community people want to live in.

Besides the consistently low taxes, residents often point to the superb services in Monroe. Our senior center, recreation center and municipal library are all second to none, the envy of so many other towns in New Jersey. Monroe has top-notch ball fields and athletic programs for people of all ages, and programming

throughout the year that celebrates our history, our present and our future.

As a director and adjunct professor at Rutgers University, I am often asked why I serve as mayor. I explain it is all about the volunteer spirit of Monroe and how we come together to help wherever and whenever we can. That was no more evident than during the pandemic, in which the all-volunteer "Vaccine Angels" were created to help link our population with vaccine appointments. I was impressed that so many residents reached out to me seeking ways in which they can help out.

It was yet another beautiful testament to this town where I have chosen to raise a family and to serve in public office. I am proud of this town, of its people and of the faith you have all bestowed upon me.

It is an honor that I cherish. ■

2021 Property Tax Rate Remains "Flat and Stable"

Monroe taxpayers are seeing a slight reduction in municipal taxes this year.

"Our final budget reduces the municipal tax rate from \$.493 to \$.489 per \$100 assessed value. This modest decrease contributed to a stable, flat rate," said Mayor Stephen Dalina. Water and sewer rates will remain the same in 2021.

Mayor Dalina said there is a flat overall property tax rate for 2021 that incorporates county, school, municipal and fire

tax rates. The Monroe Township municipal tax rate has seen a less than 1% average increase over the past seven years.

"We are working hard together to save our residents as much money as possible while preparing for the future of our Township," Mayor Dalina added. "This summer, for example, we refinanced \$28.5 million in municipal debt, backed by a strong AA+ bond rating, that will net the Township nearly \$2.4 million in savings over 12 years." ■

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Monroe's Bond Rating Shows Township's Strong Financial Footing

Township Secures Lowest Interest Rates in Memory

In yet another affirmation of Monroe's strong fiscal position in May 2021, Standard & Poor's has given the Township an "AA+" bond rating, the second highest bond rating assigned by the company and only awarded to 10% of municipalities nationwide. The Township's short term borrowing rate is SP 1+, the highest rating available in that category.

Such a strong rating underscores the strong creditworthiness of Monroe as an issuer of bonds, signifying the municipality has strong financial backing, excellent credit reserves, and limited debt.

Because of such a strong bond rating, following a detailed review of the Township's finances by third-party independent fiscal experts at Standard & Poor's, Monroe can borrow money at the lowest interest rates available. During a May 25 bond sale, the Township secured its lowest interest rates, in memory, with 1.43% rate for a 15-year-bond and 0.20% for a one-year bond. These rates, which are lower than expected, will save the township approximately \$130,000 in 2022.

"Our excellent bond rating reflects our strong administrative management, consistent financial operations and low debt," explained Mayor Stephen Dalina. "This accomplishment is not solely because of my Administration. We've continually tightened our belt and focused on operational efficiencies, and the financial services companies have clearly taken note."

"I am proud of our AA+ bond rating that directly results in taxpayer savings," Mayor Dalina said. "Monroe is in a strong financial position for years to come." ■

Monroe Voices Support for BPU Audit of JCP&L, Demanding Improved Reliability from the Electric Utility

Mayor Stephen Dalina is voicing strong support of an audit of Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L), which provides electricity to township homes and businesses.

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is hiring a consultant to conduct a \$1.47 million comprehensive audit of JCP&L, including a detailed examination of its management operations.

JCP&L has come under frequent criticism by Mayor Dalina and the Township Council in recent years, following its delayed attempts to restore power after storms. The issue hit a boiling point in

Monroe last August when a forecasted tropical storm left many residents without power for days during the height of summer.

"Two of the ongoing issues in Monroe have been JCP&L's response times and poor communication regarding restoration times. I fully expect this audit will reinforce what we already know: JCP&L must do better," Mayor Dalina said. "As we continue through the summer tropical storm season, JCP&L must improve reliability and act expeditiously in service to its customers."

