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AMBOY GUARDIAN

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Good News on the Horizon 3/8/21 Caucus

By: Carolyn Maxwell
PERTH AMBOY – The meeting took place at the council chambers and via teleconferencing on Zoom. It started at 5:39 p.m. after Council President Bill Petrick showed up (All council members were present).

The first order of business involved a discussion on bids received on the public safety complex gate improvements. There was only one bidder: Giacorp Contracting, Inc. for \$186,920.50.

Business Administrator Remsen told the council that the DPW Supervisor Danny Cleaver will get you more information regarding this project.

Fire Chief Ed Mullen came forward to give a more detailed explanation. “This is a project that was supposed to start in 2017 due to major traffic issues. We went in with the county to secure bonds. The bonds were supposed to be for \$1.5 million, but less than \$1 million was used. There was not enough money that was needed to place a bid for the services needed. This is for a traffic light, because a lot of non-emergency vehicles go across the property (which involves a Rte. 440 connector on Augustine Place) which causes a traffic back up. We are concerned about children going across the property

when fire engines are going out on calls. This is a very involved project. After hours, swipe cards are used to gain access. For those who need handicap parking, they will have to be buzzed in. In the past, gates were not needed because the property was vacant until the school was built. This bidder said the original price is good for the next 30 days. A lot of electrical work is involved.”

Councilman Joel Pabon spoke up, “We are always put in the corner with only one bidder. The price is high, and I think we should rebid for this project.”

Mullen continued, “The bids are only good for a certain amount of time.”

Council President Petrick suggested, “We should see who did the gates for the Home Depot warehouse.”

Mullen then stated, “I don’t think the price will go up much more.”

Pabon stated, “It should not go up at all.”

Councilwoman Milady Tejada stated, “I agree that we need more bidders for this project, but it is also a safety issue.”

Business Administrator Remsen spoke up, “The price of the bid is good. In the beginning we believed the infrastructure was good, but it wasn’t, and we can and will rebid.”



PERTH AMBOY - After the 3/10/21 Council Meeting

*Photo by Carolyn Maxwell

Mullen ended the discussion by stating, “As long as we are up and running by September 2, 2021.”

CFO/Comptroller Jill Goldy participated via Zoom to give the following reports: 1) Standard and Poor’s Bond Rating Report; 2) City of Perth Amboy Financial Trend Analysis.

Goldy stated that the bond rating was from two weeks ago. “The city was given an A+ rating and a stable outlook. We did pretty well inspite of the economic suffering effects of Covid. I started doing a financial trend analysis a few years ago. There was an evaluation increase in 2020 with the \$10 million net debt up. There were

deficits in 2 utilities: parking and water. Based on our population, the Net Debt Capita, every resident will owe \$2,000. Our fund analysis between years 2019 to 2020 showed a slight decrease. Our miscellaneous expenses show a \$380,000 shortfall. We could not replenish the money borrowed which went towards having less of a tax increase. The cash balance operation increased. The interest rates are low. More people paid their taxes and utilities online. There’s the \$100,000 in uncollected taxes. The principal debt for the water was \$80 million. We paid \$11.9 million. We cannot shut off residents’ water until the moratorium on unpaid water bills is lifted (via Governor Murphy’s order) in June. Those with unpaid water bills will have to pay them, plus the penalties.”

Pabon then questioned if notices should be sent to those people so they know they will eventually have to pay these bills.

Goldy responded, “We can investigate if we can alert people. It was a very tough year, and we did our best to mitigate the shortfall. The Parking Utility had a shortfall even though they were up in revenue. In regard to the Harborside Utility, they generally get more revenue than anticipated. They have a very healthy fund balance and run very well. The city surplus stands at \$10,352,000. The Water Utility was predicted to have \$22 million, but they were short \$500,000 or about 2%. The Parking Utility was \$90,000 short in parking fees which is 10% of their budget. The prop-

erty taxes were just over 100% collected because of tax appeals. We’ll have challenges for 2021 because of uncollected funds in 2020. UCC and the Fire Departments have a surplus, but that surplus money can only be spent in those departments. Our pension bills went up.”

Goldy then spoke about Ordinance No. 1 – An ordinance to exceed the municipal budget appropriation limit and establish a cap bank.

“There is a flat percentage that has to be banked and there is no limit on debt services. If we have to exceed the cap, we can use money from the previous year. We can bank money for future years. This number is calculated on paper.”

Ordinance No. 3 – An ordinance authorizing the acquisition of property for public use located on the corner of Amboy Avenue and Inslee Street, commonly known as 984 Amboy Avenue by exercise by the power of eminent domain.

Fire Chief Mullen explained, “We are waiting to close on this property and need money. The building is falling down, and there is penalty on that property and eminent domain is needed to acquire it.”

Councilman Joel Pabon, who has a relative who lives near that property stated, “There are just walls and it’s a hangout and it’s very dangerous. With strong winds we’ve been having, I’m surprised the building is still standing. Code Enforcement or someone needs to knock it down.”

*Continued on Page 7

No Tax Increase for The City of Perth Amboy Residents Mayor Caba's Statement on the American Rescue Plan Act and Impact to Perth Amboy

Press Release 3/12/21

PERTH AMBOY— Mayor Helmin J. Caba issued the following statement after President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act.

“The signing of the American Rescue Plan Act marks a historic moment for our country and the City of Perth Amboy. This legislation will allow much needed support to our city that translates into stabilizing vital services threatened by this pandemic and putting us on a stronger financial foothold. Our families and businesses have suffered enough during this pandemic and this relief will help us become stronger, healthier, and

better prepared for a lasting recovery.

This relief will allow us to balance our city budget and have no tax increase this year. There is much work ahead and I want to whole-hearted thank Congressman Frank Pallone Jr., Senator Cory Booker, and Senator Robert Menendez for their long and hard fought efforts to ensure we received this federal relief.

I want to also thank Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin, Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, Senator Joseph F. Vitale, and the Middlesex County Commissioners for their legislative priorities in always supporting our families and businesses.”



Mayor Helmin Caba

Updates on Coronavirus Outbreak: www.perthamboynj.org & www.southamboynj.gov & www.amboyguardian.com

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Importance of Food Pantries, Emergency Vehicles

3/3/21 Business Meeting via Teleconferencing

By: Katherine Massopust

SOUTH AMBOY – Councilman Tom Reilly asked that everyone try to patronize local businesses.

Mark Herdman stated that 42,000 bags of groceries were given out this year at the food pantry.

Councilman Brian McLaughlin thanked all the businesses and residents who donated to the food pantry. “Thank all of you especially the organizers who stepped up. Mark has been good through this whole pandemic.”

Councilman Reilly thanked the first responders, and the food pantry. “To Mark Herdman: a job well done!” Reilly added, “The need is still high. From January 2021 to February 2021, 3,000 families were given groceries. 12,000 bags of groceries were handed out this year. The food pantry is in need of food. Donate time, food, or money. I thank Mary Porcello.” Reilly then thanked Tom Kross who is celebrating 50 years as a firefighter. Reilly then gave his condolences to the Mulvey family on the passing of Jack Mulvey. “Jack Mulvey was with the First Aid Squad for 62 years. He was a volunteer, a veteran, and a church usher.” Reilly then asked about the property on lower Main Street.

Law Director Francis Womack answered, “There is no significant change. I’ve constantly been in touch in environmental issues. I’m not in the midst of pursuing anything.”

Reilly asked about the ongoing legal issues with Venetian.

Law Director Francis Womack

ack stated that today (3/3/21) the court rescinded a prior hold. He told Councilman Reilly that he would discuss the specifics in private. “We are not far away from going to trial.”

Reilly then asked about a possible redevelopment of property on Roosevelt Street.

B.A. Glenn Skarzynski stated that there was a submission to the Planning Board and that they must go through the Planning Board to get more information. He explained that at the present time, he did not have any specific information.

Reilly then asked about the illegal palate operation.

B.A. Glenn Skarzynski answered, “There is a lot less there now. The operation was issued a second summons today.”

Vice President Christine Noble thanked the first responders. “My sympathy to the Mulvey family.”

Council President Micky Gross stated that the date of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade is Saturday, October 2, 2021. “The taverns have been beat up during the pandemic.” Gross explained that the taverns can then get revenue after the parade and during Sunday Football games.

Gross thanked the food pantries. “They are remarkable – phenomenal!” Gross then spoke of Jack Mulvey, “Mr. Mulvey was my friend. He will be missed.”

Gross then stressed the importance of the much-needed vehicles for the First Aid Squad and Fire Department. “This cannot get slowed down!” Gross then emphasized the need to get vaccinated for Covid-19.

Mayor Fred Henry stated, “My condolences to the family of Jack Mulvey.” Henry then congratulated the food pantries. “There is a need out there.” Henry then commented on LOSAP (Length of Service Award Program which was on the agenda). “There are rumors. I have no intention of ending this program.” Henry then stated, “Last Thursday (2/25/21), we had a virtual meeting on the proposed historic accommodations.” Henry stated that soon all plans will be coming.

B.A. Glenn Skarzynski stated, “I encourage everyone to take advantage of free Covid testing on Tuesdays and Saturdays at no cost. There are locations in the city.” Gross then spoke about a vacant property on Fourth and Potter Streets. “It was addressed in municipal court. A \$2000 fine was issued. The owner will sell the property.” Skarzynski then stated that a dropbox was ordered and will be delivered. “The First Aid and Fire Chief vehicles will be ordered the minute the budget is passed.”

Law Director Francis Womack said he would let them know about the status of the Pigeon Palace on Broadway. He then stated, “I am looking forward to the St. Patrick’s Day Parade on October 2nd.”

City Engineer Mark Rasimowicz had no comments.

No one spoke during the public portion. The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m. Councilwoman Zusette Dato was not present.

Pallone Announces Additional Community Health Centers in New Jersey Will Become Eligible for Vaccination Program

The announcement includes locations in Middlesex and Monmouth

Press Release 3/11/21

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06) released the following statement after the Biden Administration announced an expansion of the Community Health Centers Vaccination Program:

“I applaud President Biden’s expansion of the Community Health Centers vaccination program. By inviting an additional 700 centers across the country to participate in this program, the President is ensuring life-saving vaccines are available to underserved and vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. I’ve been working to ensure that Community

Health Centers in New Jersey receive additional vaccine doses directly from the federal government. I am pleased that four centers in my district have received invitations to participate in the expanded vaccine program.”

Pallone advocated for of the creation of the vaccination program and worked with the Biden Administration to further expand the program and ensure additional centers in New Jer-

sey would become eligible. The following centers in New Jersey’s 6th Congressional District have received invitations to participate in the vaccine program:

- Jewish Renaissance Medical Center, Perth Amboy
- Eric B. Chandler Health Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- Jewish Renaissance Foundation, Perth Amboy
- Monmouth Family Center, Long Branch

One Year Later Remembrance

PERTH AMBOY - A Reflection One Year Later from COVID-19; Remembering the lives lost in the City of Perth Amboy - Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 6 p.m., City Hall Circle, Rain or Shine. Social Distancing and Masks Required.

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LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

EDITORIAL

One Year



On March 7, 2021 it was exactly one year since my father died. I often wonder what he would have thought about the pandemic. As a first responder, he probably would be leading the charge to fight the virus. The day after his funeral, Covid restrictions came into play and the world changed again. Part of me didn't mind at first, because I wasn't up for Easter, but this pandemic has taken its toll on everyone.

