Mayor and Council Message

Dear Neighbors,

In the General Election on November 3rd, voters will have an opportunity to cast their vote for local, state and federal level candidates, including the President of the United States. This is an important right and duty for all U.S. citizens age 18 and above. Upper Saddle River voters will also be asked to vote on a municipal question concerning Open Space funding.

By definition, a Municipal Open Space Fund is to be used for the acquisition, development, maintenance and preservation of lands for recreational use. The fund can also be used for the acquisition and maintenance of farmland and historic properties for preservation purposes. For example, the Borough-owned land at the corner of West Saddle River Road and Lake Street and nine acres at One Lake Street were designated as open space. This protects the land from development.

USR’s local Open Space Fund has allowed projects in the past such as the creation of Liberty Park, the community sign at the corner of Lake Street and West Saddle River Road, the resurfacing of the tennis courts, and improvements at Lions Park such as flood mitigation including a drainage system and a gabion wall, street lighting, an additional field and the walking/running path. Improvements such as these are enjoyed by residents of all ages and, along with our great schools, are often what buyers are looking for when they purchase a home.

The question, as it appears on the ballot, asks residents to approve an annual tax rate at the rate of $0.01 per $100 of assessed value, equal to $75.00 for the average property assessed at $750,000.00. The fund is used to provide monies to maintain and improve our recreational facilities as well as match grants the Borough receives from the County of Bergen. Each USR taxpayer sends Open Space funds to the County, which supports parks such as Van Saun and Overpeck. In addition, each municipality can apply for an Open Space grant, and if approved, must match it. For instance, we received a $140,000 Open Space award from the county for Hess Park a few years ago to refurbish the playground, bathrooms and install ADA compliant features. We were able to match the grant from our local Open Space monies. We received similar grants for improvements at Lions Park.

We did receive a $1.6 million Open Space Grant for the purchase of the nine acres at One Lake Street. That particular grant did not require a match. But many other Open Space grants do. As you can see, if we do not have local funding, it becomes difficult to accept Open Space grants that require matching funds. In addition, having a local Open Space Fund elevates a municipality’s score when applying for grants.

When casting your vote in the General Election, please remember to voice your opinion on the Open Space Question. This is up to the voters and the Governing Body wishes to hear from as many as possible.

2020 Hurricane Season:

This latest tropical storm, at the beginning of what is being predicted to be an active hurricane season, brought the worst damage to our area since Superstorm Sandy. As we continue to clean up, let’s also prepare for future storms.

The Atlantic hurricane season starts on June 1st and continues through November 1st. Hazards such as high winds, storm surges, high tides and rip currents, heavy rains, inland flooding, and tornadoes pose a threat to life and property. In Bergen County, trees and power outages are often the main hazards.

Our local and State Offices of Emergency Management encourage everyone to review the “Hurricane Survival Guide for New Jersey” and take necessary actions to prepare their families and homes. This guide can be found at the link provided below: http://ready.nj.gov/planprepare/pdf/NJ_Hurricane_Survival_Guide_2020.pdf


Let’s Trim Our Trees and Remove Diseased or Damaged Trees: O & R routinely trims back trees from the right of way. Our DPW and Police Department are compiling a list of areas that should be prioritized. Learn more here: https://www.orm.com/en/services-and-outages/preventing-recovering-from-outages/tree-trimming

Homeowners can do their part as well.

Section 36-1 of the Borough Code states that all homeowners must keep vegetation 10 feet from the road on most lots and 25 feet on corner lots. It also states that plant life is not allowed to grow over the roadway. Ordinance Section 137-9 states that the homeowner must maintain all trees on their property and remove damaged or diseased trees as well as stumps, roots and dead trees. The DPW is currently assessing the town for our Zoning Officer who will be sending notice to affected homeowners. This work must be done as quickly as possible. Everyone is thanked in advance for their cooperation as this will be a tremendous help in reducing future outages as well as restoring the beauty of town for the community at large.

Post Storm Emergency Clean up:

The council voted unanimously to schedule an emergency large pickup of branches and small limbs. The DPW circled through town picking up debris and came around again with a chopper for the remainder. As always, smaller bundles of branches are picked up curbside every other week. Thank you to our dedicated DPW department. They’ve been tireless throughout this storm, clearing roadways and downed trees and we can’t thank them enough.

Generator Information:

Generators are often in high demand after a bad storm and lengthy power outage. For your safety, the Building Department advises all...