Last August, Monroe officials wrote to BPU

President Joseph L. Fiordaliso to share the latest experiences with JCP&L. In the height of August, with no air conditioning and a state of emergency due to the pandemic, residents were left suffering for days on end, with food, medicine and other supplies spoiled during the lingering power outages.

Last October, JCP&L won approval of a rate increase of about \$4 per month, roughly equal to collecting \$94 million from ratepayers. In its approval, the BPU commissioners rightfully attached several conditions, ordering the utility to figure out how to

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Monroe Refinances Municipal Debt in Summer 2021; Saves Nearly \$2.4 Million in Interest

The recent refinancing of \$28.5 million in municipal debt will net the township nearly \$2.4 million over 12 years.

Monroe was able to refinance at an effective rate of 1.25%, replacing an interest rate of 2.93%. A key reason for the historically-low interest rate is the Township's "AA+" bond rating, the second highest bond rating assigned by Standard & Poor's and

only awarded to 10% of municipalities nationwide. The Township's short term borrowing rate is SP 1+, the highest rating available in that category.

Such a strong rating underscores the creditworthiness of Monroe as an issuer of bonds, signifying the municipality has solid financial backing, excellent credit reserves and limited debt.

"Our excellent bond rat-

ing continues to provide direct, tangible savings to our taxpayers," explained Mayor Stephen Dalina. "It reflects our modestly reduced municipal tax rate, strong administrative management, consistent financial operations and low debt."

With the AA+ rating, Monroe is also being recognized for proactive planning, in which Township

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Mayor Dalina Lauds U.S. Senate Effort to Repeal \$10,000 Federal Cap on State and Local Property Tax Deductions

Mayor Stephen Dalina is expressing appreciation to the U.S. Senate for advancing an effort last month to repeal a \$10,000 federal cap on deductions for “SALT,” an acronym for state and local taxes. This has been a priority for the Dalina Administration, which has strongly supported the New Jersey Congressional delegation in addressing this critical issue.

In 2017, the federal government modified its tax code, no longer allowing property taxpayers to have full deductibility of their property taxes and state income taxes as part of federal tax filings. This decision hit towns across New Jersey, like Monroe, particularly hard.

“The government’s decision is an unfair burden for many of our residents, especially those on a fixed income,” said Mayor Stephen Dalina, adding the full deduction of state and local taxes has

been part of the U.S. tax code for more than a century. In fact, in 1913, the first federal income tax form allowed taxpayers to deduct state and local taxes – one of only six deductions allowed at the time.

Mayor Dalina said that reviving the SALT deduction is especially critical for Monroe’s middle-class residents, including such frontline workers as firefighters, teachers, and public health workers, who have helped the community survive the pandemic.

“Because of the cap on SALT deductions in 2017, many New Jerseyans are paying more in federal taxes,” Mayor Dalina said. “They deserve the SALT deduction. It is the tax break they earned. Congress can fix this, which is why I appreciate and laud the U.S. Senate’s support.

“I pledge to continue the fight.” ■

BPU Audit of JCP&L

Continued from page 4

greatly minimize power outages.

“JCP&L continues to take from the people of Monroe,” Mayor Dalina

said. “Meanwhile, we continue to wait for this utility to finally give something back – in the form of reliable, accountable service.” ■

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Monroe Township Preserves 76 Acres of Wooded Property for Open Space

Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust to Fund \$395K Purchase Price

Monroe Township has closed on a 76-acre parcel of wooded land located on the western side of Perrineville Road, south of Union Valley Road.

The large parcel, previously owned by Galaxy Land Corp., served as a farm from the 1930s through the 1980s. Over the past 30 years, it has reverted to forest as illustrated in the photo.

The Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund will fund the \$395,000 purchase price via Resolution for County Grant No. R-6-2020-146 which passed on June 22, 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The deed to the land has now been transferred to the Township.

“The acquisition of this

beautiful piece of land creates a large forest that is preserved as open space for generations to come thanks to our strong partnership with Middlesex County,” said Mayor Stephen Dalina. “This former farm is one of the largest parcels we have secured for preservation yet.”

