



January 8, 2021

Dear Harding Resident,

Happy New Year! I hope that this note finds you and your families well and that you were able to find some joy over the Holidays. Each January, the Harding Township Committee re-organizes for the New Year. On January 4, 2021 the Township Committee said thank you to Dev Modi who stepped off the Township Committee after six (6) years of service. We welcomed Rita Chipperson to the Township Committee and look forward to working with her over the next several years. This year I was selected to be the Chair (or Mayor) of the Harding Township Committee. Chris Yates will serve as vice Chair (Deputy Mayor) for 2021 and remains dedicated to Harding. When Chris served as Mayor, he began to send letters to better inform our residents of all the things that the Town is doing with regard to COVID-19 and all other Town happenings. This is a welcome addition to the role of Mayor and a tradition that I will continue. We are here to help and you should not hesitate to call on us to ask questions or voice concerns.

Thank you all for the sacrifices and cooperation that you have endured since March 2020. We estimate that there are currently a total of 97 cases as of January 7, 2021 since March 2020 (second lowest municipality in Morris County). Our local first responders are still serving us in this time of great stress. Please do not hesitate to call them and be mindful of their safety protocols. Their safety is our safety.

Today, January 8, 2021, Morris County and the State of New Jersey are opening the COVID-19 vaccination super center at the former Sears store in the Rockaway Mall. This is a significant step in the aggressive plan to get as many people vaccinated as possible in the next several months. Right now the group that is identified by the State as Group 1-A which consists of first responders and essential health care providers are the only people eligible to receive the vaccine. Effective January 8, 2021, Police & Fire are eligible for vaccination. It is anticipated that the availability of vaccines will open up in the coming days and weeks. We direct you to <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/covid/> (State of New Jersey) and <https://health.morriscountynuj.gov/> (Morris County) for additional information on vaccine availability. As always, consult with your doctor for the best information regarding vaccination.

Yesterday, the Governor held his weekly call with area Mayors and County Officials to discuss COVID-19 information and protocols. It is evident that this

situation is still very much a work in progress and we were advised to look out for the guidance on when vaccine availability would open up beyond the Group 1A. The guidelines for gatherings have not changed and you should continue to make of them what you will.

Help for Harding is still active and serving our community. If you need anything, please reach out to Elizabeth Sovolos at helpforharding@gmail.com. You can also text or call 862-246-7648. Of course emergencies should be addressed to the Harding Police Department. We are expecting the SBA to roll out guidance on the second round of PPP loans for small businesses any day now, please go to sba.gov for further information.

Harding Town Hall, which never closed down operations due to the pandemic, remains open to the public and operational, please come in if you need anything and adhere to the COVID-19 requirements of masks when social distancing cannot be attained. Harding Township Government operations continued throughout 2020 with the following accomplishments:

- * Public Works Facility generator installed.
- * Hurstmont Redevelopment Agreement approved.
- * Court approved the Affordable Housing Plan.
- * The Farm sale completed.
- * Glen Alpin Pre- Application & Final Applications approved & Hearings scheduled for January 28, 2021.
- * Gate House ownership transferred to Harding Land Trust.
- * CPNJ/PILLAR project completed.
- * Implemented the employee personal development program – Harding hosted the purchasing training class for Harding employees and ten other towns.
- * Reviewed all the municipal fees. Removed the requirement for fees to be updated by ordinance. Developed one fee schedule with all the municipal fees that will now be updated by resolution at the Township Committee reorganization meeting.
- * Moody's Bond rating remains at AAA.
- * Implemented on line fillable forms program.
- * Sand Spring Road Paved (received \$250,000 grant from DOT).

- * The Affordable Housing Mid-Point review was completed, as required, before July 1, 2020.
- * The Municipal Building was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Municipal employees were present in the building every day conducting Municipal business. Employee schedules were staggered and employees did work from home, but there were several employees that reported to the Municipal Building every day during the pandemic.
- * Morris County funded the Dickon's Mill Bridge replacement.
- * Long Hill Road was paved from Pleasantville Road to the Harding/Long Hill line.
- * The following properties were purchased for open space:
 - Appleton 1 – 4.375 acres
 - 163 Lee's Hill Road – 5.140 acres
 - DOT property (Glen Alpin disposal) – 11.295 acres (contract pending)
- * Municipal Building phone system replacement underway and scheduled to be completed before January 30, 2021. The new phone system provides for alternate locations during an emergency and other flexible options.
- * Municipal Building electronic security system installed (key fob access).
- * First female police officer appointed.

As you begin the New Year and set your goals, please remember that America is still the best place in the world. The events of this week in Washington, DC do not represent wide swaths of our people and we must work to unite. We must remember to respect one another and celebrate our differences. There is much promise in our future and we have so much to be thankful for.

Respectfully,

Timothy D. Jones

Timothy D. Jones
Mayor

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