



TOWNSHIP OF MARLBORO

DECEMBER, 2021



FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR JONATHAN HORNIK

As 2021 draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to reflect back on our accomplishments. Admittedly, we have faced challenges. When I was first elected in 2008, we were at the start of what would be called the 'Great Recession', the biggest financial crisis since the Depression. Tough economic times necessitated tough choices, including hiring freezes and furloughs at the local level. In 2011, we faced Hurricane Irene, and in 2012, Superstorm Sandy. In 2014, the Newtown, CT School shooting placed a spotlight on the need to protect our kids while they learn, and, in response, we assigned armed police officers to every school. Beginning in March of 2020, we have experienced an unprecedented global pandemic that has upended every part of our daily lives.

Each of these events presented us with unique challenges, yet through them all, an overarching theme has emerged. We as a community cannot rely on outside sources to come to our aid in times of crisis. We must plan and prepare and be largely self-sufficient. And in order to be better positioned to "weather the storms", we must be financially stable, bolster our infrastructure and maintain an open dialogue with residents through transparent and regular communication.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all those who take time from their work and families in order to volunteer and give back to the community. There are hundreds of committee members, volunteer firefighters, emergency medical technicians, coaches and extraordinary teenagers who are the heroes of this great community, without whom we could not be successful. I encourage all residents who are interested in contributing in this way to find out more about volunteer opportunities by reaching out to me at mayoremarlboro-nj.gov.

I hope that you find this 'look-back' informative, and, that you are as proud as I am in all that we have accomplished together.

As we enter into 2022, I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year!

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Communication

In 2008, we made improving transparency and communication a central priority. Since that time, we have expanded our methods of communication with residents and our outlets to receive information from the town, critical in times of emergencies.

- More than 34,000 followers on our social media platforms...Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor and LinkedIn.
- Over 24,000 residents are registered to receive email updates.
- Annual Superstorm Sandy Letter mailed to every home.
- Weekend Updates detail town events, programs and notices.
- Storm preparedness and road construction notices emailed and posted.

FINANCIAL

Our financial strength makes everything else possible. Our triple A bond rating allows us to borrow money for capital improvements at the lowest rates available, and that means we can do more.

- **Bond Rating** - One of only 6 towns (out of 565) in NJ to receive a triple A bond rating from both S&P and Moody's.
- **Shared Services** - We save money when we share resources with other government agencies. Examples include animal control, purchase of leaf bags, paving, school security, police training, swim club, custodial services, snow removal, and road improvements.
- **Economic Development Committee (EDC)**- Formed in 2008, the EDC contributed to the generation of more than 1.2 million sq. ft. of commercial property and \$120 million in new tax ratables.
- **Shop Marlboro Property Tax Reward Program** - First in the nation to directly tie shopping locally with property tax savings. Participating merchants realized \$4 million in sales and residents saved \$263,000 on taxes. So successful was this program it was signed into NJ state law in 2021.
- **Marlboro Water Utility** - We consolidated the water utility, saving more than \$800,000 in annual compensation in the first year alone. Today, our water customers still pay less than surrounding water suppliers.
- **Grants** - Have aggressively applied for and received grants at the County, State and Federal level.
- **Property Taxes** - The locally controlled budget is about 18% of of the tax bill. Property taxes have increased by less than 2% a year since 2007.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Marlboro is consistently rated one of the safest towns in the state and the country, most recently the 6th safest small town/city in America and 1st in NJ. Our Division of Police, led by Chief Pezzullo, focuses on community policing and building relationships with our residents and businesses.

- **School Security** - Within days following the Sandy Hook school shooting in Newtown, CT, and with the cooperation of the schools, we placed armed officers in every school.
- **Private/Religious School Security** - Marlboro police regularly assess security procedures for all of our Chinese, Hindu, Jewish religious/cultural schools, and other private schools.
- **Internet Exchange Zone** - Allowing for a safer on-line transaction with strangers, the exchange zone is in the Town Hall parking lot and is monitored 24/7.
- **Community Involvement** - Residents from teens to seniors can work with the police. Community volunteers assist the victims of sexual and domestic violence, and participate in the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Police Cadet program is open to youth interested in a future in law enforcement.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water/Power/Fuel/Shelter

- ✓ Following Superstorm Sandy, using a FEMA grant, we upgraded the generator at the Rec Center allowing for its use as a shelter, charging, warming and heating center.
- ✓ Added backup generation capabilities to traffic lights freeing up resources during outages.
- ✓ Approved a local regulation requiring all gas stations to have on-site generators to pump gas even when the power is out.
- ✓ Expanded water treatment capabilities to ensure safe, reliable and affordable water and reducing reliance on outside water companies.

