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**TOWNSHIP OF MARLBORO**  
**HURRICANE SEASON UPDATE**  
SUPERSTORM SANDY - 10TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

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

**-MAYOR JONATHAN HORNIK**

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**SUPERSTORM**  
*10th Anniversary*  
**NEWSLETTER**

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SCHOOL SAFETY, DISPATCH

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STAY INFORMED  SCAN ME  
REGISTER FOR EMAIL



# 2022 HURRICANE UPDATE SEASON

First, I am excited to be communicating with you in a new format, a far cry from the long letters I sent out in prior years on this anniversary of Superstorm Sandy.

This year marks 10 years since this epic storm brought us impassable roads and prolonged power outages. Until 2020, that event, more than any other, served as a sobering reminder of our vulnerability in the face of the forces of nature. Little did any of us know that we would face a storm of a different kind, one that impacted our daily lives in every way imaginable, changing how we work, attend school, obtain medicine and groceries and provide for our families.



Storms pass, and after a relatively short period, fade to memory. The COVID 19 pandemic - undoubtedly one of the most difficult chapters in modern history - impacted our lives in a way that continues to this day, in some respects changing life forever. While we appear at the time of this writing to have moved beyond the pandemic, COVID-19, more than any emergency that preceded it, reinforced the need to maintain open lines of communication, as well as how crucial it is to face the hardest challenges by working together as a community. It is for this reason that I write to you again now, and each year, on the anniversary of Superstorm Sandy.

While we have seemed to develop some sense of normalcy in dealing with it, COVID and its many variants are not going away any time soon, and we have certainly not seen the last of public health emergencies. It is for this reason, each fall, that I take this opportunity to remind you and your family to be prepared for emergencies, weather-related and other, and to review how we as a united community continue to Weather the Storms.

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# WATER, POWER, FUEL AND SHELTER

We learned from Sandy that local preparation is critical. We cannot wait for outside agencies to act in times of emergency, and as a result, we have invested in critical infrastructure, leveraging grant dollars to ensure we are resilient.

After experiencing more than a week of power outages, the first step we took after the Superstorm was to enhance the Township's backup power generation capabilities. With a \$250,000 grant from FEMA, the Recreation Center now has a full backup generator, allowing the building to be a place for warming, for charging devices and to act as a shelter if necessary.

In collaboration with the State, several major traffic intersections have been upgraded so that lights can operate without dedicating public safety resources during outages. We passed an ordinance requiring gas stations, either new or when undergoing major renovations, to provide backup generators on site so that they can pump fuel even when the power is out. To our knowledge, we are the only township in the state to institute this important initiative.

The Marlboro Water Utility continues its investment in infrastructure utilizing federally-subsidized financing. The recently completed Tennent and Harbor Road Water



Treatment Plants feature backup generation capabilities, ensuring a safe, reliable and affordable water supply, reducing reliance on outside water companies and ensuring that drinking water continues to flow during emergencies. Solar fields have been installed at both water treatment plants which substantially reduce energy costs associated with running the facilities.

It is worth noting that, even with the State BPU approving a water rate increase for our main supplier, Middlesex Water, our customer's rates remain well below other public and private water companies in the region. Marlboro Water remains in compliance with all State and Federal regulations for the provision of safe drinking water.

Just like our standard of living depends in part on how the State and County maintain highways that run through our town, the same goes for electricity and internet access infrastructure. We rely on what are essentially monopolies regulated by the State to provide us with these basic services, the reliability of which has been unacceptable at times. I continue to use the pulpit of the Mayor's office to pressure these monopolies into being more accountable to customers, and engaging State officials and legislators in the fight.



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# 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 and first responders who arrive at the scene.



We continue to receive high marks from independent safety organizations and credit advance preparation, long range planning and a focus on community policing.

## SCHOOL SAFETY AND EDUCATION

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. I am proud to say that, through shared service agreements with Marlboro K-8 and the Marlboro High School, every public school in our borders have a specially trained police officer on site every day.



## MARLBORO DISPATCH - 911 CALLS

This summer we have authorized the first significant upgrade to the Township's communication system in 20 years. As Mayor of Marlboro, 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

officers right here in Marlboro. The Marlboro Township emergency dispatch system is quite literally the backbone of our public safety and public health response.

