
TOWNSHIP OF MARLBORO

HURRICANE SEASON UPDATE

SUPERSTORM SANDY - 11TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER



*As a united community,
we continue to Weather the Storms.*

-MAYOR JONATHAN HORNİK



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STAY INFORMED  **SCAN ME**
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2023 HURRICANE U SEASON UPDATE

I write to Marlboro families each year on this anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, first and foremost, to remind you to be prepared. If you lived through weeks of impassable roads, power outages, fuel shortages and disruptions to work and school schedules eleven years ago, you understand what I am referring to. We are in the midst of another busy hurricane season which keeps our Office of Emergency Management glued to weather reports and planning for the worst case scenarios. To learn more, visit ‘Storm Alerts & Updates’ on the Township website.



While Mother Nature has certainly been relentless, the pandemic presented us with a new kind of challenge, changing nearly every aspect of life for much longer than a few weeks. It also served to remind us that emergencies of any kind can take place at any time. We get through difficult times by being prepared, keeping open lines of communication, and most importantly by working together as a community. On the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy each year, we are reminded and can take comfort in the fact that Marlboro, as a united community, continues to Weather the Storms. At the same time, continued vigilance and thoughtful preparation in advance of whatever may come our way is critical.





MARLBORO GIVES BACK

We could not do all we do without our resident volunteers. There are numerous opportunities for all interests and ages.

Teens can participate in the Teen Advisory Committee (TAC) boasting the largest membership in the State, with over 1,800 registered, committed to *Do Good!* in our community. Teens interested in a future in law enforcement, might consider joining the Police Cadets. On the other side of the spectrum,



we have an active Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) which provides feedback directly to my office about how to improve our community for senior residents.

Let us remember that our Township relies on volunteers to staff our First Aid Squads and Fire Departments. We are remarkably fortunate to have such a dedicated group of citizens ready and willing to serve the public and quite literally save lives at any time of day or night.

Also, when we speak of community service, it is important to recognize the work of military veterans. In this regard, I am proud that Marlboro was recognized as New Jersey's first "Veteran Friendly Community" by the State Veterans Chamber of Commerce. I salute the men and women who have sacrificed on behalf of our country.

We are a proudly diverse and multicultural community and welcome all residents to get involved. Visit 'Volunteer Opportunities' in the 'I need to learn about' dropdown box on the website homepage, and



keep an eye out for notices sent via Township email and social media outlets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining the Township's tax base through economic development is inextricably linked to our continued quality of life and financial stability. Attracting new high-end retail establishments not only makes quality dining and shopping more accessible to residents, but helps ease the residential tax burden. We formed the **Economic Development Committee (EDC)** in 2008 with a mandate to make Marlboro more business friendly and attract new enterprises. Since then, we have more than 1.7 million square feet of new commercial development and \$132 million in new tax ratables.

An innovative program born in 2012 and the first of its kind in the country, was the **Property Tax Reward Program** enabling residents to shop locally and save money on property taxes. It has since been instituted in other towns and, in 2021 NJ passed a law modeled after our program. More than 35% of Marlboro households are registered and have saved more than \$378,000 on their property taxes. Marlboro homeowners and, new this year, renters can all save by participating in this free program. Learn more. Download the PTcard app.

We strive for "Smart Growth" as we generate new, clean, commercial tax ratables and support Marlboro local business for the benefit of the community at large.





FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

We all want and deserve a strong community with a strong infrastructure, great schools and safe neighborhoods. We have not only been able to accomplish this, but have done so while improving our financial footing, critical to maintaining Marlboro’s status as one of the premier suburban communities in New Jersey.

GRANT AWARDS

First, some great news. In 2023, we applied for and were awarded grants by the State of NJ totaling \$1,059,850 including projects which help make Marlboro safer and more pedestrian friendly.

A state grant in the amount of \$300,000 for the “Route 79 Bike Path Project” involves the construction of an 8 foot wide asphalt bicycle path on State Highway 79 from Station Road, where it will connect to the Henry Hudson Trail. The plan also provides for an extension of a safe pedestrian route to the Wickatunk Post Office, shops, Montessori Academy and NJ Transit bus stop at Ridge Road. Also included in the project is a blinking pedestrian warning signal along Route 79 near Station Road.

