



July 2021

North Caldwell Community News

As we emerge from our Covid cocoons your North Caldwell Community is your first respite and safety as well as place of celebrations. Much has happened within our town and this message is to inform you and to welcome your participation.

1. Council News

While health and safety have been at the forefront of community and global concerns, North Caldwell has addressed development, economic, and Council changes. We welcome Matt Atlas and Anthony Floria-Callori to the Council. Matt was a member of the North Caldwell Board of Education and Anthony was a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. We thank former Council President Cynthia Santomauro and former Councilman John Chiaia for their many years of service. North Caldwell is a better place for their hard work and dedication to the community. Youthful and intelligent contributions have already focused on the challenges as well as the opportunities for our beloved town.

2. COVID-19 Update

In North Caldwell 490 individuals have tested positive resulting in six (6) deaths. Over 83% of our residents over 12 years old have received at least one dose of COVID vaccines at last count. Restrictions have been lightened for schools and businesses. The Borough has received \$346,505.25 in local fiscal recovery funds for 2021 with approximately the same amount expected next year. The funds are available for certain uses specified by the American Rescue Plan Act.

3. Drainage

Many will recall the unprecedented rainfall on August 11, 2018. The deluge of water raised concerns about infrastructure, particularly drainage, in our town. The incident prompted many town members to attend collaborative meetings which gave witness to increased citizen voice, professional engineering drainage studies, and revisions to the Borough's stormwater rules all while seeking more community input. The Department of Public Works has increased their focus to clean Borough-owned drainage easements for improved performance of our natural drainage systems. The DPW has also completed several smaller drainage infrastructure projects to alleviate localized flooding issues on Brookside Terrace, Glenview Road, Hamilton Drive North, Hamilton Drive East and Oak Place. Additionally, the Borough has completed the relining of two failing culverts on Brookside Terrace and Old Farm Road. In the same vein, the dredging of Walker's Pond has restored the conveyance capacity of the pond and has improved the tributary drainage systems feeding the pond. There are many drainage projects, large and small, occurring throughout the Borough. We ask residents to follow the Borough's lead by maintaining and keeping clear all natural drainage paths which exist on your own property.

4. Infrastructure

It is apparent that repair initiatives i.e. the community pool, tennis courts and Walker's Pond have inspired new sub-committees. Community participants have been collectively voicing ideas and remedies for functionality, land use, and recreation. Some of the main projects are:

- Walker's Pond has gained the spotlight when we completed the \$741,631.41 dredging contract, more than \$100K below anticipated costs. The tree planting types, quantities and locations are NJDEP mandates associated with the pond dredging. A pond conservancy has been established and is represented by many town residents. The Conservancy is in the process of establishing a 501C(3) which will allow for donations to be tax deductible. This will assist the Mayor and Council by shaping future plans which include many exciting improvements such as open trails, footbridges, a gazebo, additional parking, a performance platform and considerations for public utilization of the Walker house. A ribbon cutting ceremony officially opened the park for you on June 19th, 2021 which coincided with Juneteenth. This new national holiday was appropriately commemorated by Mayor Alessi.
- The Gould Avenue Recreation Complex Project is a pivotal revitalization project. Preliminary engineering drawings have been prepared to address the tennis courts, pool, playground areas, food services, and a recreation center. These elements are among the most critical decision points for recreation and Council. This is a work in progress.
- Green Brook Country Club is currently operating as a golf facility. The Council has proactively satisfied its state-mandated affordable housing obligation if the property transitions from recreation to residential use. North Caldwell does not own the property but the Council will keep you informed as information develops.

5. Tax Revaluation

The Borough of North Caldwell has been ordered by the Essex County Board of Taxation to complete a revaluation of all properties. The goal is to update all assessments to fair market value and maintain fairness and uniformity among all property owners. Revaluation is a revenue-neutral event and the overall tax levy is unaffected by the housing market or the revaluation process. Furthermore revaluation does not raise any additional revenue beyond what was included in the 2021 Municipal Budget. Be assured that your taxes will not necessarily be raised as a result of this revaluation. Letters will be issued at the end of the revaluation process identifying current assessments and estimated assessments which can be discussed with our tax assessor, George Librizzi. He can answer questions and can be reached at (973) 228-6410, x-111 or at glibrizzi@northcaldwell.org.

The revenue for North Caldwell is almost entirely from the tax levy. As a Borough, we continue looking for opportunities to create new revenue streams and share services with neighboring communities. While reducing cost is one aspect of fiscal responsibility, having innovative revenue sources will provide longer lasting feasibility for improvements and sustainability.

6. Technology

North Caldwell is fortunate to have technological savvy at a nominal budget. Our ability to enhance our information and communication to you continues to grow with exciting new projects. Such developments have included, yet are not limited to, a new emergency notification system, increased social media presence, the launch of the Team Snap sports app and a soon-to-come updated website. Website design and implementation is currently

underway. Recording and broadcasting of public meetings has enhanced the involvement of our community and it is here to stay. Discussions are forthcoming for cell service improvement, vehicle charging stations, and solar power. The architect of this technology initiative is our Information Technology Director, Sgt. Michael Credico. His expertise has saved the Borough countless tax dollars.

