



North Caldwell Community News

We would like to acknowledge the protests arising from the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis which protests have made the news throughout the country, including New Jersey and right here in Essex County where our North Caldwell Police took part in a recent peaceful protest on Bloomfield Avenue. These protests are illuminating an important message and marking an important time in our history. We fully support the peaceful message that racism and injustice of all kinds are to be eliminated for our society to move forward.

- 1. COVID-19 Update** - We must, unfortunately, provide an update on COVID-19 and the impact it has had on our community. While we were extremely fortunate to have one of the lowest per capita infection rates in Essex County, we sadly lost four residents and we mourn collectively with their families and friends. There are simply no words which could adequately convey the depth of this loss. Our residents must be commended for their adherence to social distancing which is the reason for our low infection rate. We are now in the process of reopening our town, including safely reopening our tennis courts, pool and summer programs while adhering to strict government regulations with which we must comply. We are outfitting public facilities in accordance with guidelines so our residents may have improved safety. We thank everyone for their patience as we navigate this new normal.
- 2. A Message to all our North Caldwell Graduates** - On behalf of all residents of North Caldwell, we are excited to address and congratulate all 2020 North Caldwell graduates. We are so proud of you and the many accomplishments you achieved. The excellent education you were so fortunate to receive will be a springboard to a life which will be filled with great academic achievements which, in turn, will lead to many exciting and successful years ahead as you further your education and pursue your life's goals. As you move forward, know that whatever challenges you face, your education will be a solid foundation for future success. It will enable you to confidently face any challenge and to pursue your dreams with the tools needed on the road ahead.

Your ability to succeed however is not just because of the education you received, most recently under new and difficult circumstances, but is a combined product of that education and the values instilled in you by your parents, immediate family, friends and community. While we are currently in a challenging time, we look around with awe at how so many of you have demonstrated those values and stepped up to help your communities by not just social distancing but by volunteering, helping your friends and neighbors and keeping a positive attitude which is so essential now. We have no doubt that all of you will make us

proud and we look forward to hearing of your future accomplishments. Good luck to all of you.

- 3. 2020 Municipal Budget - NO TAX INCREASE** - We are happy to report that the Borough portion of your property tax bill (17% of the total) will not increase. We felt strongly that during this difficult time, residents should not be burdened with a Borough tax increase. Through a conservative approach to spending (and without reduction in services), we have been able to avoid municipal tax increases for a 5th time in the last 8 years. We appreciate the work of our dedicated CFO Richard Mondelli and all department heads who deliver great results within budget. As you may be aware, the property tax bill you receive reflects not only your North Caldwell municipal taxes (17%), but the taxes for the local and regional schools (66%), and the County of Essex (17%) for which we are required to collect taxes. So, while your overall property tax bill may reflect an increase, that increase is not from the North Caldwell portion. Also, we are happy to have been able to extend the payment deadline to June 1, 2020 for 2nd quarter taxes to accommodate the unique times.
- 4. Walker's Pond Update** - The acquisition and restoration of Walker's Pond is a landmark moment in our Borough history. The Walker property, located on Mountain Avenue, had been a signature feature in our community when it was privately owned by the Walker family. For many decades, it offered a beautiful reflecting pond and during winter it was generously opened to the public for ice skating. Over the last two decades, the pond filled with sediment and plant materials. Approximately five years ago, the opportunity to purchase this pristine land was presented to the Borough by the Walker family. Although this 17.51 acre parcel was more valuable if sold to developers, the Walker family was motivated to sell the land to the Borough in order to preserve it from multi-family development. The Borough agreed and in December 2016, the property was purchased at below market for \$2,575,000. The acquisition was funded through a bond ordinance which authorized up to \$2.85 million of available funds. The Borough paid \$225,000 as a down payment on the bond from the Borough's Capital Improvement Fund and also received a \$150,000 grant from the County of Essex. After purchase and all expenses incurred to date, approximately \$192,000 remains available from this acquisition bond and grant. A second bond ordinance provides for up to an additional \$2.126 million of available funds for the dredging of the pond and other improvements to the land and structures as may be needed. The Borough recently received a second \$150,000 grant in June of 2020 from the County of Essex for dredging the pond and we also have a pending grant application with the NJDEP Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund program. Any grant awards may be used to supplement available bonding or it may be used to pay down bond debt. Additionally, the new Open Space Tax, instituted as the result of a town-wide referendum, will provide annual revenue (\$245,926 in 2020) to pay the interest on the debt already incurred for the acquisition of the property plus 1/15th of the principle. This approach will pay off the acquisition bond debt in 15 years and leave approximately \$31,000 in the Open Space Trust at the end of each year.