I miss walking down the street with the cool air blowing on my face. I miss seeing people's faces when I talk to them. I miss going to some of my favorite places. I miss having fun. I miss a lot of things.

My theory is that Covid-19 is a biological weapon. By whom or why it was released remains to be seen, but it did what it was designed to do: kill us and if that doesn't happen – weaken us both physically and mentally and most importantly break our spirit.

The American spirit is a difficult thing to break. We as Americans want to make our own decisions, do what we want to do when we want to do it. All of that has changed during this pandemic. The government is making decisions for us for our own good. Right now, we still need to wear masks, we still need to get vaccinated, and we still need to social distance.

But all of this worries me. You put a ball and chain on a person

long enough and you get used to it. Are we ever going to leave our homes to do anything? Will automated machinery and robots do everything that is even partially dangerous, and will we ever go anywhere? How many events are going to be virtual?

I am guilty of preferring meetings on Zoom to live meetings because it is easier than actually going somewhere. It is also easier to shop online. You just pick out the color and size of anything you want and have it shipped to your home. Many already struggling brick and mortar retail stores were forced to close due to competition with a thriving internet. The virus was just the straw that broke the camel's back.

Over the past year, some things are a little better. There are no longer lines around grocery stores, and you can find toilet paper and Lysol spray.

Many people are excited and/or relieved that there are now three vaccines available. Not only that, but people are also having success recovering from Covid after doctors prescribe effective medicines that have been on the market for years. I believe those physician's voices will be heard. I also believe the vaccines are just one of many options available.

We hope you all enjoy a Happy St. Patrick's Day and a Peaceful Passover and Easter and the joy with those you care about the most.

K.M. & C.M.

THE COMMUNITY VOICE

Statement from Mayor Helmin J. Caba on the passing of former Middlesex County Freeholder Blanquita Valenti

Press Release 3/10/21
PERTH AMBOY - Today, we mourn the passing of the former Middlesex County Commissioner Blanquita Valenti, who lived an extraordinary life of

service. It was my honor to have known and worked with you. May we carry your courage and compassion for others so that your legacy endures. My deepest condolences to the Valenti

family.
Mayor Helmin J. Caba, City of Perth Amboy

Just Sit There and Obey!

I was reading an article from the Amboy Guardian "Flexing Their Muscles" March 3, 2021 about a concerned resident, Mr. Alan Silber and he was upset that the amount of time for the

public to speak was changed from 5 to 3 minutes. "Yes," Mr. Silber, Perth Amboy City Council Members are in the business to make your life "Miserable"! You got what you voted for, and this was no surprise for me. What's next? "Censorship"! Just sit there and enjoy the circus. Also, Black Lives Matter some-

how got \$90 MILLION Dollars in 2020! How nice. Maybe our elected officials can ask BLM for a million or two. Now I hope you are enjoying Biden's New America of Disorder. "Wear the mask, be miserable and obey!"

Orlando "Wildman" Perez

Maintaining the Fear

Well, it's here. Hurray, we have a vaccine for the dreaded COVID-19 virus, or should I say the SARS-CoV-2, or 2019-nCov. I'll just call it the "Cooties" and be done with it.

As anticipated, people are running with their arms out to be vaccinated, Stick me, stick me. Well as far as I'm concerned you can stick it, just not in me.

When Trump announced operation "Warp Speed" I didn't understand the implications. I thought they were going to just remove the normal barriers that hinder normal research, you know, politicians vying for the work to be done in their state so their respective states get the bulk of the money, and of course the money itself.

What I didn't realize is that this meant the whole "shootin' match", research, development, and deployment. Whoa, slow down a little. Almost every vaccine I ever heard of took years to develop and here you do it in months. Not only that, but this type of vaccine has never been tested before, although they've been working on it for other diseases for a decade or so. What's wrong with this picture? Yet people are willingly seeking out this vaccine.

research on this matter.

I did, however, do some research into this vaccine thing. For one thing there are now three vaccines that have an EUA, (emergency use authorization), from the FDA, none of which are approved by the FDA. Confused? Wait, it gets better. Questions that some, like myself, ask are:

1. Is it safe?
Depending on the site you go to the answer is: Oh yes it is safe, at least we think so.

2. Does it work?
Absolutely, it is effective in 80% of the people 65% of the time but you still have to wear a mask and social distance from others.

3. If it is effective why would I have to wear a mask and practice social distancing?
Well because even though you are vaccinated, you can still be a carrier and spread it to others.

4. But if the others are vaccinated, what is the problem if the vaccine is effective there should be no worries, right?
Go away kid, you bother me.

I have been keeping track, on a daily basis, of "Cooties" testing and related deaths since last March, going to the same site to be as accurate as possible. About a month ago I went to another site where the link said: "How Bad is the COVID-19 Outbreak in Your County" so I clicked on it and looked up the state figures. Not only where the positive tests 200,000 people lower than the site I've been going to, it also had the deaths as a few thousand less. The amazing thing was that it had the recoveries listed at least it did then, I went on the site the other day and that statistic was gone, hummmm.

I guess what I am trying to say is that the vaccine is too new. Over politicizing this issue is worse than the disease itself. All that an EUA from the FDA does is give the "powers that be" the ability to turn "We the People" into Guinea Pigs for the "powers that be".

Some may say that they saw "Mr./Ms Rich" on TV taking a shot. My answer would be: how do you know what was in that needle? It could have been a shot of B-12 for all you know, or "Mr./Ms Rich" didn't contribute to the right campaign fund.

A little common sense goes a long way. For instance, how do you social distance in a taxi cab that is full to the brim with people? That is just one example.

If you want to make money and pass legislation that would otherwise not pass, you have to keep the people scared. And scared they are.

Joe Bayona

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August 18
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September 15
October 6
October 20
November 3
November 17
December 1
December 15

Community Calendar

Perth Amboy

MON. Mar. 22 City Council, Caucus 5:30 p.m.
City Hall, High St. & Zoom
WED Mar. 24 City Council, Regular,
City Hall, High St. & Zoom
THURS. Mar. 25 Historic Preservation Commission, 7 p.m.
City Hall, High St.
THURS. Apr. 15 Board of Education, 5:30 p.m.
PAHS, Eagle Ave.

South Amboy

WED Mar. 17 City Council, Regular, 7 p.m.
City Hall, N. Broadway
WED. Apr. 7 City Council, Business, 6 p.m.
City Hall N. Broadway.

**All meetings are subject to change. Check the City Website or www.amboyguardian.com to see if the meeting will take place via phone or video conference or for updates on meeting times, places, and details how to participate.*

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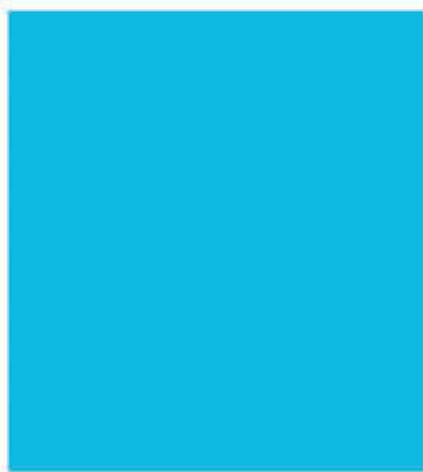
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KEEP GETTING BETTER

Good News on the Horizon

3/8/21 Caucus

**Continued from Page 1*

Mullen explained, “We can’t knock the building down until we own it. Lawyer William Opel, who was filling in for Law Director William Northgrave, worked on getting us this property.”

Pabon questioned, “What is our liability if someone gets injured (because the building is unstable)?”

Interim Business Administrator Remsen suggested, “Maybe we can shore up the property.”

Council President Petrick spoke up, “The City Engineer has to declare the property as a hazard and has to give a notice to the owner first.”

Mullen said, “Both buildings on that corner are already labeled unsafe.”

Petrick then wondered, “We have to see if we may have to knock it down.”

City Engineer Ernest Feist spoke up via Zoom, “We’ll look at the property (for safety issues). This will give us leverage to move forward to a demolition.”

Mullen ended the conversation, “We will get quotes for both properties on Amboy Avenue.”

Interim B.A. Remsen then spoke about R-143-3/21 – Introduction of CY: 2021 Budget.

“We made this budget as tight as we can make it without layoffs, and it is based on revenues we will get. Department Heads will be making presentations. We didn’t fill all vacancies and we cannot break some contracts. People in different departments are cross trained.”

Council President Bill Petrick then asked, “Did anyone reach out to Congressman Pallone for help?”

Remsen responded, “We don’t know if we will get anything from the federal package.”

Mayor Helmin Caba came up to speak regarding this resolution, “The budget was presented to me on Day 1, and it would have been a large tax increase. I want to thank CFO Jill Goldy, B.A. Remsen, and the Department Heads for their work. We have trimmed the budget and have met with the county, state, and federal officials. There is a 1.7% tax increase over last year. I think there will be an amendment which will be great news for the entire city.”

Councilman Joel Pabon made a statement about R-144-3/21 – Authorizing emergency temporary appropriations to extend the CY: 2021 temporary budget in the amount of \$243,000. Pabon suggested the council table this resolution.

Remsen then talked about R-145-3/21 – Adopting the information, technology, cyber policy for the city revised as of February 19, 2021.

“There is no deadline on this. You don’t have a cyber security policy and we need to have one in place. You can pull this resolution so everyone can have a good look at it.”

Pabon stated he didn’t have time to go over the backup material.

Councilwoman Tejeda spoke

up, “This resolution has everything a policy needs.”

Petrick then asked if we could have a presentation on the cyber policy by Perth Amboy IT Tech John Alleman.

Petrick then asked if there was anyone available to talk about R-149-3/21 – Authorizing initial review and approval of an application submitted by the Peruvian Civic Committee for the placement of a monument of INCA Garcilaso DeLa Vega at the international park.

Dalila Silva, Member of the INCA Garcilaso De La Vega Committee and Vice President of Solidaridad Peru Organization came up to the podium. “Peru is celebrating their 200-year Anniversary of Independence. This will be the only event of this kind. We would like to have it placed by our flag at the international park.”

Petrick responded, “It will have to go through the proper channels (Different Boards) before it comes back to us for a final decision to vote on it.”

Councilwoman Tejeda spoke up, “It is important for our future generations to know what other cultures were here.”

Councilman Joel Pabon asked for an explanation for R-152-3/21 – Amending Resolution R-302-8/30 – Authorizing non-fair and open contract with Ecolsciences, Inc. as licensed site remediation professionals to conduct additional site investigation at the former municipal complex, 366 High Street, in an amount not to exceed \$30,818.

B.A. Remsen replied, “We have to do this.”

Petrick then added, “It’s for the tanks.”

Tashi Vazquez from the Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD) came up and said, “We already did the tanks. Now, it’s for other contaminants based on the last investigation.”

City Clerk Victoria Kupsch spoke up, “We can get the last reports to the council on the remediation.”

Fire Chief Ed Mullen came up to speak about R-154-3/21 – A contract with Skylands Area Fire Equipment and Training LLC for firefighter turnout gear in an amount not to exceed \$77,500.

“It’s a 5-year capital plan. It is to purchase 17-18 sets of turnout gear each year (boots, jackets, pants, suspenders, bailout harnesses). We are using the same company.”

B.A. Remsen then added, “This is catch-up gear. We are using the new washer and dryer for cleaning some of the gear.”

Mullen then spoke about R-155-3/21 – Unencumbering the Inter-Local service contract with the County of Middlesex for installation of a traffic control signal at the intersection of New Brunswick Avenue and Ogden Place in the amount of \$150,000.