Dalina noted that the parcel is surrounded by preserved open space on three sides and creates a large forest, safe from development, that is unique to most, if not all, municipalities in the County.

“From improving the environment to enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors, the benefits of open space preservation cannot be overstated. That’s why we’ve made it a priority in Middlesex County to support the acquisition of open space

whenever possible,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios. “On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, I am pleased that we could support this acquisition through the Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, and I thank Mayor Dalina for his shared commitment to preserving open space throughout the County.”

“Middlesex County is committed to preserving open space throughout the County. The preservation of this 76-acre parcel in Monroe is our second significant investment in open space in Monroe Township in as many years and will benefit current and future Township residents. It is an ideal



Pictured is an aerial view of Galaxy Farms, shown on the left in 1953, and on the right in 2013.

use of this funding,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Charles E. Tomaro, who chairs the County’s Infrastructure Management Committee. “Our ongoing partnership with Mayor Dalina and Monroe Township has been integral to identifying these opportunities for open space preservation. We look forward to continuing to work together in

the future.”

In September 2019, Middlesex County purchased 59 acres of wooded land just south of this parcel for open space. The County paid \$508,000 for the land. Together these acquisitions have preserved thousands of trees and a balanced ecosystem of forest and fauna. ■

Monroe Ensures the 35-Acre Zimbicki Farm is Forever Preserved as Open Space

Monroe Township has added 35 acres of open space thanks to another successful collaboration with Middlesex County and the State of NJ through the Farmland Preservation Program. The agreement closed on Wednesday, May 26.

“This is a prime piece of Monroe Township real estate that is now and

forever saved from development. We are thankful that Middlesex County and the State took the necessary steps to acquire the land in partnership with us,” said Mayor Stephen Dalina. “The addition of another 35 acres of farmland moves us closer to our goal of preserving half of the Township. This acquisi-

tion would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Zimbicki Estate. We are grateful for their interest in preserving this land.”

The County, in partnership with the State and the Township of Monroe, purchased the development rights for the farmland located on Federal Road, owned by the Estate

of the late Mr. Anthony Zimbicki, Sr., of Monroe Township, for the total of \$945,837. The State contributed \$567,502.20, the County paid \$189,167.40, and Monroe Township paid \$189,167.40 towards the purchase.

“The Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners has always serving

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Peach trees are in full bloom this summer at Zimbicki farm.

Monroe Residents Participate in Master Plan

As Monroe Township works to update its Master Plan, residents and local businesses shared ideas, asked questions, made suggestions, and engaged in thoughtful discussion about the future of our Township. Hundreds attended three community workshops and over 1600 respondents contributed more than 5000 comments in a community-wide survey. This feedback is essential for shaping the physical, social, environmental, and economic future of the community.

“We want to hear from all of our residents as we plan for the future of our hometown,” Mayor Stephen Dalina said. “Public input is a key step in working together with the community at large to develop a thoughtful and strategic Master Plan. Each person has unique

ideas and experiences that are valuable to the outcome of this process.”

Mayor Dalina and the Township Council launched an online survey that ran from the end of May until the end of August. Questions from the survey focused on gathering input for land use, transportation, circulation, utility, recreation and open space planning in the Township, as the Master Plan sets a vision for the future of the Township in those areas.

In conjunction with the survey, community workshops were held at the senior center, recreation center and the public library. These events provided a space for hundreds of residents to discuss their views with accomplished statewide planning experts and contribute toward any amendments to the



Mayor Dalina had the opportunity to speak with residents and address their questions during the event.



Council President Miriam Cohen talks with a planning expert during the first of three Master Plan Open House meetings on June 17.

Master Plan.

As the Master Plan process moves forward, all relevant documents can be found on the municipal website, MonroeTwp.com, and the Township’s Master Plan website, <https://public-input.com/MonroeMP>, for public review as the process moves forward. ■



During the Master Plan Open House residents were able to share their thoughts about the future of Monroe.



Residents also had the opportunity to voice their opinions through an online survey, which yielded more than 1,600 responses.