In May of 2023, the Township received a \$447,000 Local Transportation Grant from the NJDOT for the construction of curb and sidewalk along Topanemus Road from its intersections with Wyncrest Road and Julian Way at the Coltsbrook development. This project also involves the construction of sidewalk along Wyncrest Road from Township Drive to its intersection with School Road West and links

residential developments with schools, religious and other public locations including the Recreation Center and Library.

Other state grants included \$246,850 for improvements to Ticetown Road and \$66,000 for playground improvements.

Through our annual capital program, we continue to complete road, traffic and sidewalk improvement projects, preserve open space in key areas, and these grant awards are another win for traffic safety and circulation in Marlboro.

ADVOCATING

We have worked very hard over the years to develop new and affordable programs for adults age 60 and over. We recognize how important physical activity and social programs go towards maintaining the well-being of this growing population.

This past June, I testified in Trenton to support a bill introduced by Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin and co-sponsored by Senator Vin Gopal, which proposed to cut taxes for Marlboro seniors by 50%. In a hearing before the Committee, I asserted that Senior Citizens are still footing the bill for schools, long after their kids and even grandkids have graduated. While we do what we can to give seniors a break at the local level with free or low cost programming through our Recreation Department, reduced rates for swim club membership and free weekend parking in Marlboro commuter lots, only action at the State level can provide the needed tax relief. Many generations of families choose to call Marlboro





TOWNSHIP BUDGET AND TAXES

In New Jersey, towns are charged with collecting property taxes for all local government entities including public school districts (Marlboro K-8 and FRHSD), Monmouth County and individual Fire Districts. If you think of your property tax bill as a pie chart, **only about 18% of your property taxes remain with the Town** to pay for municipal services such as police, parks, public works and road improvements.

All towns in New Jersey are “creatures of the State”, subject to its regulations, mandates and to paying the bills it sends down to municipalities. Since 2007, costs mandated by the state have increased by approximately 80%. However, at the local level, I am proud to have delivered a budget which is both fiscally prudent and

responsible, made possible because of the Township’s continued strong operating results. **Our budget picture remains stable, held at an average of about 2% annual rate of increase since 2007**, in spite of aggressive inflation, double digit increases in state-mandated payments, a public health crisis and numerous impactful weather events

The strength of the Township’s balance sheet and strong management are the driving factors behind the triple A bond ratings from both Standard & Poors and Moody’s. For 2022, we received yet another clean audit from the Township’s independent auditor. Remarkably, three different audit firms over 11 consecutive years have rendered the same opinion! In fact, during a presentation at a recent Township Council meeting, **auditors**

stated that our records were ‘pristine’ and our debt service low, in line with their other triple A rated municipalities.

I am proud to say that our 2023 budget was once again adopted in a bi-partisan manner with no increase in municipal government taxes. Our goal is to responsibly fund the programs and services which residents deserve while maintaining our status as a premier suburban community in the State of New Jersey, and one of the safest in the nation.

FOR SENIORS

*(continued from previous page) “home”, and I constantly run into fellow Marlboro High School graduates who are raising families here. Many parents like me, who grew up in town and came back home, can think of nothing better than having their children live in the safe and supportive community that is Marlboro. I hear from grandparents living in Town that they would love for their children and grandchildren to be able to settle down here. I believe it is important to the fabric of our community that we encourage generations of families to stay here in town, together, and not be driven out by the cost of living in New Jersey so I am pleased to announce that shortly after my testimony, Governor Murphy signed the STAYNJ senior property tax credit affordability program into law. **The plan will reduce seniors’ property tax bill by 50%, up to \$6,500 for incomes under \$500,000.** The program will take effect in January 2026 and, in the meantime, ANCHOR benefits have been expanded.*



PUBLIC SAFETY

A premier suburban community such as Marlboro, can only achieve and maintain this status with a strong and persistent focus on public safety. The Marlboro Division of Police, led by Chief Peter J. Pezzullo, serves the community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - from the dispatchers who answer your call to the police officers who arrive at the scene.

We continue to receive high marks from independent safety organizations. We were recently ranked 19th safest in the nation and 4th in the state. We credit our success to advance preparation, long range planning and a focus on community policing.

EMERGENCY DISPATCH – THE BACKBONE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

As Mayor, the public safety and health of our residents has always been one of the most important priorities of my administration. For this reason, I strongly believe that continuing to have Marlboro employees perform the dispatching services for Police, Fire and First Aid (EMS) best serves our residents.

There was a push by some here in Town to shut down our local dispatch operation and outsource those duties to the County. Under this model, when you or a loved one dials 911, a call taker located in Freehold or Neptune handles the call and dispatches out a first responder. I could not disagree more with this model.