Mullen explained that the cost was reduced from the original resolution.

DPW Director Frank Hoffman joined via Zoom to explain R-156-3/21 – Awarding a 2-year contract to Cintas Corporation

for uniform rental, purchasing and cleaning service for the Department of Public Works in accordance with Omni Partners commencing February 28, 2022 and terminating February 28, 2024 in a total amount not to exceed \$77,900.

Hoffman stated, “If we sign up early, we can lock in the price.”

B.A. Remsen gave a brief explanation of R-157 and R-158. Involving the release of performance bonds to Duke Realty for certain lots and blocks on Riverview Drive. “Our engineers certified that their (Duke Realty) obligations were met.”

Councilman Pabon questioned R-165-3/21 – Authorizing the payment to Peter J. King for legal services rendered in 2020 beyond the regular duties of the Director of Law in an amount not to exceed \$128,873.14.

Pabon asked, “I see King’s breakdown, but some of these items are from 1½ years ago, and we can’t fight it, now.”

City Clerk Victoria Kupsch stated, “There were similar resolutions sent by King in the past (requesting payment for services rendered) which the council removed and now they are coming back (on the agenda).”

B.A. Remsen then added, “I had a friend who would submit all of his bills at the end of the year. King (the prior Law Director) identified each case he worked on with the backup material. Bills should be submitted quarterly.”

Council President Petrick spoke up, “In the past, King would submit bills, but they were not itemized. We submitted the bills by King for work he did in the B.I.D. which we gave to the B.I.D.”

Public Portion:

Resident and former councilman Ken Balut came up first, “The Mayor is the Police Director and we should know more details about the two suspended police officers and also about the tape (showing alleged ballot tampering). What’s going on with the Kushner properties, the YMCA contract, and problems with the first-time homebuyer programs. Grants in housing are given to city employees. You need to know about all your legal bills. Police reports on sexual harassment cases are not presented. There was one sexual harassment case settled for \$150,000. I’m sure the lawyer from Northgrave’s law firm can go over some of these contracts. I heard that PARTNER was involved in the Johnstone Street House Contract.”

Resident and former councilman Fernando Irizarry came up next. He wanted to get an answer to Ordinance No. 2 – Handicapped parking spaces. He also had a question regarding R-156. “On the back material it says: Prince County School’s letterhead?”

City Clerk Victoria Kupsch answered his question regarding handicapped parking permits, “There are over 700 permits (in Perth Amboy).”

Irizarry then mentioned that there are only 180 days before the council can put an ordinance on banning the sale of marijuana.

na. “Time is running out.”

Council President Petrick then told Irizarry, “The reason the backup material for the resolutions has Prince County School letterhead on it is because this is a sample of what they want done in Perth Amboy.”

Irizarry said he felt more comfortable if it actually had Perth Amboy on it.

Irizarry continued to talk about the marijuana issue, “Our prior Law Director was supposed to prepare an ordinance regarding the sale of marijuana in the city and if you do nothing, you have to wait another 5 years to do anything about it.”

Petrick responded, “I sent information (about the marijuana issue) to the former Law Director Peter King, but we had to wait for the state to take action first. Now, Law Director William Northgrave will look at it. I know it is important for us not to have marijuana businesses open up by schools and religious organizations.”

Lawyer William Opel spoke up, “You would have a two-part ordinance. The city code and a zoning policy discussion. The Law Director and the Business Administrator would have to be involved. It would have to be opened up for public hearing.”

Councilman Joel Pabon then weighed in on the discussion, “Ocean Grove is a Christian town, and they don’t want anything to do with marijuana. Time is passing and we need to start acting on this.”

Remsen spoke up again to the council, “What would be your policy and intent. People are calling the city asking about selling marijuana. 50% of people in the city voted for recreational marijuana.”

Irizarry finished off his statement, “People voted to have it legalized, but not in their city.”

Petrick then stated, “A lot of people want it decriminalized.”

Resident Junior Iglesia came up next, “I am coming here as a concerned taxpayer. The average Perth Amboy homeowner pays \$7,800 a year in property taxes. If we continue, it will take away the American Dream. If I own a home or I am renting it, we can’t operate the government with property tax increases. The majority of the city’s revenue is from property taxes and we can’t continue to increase it. 64% of homes are being rented and renters will bear the cost. A stimulus bill was just passed. Ask yourselves if the council can advocate for us. If not, then who will? We were told that the city has an A+ rating (by Standard and Poors).”

Council President Petrick responded, “As a landlord, you pass your cost to your renters unless you want to absorb the cost. You ran with the last mayor who wanted to raise taxes to 5%. One of our former B.A.’s Greg Fehrenbach was able to uplift our credit rating by managing our funds better. We kept the tax rate down for 3 consecutive years.”

Councilwoman Milady Tejeda spoke up, “Having an A+ rating does not mean we are in a strong position, because we are eco-

nomically weak.”

Mayor Helmin Caba came up to the mic, “I agree the taxes are high. This goes back to the Vas administration who put us in bad debt. The tax increase was alarming, and we (the council) trimmed it to a 1.7% increase, but we have great news coming and I will be sitting down with each of you.”

Councilman Joel Pabon then spoke up to address the last resident’s concerns. “That speaker is asking us to take a look at the budget. Every resident has a right to plead with us to make no tax increase.”

Resident Stanley Sierakowski came up next and talked about the production of marijuana. “There will be workers with no benefits. They are going to have cheap labor and the product will be shipped outside of the city.” He then again questioned, “Why did Anchor Marine which purchased the Duane Marine property not pay taxes for 25 years? They owe the city close to \$5 million. Nancy Martin from the Tax Department has the names and addresses of the owners. She had a fiduciary responsibility to inform the council of Anchor Marine not paying taxes. I am a very assertive person. Put money in escrow. Legally, that property is worth \$6 million, and you may be able to get millions of dollars back.”

Resident Iris Rodriguez spoke next and was concerned, “People are able to talk for 10 minutes straight. You give them 3 minutes, and when they ask for an additional 2 minutes, you give it to them. You might as well let them go back to 5 minutes and that’s it. You should also see how marijuana legalization laws can help us out.”

Tashi Vazquez from the OECD (Office of Economic and Community Development) came up next to address the taxes and how it also can be a burden on renters. “Landlords can only increase rent by no more than 5%. Look on the city’s website about the control on rent increases. Renters have a voice.”

Resident Vince Mackiel came up next. He inquired if there are any updates on the bridge on Market Street near Elm Street. “There has been no work on that bridge for 3 years, and an update is needed. A lot of businesses, residents, and pedestrians are near and access this bridge. I’ve sent correspondence to the Mayor, the DOT (Department of Transportation) and other departments.”

Business Administrator Remsen told Mackiel that he would get more information to him.

Mackiel concluded, “The minutes for speakers should be returned to 5 minutes and Shop-Rite is signing people up for the Covid vaccines.”

The meeting was open to those on Zoom.

Resident Lisa Nanton was first to speak, “Today is International Women’s Day. I want to honor the two women on the council and this council is very diverse. It’s important to practice tolerance and patience. I am happy

**Continued on Page 10*

The Budget, Marijuana Laws Hot Issues and a Welcomed Surprise

3/10/21 Council Meeting

By: Carolyn Maxwell
PERTH AMBOY – During the Public Comments on agenda items only, all speaking times for the public were changed back to 5 minutes.

Resident Stanley Sierakowski spoke first. “What is the status on the Anchor Marine Property?”

Business Administrator Edward Remsen spoke via Zoom, “I am getting a title search on that property.”

Sierakowski said, “A title search is not needed. Just go to the tax assessor’s office to get what you need. The property was bought by the county for \$6 million.” Sierakowski then mentioned that Developer Rosengarten got a lien on the property and the city bought it for \$10 on foreclosure.

Resident Maria Peralta spoke next in Spanish. Translations were provided by Councilmembers Pabon and Tejeda. Peralta said she is representing the Youth Against Drugs and Alcohol. “If you (the council) vote “Yes” for bringing drugs here, then it will hurt the city, the kids, and bring in gangs. This is not good for our businesses. Where is the security for our children? If they wanted to legalize prostitution, would you vote “Yes” for that? Have you met with the Police Chief to pick up kids after 9 p.m. who are involved with gangs? Please vote “No” against bringing drugs here. We are tired of the gangs and violence. If you do this (approve marijuana in Perth Amboy), the churches and other concerned citizens will protest. I have two adopted children who live with me because of their parents being involved with drugs.”

After the first public comments were closed, the council voted on the ordinances. They pulled the bid for the Public Safety Complex Gate Improvement by the Giacorp Contracting Corp. For the first reading of Ordinance No. 1 – To exceed the municipal budget appropriation limit and establish a cap

bank. Was moved by Tejeda; seconded by Morales. Ordinance No. 2 – Designating restricted parking spaces for the use by handicapped persons re: additions was moved by Pabon; seconded by Tejeda. Ordinance No. 3 – Acquisition of property for public use known as 984 Amboy Ave. by exercise of the power of eminent domain was moved by Tejeda and seconded by Pabon.

R-145 & R-146 were voided and removed at the Caucus Meeting.

There was a late-starter resolution R-166-3/21 – Rejecting the bid for the Public Safety Complex Gate Improvement at 365-375 New Brunswick Ave. and authorizing the city officials to advertise for the rebid of the Public Safety Complex Gate Improvement. It was moved by Pabon and seconded by Tejeda.

Business Administrator Remsen explained, “This is to reject R-146 (the contract with Giacorp Contracting to do this work).”

When it came time to vote on the consent agenda, Council President Petrick asked that R-165 be moved to be voted on separately. (Payment to former Law Director Peter King for services rendered beyond his regular duties).

B.A. Remsen responded to Petrick’s request and stated that former Law Director Peter King sent all backup material for the money that he is requesting.

When it came to vote on the consent agenda, R-143 thru R-164 and R-166 was moved by Pabon and seconded by Tejeda. For R-165 to be tabled was moved Tejeda and seconded by Morales. When it came to vote on separately to table this, Morales, Tejeda voted “Yes”. Pabon and Torres voted “No” to table. Motion passes to table. Public Portion:

Resident Stanley Sierakowski spoke first and made an objection when he was not allowed to have an extra two minutes to speak after his initial five minutes ran out because one council

member voted “No” to extend that time. Sierakowski stated that this is shutting down the freedom of speech. “One person should not be allowed to overrule the majority of others.” He then turned his attention to the Anchor Marine Property. “Developer Kushner has 2 acres of this property, which is worth \$2 million and also, since Councilman B.J. Torres said “No” to give me extra time to speak, then Mr. Torres should also deny extra time to other speakers who request it.”

Resident Junior Iglesia came up next. He addressed Council President William Petrick, of whom he accused of making intimidating statements to him at the caucus meeting. “I make comments about the budget and taxes going up. You (Petrick) mentioned about me being a landlord. I respect you, Mr. Petrick, and the people that are here. I also expect that you will respect me. There is supposed to be \$16.4 million of state aid coming to us according to the press conference attended by Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez.”

Iglesia then asked if he could have more time after his 5 minutes expired. When the council was polled, Councilman B.J. Torres said, “No,” because he denied Sierakowski extra time.

Council President Petrick then asked Law Director Northgrave if he could give a ruling on that.

Northgrave responded, “The council adopted the rules, and the rules were followed.”