There is 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

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*The Marlboro Township emergency dispatch system is quite literally the backbone of our public safety and public health response.*

Aid (EMS) best serves our residents. Public safety is much too critical to surrender to an organization not entirely focused on our community.

Currently, the Township provides emergency dispatch services for Police, Fire and EMS. Emergency 911 calls for service are handled by trained telecommunicators employed by Marlboro and located right in Town Hall. Most of our dispatchers live in town, they all take pride in their jobs, and some even go on to become sworn police

Neptune first screens the call, and then hands it off to someone else who dispatches our local Marlboro first responders. I could not disagree more with this model.

Under my plan, we will utilize the state-of-the-art infrastructure established by the New Jersey State Police. We will acquire new radios and 911 phone consoles, upgrade the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, and continue to dispatch emergency calls with Marlboro employees.

**Simply put, as Mayor, I am not about to give up our local dispatch capabilities to the County or anyone else.**

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# HOME AND VEHICLE SECURITY

In March 2022, vehicle thefts began plaguing suburban communities like ours throughout New Jersey, I expanded the *See Something, Say Something, We will do 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.

I had reached out to Governor Murphy with concerns about the uptick in vehicle thefts in Marlboro and other suburban communities. In response, Governor Murphy held a press conference in Marlboro Town Hall on April 29, 2022 to announce a \$10 million investment in automated license plate recognition technology. Further, Attorney General Platkin announced the reversal of a recent non-pursuit policy and will now allow police officers to pursue auto thieves, allowing officers to more effectively deter crime.

We have a wonderful police department, but with 16,000 homes in 32 square miles, we can't do it alone. Read on to learn how we have worked together as a community.

## TOGETHER WE WILL KEEP MARLBORO SAFE

### TAKE THE PLEDGE

In May, we continued to ask residents to take an active part in safety by taking an online pledge agreeing to hide valuables left in vehicles, lock the car and remove the key fob, not to leave a car running unattended, secure residence (set alarm, lock doors, and close garage doors), and to report suspicious activity to police immediately. In exchange, an officer will deliver the 'I Took the Pledge' lawn sign to your home, serving as reminder to your neighbors and a message to potential thieves to 'get out of Marlboro'.



### NEIGHBORS RING DOORBELL

This September, Chief Pezzullo and I announced a police partnership with Ring Doorbell's Neighbors Public Safety Service (NPSS). This program allows public safety officials to connect, communicate and share hyper-local updates with Marlboro residents. Most importantly, police can post a request for video surveillance footage from any security system to assist with investigations in progress. To participate, a resident simply

downloads the free Neighbors app available for both Apple and Android devices. Please note that this app is not intended for crime reporting, is not monitored 24/7, and residents should continue to utilize 9-1-1 to report crimes in progress.

These initiatives are making a difference. Since these programs began, our police have made more than 20 arrests and successful car thefts have decreased by over 40%. It is important to note that every vehicle theft has involved the key fob being left in the vehicle or the car being left unlocked giving access to the garage door opener, the house and the key fob. Lock your vehicle, take the fob, and do not leave the fob easily accessible in your home.



Request a 'Pledge' lawn sign and learn more about the Neighbors app by clicking the links at the top of the website homepage. If you see anything that seems suspicious or out of place, don't hesitate...call the Police. Together, we will keep Marlboro safe.

# PARKS & RECREATION

Park improvements did not stop during the pandemic. In fact, our outdoor facilities took on an even greater importance.