I am pleased to report that we have undertaken the first significant upgrade to the Township’s communication system in 20 years utilizing a new state of-the-art infrastructure established by the New Jersey State Police. My plan to continue to dispatch emergency calls for police, Fire and EMS service with our own Marlboro employees, rather than outsourcing the function as some suggested, is in motion.

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. WE WILL DO SOMETHING.

In 2018, I introduced the 'See Something. Say Something. We Will Do Something.' campaign in response to the school shootings throughout the country. This program increased communication between our police and residents as well as placing armed police officers in every school, keeping our students and staff safe.



SCHOOL SAFETY AND EDUCATION

I am proud to say that every year we renew our shared service agreements with Marlboro K-8 and the Marlboro High School. Each public school within our borders has a specially trained police officer on site every day, keeping our students and staff safe.

HOME AND VEHICLE SECURITY

In March 2022, vehicle thefts began plaguing suburban communities like ours throughout New Jersey, I expanded the ‘See Something...’ program to include home and vehicle safety, encouraging residents to take basic steps to protect their property and call the police if something seems out of place, no matter how small.



PUBLIC SAFETY

We have a wonderful police department, but with 16,000 homes in 32 square miles, we can't do it alone. Our initiatives have made a difference and vehicle thefts in Marlboro are down 32% from the same period the year prior, not the case for Monmouth County or the State. Read on to learn how we have worked together as a community.



- **See Something. Say Something. We Will Do Something.** –
- Expanded to include vehicle thefts, this program encourages residents to contact the Police for anything that seems out of place and to be a partner in keeping our Town safe.
- Vehicle Pursuits Restored – Pressured Gov. Murphy and State leaders to reinstate vehicle pursuits.
- **Local Ordinance** - Maximize fines and require an arrest warrant for individuals who even attempt vehicle theft. We were the first in the state and other towns have followed our lead.
- **NJ Auto theft Task Force** – My budget included a Marlboro Officer on long term assignment to focus on the root of this State-wide issue.
- **Increased Patrols** – Enhanced Patrols to focus resources on targeted areas.
- **Take the Pledge** – Register on-line and a lawn sign is delivered to your home reminding you and your neighbors to take basic precautions and a visual message to potential thieves to move on.
- **Hybrid CompStat** - Using information technology, more Officers are on the streets overnight and non-police personnel, both stationary and roving, at different and strategic locations and times.
- **Police/Neighbors Ring Doorbell Partnership** – Electronic communication between police and residents and works with any security system.
- **Vacation Security Checks** – Upon request, Police will do extra patrols while you are away.
- **House Security Checks** – Free home security assessment
- **SWIFT 911** – Text messages from police reminding residents to lock up and take the fob.

These initiatives are making a difference. Since these programs began, our police have made 18 arrests and successful car thefts have decreased dramatically. It is important to note that every vehicle theft has involved access to the key fob or the car left unlocked giving entry to the criminal. Please lock your vehicle, take the fob, and do not leave the fob easily accessible in your home

RESILIENCY OF INFRASTRUCTURE



WATER, POWER, FUEL & SHELTER

Superstorm Sandy reinforced our commitment to preparing for worst case scenarios at the local level. Mother Nature and the needs of our residents cannot wait for the State and Federal governments to come to the rescue. With this premise, we continue to invest in critical infrastructure, leveraging grant dollars to ensure we are resilient.

With a \$250,000 grant from FEMA, the Recreation Center now has full backup generator capabilities, allowing the building to be a place for warming, for charging devices and to act as a shelter for residents.

Several major traffic intersections have been upgraded so that lights can operate

undergoing major renovations are required to have backup generators on site so that they can pump fuel even when the power is out.

Utilizing federally subsidized financing, the Marlboro Water Utility infrastructure continues to deliver a safe, reliable and affordable water supply, reducing short term reliance on outside water companies and ensuring that drinking water continues to flow during emergencies. It is worth noting that Marlboro Water customers still pay substantially less than surrounding water suppliers.

It is a reality that monopolies regulated by the State provide us with basic electricity,

cable and internet services. I continue to use the pulpit of the Mayor's office to pressure these monopolies into

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without dedicating public safety resources during outages. Our local code now requires that gas stations, either new or when

being more accountable to customers, and engaging State officials and legislators in the fight.