7. Safety

On the minds of the entire Council, your safety in town is paramount. One example is the implementation of speed humps at specific locations where pedestrians might be more vulnerable. Another example is the gradation of Walker's Pond surface from the outer edges to the center of the pond, including safety fences in hazardous locations. Security cameras have also been installed in choice locations outdoors.

The capital projects have considered our seniors as well as the children of our town. Walker's Pond will have aesthetic value as well as reflective value for our community to gather and celebrate, educate, enjoy, and restore its heritage. Our enhanced technology will improve communication and efficiencies that will have economic benefits also by potentially saving time and reducing labor costs. Improvements to our recreation facilities with fiscal responsibility will enable us to stay current and competitive with our property values.

With all these developments, our community call to action is to make your preferences known. All citizens -- from Seniors to children, from lifelong residents to new residents -- voice your concern as well as look for ways to participate by utilizing our advanced communication and technology. Join committees earmarked for town developments and respond to referendums. This is your town and yours to distinguish.

8. Resident News

Congratulations to our recent graduates of West Essex High School, Gould School and Grandview School to whom we wish good luck in their next phases of education and professional life. The pandemic prevented the public recognition of our many championship sports teams including the A's (1st and 2nd grade boys) and the Diamondbacks (3rd and 4th grade boys). Congratulations to all the teams, players and coaches on a successful season!

We would also like to congratulate Gould School's recent graduate, Nick Schwartz, on becoming the USAWNJ Scholastic Wrestling Championship Finalist in the Junior division. This is Nick's fifth national championship title. Way to go, Nick!

9. Recreation Programs - Membership registration is still open through Community Pass.

Aquacise classes: Wednesdays at 12:30pm, Sundays at 11:30am

Soccer registration deadline – July 26

Soccer team sponsorships available

Summer Fun Camp concludes on July 30

10. The North Caldwell Municipal Pool hours:

General Pool Members:

Monday - Thursday: 12:30pm – 6:30pm

Fridays: 12:30pm – 7:45pm

Saturdays: 11:30am – 7:45pm

Seniors:

Sundays: 11:30am – 6:30pm

"Senior Swim" for Pool Members:

Tuesdays: 11:30am – 12:30pm

Sundays: 10:30am – 11:30am

"Senior Swim" for all North Caldwell:

(no pool membership required)

Wednesdays 12:30pm to 6:30pm

11. Labor Day Reminder

Borough offices will be closed on Monday, September 6, 2021 in observance of Labor Day. There will be NO trash collection on Labor Day, Monday, September 6, 2021.

We anticipate the re-opening of Borough offices after Labor Day. The building's closure during the pandemic provided the opportunity to perform some building improvements which are now nearing completion. Some of the projects include the installation of walkway pavers, HVAC system repairs/replacement, installation of new energy-efficient windows and entrance doors, restroom improvements, installation of a new access security system, installation of plexi-glass partitions, paving around the Borough Hall complex, installation of new video-conference and livestreaming technology in the courtroom, etc. These renovations have resulted in our inability to reopen Borough Hall until they are completed. We look forward to seeing you soon in our new and improved Borough Hall!

Public meetings will return to in-person format in early Fall with the integration of live broadcasting on the Borough's cable-TV access channel, live-streaming through YouTube and the continuation of remote participation through Ring Central (i.e. Zoom technology). Until then, please join us virtually for the Mayor and Council, Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings. Participation instructions are posted on each meeting agenda which can be found on the Borough website at www.northcaldwell.org.

When Borough Hall reopens, Mayor Alessi will hold office hours in the evening of the third Wednesday of each month. As always, please contact Mayor Alessi, any Council member or the staff with any questions.

Your North Caldwell Mayor and Council,

Mayor Joseph H. Alessi

Council President Frank Astorino

Council members:

Matthew Atlas, Anthony Floria-Callori, Robert Kessler, Arthur Rees, Kenneth Tilton

****Save the Dates****

Annual Town Picnic

Saturday, Sept. 11

1:00pm

NCRF 5K / Color Run

Saturday, Sept. 18

8:00am / 9:30am

Soccerfest

Saturday, Sept. 25

Parade at 8:30am

Upcoming Mayor and Council Meetings – Summer/Fall 2021

July 20, 6:00 pm – Conference/Regular Meeting

Sept. 13, 6:30pm – Conference Meeting

Oct. 12, 6:30pm – Conference Meeting

Aug. 17, 6:00pm – Conference/Regular Meeting

Sept. 28, 6:30pm – Regular Meeting

Oct. 26, 6:30pm – Regular Meeting

Meeting agendas and participation instructions are posted to the Borough website at least 48 hours

In advance of the meeting at https://www.northcaldwell.org/mayor___council_

Have a safe, healthy and happy summer!