



April 19, 2020

Dear Harding Resident:

As we conclude another week of quarantine and economic shutdown, we have a few things to report to you.

We will have another Town meeting conference call on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Dial-in instructions will be sent by the Civic Association, Harding Alerts, and posted on the municipal website. Please join me, Township Administrator Bob Falzarano, Police Chief Erik Heller, Board of Health Chair Joe Cervone, New Vernon Fire Department Chief Peter Finkle, New Vernon First Aid Squad Captain Lotte Newlin, and New Vernon First Aid Squad President Larry Wepler on the call.

Our efforts to obtain personal protection equipment for our first responders have been successful and we believe our inventory is sufficient for now. We will continue to monitor our needs and keep an eye out for sources of PPE that might be available to us. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed material, equipment, and money to help us achieve this. It is a true testament to our Harding family.

We are adding a second day for recycling. The recycling center will now be open on Monday and Wednesday. The hours remain the same: 7:00 am to 8:00 am for seniors with assistance from DPW personnel, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm for everyone else with no assistance offered.

Though the State has ordered the closure of all County and State parks and open spaces, Harding's parks and open spaces remain open. Please observe appropriate spacing. Many of you have contacted me about these closures and I have reached out to the Governor's office about them. Efforts are being made to convince the Governor to reopen the parks and if you'd like to add your voice to that please call or email the Governor's office and your Assembly and Senate Representatives.

We are developing a plan to reopen our Municipal Building when the time comes. Until then, please use the drop box provided and feel free to call for any information you need. Town government is open and all functions are being performed. Property tax and other payment deadlines have not been changed.

I want to remind you to complete the Census form that was mailed to you. It can also be completed online. It is important that everyone do that since it impacts Harding in many ways, including legislative reapportionment and federal aid. Harding's response has been slow, so I encourage you to complete the form.

The Township Committee met virtually on Monday, April 13, 2020 with a number of residents participating by phone. We adopted the 2020 budget and capital ordinance. We have reached agreement on the redevelopment plan for the Hurstmont site and introduced the short-term and long-term financial agreements and the redevelopment agreements for final approval at the May 11, 2020 Township Committee meeting. Our affordable housing immunity has been extended to May 15 and we expect to be able to ask for a final order of immunity following the successful adoption of the agreements at the May meeting, ending the long road we began over three years ago.

Help for Harding continues to be a resounding success. Please reach out to helpforharding@gmail.com if you can volunteer or if you have any needs that we help you with. Thank you to everyone who has been involved.

Please support our local businesses in every way you can. The State-mandated closures are putting all of them at great risk of failure. We want all of them to be with us when the closure orders are lifted.

We cannot stop offering our thanks and gratitude to our first responders in Ttown and our healthcare providers. They continue to serve us in the face of great physical and emotional challenges and amidst enormous stress. Please thank them personally when you see them as they have been lifelines for us throughout this terrible time.

I hope to hear from you on Wednesday night.

Sincerely,

CHRIS YATES

Chris Yates
Mayor

21 BLUE MILL ROAD, POST OFFICE BOX 666
NEW VERNON, NEW JERSEY 07976
TELEPHONE (973) 267-8000
MARIAN & ALLAN P. KIRBY MUNICIPAL BUILDING