Overall Benefits

The purchase and the planned improvements have an immediate benefit to the Borough by preventing potential multi-family or other high-density development. Similarly, the purchase of the property eliminated it from the Borough's affordable housing obligations.

The acquisition also prevented the potential burden to our schools, utilities, roads and stormwater system which all inevitably come with an intensely developed site. The Borough's Drainage Study by Suburban Engineers addressed the dredging of Walker's Pond to restore capacity of the natural water feature and to provide an associated benefit to the upstream and downstream drainage areas. Each of these benefits is intangible but highly valuable to the entire community. The upcoming pond restoration project will restore the beautiful reflecting pond and offer an additional park for residents of all ages to enjoy passive recreation. Fifteen contractors submitted bids for the pond dredging on July 1st. The apparent low bid is currently under review and we hope to award a contract in July. We are encouraged that the competitive field of bidders resulted in construction bids well below the engineer's estimate. We hope to start the dredging this summer in time for fall and winter enjoyment of the property.

5. **Public Works Department** - The Department of Public Works has been diligently working during Covid-19 maintaining all utilities and public property in town. Maintenance crews have made necessary repairs to our roadways, including potholes and sewer drains. Furthermore, a replacement of an actuator for the water tank to keep the potable water flowing in town was recently completed. Two catch basin installations were also completed which entailed about 200' of 18" drainage pipe on North Terrace. Moreover, our DPW has been out cleaning drainage ditches within the Borough's rights of way and easements. With many Borough residents staying home during Covid-19, we have seen an increase in sewer flow at our pump stations in town. All pump stations are checked every day for maintenance issues. Recently, our DPW worked tirelessly overnight to get a sudden stoppage at a pump station back up and running. The DPW painted the Municipal Pool and prepared facilities for reopening. A great deal of time and effort is dedicated to make sure our utilities run smoothly and we thank DPW Director Bill Stickles and the DPW for doing a great job.
6. **Public Safety** - Throughout COVID-19, North Caldwell's first responders continued their commitment to the public. Despite risk to their own health, our first responders bravely gave assistance without interruption. Each member had training under new COVID-19 protocols such as CPR administration and patient contact. Thank you to Police Chief Mark Deuer, Captain Karl Strodthoff, Fire Chief Tim Peterson, Assistant Fire Chief and OEM coordinator John D'Ascensio and First Aid Captain David Black for keeping your departments open, well and ready to respond.

North Caldwell residents showed their appreciation by donating to the North Caldwell Police Sunshine Fund lawn sign fundraiser. Three hundred signs were purchased raising over \$6,000 for additional PPE and sterilizing equipment for the NCPD, NCFD and WEFAS. Thanks to Police Chief Deuer for enlisting many volunteers, including resident Andrea Marchese Lever, to create and sell lawn signs. Thanks also to the many residents that generously gave meals, hand sanitizer, Lysol and PPE to the Police, Fire and First Aid departments. Thanks to WEFAS for sharing cases of N95 masks with our Police and Fire Departments during the early days of COVID-19 when supplies were very scarce.

On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, North Caldwell offered free COVID-19 tests at the pool parking lot. Thank you to all the volunteers, Borough Clerk Tami Michelotti and especially

the sponsor, the Smith Center for Infectious Disease. They administered over 300 Quest swab tests. Please consider showing your appreciation for the testing they perform throughout our community at no charge. Visit smithcovidtesting.com and make a donation so their good work can continue at DONATE@smithcenternj.org. Thank you to all who participated!

Thanks to the Police, Fire, and First Aid Departments for the numerous birthday parades, bringing happiness to our young citizens and their families who, due to the COVID-19 quarantine, could not legally have birthday parties.

- 7. Camp Wyanokie** - Gifted in 1972 to North Caldwell, Caldwell, Fairfield, Roseland and West Caldwell, these 150 pristine acres of woodland and a 5 acre pond offer residents additional recreation in West Milford, NJ. Mayor Alessi has appointed Councilman John Chiaia and Anthony Prinzo to serve as the North Caldwell commission representatives. The Camp was updated this year with stocking new fish, new trail and park signs, new fire pits and an updated website: www.campwyanokie.com (where reservations for campsites and picnic areas are available).