Municipal Debt *Continued from page 4*

leaders deliberately limit borrowing, manage emergency surplus, and focus on the reduction and limited use of municipal debt.

“We’ve continually tightened our belt, not spending a nickel more than we must, and the financial services compa-

nies have clearly taken note,” the mayor added. “And Township taxpayers continue to reap the rewards.” ■

Safest Cities in America

Continued from page 1

juvenile/youth services bureau, a domestic unit, a traffic safety bureau and has an officer assigned to senior citizen crime prevention.

“The Monroe Township Police Department is committed to keeping crime rates very low. We are thankful to Mayor Dalina and Township Council for allocating the appropriate resources toward that mission,” said Chief Michael Biennas. “Our department comprises highly-dedicated law enforcement professionals, a key factor as to why Monroe is consistently recognized as one of the safest municipalities in the nation.” ■

Monroe Residents Invited to 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony

Twenty years have quickly passed and now Monroe is marking another solemn anniversary of September 11, 2001.

On Saturday, September 11, Mayor Stephen Dalina and the Monroe Township Council will be holding a ceremony to honor the lives of those impacted by 9/11. The ceremony will be held at Memorial Tree Park on Prospects Plains Road and will begin promptly at 8:46 a.m., marking the moment when the first plane crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center.

Summer Bounty for the Needy



Fresh produce from Monroe's community garden on Applegarth Road was donated to Alice's CUP in Spotswood, a food pantry on Main Street that serves hundreds of families in the area. The popular garden has eight plots dedicated to growing the freshest fruits and vegetables in support of local pantries. To reach Alice's CUP to volunteer or donate, email communityhope@comcast.com.

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Monroe Township Awarded \$94,000 Clean Communities Grant from DEP; Increase of Nearly \$9K from 2020

Monroe Township is receiving a \$94,059.62 Clean Communities grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Solid Waste Division.

Clean Communities grants are intended to help municipalities and counties across New Jersey promote volunteer and paid clean-up events, purchase equipment, support enforcement activities and educational opportunities.

“The Township Council and I strive to move toward a cleaner, greener future for Monroe Township,” said Mayor Stephen Dalina. “Our Department of Public Works conducts numerous programs aimed at keeping our town litter-free throughout the year. It is through programs like Clean Communities that we are able to help keep our streets, open space, recreation areas and township grounds clear of litter

and debris.”

This year’s grant reflects an increase of nearly \$9,000 from the grant received in 2020. Monroe Township is the sixth-largest recipient in all of Middlesex County. This grant award allows the Township to continue to improve upon its ongoing community engagement and education initiatives.

“Monroe has consistently been one of the top municipalities in the state in regards to fighting litter,” said JoAnn Gemenden, executive director, New Jersey Clean Communities Council.

“We work closely with Joe Slomian to ensure that state funds are continually maximized to develop and implement anti-litter education and programming in Monroe, as well as to coordinate local clean-ups,” she said. “We are confident that Joe and his team will use the \$9,000 increase this year in a smart, strate-

gic way to further expand the mission in Monroe.”

This summer the Clean Communities grant helped to fund a new summer employment program through the Department of Public Works called the Monroe Clean Communities Clean Team. The Clean Team consists of two residents 18 years of age and older who spend 12 hours a week picking up litter along Monroe Township’s roadsides, parks and open spaces throughout the summer months.

In addition, the Township offers Monroe-based non-profit and community-service groups through its mini-grant program that offers \$500 per group for running localized clean-up efforts.

Interested organizations can register for litter patrol opportunities at Township approved sites by contacting Clean Communities Coordinator, Joe Slomian at 732-656-4575.



Monroe used funding through the New Jersey Clean Communities Council to purchase a specialized all-terrain vehicle that can be used in waterways to collect litter.

“Litter comes from many sources and these grants help us to organize community programs that educate the public about proper trash disposal, reducing waste and the environmental impacts of litter,” Slomian said.