Roads and Parks

- ✓ Paved 55 miles or approximately 25% of town owned roads (it costs more than \$500,000 per mile!) and instituted a road repair website and a resident Pothole Portal.
- ✓ Constructed pickleball courts and turf fields and implemented numerous park and playground improvements.
- ✓ Worked with NJ DOT to have Route 79 repaved in advance of a major traffic intersection and road repaving project.
- ✓ State Hospital Property - Agreement with State maintains land as open space, never to be homes, and 411 acres will be turned over to the County for a park.

OPEN SPACE

- **Open Space Preserved** - Hundreds of acres of Township open space preserved. This is in addition to state and county preserved lands.
- **Stattel Farm** - Preserved 56 acres at the corner of Routes 79 and 520 preventing the construction of 500 homes. It is also now the home of our successful *Marlboro Farmers Market*.
- **Community Garden** - Located on preserved land on Tennent Road the garden has expanded to meet demand and includes ADA accessible plots. The members have donated more than 1,000 pounds of produce to local food banks.
- **Shade Tree Committee** - Since this once dormant committee was restarted in 2008, Marlboro has been named a Tree City every year and handed out 1,000s of free seedlings to be planted in town.
- **Green Team** - Has collected over 500 pounds of plastic bags to recycle, initiated the Dino/Earth Day celebrations, constructed a water bottle filling station, and hosted the Mayor's Bike & Stroll on the Henry Hudson Trail.

COMMUNITY

- **Veterans Services** - An active Veterans and Volunteers Committee and the first town in NJ to be recognized as a 'Veteran Friendly Municipality'. We installed Veteran parking spaces throughout the town and hold ceremonies to honor Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Patriots Day to ensure that we, as a community, never forget the sacrifices made by those that serve our country.
- **Volunteers** - We increased resident participation by expanding the number of opportunities to volunteer. My first call for volunteers resulted in more than 180 responses and each annual call since continues to be met with great enthusiasm by the many residents looking to give back to the community.
- **Multi-Cultural** - We regularly celebrate the town's diversity in many ways. We established a multi-cultural committee and an annual Winter Holiday Lighting for those from all faiths. We celebrate with the Chinese Schools, Hindu Temple and synagogues and churches and local Clergy at an annual interfaith-Thanksgiving service.
- **Senior Programming** - We reinstated the dormant Senior Advisory Committee to improve communication with our active adult population. We have kept most classes free for seniors and added space to keep up with the demand for classes.
- **Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)** - This committee started with 22 teens and has now grown to more than 1,000. As promised we made this an official town committee, one which builds leaders and teaches students to give back. TAC has been recognized and imitated throughout the state and country.
- **See Something. Say Something. We will Do Something.** This citizen reporting program, in partnership with the police, was first instituted to enhance school security. It was then expanded to include the reporting of hate crimes. If you see something that is concerning, don't hesitate. Call the police.
- **Generational Housing** - After costly failures by administration after administration to face affordable housing obligations, we have established 'Generational Housing Zones' within town. These will ensure young couples, entry-level police, teachers, social workers, nurses, health care workers and veterans can come to Marlboro to raise their families and that empty-nesters can afford to call Marlboro home.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

I must begin by thanking the Township employees. Every Department remained staffed and in-office from day one. Procedures such as staggered hours were put in place to keep people safe, but every office was covered. Our dispatchers continued to answer your calls and police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians arrived at your door in your times of need. The Department of Public Works continued snow removal, leaf and brush collection, street repair and park maintenance throughout. Administration, Community Development, and the Mayor's office responded to your request for service. Recreation kept on-line classes going for all ages and maintained contact with our most vulnerable residents. As employees were dealing with their own health concerns and home schooling their children, they showed up for work. I hope you will join me in thanking the Marlboro Township employees, public servants who continue to go above and beyond.

- Hundreds of emails, social media posts and website updates kept residents and businesses informed.
- Increased on-line services allowing residents 24/7 access.
- Arranged food and medicine deliveries to vulnerable residents.
- Partnered with a local clinic to have a COVID-19 testing truck for our residents.
- Waived permit fees allowing restaurants to increase or create outdoor dining.
- Allowed private gyms and fitness centers to increase outdoor space or use recreation property to hold classes outside.
- Assisted in securing vaccine appointments at hospitals and pharmacies for more than 1,000 residents.
- Hosted two booster clinics in our Rec Center in cooperation with Monmouth County Health.



Nextdoor



www.marlboro-nj.gov