

## RESOLUTION 2020 – 348

### RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BARNEGAT, COUNTY OF OCEAN STATE OF NEW JERSEY SUPPORTING HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY

**WHEREAS**, rural areas of the State of New Jersey are serviced by service providers with respect to high-speed internet service; and

**WHEREAS**, having access to high-speed internet service is a necessary and vital part of living in today's society; and

**WHEREAS**, the recent pandemic of COVID-19 further illustrates just how vital access to high-speed internet has become to society, especially during times of crisis or emergencies and how not having access to high-speed internet has the potential to cripple a community, particularly a rural one, denying the community the capacity for remote student learning and remote working arrangements with a resident's employer; and

**FURTHERMORE**, during a time of crisis not having access to high-speed internet has the potential to shut down all functions of government by denying essential employees and elected officials the ability to work, communicate, distribute information, conduct meetings, and perform the other requirements of a functioning government through remote capabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Barnegat believes that the service providers of aerial line high-speed internet in the State of New Jersey are more than capable of and financially sound enough to achieve a 100% rate of high-speed internet accessibility but choose not to pursue that goal unless forced to through regulation because the providers feel it is not profitable; and

**WHEREAS**, not having access to high-speed internet service is a plight on students, reducing their educational opportunities and ability to learn in a modern world; and

**WHEREAS**, not having access to high-speed internet service causes a great burden to businesses, places them at a disadvantage, and reduced chances for economic development in rural areas; and

**WHEREAS**, not having access to high-speed internet service can cause rural healthcare facilities to shut down because they cannot access required networks to function, thereby further creating negative impacts on New Jersey residents' health; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Barnegat is desirous of assisting and cooperating with other public entities, the State Legislature, to pursue a petition before the Board of Public Utilities to enact regulations requiring a 100% rate of high-speed internet accessibility in each individual municipality throughout the State of New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, unless the Board of Public Utilities requires service providers of aerial line high-speed internet to provide 100% high-speed internet access in all municipalities throughout New Jersey, the State will have unintentionally subverted the public's significant investment in the Highlands Preservation Zones, farmland, and open space preservation by not allowing those areas' business to be economically competitive and viable over the long term.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Barnegat, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey that the Board of Public Utilities is requested to order all service providers of high-speed internet to provide high-speed internet to all municipalities throughout the State with each municipality being afforded a 100% rate of high-speed internet accessibility; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that our State representatives use their authority to require service providers of high-speed internet to achieve a 100% rate of high-speed internet access for each individual municipality throughout the State of New Jersey; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Municipal Clerk for the Township of Barnegat be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of New Jersey, the Senate President of the New Jersey State Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly of the State of New Jersey, the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the Board of Public Utilities; and

**BE IT FURTHERMORE RESOLVED** that the Municipal Clerk for the Township of Barnegat be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Municipal Clerks of all 565 municipalities in the State, encouraging them to pass similar resolutions so that during times of crisis and emergency all New Jersey residents have access to high-speed internet access thus allowing employees to work remotely, healthcare providers to function, governments to continue to function ensuring the health, safety and welfare of residents, and also so that all children in the State of New Jersey have an equal opportunity to access information critical to furthering their educations.

### **CERTIFICATION**

I, Michele Rivers, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Barnegat, County of Ocean State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee at their meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2020.

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Michele Rivers, RMC  
Municipal Clerk