Through the grant program, the NJDEP issued more than \$19.4 million to municipalities and counties across the state, basing

its allocations on statistical reports that outline the number of housing units and municipally owned roadway mileage in a respective area. Grants are funded by a legislated user-fee on manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors that produce litter-generating products.

For a complete list of municipal and county grant awards, visit www.njclean.org. ■

The Monroe Township Historic Preservation Commission Hosts

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- Experience the NJDEP hands-on workshop to learn how to build a rain barrel.

NO RAIN DATE

Thank You MaryAnn Reiner!

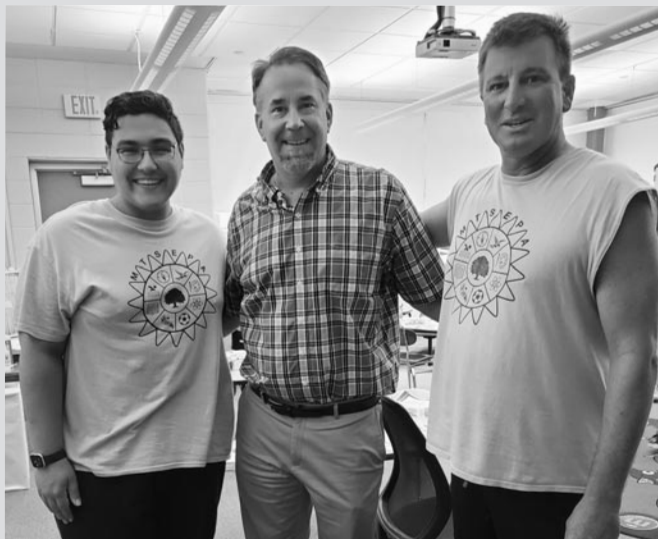


MaryAnn Reiner was honored by Mayor Dalina, the Township Council, Library Director Leah Wagner, and Library Assistant Director Karen Klapperstuck at the August 2 Council meeting for her 26 years of service to the Township Library.

Fun at Summer Camp



Mayor Dalina handed out ice pops while meeting with campers and counselors at Mt. Sepa.



Counselors enjoyed talking to Mayor Dalina about Mt. Sepa as they toured him around the facilities.



Now, how did that table rise like that? No one will ever know, but seniors sure had fun trying to figure it out at a magic show on August 18.

Zimbicki Farm is Forever Preserved

Continued from page 6

land within our beautiful County, evident in our thousands of acres of farmland and open space already preserved,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald Rios. “We look forward to continuing to preserve more farmland properties and protecting them from non-agricultural development as it’s an investment in all of our futures. Farmland preservation is the first step to ensuring food is available for generations to come.”

Middlesex County’s Farmland Preservation Program purchases the non-agriculture development rights on farmland that meets criteria established by the Middlesex County Agriculture Development Board and the New Jersey State Agriculture Development



Monroe Township has ensured that the 35 acres of land at Zimbicki farm will be preserved as open space.

Committee. The value is determined by two independent appraisals, and the farmland is preserved by placing an agriculture preservation easement on the property.

The State, County, and municipality share the cost of the farms’ development

rights, with the State contributing much of the purchase price. Middlesex County’s program is strictly voluntary; farmland owners interested in participating in the program must submit a formal application to the Middlesex County Agriculture Development Board. ■



Special Stride Therapeutic Riding Center invited Mayor Dalina to tour its facility and visit with a group of Monroe Township High School students who enjoy the farm’s services. The farm also hosted a summer concert on July 23 with all proceeds benefiting the center.

Monroe Township EMS Expands Service Locations to Enhance Public Safety

The Monroe Township Emergency Medical Services, through a shared services agreement with Monroe Township Fire District No. 3, moved into its fifth location in August, providing another centrally located point from which EMS technicians can quickly respond to resident needs.

Thanks to the cooperation and partnership of Fire District No. 3 board and staff, the newly built fire station located at 359 Schoolhouse Rd now will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by a team of highly trained Emergency



The new Monroe Township Fire District No. 3 firehouse located at 359 Schoolhouse Road will now be staffed 24/7 by Monroe Township EMS and equipped with the latest technologies to handle any emergency.

