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Berkeley Heights Newsletter - December 2018

Welcome to the Berkeley Heights Newsletter, created by the Berkeley Heights Communications Committee to provide residents with an easy way to learn about what's happening in town. Watch for it in your inbox ([sign up here](#)) or pick up a paper copy at Town Hall, the Library or at Senior meetings.

Comments? Suggestions? Please send them to: BHCommunications@bhtwp.com

Township Updates

Municipal Complex

Big things are happening at Town Hall! The new Salt Dome is complete and our developer is currently loading it with salt for the upcoming winter! There has been a significant amount of excavation for the new municipal building and footers have begun to be put in the ground.

Soon our developer will demolish the old salt dome and you will be able to see the footprint for our new municipal building. With all of this progress, the Township Council updated the public at the last meeting on the progress and status of the overall project.

To recap, the municipal complex project was budgeted at \$32 million – this included a guaranteed maximum price contract of \$26.82 million for our developer Epic Construction to construct the municipal building and salt dome and demolish the old buildings; Technology and Furniture of \$1.768 million; Township Contingencies of \$753,000; and Soft Costs of \$2.65 million.

As of December 1, 2018, Epic has purchased materials or signed contracts with subcontractors for 98.5% of the total project, locking in pricing for those materials and construction services, and realizing a savings to the Township of \$900,000.

The excavation of the soil for the new salt dome resulted in change orders to the contract due to unforeseen conditions (conditions not included in the \$26.8 million GMP) due to unsuitable soils that needed to be addressed. These unforeseen conditions cost \$500,000. At the December 4th Township Council meeting, a resolution was passed allowing the Township to apply a portion of the \$900,000 in Township savings on the GMP to offset the \$500,000 in unforeseen conditions costs.

To date, Epic has approximately \$470,000 of its contingency unused. The Township receives 70% of any unused Epic contingency amount upon project completion.

In addition, still to be realized are reimbursement from Union County for approximately half of the construction cost of the Sale Dome (reimbursement anticipated in the amount of \$650,000); funds from the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act (the terms are

still being developed in Trenton); and savings from New Jersey Smart Start Incentives for various energy efficient initiatives included in the new municipal building.

In short, as the year comes to a close, the total cost of the municipal complex projects is currently as follows:

Original not to exceed Project estimate: \$32,000,000
(Less) Net GMP Savings to date:..... (400,000)
(Less) Township unused Contingency to date:. (753,650)
(Less) Est. Union County Reimbursement:..... (650,000)
Total Municipal Complex Project Cost:... \$30,196,350

We will provide an update on the additional potential savings as they are realized.

Make sure to follow the progress of the construction and see what will be happening in upcoming weeks via the [Weekly Construction Updates](#) on the Township website.

Township Reorganization Meeting

The annual Township Reorganization meeting will be on Tuesday, January 1, at 2:30pm. Our new Mayor, Angie Devanney, will be sworn in along with newly elected Township Council members Alvaro Medeiros and Stephen Yellin.

In addition, the Council will vote to appoint the various professionals who serve our town, including municipal attorney services, the Township planner, labor/personnel counsel services, redevelopment counsel, bond counsel, tax attorney, auditing services, etc. As these positions are appointed and announced, we will communicate changes to professional staffing.

Warren Proposed Development

The Township has formally filed a written objection to Warren's proposed housing developments (K. Hovnanian and Premier sites) that border Berkeley Heights. Those objections include feedback from residents, elected and appointed officials, and professionals regarding the impacts of the proposed development projects on Berkeley Heights residents and infrastructure. Those concerns, among others filed, must be addressed by Warren Township and the developers.

Please read the a [summary of the recent filings, issues raised and court decisions](#).

Background on this issue can be found on the [Berkeley Heights Township website](#).

Fall Leaf and Yard Debris Collection

The annual Fall Leaf and Yard Debris Collection program began the second week of October and **will continue throughout the Township until the end of the year**. Please place bagged leaves curbside for pick up. All branches must be tied with twine. Please address questions to Jim Ferratti, Director of Public Works, at 464-0427.

Details can be found on the [Township website](#).

Remaining Leaf Collection Schedule:

- Section 1 and will revisit all sections before year-end.