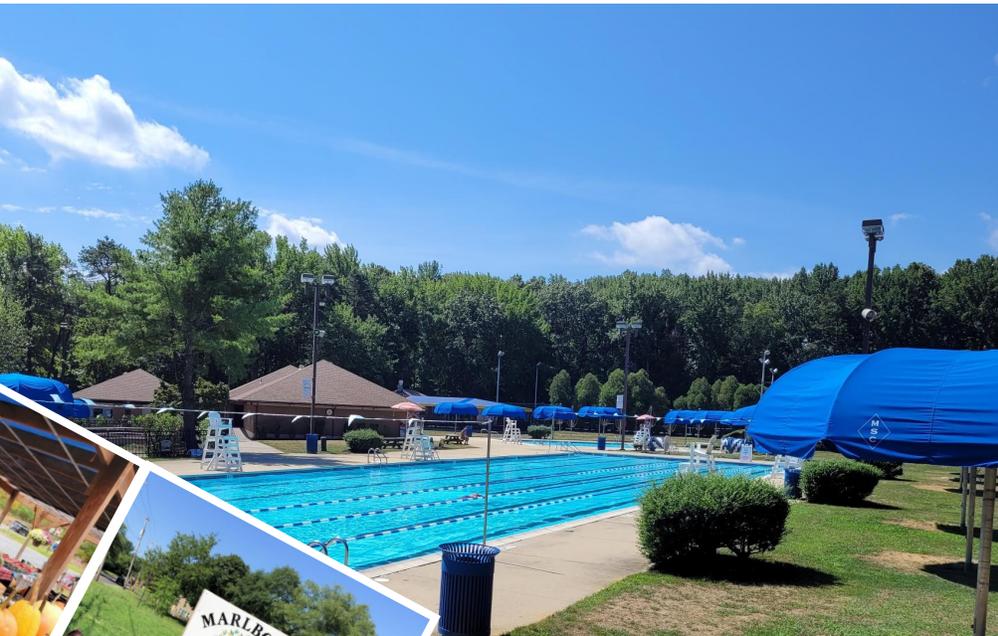
Marlin Estates and Wicker Park improvements were completed in 2021. Nolan Road Park softball field was upgraded with new fencing, backstop and infield grading. A new playground and basketball court are ready for play and the cost was offset by a \$200,000 County grant. This year we dedicated a cricket field, the first in Monmouth County, located behind the Marlboro Middle School and near the H&L fields.

A walking path that meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act has been approved for construction as a walkway between the Marlboro Middle School parking lots and the H&L fields. The recreation center parking area and the courts received upgrades and the municipal complex walking path was repaved and exercise equipment installed.

We have worked very hard over the years to develop new and affordable programs for adults age 60 and over. A hybrid approach of both in-person and virtual programming has been successful and demand continues to increase. We recognize how important physical activity and social interaction go towards maintaining the well-being of this growing population.

It was great to see us gather together at our community events. Concerts, movie nights, fireworks, and our first ever antique car show were all well attended. Marlboro Day, my favorite holiday, was back in full force and had record breaking crowds. Trunk or Treat, a tradition born in the wake of Superstorm Sandy is great fun. We will end the year with our annual multi-cultural holiday lighting, with surprise guests for photo ops.





## OPEN SPACE & PRESERVED LAND

Our focus continues to be on maintaining the suburban character of the Township. 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 now poised to preserve the VanMater Farm on Route 79, another 28 acres of precious farmland that will never be developed. An additional 14 acres off of Beacon Hill Road will expand an existing 33 acre oasis of Township park land. Only State grants and dedicated open space dollars are slated for these acquisitions, with no impact to the local taxpayer. We eagerly 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. In addition to the focus on preservation of open space, we are requiring those who are constructing housing to address off-site traffic impacts with signalization and intersection improvements, and where possible, donate undeveloped parcels to the Township to supplement our preserved land inventory.

## MARLBORO FARMERS MARKET

In June of 2019 we gathered to dedicate the Marlboro Farmers Market set on 56 acres of preserved land that was once the Stattel Farm. We just finished our fourth season and each year is bigger and better. The Market provides a venue for small family farmers and businesses to sell locally grown or made products directly to the community and encourages conversation between buyers and growers, promotes healthy food options, supports the local economy and fosters social gathering, enhancing community building and quality of life in Marlboro Township. We look forward to our pre-holiday market which, last year, welcomed over 1,000 visitors. Scheduled for the Sunday before Thanksgiving, it is just in time to shop for your holiday table and get a head start on gift ideas while supporting local, small businesses.