Mayor Helmin Caba came up next. He said, “As it stands now, we have a 1.7% tax increase, but we anticipate getting additional money and now I am confident that taxes will not go up in the city this year.”

Resident Vince Mackiel came up next. “You (the council) were good at asking questions dealing with the budget last year. Healthcare and essential services are important. And regarding Market Street, the county can do street repairs. The mayor should see that it is

a priority, and the Market Street bridge is important for the railways and businesses.”

Business Administrator Remsen spoke up, “I was unable to get more detailed answers yet regarding the Market Street bridge.”

Resident David Caba came up to speak, “The Landings Developer (Kushner) took off and neglected Rector Street. I’ve complained 50 times about Rector Street. I’m looking at an abandoned house on Rector Street which is disgusting. How many fines were given to residents who have neglected their properties? I bet thousands of fines. Yet this billionaire gets away with this. Now, he wants to build 600 more rental units. How many storefronts are there being used at the Landings properties?”

Council President Petrick responded, “None.”

Caba then asked, “Was there a vote to change the speakers time to 3 minutes?” Caba then drew a laugh when he said, “When my time runs out, can I ask for an extra 50 minutes to speak because I haven’t been here for a long time?”

Petrick said, “We might change it back to 5 minutes for the public to speak.”

Petrick also requested how many fines Kushner has received in the timeframe between 2019 to 2020 versus how many fines residents have gotten in the same timeframe.

Code Enforcement Director Irving Lozada responded thru Zoom, “I can provide those numbers to the Business Administrator.” He also said, “The property at 500 High St. has been tagged as unsafe and the Law Department is in contact with representatives from Kushner.”

The meeting was opened up to the public via Zoom.

Resident Debra Foley spoke first. She asked if all city parks are closed.

Council President Petrick answered, “Only the equipment cannot be used.”

Foley then asked if the kids could play baseball yet. “There were kids skateboarding in (Washington Park) and cops were there accusing the kids of putting holes in the equipment. The police were not wearing masks. The skate parks are open in Woodbridge and Edison. Kids are skating in the streets and they could be in the parks instead. What’s the deal? Are the parks open or closed?”

Petrick responded, “We can have the Department of Recreation look at this.” Council Comments:

Councilwoman Rose Morales thanked everyone for voicing their concerns. “We need to have the public comments go back to 5 minutes and they should respect that time limit.”

Councilman Joel Pabon said, “There is nothing coming forward about the Market Street bridge repairs which belong to us. The Fayette Street bridge is in very bad condition and we need to get that one going. I want to send my prayers

to the family of Former Freeholder Blanquita Valenti who recently passed away. She will be missed.” He then turned his attention to the money which will be sent to the city due to the stimulus package. “We have to honor some contracts and outside of the police department we should not be doing that much hiring. The budget is not a done deal. It is over a month and a half and there are still a lot of lights that are out. People should go down by the Cornucopia after this meeting to see that the lights are out in their parking lot. It’s an unsafe situation. You can’t even see in front of yourself when you go by the Cornucopia. I took Lozada (Code Enforcement Director) there last night. All I hear is a lot of talk and not much action. I have to admit that they got the lights working at the Jefferson Street Parking Deck. Who was looking out at for the other lights that are not working? If anybody sees any lights that are out, there are numbers on the poles, and just report them. We as well as the county got some good money. The people who do our grants should try get even more money.” He thanked everyone for coming. “We are starting out with good numbers for the budget.”

Councilwoman Milady Tejeda commented about the lights being out. “We just have to push PSEG to take care of this. With Washington Park, when the weather gets warmer, we’ll start opening it up. The administration worked hard on the budget to make it to be an only 1.7% tax increase and it may go down to zero if we get the money. Thanks to all who came here and participated on Zoom.”

Councilman B.J. Torres thanked all who came to the meeting and those who were able to get federal money.

Council President Bill Petrick congratulated the administration for getting money from Washington. “We have 16 CSO’s (Combined Sewer Overflows) and there has been flooding in some of our resident’s basements. It is going to take \$500 million to rectify the situation. I want to thank all who came here and all those who participated in Zoomland.”

Code Enforcement Director Irving Lozada spoke up via Zoom, “I went down to the Cornucopia with Councilman Pabon and we met with the owner Mustafa Kilic. He said he turned off the lights in the parking lot because the Cornucopia has not been operating and he is looking to get solar panels. He agreed to manually turn on the lights when needed.”

Petrick closed up the meeting by sending condolences to the family of Former Freeholder Blanquita Valenti and also to the family of Firefighter Perez who lost a family member. He thanked the Peruvians for their dedication to get a monument dedicated to Inca Garcilso De La Vega.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Perth Amboy Federation Disheartened by New Contract for Superintendent Dr. David A. Roman

As her members cope with shortages and other challenges during the pandemic, Local 857 President Pat Paradiso questions the logic and timing of the deal

Press Release 3/11/21
PERTH AMBOY, N.J.: The Perth Amboy Board of Education on March 11 voted in favor of a new contract for Superintendent Dr. David A. Roman, a decision that leaves Perth Amboy Federation/Local 857 President Pat Paradiso and her fellow union members frustrated and confused by the BOE’s priorities.

“He always has to have five years to go on his contract, and every time they open up his contract, he’s given more money and more years,” Paradiso says. “We don’t know what the obsession is with five years, but if there is a time to prioritize something other than his wallet, it would be this year. The

school board’s focus should be on hiring and retaining teachers and investing in whatever else is needed for a successful academic year.”

The Perth Amboy school district has faced many challenges during this pandemic-stricken academic year, among them a shortage of nurses and educators teaching out of their certification in order to cover for open positions. (Paradiso, an elementary school teacher all through her career, has been thrust into middle school and high school roles.)

“We’ve all been sucking it up and doing the jobs we’re not certified to do,” she says. “People are teaching themselves how to teach the content at the

same time they’re teaching the students. It’s not the smartest use of manpower.” In some cases, she adds, “a series of substitutes” have been filling the staffing voids.

Nevertheless, Paradiso and the rest of Local 857 will stay focused on the task at hand.

“Despite all of this chaos, the teachers and support staff in Perth Amboy will continue to do everything within our power with the resources available to provide the children in this community with the best education possible,” she says.

Board Votes to Approve Renegotiated Superintendent's Contract

Effective July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2026

3/11/21 Board of Education Meeting via Zoom

By: Katherine Massopust

PERTH AMBOY – After the meeting was called to order, the Board went immediately into executive session at 5:38 p.m. It was suggested by Board Member Junior Iglesia that since there was a long agenda, and if the executive session goes on too long, the public should be informed. Board Attorney Isabel Machado stated she would set a timer.

At 7:26 p.m. the board returned from closed session. There was only one public portion on any subject with each speaker allowed 3 minutes.

The first person to speak was Perth Amboy Federation President Pat Paradiso. She expressed her concerns about teachers being pressed into teaching things they are not qualified for. She also was concerned about some students who lost their much-needed specialists. She also criticized the renegotiation of the Superintendent's contract, "We all want to save on cost due to financial hardships. Then why are we giving the Superintendent more money? Where are you saving money to pad the Superintendent's contract? What is the rush? The Superintendent's contract does not expire for a year. We should also see the terms and conditions of the contract."

Lynn Audet, 30-year teacher and District Representative of the Perth Amboy Federation spoke next, "We have some teachers transferred. Many teachers are teaching in areas outside of their expertise. Once Covid-19 has passed, the teachers will return to their original position. I am making requests for there to be protocols. The Perth Amboy Board of Education should make Covid vaccines available for our staff. Most people have been unable to get an appointment so far."

Resident Sharon Hubberman spoke next. "I know there is a preliminary budget. Will there be invoking a tax levy? Federal Aid has been directed to many localities. Regarding the Superintendent's contract – the Board should consider that each year, it seems to always come up. Why does Perth Amboy always amend an existing contract? I don't believe it is also an obligation to review amendments."

Resident, homeowner, and employee Diane Crawford spoke next. She asked about the property on Charles Street which is scheduled for demolition. "The grounds are well maintained, but it is an eyesore." She then addressed the issue of the Superintendent's contract, "I'm asking to rescind his request for another year. It is not my desire for you to deny his request. How do you know in a few years if you may not want to extend it? I should not need to read it in the newspaper to know what they are paying a Superintendent. The nondisclosure of salaries feels like we have something to hide."

Resident and parent William Ortiz spoke next. "The CDC has been saying constantly that K-5 students are not victims of

the virus. My first grader is languishing. He is smart but he is having difficulties. This format is mind numbing. K-5 are not spreading this virus. The plan is to open on April 21st. What is this going to look like for the school district? It's been a year now since the pandemic began. The community has been lackluster to what the ideology is. Why are we revising contracts? In 3 to 4 years, I'd like to figure that out."

Resident Lisa Alston spoke next. "We have no information given to us. I know staff that live within the city. The Superintendent is getting a pay raise. That is disgraceful. Perth Amboy is one of the only districts that doesn't give information out. Parents have concerns. Zoom information should be given out (way ahead of time) to all parents so more people can be involved. Send out an email to all parents so they know what is going on."

Superintendent Dr. David Roman made some remarks to address what the speakers said during the public portion. "It's not the same program year to year (referring to which staff the district retains). The jobs are there. The program gets funded for the needs of the students. We are having a retreat next week. As far as the tax levy – We are receiving federal aid (stating that it is not determined yet if there will be a tax levy). I will share the budget." He then stated, "Charles Street is an eyesore."

Board Secretary Derek Jess explained that the demolition of those properties is supposed to occur, but the crossing has been held up because there is some difficulty with Conrail refusing to bend. Dr. David Roman stated that the district is on top of Conrail, and we will work with them.

Jess then gave an update on the new high school. They are testing piledrivers which look like telephone poles. The school will be built on pilings. They are testing to assure the ground is able to hold the pilings."

Dr. Roman then stated the start date is Wednesday, April 21st to go hybrid.

Board Member Junior Iglesia requested that the agenda item regarding the 2021-2022 preliminary budget be read. It was noted that there will be a zero-property tax increase in the budget. Iglesia praised the finance committee: Tashi Vazquez, Stacey Peralta, and Ken Puccio for their work, "For the greater good of the community and how our budget serves the students' needs – the best we can provide for them." The preliminary budget for 2021-2022 is \$25,850,431.00.

Board Secretary Jess commented that there is testing being done at the Ignacio Cruz Learning Center and Idealized Shirts (which is nearby) because the school was built on the grounds of an old Terra-Cotta Plant of which consists of some tanks which were not cleaned up.

Dr. Danielle Brown was thankful for a donation of books

for Black History Month and hand sanitizer.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the renegotiation of Superintendent Dr. David Roman's contract which was to be voted upon.

Board Vice-President Tashi Vazquez spoke first. "I want to inform the public with information that will be helpful to them. There either is a lot of misunderstanding in the public or not enough information. It will cost the Board of Education \$50 more (on the new contract with the Superintendent). Information is available. The old contract has a base salary and merit pay. The new contract eliminates the merit pay. Merit pay was instituted for the quantity and quality in dollars of goals achieved when the goals were met. There are still goals now, but the salary cap is different. Are we eliminating goals? Of course not. There will always be goals. We will set goals and they will be evaluated. For the first years, there was not an increase or raise contrary to what people believe. Now, there is a 2% raise on the base and no merit goals. There is a lot of misinformation about competitive contracts. Each class of Superintendent positions have similar salary guidelines. They are directed by the county, approved with all documentation. This is ensured accurate and approved by the county Superintendent which is required. Why are we settling a contract with the Superintendent when the teacher's (union) contract is not settled? We have an administrator that wanted several more years. Some things are posted in social media. I believe in what Dr. Roman has been doing for our district. We have to give credit where credit is due. Our graduation rate has gone up from 40% to 80%. The Dual Language program (is successful). Our test scores before Covid have went up. Since when does whether or not you dislike someone affect a contract? Some say he is not a community man. Dr. Roman said, "I will feed every single child and their families, too," (referring to the food distribution programs for children and their families in the district). If he didn't care about our community, he would not be doing this. He has been on the phone to get staff vaccinations. The list goes on. This information was needed."