Medical Technicians.

The location will house a primary and a backup ambulance as well as state of the art communications and training equipment.

This strategic distribution of resources is intended to improve already impressive response times, enhance patient care and save lives. ■

Recruits Show the Right Stuff at Police Youth Academy

It was a memorable five days in July for the Monroe Township Police Youth Academy.

The recruits learned about the MedEvac helicopter and the jobs the men and women aboard do on a daily basis. The recruits also learned how to talk on a police radio and how to conduct motor vehicle stops.

The recruits learned how to conduct small- and large-scale searches, and even located a crucial piece of evidence in their missing person case. Police also showed the recruits how to



Monroe Township Police Youth Academy recruits were given a tour of the MedEvac helicopter during their week of training in July.

process a crime scene, collect evidence, lift fingerprints and even take a footprint mold. ■

The recruits favorite part was all the physical training. (Or maybe not.)



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A D V E R T O R I A L

Township's First-Ever Exercise Instructor Returns Home as Director at Parker at Monroe

In 1991, Lori Morell was named the very first exercise instructor for the Township of Monroe.

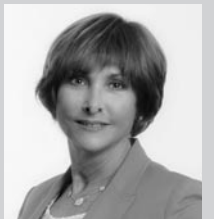
From there, she watched the construction of the Monroe Township Senior Center and introduced numerous programs over her 23-year career with the municipality. Morrell, a township resident, has established deep ties, especially in the active adult communities, coordinating numerous health and wellness programs for thousands of Monroe residents over the years.

That is why it is fitting that Morell will be spending much more time in Monroe, serving as the newly-appointed Director of Parker at Monroe's Adult Day Center, due to open in September at 200 Overlook Drive.

"Lori's passion was always centered on the wellness of the senior community," said Jennifer Sternberg, assistant director, Monroe Senior Center. "Her desire to pursue bigger and better things, while serving the senior population, was evident in her move to work for Parker.

"Lori's commitment to the health and well-being of seniors continued with her facilitation of the Beginners Healthy Bones class held at the Senior Center prior to the pandemic," Sternberg added. "On behalf of the Office of Senior Services staff and its members, we wish Lori the best of luck in her new position."

Residents are invited to welcome Lori at lmorell@parkerlife.org



It's Free! Join Our Community Center

To use the Community Center facilities, you must obtain a membership. Membership dues are currently FREE through the remainder of 2021 and expires a year from the date you register. Renewing or registering for a Community Center membership can be done at register.communitypass.net/monroe-township.

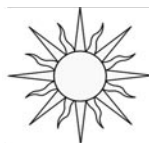
Having this membership gives you access to our programs, fitness center, open gym, and even borrowing a basketball to shoot around during open hours. If you have any difficulties with registration, you can stop by our front office and we can renew/register your membership in person. Monroe Township residents only. Proof of residency required. ■

Visit the New Fitness Center

Our Fitness Center is in a new, larger location within the Community Center. This facility is available to residents who are 18 years of age or older and are included in our annual Center Membership. The Fitness Center is perfect for anyone looking to restart their fitness regimen, start a new one, or even to have a treadmill to run on indoors on a rainy day. Fitness Center equipment must be booked in advance and can be done so via your Community Pass account page. Stop by today to check out the Fitness Center and the many other fitness offerings we provide. ■

Join the Octoberfest 2021 Celebration!

The Octoberfest 2021 celebration will be held Sunday, October 24 at noon at the Community Center, located at 120 Monmouth Road. The day will consist of vendors, music, rides and delicious food. Admission is free. Bring your friends and whole family to enjoy an afternoon of good tunes and great company.