Remaining Brush Collection Schedule:

- Section 5

Recycling Schedule - Please note schedule changes

Big changes are coming to the recycling schedule starting in January. Our contractor, Giordano announced these changes this week. Please note:

Beginning in January 2019, the Township will be divided into two sections for recycling pickup. Snyder Avenue is the dividing line between the East and West sides of Berkeley Heights. **Pickup will occur every other Wednesday for streets East of Snyder Ave and every other Thursday for streets West of Snyder Avenue.** Both sides of Snyder and Horseshoe will be picked up on Wednesdays. Berkeley Heights Township contracts with Giordano Company to collect recycling.

[Full 2019 schedule with East & West dates is online.](#)

Specific questions can be sent directly to Giordano at (service@gogreengiordano.com) for the most up-to-date information. Read a summary of [Recycling "Do's and Don'ts"](#).

Remaining 2018 Recycling Dates:

- December 26

January 2019 Recycling Dates:

- EAST: January 9, 23
- WEST: January 10, 24

Township Council Meeting Schedule

Township Council meetings take place at Town Hall (29 Park Avenue) at 7 pm.

Upcoming Township Council meetings:

- January 1, 2019, 2:30 pm - Annual Reorganization Meeting

Letter from Mayor Woodruff

For nine years I have had the privilege of serving the Township of Berkeley Heights. During this time, I have been continually impressed by how our Town has flourished and by all the great volunteers who have helped us bring about positive change while respecting our long-held traditions.

Running the Township on the limited percent of tax dollars it receives has required strict discipline and careful scrutiny to maintain costs, fees, and salaries. I'm proud of what we accomplished together with our employees, who consistently demonstrated dedication to their work and a pride in our Township.

I'm gratified to see the many great things ahead for our community. A new Administration Building, which will house all of the Township's departments, including the library, and provide great opportunities for all of our citizens, will open within the next year or two. A brand-new YMCA will open in 2020, together with a newly constructed community pool.

While spurred by state mandates none of us would have voluntarily opted into, new residential developments will enhance our Downtown and increase support for our local businesses. We maintained reasonable density, dictated design standards, and arranged

for an alternative payment of taxes which increases available dollars to the Township and avoids any tax appeals on these properties for the next thirty years.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together with our residents and extend my gratitude to all who have contributed to our success.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve. I wish the best to our newly elected Township officials and wish all our citizens a happy holiday season.

Mayor Robert Woodruff

Committee & Board Updates

Interested in Getting Involved? Apply for Township Boards & Committees Positions

Each year, there are openings for positions as members of Township Boards, Committees and Commissions. The Township welcomes volunteers who have specific experience applicable to each committee/board/commission. Please note that there are only a few volunteer opportunities available this year as there are staggered terms for members of each committee/board/commission.

There may be more committees formed in the coming year that will provide additional opportunities to participate. Your qualifications will be carefully considered and, if your skillset matches the needs of the committee/board/commission you are most interested in, you will be contacted if an opening becomes available.

If you are interested in applying for a position, [submit this application](#) to Barbara Russo, Township Executive Assistant (brusso@bhtwp.com) or please bring a completed paper copy to her attention at Town Hall (29 Park Avenue)

Here is the current list of [all Township sponsored boards and committees](#).

Communications Committee Update

The Communications Committee is working to upgrade the Township website. The new website will be easier to use for residents (on phone and tablet too) and easier for Township employees to update. The Committee is planning to give a project update at a Township Council meeting early in 2019. Please send questions or comments about the website project or other communications issues and ideas to BHCommunications@bhtwp.com.

Peppertown Park Renewal Committee Update

Peppertown Park Renewal Committee will be hosting our **First Texas Hold 'Em Fundraiser** at Mt. Carmel Society at 56 River Road.

Save the Date February 23rd, 2019

More details to follow in January

Peppertown Park Committee is a non-profit organization (501 (c) (3) dedicated to raising funds to be used for the much needed renovation and redesign of the park located in the center of Berkeley Heights. Please visit our website at Peppertownpark.com.

Downtown Beautification Committee (DBC)

In keeping with our mission of keeping our Downtown vibrant, the DBC creates opportunities for Berkeley Heights businesses to connect with our community and for residents to show their community spirit.