Board Member Junior Iglesia stated he had a relative who works in the district, so he had to abstain.

Board Member R.L. Anderson spoke next. "Please be transparent. The most important thing – a student that possesses a quality education. Look at the SAT scores (from two years ago). If you look (at statistics), our reading and writing is seventh from the bottom – math 8th from the bottom. We are ranked 29 (from the bottom) out of 308 schools. That is the 6th percentile. 94% of schools did better. Why look and compare ourselves to low performing schools? The State of New Jersey has ranked every school: best 100 to worst 0. We

are at 11. That means 89% of schools are better. Our middle schools are at 6 and 12. For our elementary schools: Wilentz is at 61% where 39% were better. The Dual Language School is at 80%. Wilentz and Dual Language – is where to go. Let's compare ourselves to other districts. I won't say we are. I'm tired of buzzwords. Let teachers teach. The Rose Lopez school was not included (in the stats). The data is from the year before. There should be more teacher driven instruction." R.L. Anderson showed 2 bar graphs, one which the district put out. "The graduation rate basically leveled off at a small growth. I'm surprised we allowed this (a bar graph showing the improvement to the graduation rate over the years) to be published. It's a little deceptive. Our graduation rate hasn't skyrocketed." Anderson then spoke about the Lighthouse district. "It is for a district that is doing poorly and has improved. I'd rather be a Blue Seal District. The District of Distinction? It's been discontinued in 2021." Anderson continued, "I've taught at Middlesex County College for years. Students knew me. You know why? They are from Perth Amboy. Math 101 – basic math. Perth Amboy High School did not have sufficient background in math. The Superintendent's cap? I'll use a football analogy. 15 years ago, Austin Gumbs passed the football. Can you name the running backs or wide receivers who won the super bowl? Maybe if you are a football aficionado. Austin Gumbs passed the ball to Mr. Rodecker. Austin Gumbs went to the SDA (School Development Authority) to secure funds for a new high school. He met with everyone and they had input from everyone. That data was turned over to architects for a contest. Other high schools were built everywhere. By the time we selected a winner – Ronan Architects won. Mr. Gumbs took it took the ball down the field. Mr. Rodecker took it to the second down. If we don't put a plaque up to Mr. Gumbs (it would be wrong)." Anderson then concluded, "We will say no. It's not about people - it's about programs. The highest quality education – we are only asking. Just fulfill the current contract. What I stand for and go on and I stand on. The altruistic approach - I agree with equitable treatment for everyone. John Lewis said: when you see something that is not just - you have to say something and do something. That is why I am voting "No.""

Board Member Marisol Gonzalez stated she also had to abstain because of a relative employed in the district.

Board Member Dr. Danielle Brown recognized Austin Gumbs as well. "Do not diminish strides the district has made. It matters who your quarterback is. Right now, we have a quarterback who under his leadership our district has made progress. Our students have made progress. Numbers do not lie. We are in a better place under

the leadership of Dr. David Roman. We should do right for the district. No one here works for him. I will vote "Yes". It matters who the quarterback is. The quarterback is leading us in the right direction. Perth Amboy is moving in the right direction. I support him."

Board President Ken Puccio spoke next. "I've been here for 12 years. I've been a police officer for 38 years. Some things can be misleading. I was around for all of that. There was political interference at that time. The city's mayor interjected hindering in all that. They delayed us explicitly building a high school. I've seen this for 38 years as a police officer. This is personal. I am embarrassed to say I am President of the Board of Education. You are a part of this. The worst thing it can do is make it personal. I'm glad to vote for Dr. Roman."

Board Member Michael George spoke next. "I've worked in this district more than anyone. I also taught in Middlesex County College and Rutgers and with different Superintendents. Why are we extending his contract? He is a man I've gotten to know for these past 3 months now. We may not need a down – we need a quarterback that can kick butt!"

The vote to approve the renegotiated Superintendent's contract went as follows: Stacey Peralta, Michael George, Dr. Danielle Brown, Tashi Vazquez, Ken Puccio voted: "Yes". Stephanie Márquez-Villafañe, R.L. Anderson voted: "No". Junior Iglesia, Marisol Gonzalez abstained.

5 "Yes", 2 "No", 2 Abstentions. Motion passes.

The Board then voted to approve the 2020-2021 contracts with Dr. Vivian Rodriguez (Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction) and Delvis Rodriguez (Assistant Superintendent of Administration), Derek Jess (Business Administrator/Board Secretary) and Michael LoBrace (Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary). LoBrace will be leaving at the end of April 2021. The Board wished LoBrace well on his endeavors.

During the Old Business portion, Superintendent Dr. David Roman stated, "The Superintendent doesn't have all the answers. We have a limited time on this earth. The injustices of this world that plague Perth Amboy. Together we will build a beautiful high school. To those individuals who didn't believe in me – I will reach out to you. We were recognized by our colleagues. We are a lighthouse district. What can we do together? Sometimes the answer is no because we are doing something different."

Board Vice-President Tashi Vazquez added, "Please reach out."

Board Member Junior Iglesia said, "The most important thing is the construction of the new high school."

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m. All Board Members were present.

Dominican Flag Raising, City Hall Circle, Perth Amboy 2/27/21 *Photos by Paul W. Wang



Good News on the Horizon
3/8/21 Caucus

**Continued from Page 7*

to report that during the public portion, all the women who spoke did so for 3 minutes or under.”

Nancy Martin from the Tax Collector’s Office spoke via Zoom, “I want to let everyone know that the water notices were sent out today and people can make partial payments. Regarding the Anchor Marine Property, after so many years, the property would go into foreclosure for not paying taxes.”

Council Comments:

Councilwoman Rose Morales and Councilman Joel Pabon had no comments.

Councilwoman Milady Tejeda wanted to thank all who spoke tonight and wished all a good evening.

Councilman B.J. Torres stated there are \$500,000 tobacco deaths a year and none from cannabis.

Council President Bill Petrick asked, “Were there any liens on Kushner’s property or any action taken? We need to be more aggressive, and if they don’t respond, we need to put a lien on

all their property.”

Business Administrator Remsen responded, “Law Director William Northgrave is talking to representatives from Kushner’s properties.”

Joel Rosa who works in the mayor’s office came up to the mic regarding 500 High St. “Code Enforcement has spoken to the owner.”

Petrick replied, “That property is an eyesore, and it is next to the county park.”

Rosa then responded, “It is supposed to be renovated into luxury apartments.”

Code Enforcement Director Irving Lozada joined the discussion via Zoom. “In a few days, he and all necessary department heads will have a Zoom meeting with the owner of 500 High St.”

Petrick concluded the meeting by telling all to stay safe. “I’ll see you on Wednesday.”

The meeting adjourned 8:17 p.m. All council members were present.

Ads Sell!
Call Carolyn!
732-896-4446

A Statement from the Board of
County Commissioners on the Passing of
Former Freeholder Blanquita Valenti



Former Freeholder
Blanquita Valenti

Press Release 3/10/21
MIDDLESEX COUNTY - “It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of a colleague and friend, former Freeholder Blanquita Valenti. Blanquita was an inspiration across the County, particularly for those in the minority community as she not only shattered convention by becoming the first Latina to win county-wide election in Middlesex County, but she founded one of the County’s



Valenti honored by Board of Freeholders for years of service.
**Photos Submitted*

most active human services organizations, the Puerto Rican Action Board (PRAB). A mother and grandmother, Blanquita’s love for the youngest in our community was reflected in her career, spending almost four decades as an educator in both high school and university settings.

Each of our lives are made greater to have known and served on the board with Blanquita and for those of us that benefitted from her mentorship. Her kindness was a signature, felt deeply by those who had the privilege to spend time with her, and she leaves behind a rich legacy of change driven by her service. Our thoughts are with Blanquita’s loved ones at this time. We hope they find peace in remembering the countless ways Blanquita touched and transformed the community she loved so much.”

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Perth Amboy, NJ 08861

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Email: JNegr009@gmail.com
www.NextageAllStarRealty.net



Happy Easter!



Jason R. Negr0
Broker/Owner

PERTH AMBOY - Great opportunity to have your own business! 22yr old Grocery store looking for a new owner to carry it forward. Excellent location in High traffic area with plenty of walking traffic between Shull & P.A. High Schools. Scratch offs & Lotto machines, Deli with Boars Head brand, Cooking area in back that sells many breakfast sandwiches & subs daily. Coffee station in front with small seating space. Bsmt for storage. Rent-\$1,400/monthly. **\$60,000**

Trinity Treasures Thrift Shop

SOUTH AMBOY - Trinity United Methodist Church Trinity Treasures Thrift Shop located at: 815 Bordentown Avenue, South Amboy is open on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. through 12 p.m. weather permitting. Household items, clothing, appliances, and much more. Any questions, please call 732-763-6232.

Sham-Rock the Y

SOUTH AMBOY - Join us on Saturday, March 20, 2021 for Sham-Rock The Y at the South Amboy YMCA from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This outdoor event will be held in The South Amboy YMCA parking lot at 200 John T O'Leary Blvd. with activities and music for the entire family! This FREE event will feature authentic Bagpipers, The Grand Falloons and La Bonbonniere Bakery will be giving away authentic Irish Soda Bread. All attendees will receive a raffle ticket that can be redeemed for exciting prizes. Fun activities Include: Arts & Crafts, Luck of the Irish Scavenger Hunt, Fitness Challenge, Around-the-World Basketball Game, Leprechaun Toss, Family Zumba and our themed wall for photos.

Wear your green and we'll see you on March 20th!



Clothing Bin Now Open

SAYREVILLE - The Clothing Recycling Bin located at First Presbyterian Church of Sayreville, 172 Main Street, across from Borough Hall has been reopened for donations. With ART, the recycling company, one may donate in 3 ways:

- 1.) Usable clothing is donated directly to the needy.
- 2.) High-quality clothing is given to organizations that sell to those who cannot afford new clothing.
- 3.) Unusable clothing is washed and sold for industrial use and leftovers are used in the auto industry as seat stuffing for large trucks. They also help charities, schools, police departments, fire departments and non-profit organizations.

If you have clothes, shoes or other fabrics please consider using our recycling bin. Thank You.



Food Drive for Local Families

SOUTH AMBOY - The South Amboy High School Interact Club (Rotary Club) and the City of South Amboy is holding a food drive to benefit local families. If you are able to donate, there will be a collection of non-perishable food, personal hygiene products and paper goods. Donations can be dropped off at the side door of the South Amboy Senior Center on Henry Street, Mondays – Friday's from 8AM to 3p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Jaclyn at (732) 525-5965. You can also contact Cathy at the Nurse's office in the South Amboy Middle/High School at (732) 316-7668 option 3 to arrange curbside drop off.