September 2021 Center Activities

Pre-Register for All Programs
> REQUIRED EACH MONTH! <
609-448-7140

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>If You are Unable to Attend a Program, You Must Call 609-448-7140, ext. 216, to CANCEL. Waitlisted Members Will Appreciate It!</p>	<p>"No Room in the Box" for Mon. 9/20/21</p> <p>Mark Your Calendar: HEALTHY BITES Sept. 20, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 Healthy Living 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 1:00 Parkinson's Support 2:00 Amani Music</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:00 Chair Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball 9:30 Open Cards/Games 10:15 Body Works 10:30 Between the Covers 10:30 Spinal Strains 2:00 About Golda Meir</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Fun Friday 10:00 Open Canasta 10:30 Judge for Yourself 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Qi Gong 2:00 Laughs with Robin</p>
<p>6 OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>LABOR DAY</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Programs Postponed Today.</p> <p>L' Shanah Tovah Have a sweet year!</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 2:00 Music with JoAnn</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:00 Chair Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball Cholesterol Scr., By Appt. 9:30 Open Cards/Games 9:30 Community Pass 10:15 Body Works 11:00 Symptoms You Can't Ignore 2:00 Maggie's Sinatra</p>	<p>10</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Fun Friday 10:00 Open Canasta 10:30 America's Trivia 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Qi Gong 2:00 Jerry's Travels</p>
<p>13</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Cardio Blast 10:00 Bodies in Motion 11:00 Early Days of TV 11:00 Tai Chi 1:00 Yarn It / Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 Cecilia's Music 4:00 Ballroom Dance</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball 9:30 Chorus 10:00 Drums Alive 10:30 Consumer Fraud 11:00 Green Thumbs 2:00 West Side Stories</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Total Toning 9:30 Community Pass 10:00 Move & Groove 11:00 Sepsis 101 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 Diabetes Support</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Programs Postponed Today.</p> <p>Yom Kippur</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Open Canasta 10:00 Fun Friday 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Aloha, from Hawaii 11:00 Qi Gong 12:00 T.A.P. (MTHS) 2:00 Variety with Mike</p>
<p>20</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Cardio Blast 10:00 Bodies in Motion 10:30 Robinson Artshop 11:00 Tai Chi 11:00 Non-Verbal Cues 1:00 Yarn It / Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 Warren & Bob 4:00 Ballroom Dance</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:00 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball No Chorus 10:00 Drums Alive 10:30 Bereavement Group 10:30 Maya Angelou 1:30 Cancer Support 2:00 Stonebridge Jammers</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 Feeding the Birds 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 Rhythm & Sound 2:00 Caregivers Support</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:00 Chair Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball 9:30 Open Cards/Games 9:30 Mah Jongg Class (\$) 10:00 Art Expression (\$) 10:15 Body Works 10:30 Planning for the Unpredicted 1:00 Fall Wine Glasses 2:00 Robert Eric Duo</p>	<p>24</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Open Canasta 10:00 Fun Friday 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Qi Gong 1:00 FRIENDS BINGO (\$)</p>
<p>27</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Cardio Blast 10:00 Bodies in Motion 10:30 Art of the Masters 10:30 Famous Brooklynites 11:00 Tai Chi 1:00 Yarn It / Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 Fun with Al Getler 4:00 Ballroom Dance</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:00 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball No Chorus 10:00 Drums Alive 10:30 For Men's Sake 2:00 About Mel Brooks 2:00 Science Today 5:30 Gazebo Special: Donato & Yeager</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30 Walking Club 9:00 Open Cornhole 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 Trivia Time 10:30 Robinson Artshop 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 Sunset Boulevard</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9:00 Chair Yoga 9:00 Open Bocce Ball 9:30 Open Cards/Games 9:30 Mah Jongg Class 10:00 Art Expression 10:15 Body Works 10:30 Know Before You Go 1:00 Fall Wine Glasses 2:00 Quickest Thinkers</p>	<p>SEPT - ASTER</p>

Join a Local Sports Team

Monroe is proud to be home to a wide variety of sports organizations.

