

Committee Meeting – March 16, 2009
MAYOR’S REPORT

MAYOR’S ROUND TABLE:

I and many other Ocean County mayors met with Congressman Adler and a number of state and federal officials to discuss transportation issues in Ocean County and our towns. In particular, I brought up the issue of the pedestrian walkway over the new Parkway bridges. I was assured by the Turnpike Authority that will have a continuous 8 foot walkway with a guard rail. The Administrator met today with County officials on this issue and will give us an update during his report.

COUNTY WISH LIST MEETING:

The Administrator and I met with County officials to discuss our annual “wish list” of County projects within our township. Our list included many routine items such as; street sweeping, roadside cleanup, traffic signal timing and crosswalk concerns. Some of the major County projects slated for Barnegat are the resurfacing of Gunning River Road and of West Bay Avenue from Gunning River Road to Route 9. I asked the County Engineer to try and coordinate with the DOT to have them repair and resurface the Route 9 and Bay Avenue intersection at the same time.

SHARED SERVICES MEETING:

The Deputy Mayor, Administrator and I met with School officials for our monthly shared services meeting. Many items were discussed including; the recent pedestrian study, combining our upcoming trash contracts, summer camps, facility usage, Schedule C paving projects to name a few. Both the Township and the School District are working hard together to see where we can combine our efforts and expenses to save us all some money.

LIGHTHOUSE DRIVE CONSTRUCTION:

As of March 3rd, Lighthouse Drive was closed to all vehicular traffic and will remain closed for approximately 30 days. This is to facilitate the construction of the new Lighthouse Drive, intersecting First Street. Traffic is being rerouted to Nautilus Drive and Harpoon Drive for anyone traveling to and from Ocean Acres and Manahawkin. Please allow a little more time while traveling through this area, especially during the morning and evening commuting hours.

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Also, as was announced, the new southbound Parkway on and off ramp is slated to open in about a month. At that time, the current southbound off ramp will be closed to allow for further construction of the new bridges. Considerable construction will be occurring as we reach the warmer months on both the interchange and West Bay Avenue so I urge all of our residents to please be patient, be courteous and drive with care through this area. One update to report is that the new northbound ramp was opened this weekend.

PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE:

The Administrator and I are working on setting up a “Property Tax Relief Workshop” for anyone wishing to file a tax appeal or learn more about the various state programs available to provide economic assistance. The Township is committed to seeing that all tax appeals receive a fair hearing at the County and that everyone is aware of any program they may be able to take advantage of. The workshop/s will be in late March or early April.

MARCH SNOW STORM:

Just when we thought that winter was over, March greeted us with nearly a foot of snow on the 1st & 2nd, and we were ready for it. For the first time ever, our Public Works Department along with Water & Sewer and other trained personnel, had 21 trucks with plows out to cover our streets by just after midnight on March 1st. All of our roads were cleared by mid morning and salting operations commenced to further insure safe passage throughout the town. On behalf of the entire Committee, I want to thank all of our personnel for their outstanding efforts during this storm and thank our Administrator for seeing to it that we had the resources to handle the job on our own.

In the past, we would have had to rely on an outside contractor to supplement our crews in a storm of 8 inches or more and at a substantial additional cost to the Township. We are now confident that we can handle whatever Mother Nature wants to dish out. And, I was surprised to receive a letter from Atlantic City Electric commending the Township on how well we handled the storm and made their job much easier. I have asked that a copy of their letter be placed in the files of all of the department heads involved.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

The Economic Development Committee met and reorganized for 2009. The Chair and Vice Chair will remain with Frank Santolla as Chairman and Jerry Thompson as Vice Chairman. The EDC welcomed new member, Brian Hansford and voted to have Wayne Pawlowski fill a vacancy on the Commission. The EDC will be focusing on two projects this year, one being an informational sign on Route 9 & Barnegat Blvd. and the other being a brochure promoting commercial development in the Township.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

The Historic Preservation Commission reorganized in February and again voted to appoint Ginny Melchiondo as the Chairwomen and Doug Brenner as the Vice Chairman. They welcomed new member, Sharon Ragonese. The HPC reviewed an application by Mid Lantic Construction for their new office on the corner of Route 9 and Burr Street.

**Jeffrey M. Melchiondo
Mayor, Barnegat Township**