Clothing & Shoe Fund Drive

SOUTH AMBOY - There will be a Clothing and Shoe Fund Drive on April 11, 2021 at the Sacred Heart Church, 531 Washington Rd., from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please donate to raise funds for Boy Scout Troop 95 and Church of the Sacred Heart South Amboy.

Needed Items:

- All types of styles of used and wearable clothing (men, women, and kids)
- All used and wearable sneakers
- Purses/Backpacks
- Briefcases
- Belts/Hats/Gloves
- Socks/Scarves/Ties
- Blankets & Sheets
- Pillows & Bedspreads
- Quilts & Comforters
- Towels & Bath Rugs
- Tablecloths
- Drapery & Curtains

No Furniture, toys, books, glass, liquids or bric-a-brac.

If you are unable to drop off your items at these times, please contact: Troop 95 BSA at 732-654-2816 or email: T95B-SANJ@GMAIL.COM

Help us help others.

SPRING INTO ACTION



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT[®]
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Register for Programs or Classes TODAY!

Call or email us at info@rbaymca.org

- Summer Day Camp
- Enrichment Camp
- Soccer
- Martial Arts
- Jr. Artist
- Ballet
- Virtual Tutoring
- Remote Learning Program
- Middle School/ 9th Grade Afterschool Program
- Weekly Group Fitness Classes
- Personal Training
- Lap Swim (reserve your lane)

Coming Soon...

- Swim Lessons
- Expanded hours
- Basketball (evenings)

and much more...

The RARITAN BAY AREA YMCA
staff would like to wish you and
your family a blessed Easter!

RARITAN BAY AREA YMCA
357 New Brunswick Avenue
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
732.442.3632 www.rbaymca.org



How the American Rescue Plan Helps You and New Jersey

Press Release 3/13/21

Dear New Jerseyans,
NEW JERSEY - This past week, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan, delivering on his and Congressional Democrats' promise to provide COVID-19 relief to the American people. I supported this bold legislation because it provides an urgent and historic

investment in the health and financial stability of millions of New Jerseyans and people across the country, a boost to our small businesses, and a lifeline to state and local governments. The landmark American Rescue Plan puts our country on a path to ending this pandemic and building back stronger and better.

The American Rescue Plan provides a number of benefits, which will directly benefit you. I encourage New Jerseyans who would like to see a detailed breakdown and more information on how to access these critical resources to take a look at our updated COVID-19 Federal Relief Update for New Jerseyans at booker.senate.gov/coronavirus.

Here is just a snapshot of what this landmark bill will do for the American people:

Stimulus Checks

- \$1,400 direct payments to individuals making less than \$75,000 or couples making less than \$150,000 and each of their dependent children. (Some individuals earning up to \$80,000 and couples earning up to \$160,000 will be eligible to receive a reduced amount of this benefit).

- This will total \$9.62 billion in combined direct payments for 3,691,546 eligible New Jersey households – an average \$2,605 per household.

- On top of \$600 checks approved in December, these \$1,400 payments fulfill a promise of providing \$2,000 stimulus payments per person.

- Unlike previous rounds, adult dependents would be eligible for payments.

- Citizen spouses and children living in mixed-status families are also eligible for payments.

Unemployment Insurance (UI)

- Emergency provisions expanding unemployment insurance benefits that were due to lapse March 14 will now be extended to September 6.

- These changes extend the \$300 federal weekly enhanced benefit through September 6.

- The American Rescue Plan makes the first \$10,200 of unemployment insurance benefit income tax-free for individuals earning up to \$150,000.

- Freelancers, gig workers and independent contractors are eligible for expanded benefits.

- Over 268,000 New Jerseyans

whose federal UI benefits were due to expire this week will have them extended.

Tax Credits

- Expands the existing Child Tax Credit for families with children by up to \$1,600 per child, from \$2,000 to \$3,600 per child under age six and \$3,400 per child under age 18.

- Families will become able to receive the credit as a monthly payment.

- More than 1.6 million New Jersey children will benefit from this expanded credit, including an additional 560,000 children who previously did not qualify for the full benefit.

- 82% of New Jersey children will now be eligible for the Child Tax Credit

- In addition to benefiting millions of New Jersey children, these changes will lift 10 million American children out of poverty, including an estimated 89,000 in New Jersey.

Vaccines/Testing

- The American Rescue Plan provides \$14 billion for vaccines, helping to scale up America's vaccine capacity.

- The law also provides \$49 billion for testing, contact tracing, genomic sequencing to track new variants and monitor of COVID-19 to better prevent its spread.

- It also provides \$7.6 billion to hire 100,000 public health workers to administer vaccines and support the pandemic response.

State/Local Assistance

- The American Rescue Plan provides \$360 billion in direct, flexible aid to every state, county and municipal government, to help cover increased costs and lost revenues due to the pandemic, while keeping essential public workers on the job and maintaining critical services for residents; includes \$10 billion to expand broadband internet access.

- The law provides an estimated \$10.2 billion for New Jersey, including approximately \$6.4 billion for the state plus another \$192 million for broadband, \$1.823 billion combined for all 21 counties, and \$1.741 billion split among all 565 municipalities.

- The law provides \$50 billion for Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to reimburse state and local COVID response costs at 100% cost share.

- New Jersey has already received \$2 billion from FEMA DRF.

Help is on the way. Together, we will finally overcome this pandemic and build back better.

Sincerely,

Cory A. Booker

United States Senator

Press Release 3/12/21

Dear Neighbors,

NEW JERSEY - This week, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan into law. It will go a long way toward crushing the coronavirus, delivering help to struggling families, and rebuilding our economy. It's exactly the kind of response we need to end this public health and economic crisis. I want you to know that help is on the way.

A Plan to Crush the Virus and Get Back to Work and School

The American Rescue Plan will support the national effort to ramp up distribution and administration of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines as well as the implementation of a national testing strategy that will help us quickly track and contain the virus. President Biden addressed the country this week and said that he expects that COVID-19 vaccines will be available to all adults by May 1. For the first time, we have a national plan to fight the virus that does not force states and local governments to compete with each other for testing, contact tracing, and medical supplies.

The bill also includes the largest expansion of health care coverage since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, including lower monthly premiums for millions of Americans and a coverage expansion for millions more who are currently uninsured. The pandemic has shown just how important it is to have affordable and accessible health care coverage, and this bill helps provide it.

The relief package also helps low-income families pay their utility bills so they can keep the lights on, the heat working, and the water running. We also expand internet connectivity to help students and teachers

Help is on the Way

without home internet access so that we can close the homework gap.

Here's What the Bill Means for You:

- Eligible individuals and families will receive direct cash payments. The deposits will begin as early as this weekend. If you have questions about your payment, please call my office or click here for more information from the IRS.

- Unemployment benefits will be extended through early September with the additional supplemental benefit of \$300 per week.

- The child tax credit for eligible families is now fully refundable for 2021, and the bill increases the annual amount from the current \$2,000 per child to \$3,000 per child (\$3,600 for a child under age 6) in 2021.

- New Jersey's K-12 school districts will receive an estimated \$2.9 billion for immediate and long-term relief so they can work with public health experts to safely re-open schools and make up for lost time in the classroom.

- Small businesses and non-profits will have access to more Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding with expanded eligibility to ensure it reaches nonprofits of all sizes and types. Click here for information about resources for small businesses and PPP loans or call your lender directly.

- Our towns will receive funding to ensure critical services and day-to-day programs can remain operational. First responders, teachers, and public servants across our state are risking their lives to serve our cities and towns, and we cannot let them down. New Jersey is expected to receive \$6.5 billion. Rebuilding Our Infrastructure with Good Paying Jobs

This week, I introduced the Leading Infrastructure For Tomorrow's America Act, or LIFT America Act. As our nation combats COVID-19 and a severe economic downturn, the LIFT America Act fulfills President Biden's promise to Build Back Better. Over the last

year, we've seen the devastating results of inaction: major power outages, water shortages, health care facilities stretched to the limit, and communities left behind due to the digital divide. The sweeping legislation will modernize the nation's infrastructure, rebuild the economy, combat climate change, and protect public health and the environment.

Local COVID-19 Announcements

Restaurants, recreational and amusement venues, gyms, barber shops, and salons can increase indoor capacity to 50% on March 19.

The cap on outdoor gatherings that are not religious services or ceremonies, political events, weddings, funerals or memorial services will increase to 50 on March 19. Indoor gatherings will have a limit of 25 individuals.

If you or someone you know needs assistance paying for heating and cooling bills, click here to find out how eligible households in New Jersey can get help.

Coronavirus Resources

If you have questions about resources available to New Jerseyans during the coronavirus pandemic, click here to visit my website or call my offices directly:

Middlesex County:

732-249-8892

Monmouth County:

732-571-1140

Sincerely,

Congressman Pallone

Shortage of Bilingual Spanish-Speaking Advocates for Children in Foster Care

Press Release

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

- Spanish-speaking children in foster care too often have to wait longer than their English-speaking counterparts to be provided with a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). CASAs serve a vital role in advocating for a child's best interest in court and there are not enough bilingual CASA volunteers to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking children and families in Middlesex County. Last fiscal year, CASA of Middlesex County served 157 of the 352 children in Middlesex County who were in foster care during that time. Over a quarter of these children were Hispanic/Latino, and many of them speak Spanish as their native language.

CASA of Middlesex County is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving abused and neglected children who are living in out-of-home placements. CASA recruits and trains volunteers to advise the courts and advocate for the children's best interests. Unfortunately, many children in foster care have little stability in their lives. They may experience changes with family

connections, homes, schools, friends, and even caseworkers. A CASA volunteer may be their only constant while in foster care. Many children without CASAs are left trying to navigate their way through the system as one of thousands, only having their basic needs met, until they are permanently placed in a home or age out of the foster care system. Having a CASA Advocate can change this story. Children with a CASA on average receive more services while in care, do better in school, spend less time in foster care, are more likely to be adopted, and are less likely to be bounced from home to home.

This past fiscal year, CASA worked with 83 amazing advocates, who donated a total of 4,529 case-related hours, valued at \$133,560. They also drove 17,854 miles to visit children and gather information about them. Of these advocates, fewer than 10 of them spoke Spanish. Having a bilingual advocate can make a world of difference for a Spanish-speaking child in foster care. In the words of CASA Advocate Nancy Cicale-Sharon, "being bilingual helps me

form a deeper connection to my CASA child because she can more fully and easily express things to me in Spanish than she could in English. This helps me to advocate for her because as a CASA, communication is everything."

By becoming a bilingual CASA volunteer, you can change the life of a Spanish-speaking child who has been removed from their home due to abuse or neglect. You can make sure that a child feels listened to and understood, and that their voice is heard in court.

If you are interested in learning more about how you or someone you know can change a child's story by volunteering with CASA, go to casaofmiddlesexcounty.org/volunteer or email info@casaofmiddlesexcounty.org.

CASA of Middlesex County is non-profit dedicated to standing up for the needs of children living in foster care, advocating for these children through the hard work of trained volunteers who are assigned to a child or sibling group.