Monroe Hoops Basketball - www.monroetownshipbasketball.org

Jr. Falcon Wrestling - josephfiordaliso24@gmail.com

Monroe Special Sports - www.monroespecialsports.com

Monroe Township Girls Softball Assoc. - www.monroesoftball.net

Boy and Girls Lacrosse - www.monroelacrosse.com

Monroe Township Ice Hockey - www.monroeicehockey.com

Monroe Township Soccer Club - www.monroesoccer.com

Monroe Township Baseball Assoc. - www.monroebaseball.com

Monroe Wolverine Football & Cheer - www.monroewolverines.org



Bike Rodeo

Officers Lucasiewicz, Salemi, Bennett, and Brandt helped out with Bike Rodeo on July 18. Children learned how to conduct bicycle and helmet checks, learned about bike safety and were rewarded helmets, sunglasses and flashing lights. The fun day ended with Four Boys Ice Cream giving all participants free ice cream certificates!



Girls Softball Championship

Girls softball celebrated the end of a great season at the championship game on June 17. To honor the celebration Mayor Dalina threw out the first pitch.



Summer Tunes



The Senior Center hosted the Sweet Caroline Neil Diamond tribute performance for seniors on July 27. Senior Services is committed to plan meaningful entertainment, activities and services for all members.



The Cultural Arts Commission hosted a series of Music in the Park events at the Gazebo at Thompson Park throughout the summer. Residents danced around as Neil Young Tribute band Decade played tunes from the 70s.

Have a Ball with Bocce Ball

It's "Game Time" at the Senior Center every Tuesday and Thursday at 9 a.m.



Gone Fishin'



On June 19, Monroe Recreation hosted the annual Youth Fishing Derby at Thompson Park. Participants were able to compete to win prizes while enjoying a beautiful day by the water.



Splish Splash!



The Spray Park at Avenue K officially opened for the season on June 18. Visitors of all ages enjoyed cooling off from the summer sun while playing at Veteran's Park.

Road Improvements Completed in Monroe this Summer

Monroe has launched a number of road upgrades throughout town that included resurfacing, repaving, stormwater improvements, ADA ramps and new crosswalks.

Completed road improvement projects include portions of the following roadways:

- **Schoolhouse Road** (from Mounts Mills Road to Spotswood-Gravel Hill Road)
- **Gravel Hill Road** (Federal Road to Spotswood-Gravel Hill Road)
- **England Road** (Federal Road to Bella Drive)
- **Wyckoff Mills Road** (Applegarth Road to farm)
- **North Disbrow Hill Road** (from Butcher to Disbrow Hill Road)
- **Avenue G** (from 13th Street to 10th Street)
- **Matchaponix Extension**
- **Whispering Woods Boulevard**
- **Dominic Drive**
- **Jackie Court**
- **Camelot Neighborhood** (off Schoolhouse Road). This project was funded through a grant from the NJ Department of Transportation and includes Florence Drive, Nathaniel Street, Forman Avenue and Holly Road.

Middlesex County has also undertaken road improvements on county roads in Monroe.

- They include:
- **Perrineville Road** (Dey Grove Road north to Union Valley Road)
 - **Pergola Avenue** (from Jamesburg border to new traffic signal at Matchaponix Avenue)
 - **Forsgate Drive** (from railroad tracks to Half Acre Road)

The county also partnered with Monroe to construct new traffic lights with dedicated left turn signals in all directions at Matchaponix Avenue/Pergola Avenue/Spotswood-Gravel Hill Road. This signal was activated on Monday, June 14. ■



The highly used Gravel Hill Road was repaved in a series of road improvement projects throughout the town.

National Night Out



This year, the township hosted the first ever Car & Truck Show during National Night Out. The public was able to vote for their favorite car and trophies were awarded to the top three beauties.



Officer Patrick McCann spent the evening in the dunk tank as the kids took their turns trying to soak him.



Honorary Officer Danny "Gooch" (middle) served as the official greeter for National Night Out along with help from Mayor Stephen Dalina (left) and Chief Michael Biennas (right).



You Got What it Takes?



Cornhole is now available at the Senior Center every Wednesday and Friday at 9 a.m.

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Finding the Perfect Book



On July 31, Monroe residents were invited to take part in the Bookmobile's animal-themed Scavenger Hunt at Thompson Park. Residents were also invited to browse through a selection of books from the Library and relax with some fun games.

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