ROAD AND TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS

Our capital program is designed to invest in infrastructure for the long term. We have paved more than 25% of Township owned roads, allocating more than \$22 million towards road and drainage improvements in just the past five years. In 2022, I announced a \$35 million road program to be rolled out over 7 years, the largest investment in road improvements in the Township's history.

Aging infrastructure (most of Marlboro's residential development occurred between the 1980s and 2000s with no

management plan for the future) coupled with severe weather and aggressive snow removal has taken a toll on our more than 200 miles of local roadways. And maintaining the

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Township's infrastructure is expensive -- the cost of road reconstruction averages in excess of \$500,000 per mile! That said, we continue to invest knowing that it is good fiscal policy to do so, especially when we are able to borrow at the lowest rate available, due to our Triple-A rated status.

SIDEWALKS, TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS & DRAINAGE

Our multi-year capital plan continues to focus on roads, drainage, sidewalks and traffic intersections to improve vehicle safety as well as enhance the walkability of our community.

The Stattel Farm properties located at the busiest intersection in the Township are the centerpiece of our plan to connect and make key locations more accessible, including schools, the municipal complex and library, retail establishments and houses of worship. The Township's acquisition of the Stattel Farm, utilizing a combination of State, County and dedicated local open space funding protected 56 acres from development in perpetuity, preventing more than 500 homes from being built. An added bonus – that land is now home to the Marlboro Farmers Market! The Market first opened in 2019 and, now in its fifth season, it continues to grow and expand programming, including a November Holiday Market.

We also have a lot of roadways under County and State jurisdiction like Routes 18, 79,

520 and 3 (Tennent Road), and spend a lot of energy coordinating with outside public agencies to ensure this infrastructure gets the attention it deserves. The "Road Construction" section of the Township website contains our annual report on roads and project updates.

Towards the goal of improving pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, I recently announced that the Township had received two State grants totaling \$747,000. (*Learn more in Fiscal Responsibility, Grant Awards section*)

TOWNSHIP CREDIT RATING

Standard & Poors assigned a AAA rating to the Township in 2017 and, in 2021, Moody's followed suit. This makes Marlboro one of only six towns (out of 566) in the entire State, the top 1% - to enjoy the highest rating possible. The result is that we borrow at the lowest cost available, realizing significant taxpayer savings for critical road, drainage, park and other capital improvements. Marlboro Township's Triple A rating was reaffirmed late in 2022.

HIGH SCHOOL BUSING RESTORED

This summer, the Freehold Regional High School District announced that, due to state budget cuts, they would end ‘courtesy busing’ to the High School District. Under State law schools are only required to bus students who live more than 2.5 miles from their school. As I have stated repeatedly, I believe the term ‘courtesy’ to be a misnomer. Busing for our kids is not just some discretionary program, but an urgent matter of public safety.

As Mayor, despite the fact that I have no formal governmental role in either the Freehold Regional High School District (FRHSD) or Marlboro K-8 school districts, I can and will continue to be a strong advocate for our residents’ safety, quality of life and education.

For that reason, on June 20 of this year, I testified at the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee in favor of bill S-3950 that would restore busing for more than 3,000 students in FRHSD. It was approved at the committee, passed by both houses and was signed into law by Governor

Murphy in time for the new school year.

I want to thank Assembly Speaker Coughlin and Senators Gopal and O’Scanlon for their steadfast support in ensuring that this bill made its way to the Governor’s desk.

As a product of the Marlboro schools, I say with confidence and pride that our public school system is one of the most highly-regarded in the State. The quality of our school system is without question one of the

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primary motivating factors behind a family’s decision to choose Marlboro as a place to live, work and raise a family. The FRHSD is a model of what a school district should be; regionalization of administration, efficient and with high student achievement. It represents everything that other districts should strive for. This agreement

not only restored busing to the FRHSD but encourages more districts to move towards our model.