Bright Nights in Berkeley Heights: We are encouraging businesses to decorate storefronts with warm white, non-blinking lights for the holidays, a "Bright Nights" red bow, or both. Our goal is to enhance the festive feel of Town, showcase our inviting community, and hopefully boost commercial traffic during the dark afternoons.

'Meet the Owners' campaign: Customer loyalty is often driven by personal connections. To help brick-and-mortar businesses connect to area residents, the DBC is featuring business owners in short personal bios on our social media pages. This campaign will go on all year. If you would like your business to be featured, please email:

DBC@BHTWP.com

210th Anniversary of Berkeley Heights: Soon we will start our fundraiser celebrating the 210th Anniversary. Each '*Established 1809*' wood sign sold will help us add new hanging baskets to Springfield Avenue and support other initiatives to benefit the appearance and vibrancy of downtown. Look for more details on our [Facebook page](#).

Library Board

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey conducted by Berkeley Heights Public Library. The information provided will influence the decisions being made for the new site on Park Avenue

Briefly:

- We received 504 responses
- 54% in the 26-54 age group responded and 45% in 55 plus, all age groups from under 12 to 70+ were represented
- 70% visit BHPL at least one time per month
- Most important collections: books (70% for adults, 38% for children, 27% for young adults, and 24% for teens); DVDs (36%); and, digital media (35%)
- Most important services: BHPL's website; reserving books online; Inter-Library Loan; Wi-Fi; programs for children; databases; and, public access computers and copier
- Need more books, DVDs and downloadable titles
- New library should include a meeting room, quiet study space for individuals and small groups, and a separate space for teens

A complete summary of the results is available on [BHPL's website](#). Please follow the BHPL on [Facebook](#) for regular updates on BHPL happenings.

Community Updates & Events

Berkeley Heights Diversity Council Events (BHDC)

MLK-Jr Day of Service: January 21, 2019 at Autumn Lake Rehabilitation Center, 35 Cottage Road from 2:30 - 4:30pm

Annual day of service celebrating and honoring Dr. King Jr's legacy by fostering cross generational relationships. Residents of Autumn Lake are paired with children of all ages to engage in games, activities, and crafts, concluding with a reading of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream Speech". A great service opportunity too.

Lunar New Year- Partnering with Berkeley Heights YMCA February 2nd, 4:30 - 6:30pm at the Berkeley Heights YMCA at 550 Springfield Avenue

Celebrate the Lunar New Year - "Year of the Pig" - with food, fun, performances and crafts. The Y is also holding a Lunar New Year Art Contest open to all HS students in the surrounding area. [More information can be found online.](#)

Women's History Month - March 2019: In Celebration of Women's History Month, the BHDC will continue their W.O.W. series recognizing wonderful achievements and unsung Sheroes of Berkeley Heights. Please nominate your favorite Shero via email: BHdiversity@gmail.com.

Community Suppers: The Berkeley Heights Diversity Council is launching Community Suppers early in 2019. Turning our words into action, we encourage residents to host Berkeley Heights Community Suppers. These Suppers bring together small groups of friends, in a casual and safe space to intentionally discuss local and national happenings, and how we can build a stronger community together. To learn more about Community Suppers, please like the [BHDC Facebook page](#) or email BHdiversity@gmail.com.

BHDC Members and Volunteer Opportunities - The BHDC is looking for volunteers and new members who may be interested in:

- Becoming an active participant in events and spreading the message of diversity and inclusion for all in Berkeley Heights
- Planning an event
- Hosting a Community Supper

Seniors Club Update (Ages 55+)

Please join the "Seniors" at their weekly meetings - Wednesdays at 10:30am at Mount Carmel (56 River Road). All welcome, working or retired. Everyone 55 and over is invited and encouraged to attend our 2019 trips and loads of parties.

Berkeley Heights has a 22-passenger senior bus equipped with a wheelchair lift. Three days a week it picks up seniors who want to run errands along Springfield Avenue or attend Senior Club meetings and other social events run by the Senior Club each month. Here's the [December schedule](#).

For information on senior activities, trips or clubs, please contact Joan Luciano at 908.665.9604 or email grandmaluciano@gmail.com.

January

Fantastic Friday/Super Saturday

Friday January 4 & Saturday January 5

Governor Livingston High School - schedule TBA

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