



April 9, 2020

Dear Harding Resident:

As we finish another week in quarantine, there are just a few things to report to you.

On Monday, April 13, we will have our regularly scheduled Township Committee Meeting. The meeting is open to the public. You cannot be physically present but you will be able to call in to listen and participate. Instructions will be posted on the website, along with the agenda for the meeting. The municipal budget was introduced last month with an extensive presentation and discussion and we will adopt the budget at this meeting. I have had a lot of questions about whether the budget will be changed to reflect what's going on and the answer is no. We do not believe any change to the budget is required. This will be the first time we have done an electronic meeting so please bear with us if we have any glitches.

The Governor ordered all State and County parks closed to the public. The order did not address Municipal properties and we have sought clarification but until we hear otherwise all of Harding's open spaces remain open. Please maintain your social distance while you are enjoying the properties.

The Governor also ordered construction to cease. The order is broad but has many exceptions. Residential construction work can proceed under some circumstances. Please reach out to Mark Fornaciari, our construction official, for guidance if you are in the midst of a project or have one that has been permitted. We will be as supportive as we are allowed to be to help you keep your work going.

The Governor ordered the primary election to be moved from June 2 to July 7. He has not made a decision regarding in-person or voting by mail.

I am happy to report that we have had some success in locating masks, though they are not all of the type most needed. Necessity being the mother of invention, we found a plastic strap that allows the ear loops on a mask to be converted to head straps. Dr. Michael Gervis, the science teacher at the Harding School, and Zac Chipperson, a Harding teenager, have been producing the straps on their 3-D printers. We are very grateful for their efforts as they will allow us to make better use of some of the masks we have found. This is just another example of the Harding family pitching in to solve problems and support our efforts. We remain on the search for gowns and gloves.

Help for Harding continues to grow and meet the needs of our vulnerable residents. If your economic circumstances are making it hard to keep groceries in your house or you have other needs please reach out to Elizabeth Sovolos at [helpforharding@gmail.com](mailto:helpforharding@gmail.com).

I have talked about how, as we move through this, we are planning for future emergencies and continually re-evaluating our emergency response plan and procedures to identify where we can improve. We will be adding a button to the municipal website to allow you to let us know where you think the plan is deficient, where it is strong, and where and how you think it can be improved. Our goal is always to have the best, most responsive emergency management plan in the State and your feedback is important. As soon as that is up and running on the website, we will let you know so keep your suggestions and comments in mind.

As we celebrate Passover and Easter this Holy week, let us count the blessings we have as a community and nation, surrounded by good neighbors, and pray for good health and an end to the pandemic. We know it will end, remembering the words of the Psalmist, “weeping may stay for the night but joy comes in the morning.”

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