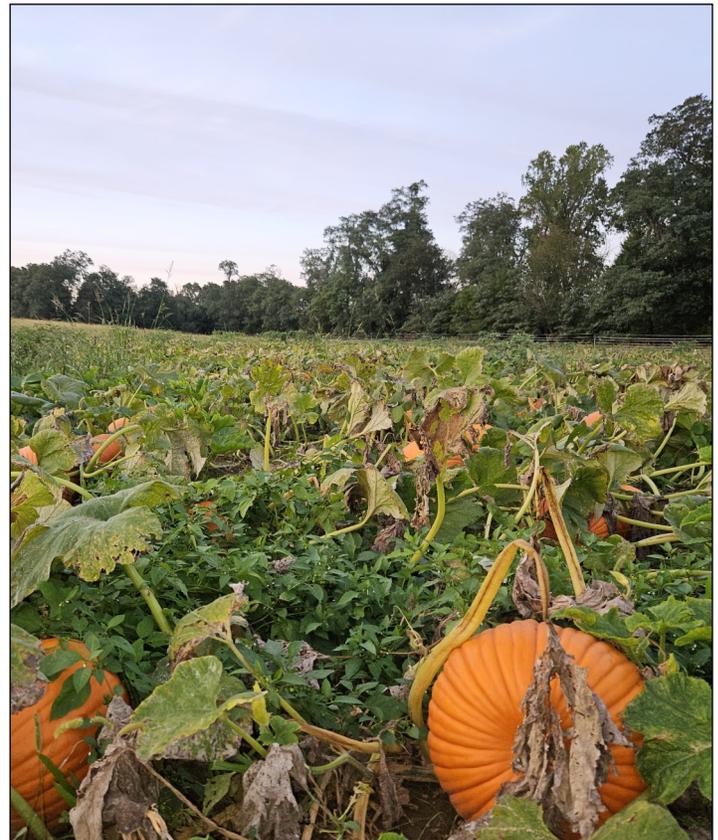
PARKS AND RECREATION



Our Parks and Recreation department offers programs and events for all ages and interests. In just the past two years we have authorized capital improvements to the H&L Soccer Field to include a paved path, lighting and cricket pitch. The Municipal Complex has a new turf field and communication stations providing for inclusive, interactive communication. Improvements to Woodcliff and Falson Parks are in progress. Country Park (swim club) is undergoing a major renovation. The basketball courts will be resurfaced and color coded and repairs made to the handball court. Two of the tennis courts will be made into 6 lighted, dedicated pickleball courts to meet the ever-growing demand for this sport. Finally, the walkway leading from the parking lot around the courts to the handball court will be repaved adding another walking trail to our park system.

OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURE

Our focus continues to be on maintaining the suburban character of the Township, preserving open space in lieu of residential development. During my tenure, we have preserved more than 280 acres of Marlboro township open space and farmland. This is in addition to 140 acres the county has preserved within our borders. We are doing this by leveraging State and County dollars with dedicated Open Space Trust Funds, with no impact on the local taxpayer. Last year, we preserved the VanMater Farm on Route 79 ensuring that another 28 acres of precious farmland will never be developed. In the coming weeks, we will protect another 15 acres of open space in the Beacon Hill section of Town, expanding an existing 33 acre oasis of Township park land. We still await the transfer of the state Marlboro Hospital property to the county as a park, adding an additional 411 acres of open space for generations of families to enjoy.



COMMUNICATION AND STAYING INFORMED

From emergencies and schedule changes to programs and updates, a great deal of the information referenced in this letter can be found on the Township website, and is regularly communicated through a combination of email blasts, social media posts, and “reverse 911” calls. We have experienced that, during times of emergencies, not all lines of communication are available. For that reason, we urge every resident to register for as many methods of communication as available. Scanning the QR code on this page or entering your email in the blue ‘Email Alerts’ box on the website homepage ensures that you receive Weekend Updates, Road



Construction Notices and Emergency Information. The ‘Resident Communication’ section of the website will direct you to Police SWIFT 911 registration – sign up for both calls and texts so you don’t miss a message.



I know how busy everyone is. With this in mind, we constantly work to make more municipal transactions available to residents online. Property look-ups, tax and utility payments, various zoning and engineering permits and appointments, pet licenses and parking permits are all available via the Township website. A secure drop box is available 24/7 in the Town Hall vestibule to deliver paperwork to any department and pay tax and water bills. One of the few silver linings of this pandemic is that you can now do even more of your Township business at a time that is convenient for you.



SCAN QR CODE
REGISTER FOR
TOWNSHIP
EMAIL

In Conclusion

Whether we are experiencing extreme weather, pandemics or public safety challenges, we work hard to preserve our neighborhoods and protect the quality of life for residents. This remains our guiding principle, applicable no matter what type of storm we face. And, as in the past, our efforts will continue in close partnership with residents and volunteers, in a manner consistent with our triple A credit rating and reputation as one of the finest residential communities in the State of New Jersey.

In community,

Mayor Jon Hornik