# TOWNSHIP CREDIT RATING

A strong and stable financial footing is critical to maintaining Marlboro's status as one of the premier suburban communities in New Jersey. Standard & Poors assigned a

AAA rating to the Township in 2017 and, in 2021, Moody's followed suit. This makes Marlboro one of only seven towns in the entire state - the top 1% - to enjoy the highest rating available. The result is that we can borrow at the lowest cost possible resulting in significant taxpayer savings for critical road, drainage, park and other capital improvements.



Bond Rating			
Moody's	S&P	Grade	Risk
Aaa	AAA	Investment	Lowest
Aa	AA		

# TOWNSHIP BUDGET AND TAXES

In New Jersey, towns are charged with collecting property taxes for all local government entities including Monmouth County, individual Fire Districts and public school districts; Marlboro K-8 and FRHSD.

Only about 18% of your property taxes remain with the Town to pay for all municipal services such as police, parks, public works and road improvements.

Extraordinary costs due to the pandemic were absorbed by the Township in 2020 and 2021. In 2022 the budget provides for continued pandemic-related spending totaling approximately \$176,285 while, on the revenue side, we have experienced consecutive years of revenue loss totaling more than \$1.2 million related to commuter parking, court operations and investment income - a direct result of the pandemic - which negatively impacted the 2020 and 2021 bottom lines. Revenue losses in these three areas have continued in 2022.

All towns in New Jersey are "creatures of the State", subject to its regulations, mandates and to paying the bills the state

sends down to the local level. Since 2007, mandated state costs have increased by approximately \$4.305 million or 78.80%. At the local level, we have kept these increases at only 19.09% during that same time, despite the budget pressures we have faced associated with the pandemic and response to extreme weather events.

We have worked hard to strengthen the Township's balance sheet, and the state of our finances is indeed the driving factor behind our highest bond ratings from both Standard & Poors and Moody's. In addition, we received another clean audit from a private, independent auditor...this makes 10 years in a row!

I am proud to say that our 2022 budget was adopted in a bi-partisan manner, and want to recognize Council President Juned Qazi for his leadership and efforts during what was a 14 week long budget process. Our goal continues to be maintaining our status as a premier suburban community in the State of New Jersey, and one of the safest in the nation.

*Only about 18% of your property taxes remain with the Town*



# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS-INFRASTRUCTURE

## ROAD & 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 \$15 million towards road and drainage improvements in just the past five years. Earlier this year, 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 was developed in the 1980s and 1990s with no management plan for the future) coupled with severe weather and aggressive snow removal has taken a toll on our roads. It should be noted that maintaining the Township’s infrastructure is expensive.

**The cost of road reconstruction averages in excess of \$500,000 per mile** - and we have more than 200 miles of local roads in Marlboro. That said, we continue to invest knowing that it is good fiscal policy to do so, especially when we are able to borrow with Triple-A credit at the lowest rate available. We continue to leverage outside grants reducing the local taxpayer burden for the quality-of-life projects so important to this community.

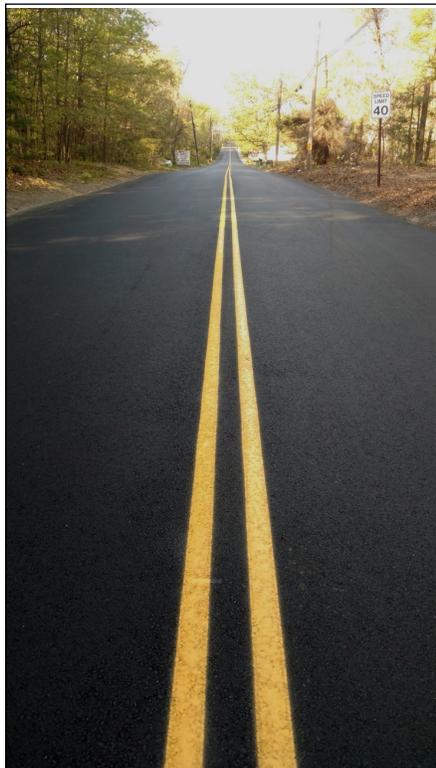
## SIDEWALKS, TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS AND DRAINAGE

Our multi-year capital plan continues to focus on roads, drainage and improvements to walkways 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 a 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 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 fourth season, it continues to grow. We look forward to our November Holiday Market.