Dowdell Library Events

Press Release
SOUTH AMBOY — Spring into reading this month at the Dowdell Library. Our April schedule is blooming with fresh new programs and services.
The month kicks off with National Library Week! Show off your creative side and design a bookmark. Stop by the library and pick up your blank bookmark starting April 5. Return it anytime during the month to have it displayed and judged! Winners from different age categories will be announced May 3.
Test Kitchen is back in April with an all-new recipe. Tune in to watch Dennis and Maryanne make Haluski, Polish cabbage and noodles. This delicious and easy recipe is a spring favorite. You can find the video on our webpage Dowdell.org or watch it on YouTube. Do you have an easy recipe you would love Dennis and Maryanne to make on Test Kitchen? Please email it to comments@dowdell.org or drop it off at the library during business hours. We would love to hear from you!
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, in collaboration with RWJBarnabas Health, is offering new virtual medical programs. Attend Stretch It!!! Hosted by John Lancaster. This class will help you improve your mobility and flexibility. Classes are held on April 1, 8, 15, and 29. Nadine Roberts, a stress management practitioner, will present A Virtual Guided Imagery Relaxation Session on April 13 & 27. Join us for a virtual relaxation session of guided imagery and creative visualization. Each one-hour session will begin at 1 pm. You must be registered to attend any class. To register, email Kathleen.johnson@rwjbg.org
April 22 is Earth Day! Water pollution causes a serious threat to our local wildlife and our wellbeing! Our very own Director Elaine Gaber has put together a fun virtual program even the youngest viewers can enjoy. This program will bring awareness to the impact water pollution has right here in our town. Don't miss this engaging program!
Take-home crafts are going green this month too! Stop in April 19-30 to grab a recycled art craft kit. You never know what you'll get because we are handing out a little bit of everything. Get creative and see what you can make!
The Library will be presenting a unique and engaging Virtual Exhibit in April. Joined by Suzanne Ryan, a small business owner and Victorian era expert, the Virtual Exhibit will dive into a lesser-known history subject. Suzanne will be displaying her extensive mourning jewelry collection and explaining the history behind the different pieces. Watch virtually on YouTube but then stop into the library to see the collection in person! The in-house exhibit will run through April.
Watch this program along with our many other fun and informative virtual programs on the Dowdell Library YouTube channel. You can find a link to the most current videos at Dowdell.org or search the Sadie Pope Dowdell Library on YouTube.
Comments, queries, compliments? Please visit www.dowdell.org, or contact the Library at 732-721-6060 or comments@dowdell.org. The library is located off John O'Leary Blvd, adjacent to South Amboy Middle High School. Due to all services being staff-assisted, walk-in service is available Monday-Friday 12-5pm and Thursday 12-5pm and 6-8pm. Grab & Go Service by Appointment- Monday morning 9:30-10:30am.

Press Release
SOUTH AMBOY — The Sadie Pope Dowdell Library is your library without walls! Use reliable 24/7 information services such as JerseyClicks, Brainfuse, New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator, Rosetta Stone language assistance or trace your family history with Heritage Quest. Brainfuse allows you to interact with live tutors in math, science, reading/writing, social studies, or access sample PSAT/SAT, ACT, AP and state standardized tests. Download free eBooks and audio books, watch movies and T.V. shows, stream music, or read comic books. All you need is a South Amboy library card. Visit Dowdell.org to learn more about these programs and start using them today!
Don't forget about the Library's YouTube Channel too! We miss holding in-house programing, so we did the next best thing and made them virtual. You can learn to cook a new recipe, listen to an entertaining story, update your technology skills or learn to paint. Choose from over 30 YouTube programs in our collection. Find our YouTube link on Dowdell.org or search for the Sadie Pope Dowdell Library on YouTube.
If you prefer holding a book in your hand, just call or email to reserve the latest bestseller or drop in during library hours.
Comments, queries, compliments? Please visit www.dowdell.org, or contact the Library at 732-721-6060 or comments@dowdell.org. The library is located off John O'Leary Blvd, adjacent to South Amboy Middle High School. Due to all services being staff-assisted, walk-in service is available Monday-Friday 12-5pm and Thursday 12-5pm and 6-8pm. Grab & Go Service by Appointment- Monday morning 9:30-10:30am.

Woodbridge Public Library Events

Free Virtual Events - All are Welcome to Attend

March 18 | 7PM
What's Next for Human Space Travel?
Paul Cirillo of the New Jersey Astronomical Association will fill us in on what's in store for space stations and gateways, moon bases, a journey to Mars and even space tourism. Registration Required - https://bit.ly/3p8oKWrr
March 23 | 7PM
Remember the Ladies
In honor of Women's History month the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts brings us a presentation which highlights the contributions of the first ladies of the United States. Registration Required - https://bit.ly/2Z4sQEI
March 29 | 7PM
Why Garden Off The Ground?
Get an introduction to raised beds, straw bales, and container gardening and learn what types of plants to grow in these environments. Presented by Rutgers Master Gardener Pat Donahue. Registration Required - https://bit.ly/2MVP2y7
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Hackensack Meridian Health
Establishes Hackensack Meridian
Health Foundation

Press Release 3/11/21
EDISON, NJ – Hackensack Meridian Health, the largest, most comprehensive and integrated health care network in New Jersey, today announced the formation of Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation. The newly created foundation will serve as the parent organization for the network's 10 community-based hospital foundations. In addition to raising funds for the network's local medical centers, Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation will also focus on network-wide priorities such as behavioral health, children's health, the Hackensack Meridian Center for Discovery & Innovation and the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine.
"The establishment of one network-wide philanthropic entity has been a goal for a long time," says Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, chief executive officer of Hackensack Meridian Health. "Our local hospital foundations, led by strong boards of trustees, do a tremendous job of fundraising for their local medical centers. In addition, there are important priorities that we need to address at a broader level that will ultimately benefit our community hospitals and patients. Take, for example, behavioral health. Funding on a larger scale helps us to create the additional programs and facilities needed to address a growing health crisis, and those extra resources have the added benefit of freeing up space and caregiver expertise in the emergency departments, which is good on a local level."
Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation is led by president and chief development officer Joyce P. Hendricks, along with a board of trustees co-chaired by Keith Banks and Domenic DiPiero. The trustees consist of members from each hospital foundation board, ensuring local hospital representation as they work to broadly raise funds for Hackensack Meridian Health. All hospital foundations will continue to operate locally, raising money for the hospitals, programs and services that mean the most to supporters in those areas.
"We are so fortunate to have dedicated trustees who will work as ambassadors on behalf of the network at all levels," says Hendricks. "It is vital that a leading health care organization such as Hackensack Meridian Health has a foundation that matches its ambitious goals and is able to secure the funding necessary to help the network fulfill its mission to transform health care. However, it is equally important that we continue to support our local hospitals, and all gifts made to those important community hospitals will be directed as donors intend and remain with the facility or program of their choosing. I am confident that with the creation of Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation, we are well poised to make a real difference for the network, and most importantly, our patients."
In addition to fundraising for Hackensack Meridian Health priorities, the establishment of Hackensack Meridian Health Foundation will deliver cost savings through the centralization of operations and office space. This will help to reduce expenses and enable the foundation to transfer additional funds directly to programs and services.
In a joint statement, foundation co-chairs Banks and DiPiero said the following: "It is an honor to serve as co-chairs of this very important endeavor. We firmly believe that the merger of our foundations in the north, central and southern markets of Hackensack Meridian Health will create a halo effect that will envelop and enhance health care for our communities. Together with our dedicated board of trustees, we will actively seek out philanthropic opportunities that will make Hackensack Meridian Health the health care organization of choice for the residents of New Jersey and beyond."
To learn more about how you can support the foundations of Hackensack Meridian Health, please visit www.hackensack-meridianhealth.org/give-now/.

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World War II - 75 Years Ago

By Phil Kohn. Dedicated to the memory of his father, GM3 Walter Kohn, U.S. Navy Armed Guard, USNR, and all men and women who have answered the country’s call in time of need. Phil can be contacted at ww2remembered@yahoo.com.

The United Kingdom’s Cabinet Mission to India departs London on March 15, 1946, with Prime Minister Clement Attlee’s blessing on India’s right to independence. The Mission — consisting of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps of the Board of Trade, and Albert V. Alexander, the U.K. Minister of Defence — will meet with Indian representatives regarding the eventual independence of British India. The British are hopeful, for strategic purposes, that both Indian constituencies — Hindus and Muslims — will agree to a unified India.

Maximilien Blokzijl, a Dutch singer and journalist who made broadcasts to the Netherlands for the Nazis, is executed at The Hague for treason on March 16. It is the first execution by the Dutch government in the Netherlands since 1854.

Red Army troops on March 17 begin departing Denmark’s Bornholm Island, which had been seized from the Nazis in May 1945. Bornholm is in the Baltic Sea, east of the rest of Denmark.

March 18 is the last day that 1.1 million Koreans residing in Japan may apply for repatriation. Some 614,000 opt to return to Korea, all but 10,000 to places south of the 38th parallel. (North of that demarcation line is Soviet-occupied, south of there is occupied by the U.S.) In Japan, 63 women are hired as law-enforcement officers, the first-ever female police in the history of the country.

Nikolai Mikhailovich Shvernik replaces Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on March 19. Iran appeals to the UN Security Council over the presence of Soviet troops remaining in the country almost three weeks after the treaty date for their withdrawal, which was March 2, 1946. Two separate crashes of U.S. Army planes in northern California kill 33 servicemen. In the first, a B-29 crashes into a mountain near Livermore, while in the second, a C-47 cargo plane with 26 aboard explodes in mid-air and crashes near Hobart Mills. French Guiana (in South America), Réunion (in the Indian Ocean), and Martinique and Guadeloupe (both in the Caribbean) become overseas departments of France.

Tule Lake War Relocation Center, in Newell, California, near the Oregon border, closes on March 20. It is the last remaining of the ten internment camps built by the federal government to hold Japanese-Americans who had been forcibly removed from their West Coast homes during the war.

The United Nations sets up temporary headquarters at Hunter College in New York City on March 21. Per planning that had begun in the fall of 1945 for a post-war air force independent of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense establishes the Strategic Air Command, at Bolling Field, in the District of Columbia, and the Tactical Air Command, at Langley Field, near Newport News, Virginia. In California, Kenny Washington signs a contract with the Los Angeles Rams, becoming the first African-American to play for a National Football League team since 1933, when the league began an unwritten ban on hiring black players.

The first U.S.-built rocket to leave the earth’s atmosphere reaches an altitude of 50 miles on March 22, 1946. To accomplish the achievement, the U.S. Army uses a team of German and American scientists to adapt German V-2 rockets that had been captured during the war. The British mandate in Transjordan comes to an end. The United Kingdom and Transjordan sign the Treaty of London, granting independence to Transjordan while permitting the British to maintain military bases in the country.

The strike by the United Auto Workers against the General Motors Corporation that began on November 21, 1945, ends on March 23, with workers winning an 18.5-cents-per-hour wage increase. W. Averell Harriman, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, is named as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom. President Truman sends an ultimatum to Joseph Stalin demanding that the Soviets comply with their agreement to withdraw their troops from Iran.

The U.K.’s Cabinet Mission on March 24 arrives in Delhi, India, to discuss the future independence of India within the British Commonwealth. While the British hope for a unified India, the country’s (Hindu) Indian National Congress and the Muslim League seem less willing than ever to compromise on a unified, independent India. The U.S.S.R. announces it will withdraw its troops from Iran, thus defusing a diplomatic crisis with the United Kingdom and the United States.

The British Broadcasting Corporation begins transmitting short-wave radio programming in Russian to the Soviet Union on March 25. In the Bronx, New York, the United Nations Security Council temporarily convenes in buildings of Lehman College, part of the City College of New York.

In Greece, a large demonstration takes place in Athens on March 26 against the holding of national parliamentary elections, scheduled for March 31. Protesters, mainly leftists, are attacked by soldiers and police, and many are injured.