- 8. Recreation News** (Membership registration is still open through Community Pass)

The North Caldwell Municipal Pool, now open

General Members: Weekdays: 12:30pm – 6:30pm

Weekends: 11:30am – 6:30pm

Senior Members: Every Day: 10:30am – 11:30am

Summer Fun Camp started July 6th, 2020 8:30am – 1:00pm

Adult and Youth Tennis Clinics began July 6th, 2020

Recreation Soccer Registration through July 27th

Clifton Soccer Academy Soccer Camp August 10th - 14th, 9:00am- 1:00pm, Liberty Field

U.S. Sports Multi-Sport Camp at Liberty Turf Field. Registration opens in mid-July.

Session 1: August 17th through 21st, 9:00am – 1:00pm

Session 2: August 24th through 28th, 9:00am - 1:00pm

- 9. Water Utility** - Please be advised that the Borough of North Caldwell Water Department remains staffed and we are available to answer any questions you have regarding your water bills, water meter readings or any other water-related items. We thank all of you for the timely submission of your water meter readings and water payments. Both of these items can easily be managed from the comfort and safety of your home through the Borough's website. (https://northcaldwell.org/water_meter_submission)

As always, the Borough is committed to providing safe drinking water to the entire community. We also understand that we are in the midst of difficult times and do not wish to adversely impact any single resident. We assure you that your water service will not be shut-off for non-payment during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please contact us if you are experiencing financial hardships as a result of COVID-19.

We ask that you kindly be reminded that late payments are subject to a 10% penalty pursuant to Borough Code Section 45-1 and late submission of water meter readings are subject to the provisions of Borough Code Section 104-8. Please submit all

outstanding water payments and water meter readings by July 15th in order to avoid being assessed a penalty.

Please contact the Water Department at water@northcaldwell.org should you have any comments, questions or hardships.

10. Technology - Much thanks to Sergeant Michael Credico for his evaluation and recommendations concerning a camera surveillance and emergency call system at Liberty Park. These improvements will make the park safer for all.

11. 2020 Census - The U.S. Census Bureau continues to carefully monitor the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and follows the guidance of federal, state and local health authorities. Help us to adhere to social-distancing guidelines by responding online to the 2020 Census. Do your part. Stay home. Get counted. www.2020census.gov

12. NIXLE and Reverse-911 Alerts - Please consider signing up for text and email emergency updates through the NIXLE system. A link is provided on the Borough website to input your mobile#, email address and zip code or you can visit <https://local.nixle.com/register/>. For current users, please be advised that NIXLE recently performed system updates and you may not be receiving text alerts. Please re-register your mobile # to re-enroll for these alerts. Another community notification system in which you can enroll is the CODE RED "reverse 911" phone call system. You can receive recorded alerts to your home and/or mobile phone through CODE RED and you can easily enroll from the Borough's homepage.

13. Pet Care - The Borough's Animal Control Officer is busiest this time of year as everybody is anxious to enjoy the warmer weather. Please remember to license all of your pets, keep your pets curbed, and clean up after your pets when enjoying the walks in the nice weather. Please also remember that dogs must be kept on leashes at all times. These requirements in the Borough's Code are for the health and safety of both our residents and all our pets. A copy of Chapter 38 (Dogs, Cats and Animals) is available for your viewing on the Borough's website. Should you have any questions, please reach out to the Animal Control Officer at Borough Hall.

14. Resident News - Thank you to 8 year-old resident Devani Patel for the donation of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitizer for North Caldwell's first responders. Devani, with her parents, Sudhir and Trupti, and her brother, Suketu, visited Borough Hall on her birthday to deliver the donations that she purchased in lieu of receiving birthday gifts. Thank you, Devani! The generosity and kindness you shared is greatly appreciated.

15. Labor Day Reminder

Borough Hall will be closed on Monday, September 7, 2020 in observance of Labor Day. There will be no trash collection on Labor Day, Monday, September 7, 2020.

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 Cynthia Santomauro

Council members John F. Chiaia, Frank Astorino, Arthur Rees, Robert Kessler, Ken Tilton



Upcoming Mayor and Council Meetings

- July 21 – 6:30 pm – Combined Conference and Regular Meeting
- August 18 – 6:30pm – Combined Conference and Regular Meeting
- September 8 – 7:30pm - Conference Meeting
- September 22 – 7:30pm – Regular Meeting
- October 13 – 7:30pm – Conference Meeting
- October 27 – 7:30pm – Regular Meeting

Have a safe, healthy and happy summer!