We also have roads under County and State jurisdiction, and spend a lot of energy coordinating with these other entities to ensure our infrastructure gets the attention it deserves. Visit the Road Construction section of our website to read how we determine what roads we pave, upcoming projects, and to view past Road Construction notices sent via email to those registered.





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGED GROWTH

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 1.5 million square feet of new commercial development and \$128 million in new tax ratables.



## PROPERTY TAX REWARD PROGRAM

Shop local and save on property taxes with the Shop Marlboro Property Tax Card. A simple premise born in 2012 from our EDC, instituted in other towns and, last year 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. Start earning your credits by downloading the PTCard app.

Business owners can request an official ribbon cutting or learn more about becoming a Tax Reward participating merchant. Email [economicdevelopment@marlboro-nj.gov](mailto:economicdevelopment@marlboro-nj.gov).

Our mantra continues to be "Smart Growth". We generate new, clean, commercial tax ratables while supporting our local businesses. This directly reduces the burden on residential property taxpayers.



## GENERATIONAL HOUSING MAKING THE BEST OF A DIFFICULT SITUATION

For the first time in more than a decade, Marlboro is experiencing new residential construction stemming from a 2020 order issued by Superior Court Judge Linda Grasso Jones. While credit rating agencies view this favorably, we are well aware that these projects, which will include some affordable units, can have an impact on local infrastructure and government services and additional housing is not, in general, viewed positively by existing residents.

- **Generational Housing** – We established a new zoning designation termed ‘generational housing’. In our region a family of 3 can qualify for affordable housing with an income of close to \$90,000. New housing as a result of this court order will mean homes for returning children of Marlboro parents and entry level teachers, police, social workers, and nurses. Residents who have had a change in circumstance such as a divorce, will be able to stay in Marlboro. Seniors who want to stay in Marlboro, near friends and family, will have a place to do so. And, continuing our commitment to those that served our country, veterans will have an opportunity to call Marlboro home.
- **Infrastructure** – We are requiring those constructing homes to address potential traffic issues with intersection improvements and traffic lights.
- **Open Space** – To preserve our suburban character builders are donating open space to the Township; to date, adding 37 acres of preserved land.

# 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 to 'Do Good!' in our

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*We welcome and encourage our residents to get involved.*

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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.

Our Community Garden is located on preserved land on Tennent Road where food and flowers are grown. In 2022, Garden members donated nearly 900lbs of produce to those in need. The Shade Tree committee was recognized this year, not only for earning our Tree City status, but also for The Pleasant

Valley Beech, the largest in Monmouth County. The Green Team and Environmental Commission partnered to build a rain garden at the Rec Center with grant funds from ANJEC. Our Open Space and Agricultural Board continue to review potential properties for preservation. Added this to our committees for Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing, MultiCultural, and our Rec/Swim, Planning and Zoning Boards it totals 100s of volunteers working on behalf of Marlboro Township.

We welcome and encourage our residents to get involved. For more information, visit 'Volunteer Opportunities' in the 'I need to learn about' dropdown box on the website homepage. Keep an eye out for notices sent via Township email and social media outlets.



# 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, “reverse 911” calls and on cable channel 77. We urge every resident to register for email updates by scanning the QR code on this page or entering your email in the blue ‘Email Alerts’ box on the website homepage.



municipal transactions available to residents online. Property look-ups, tax and utility payments, various zoning and engineering permits, pet and licenses and parking permits are all available via the Township website. One of the

silver linings of the pandemic is that we developed methods for our residents to conveniently conduct township business from the comfort of home.



REGISTER FOR  
TOWNSHIP  
EMAIL  
SCAN QR CODE



## *In Conclusion*

As I started by saying, although challenges still remain, I am confident that we are climbing out of this demanding time in our history. With the dedication of our Township employees and the active participation of our resident volunteers, we continued to maintain necessary local government services, invest in infrastructure, preserve open space and maintain our quality of life. With consistent long term planning and engagement with the citizens of our community, we will emerge, upholding Marlboro’s reputation as a highly desirable suburban destination for families, both longstanding and new to our town.

*In community,*  
  
Mayor Jon Hornik