On March 27, Oklahoma A&M defeats North Carolina, 43-40, at Madison Square Garden in New York City to win the NCAA basketball tournament. It is the first NCAA tournament to have four teams (of the initial eight in the single-elimination tourney) advance to the finals site. (The NCAA’s true “Final Four” format, however, will not go into effect until 1952.)

The U.S. Department of State releases the Acheson-Lilienthal Report on March 28. The document, written by a committee headed by U.S. Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson and attorney David Lilienthal, chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, outlines a plan for the international control of nuclear power as a means of avoiding nuclear warfare in the future. (As the Cold War progresses, however, the Report is basically ignored and forgotten.) The results of the first general elections for the provincial assemblies of the eleven provinces of British India are certified. The Indian National Congress Party wins majorities in eight of the assemblies, while the Muslim League commands majorities in two others.

A new constitution for the Gold Coast, the British Crown Colony on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, goes into effect on March 29. For the first time, the colony’s legislative council has a black majority.

In the British and American sectors of Germany, 7,000 Allied military personnel on March 30 fan out and round up and arrest over 1,000 individuals involved in “a well-financed” attempt to revive the Nazi Party. The movement has been organized by Artur Axmann, who had been the leader (*Reichsjugendführer*) of *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) from 1940 until the end of the war. Axmann had escaped from the *Führerbunker* in Berlin shortly after Hitler’s suicide and had eluded capture by the Soviets. He had been living under an alias in Lübeck, Germany, but was arrested there in December 1945 when a U.S. Army counterintelligence operation discovered his clandestine Nazi-revival plans. (In May 1949, a Nuremberg de-Nazification court tries Axmann and finds him guilty of indoctrinating youth in National Socialism but concludes he had committed no war crimes. He is sentenced to three years and three months in prison as a “major offender.”)

After only 18 days in office — heading the shortest-termed government in Belgium’s history — Paul-Henri Spaak is replaced by Achille van Acker —Spaak’s predecessor — as prime minister of Belgium on March 31. In Greece, the first post-war parliamentary elections take place, with the Communist Party of Greece refusing to participate. Some 38% of the population adheres to a left-wing boycott of the voting. International observers note “serious intimidation” of leftists. A right-wing, royalist government is elected as a result, and Konstantinos Tsaldaris becomes prime minister.

On April 1, 1946, 400,000 bituminous-coal miners in the United States go on strike under the auspices of the United Mine Workers of America. The United Kingdom forms the Malay Union, a federation of the Malay states and the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca. Singapore, the large city at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, is declared a separate crown colony. An 8.6-magnitude earthquake strikes just south of the Aleutian Islands, destroying the Scotch Cap Lighthouse on Unimak Island, Alaska, killing six people. A resulting tsunami, traveling at over 500 miles per hour smashes into Hilo, Hawaii, with a 55-foot-high wall of water, killing 173 people, injuring 163, destroying 488 buildings and damaging 936 more. Damages are estimated at over \$26 million. By prior agreement, French troops begin departing Syria. The event is celebrated thereafter in that country as Evacuation Day — a national holiday.

In Tokyo, Gen. of the Army Douglas MacArthur, administrator of the Allied occupation, issues orders on April 2 forbidding the fraternization of American military personnel and Japanese citizens. Originally intended to curb consorting with prostitutes, the order soon expands to total segregation, with Japanese being barred from American facilities, and vice versa.

Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma, who oversaw the Bataan Death March, is executed at Los Baños, south of Manila, the Philippines, on April 3. Postal relations resume between the Netherlands and Germany. An article in an Amsterdam newspaper brings to the attention of publishers the existence of a diary of a young Jewish teenager who died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The girl kept the journal for two years while her family was being hidden from the Nazis by Dutch accomplices. The day after the family was arrested, the diary was rescued and kept hidden from the Germans by one of the Dutch women (Hermine “Miep” Gies) hiding the family because it included the names of those who had helped. Upon the return from Auschwitz of the father— the family’s sole survivor — his daughter’s diary was handed over to him. Published in the Netherlands in 1947, the book is translated and published in English in 1952 as “Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.”

In Greece, Panagiotis Poulitsas becomes interim prime minister on April 4, replacing Themistoklis Sophoulis until Konstantinos Tsaldaris — winner of the controversial parliamentary elections on March 31 — can take office. In Washington, D.C., the eleven-nation Far Eastern Commission — with strong urging by Gen. of the Army Douglas MacArthur — exempts Japanese emperor Hirohito from being tried for war crimes. (MacArthur feels Hirohito needs to remain on the throne as a symbol of continuity and cohesion for the Japanese people.)



St. Patrick’s Day with the Hibernians

SOUTH AMBOY - The Colonel D.B. Kelly Ancient Order of Hibernians located at 272 Stevens Ave in South Amboy across from the old St. Mary’s High School wishes to invite everyone to start making your St. Patrick’s Day plans with us. With no St Patrick’s parades planned for the month of March, join us for a night of celebrating our Irish Heritage. On Wednesday March 17th, beginning at 5:00pm, we will have our St. Patrick’s Day Dinner. For the price of \$35 per person includes choice of dinner (Irish Spring Salad/ Potato Leak soup and choice of Corn-beef and Cabbage Platter or Shepherd’s Pie) and dessert (Irish Tea Cake or Irish Cheesecake).

There will be a cash bar with an added authentic Irish Coffee Special for \$6.00.

We will also be drawing the winners of our 50/50 raffle at 8:00pm. The Colonel D.B. Kelly Pipes and Drums will be performing for all our guests.

We will limit the capacity of our hall to only 50 people (subject to change with state guidelines). The upstairs bar will be open also if you don’t wish to participate in the dinner. For more information and to make a reservation please call 732-721-2098 Or email: colkellyaoh@aol.com and get your reservations in early!!!

Lenten Fish Fridays with the Hibernians

SOUTH AMBOY - The Colonel D.B. Kelly Ancient Order of Hibernians located at 272 Stevens Ave in South Amboy across from the old St. Mary’s High School wishes to advise everybody that we are having Lenten Fish Fridays. The menu includes Fish & Chips platter (made with FRESH Cod) \$15.00 / A Shrimp Po Boy sandwich and Chips \$12.00/ A Fish & Po Boy Shrimp Platter \$20.00/A Shrimp Platter w/ Chips \$15.00 and Chicken fingers w/chips \$8.00 as well as Fried Calamari for \$8.00 and 10” bar pies for just \$5.00. Check for the weekly Special and to make reservations or place orders go to our FACEBOOK page and by calling 732-721-2098, email: colkellyaoh@aol.com, or message us on our Facebook page.

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Journey to the Cross

PERTH AMBOY - We invite you to join us for an Easter Holy Week excursion, Journey to the Cross, a meditative guided prayer-walk. We hope this evening will give you space to reflect on the events of Jesus' crucifixion and, in that, you find it unique in a meaningful way.

Monday, March 29 through Saturday, April 3, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. including a message in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. Downstairs in Nanassy Hall 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.; upstairs in the sanctuary 7:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. This is a Free event where people from all walks of life are welcome.

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- 7 It is Finished
- 8 Buried in a tomb
- 9 Letting Go
- 10 Communion

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16. RIDING

17. SKATING

18. SOCCER

19. SOFTBALL

20. SQUASH

21. SWIMMING

22. TENNIS

23. VOLLEYBALL

24. WRESTLING

R L A P Z J G P M U J H G I H

W L T W Z M A N B V T S L G M

J A Z E J W D I I O X A G T G

X B A S K E T B A L L U Q T C

W T G N I C A R N L T Q A G N

B O X I N G I O P E A S N C B

J O R P N C L R O Y I I E I B

P F V H O H H X C B T Z C R O

W O R H T R E M M A H Y E D W

G Z L A N S D O K L C C S T L

N O C O I P U S O L C P E C I

I E L F M Q W C I O Y N R H N

D Y V F D G K N S Q N E H H G

I A T J A Z G S W I M M I N G

R L L A B T F O S R D E K C T

Happy Easter!

Ana Maria Zevallos/Skrocki
HOME for FUNERALS
732-826-1321
469 State Street Perth Amboy

Ana M. Zevallos
Senior Director
N.J. License # 4192

During Your Time of Need.....

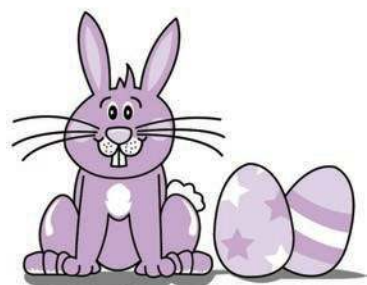
- Traditional Funerals
- Cremation Services
- Pre-Planned Funeral Services
- Shipment to Foreign Locations
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Happy Easter
From Our Family to yours!

Takeout Lenten Fish Fry

SOUTH AMBOY – The South Amboy Elks, 601 Washington Ave., are having a Takeout Lenten Fish Fry on Fridays: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2 from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Serving Platters & Haddock, Shrimp & Clam Strips Combo Platter, Fish Sandwich, Chicken Fingers. All come with fries and slaw. Call to place your order: 732-727-7170.



Lenten Fish & Chicken Dinner Fundraiser

SAYREVILLE - The First Presbyterian Church of Sayreville, 172 Main Street, Sayreville, will be having a Lenten Fish and Chicken Dinner on March 19, 2021. All dinners will be take-out. Tickets are \$15.00 and may be obtained by calling the church office at 732-257-6353 or emailing us at churchoffice172@optimum.net. Chicken must be specified in advance. All meals include a 6 oz. piece of cod/chicken, french fries, green beans, coleslaw, rolls and fruit pie. Dinner pickups will be from 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Happy Easter

PETRICK'S FLOWERS

A family run business since 1910
710 PFEIFFER BLVD. (Route 184)
PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
Phone 732-442-3559

ANDERL & OAKLEY, P.C.

CERTIFIED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY AS CRIMINAL TRIAL ATTORNEYS

Happy Easter

MARK A. ANDERL, ESQ.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

- TRAFFIC DEFENSE
- CRIMINAL DEFENSE

309 MAPLE STREET
PERTH AMBOY, NJ 08861
TEL (732) 324-7700
FAX (732) 324-8908

20 NASSAU STREET
PRINCETON, NJ 08542
TEL (609) 921-1755
FAX (609) 921-8907

Happy Easter to All Our Customers
Filizes Pascuas a Todos Nuestros Clientes
From

QUISQUEYA MEAT MARKET

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Perth Amboy, NJ,08861

Phone: 732-826-8926 Fax: 732-826-0789
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Annual Cabbage & Noodle Sale

PERTH AMBOY - St. John's Evg. Lutheran Church is having a cabbage & noodle sale. Orders taken March 1st through March 26th. Pick up will be at 664 Amboy Ave. (use the side door on Meredith St.) on Sunday March 28th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Curbside P/U available Contact Lorraine at 732-996-8860 or kookie.mc@gmail.com to place your order. Cost: \$6.00 for 1 pound or buy 3 pounds or more save \$1.00 per pound!

BROADWAY

Ange

@broadwayange124
Renee Banks
Mon-Sat
11am-5pm
124 South Broadway
South Amboy, NJ 08879
(732) 313-7669

HAPPY EASTER!

ONE STOP INSURANCE

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Principal Agent

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Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
Gabe@insureonestop.com
www.insureonestop.com

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Fax: 732-520-2670

Happy Easter

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Best Sandwiches in the City
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LUIS & NELLY TORRES
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
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Perth Amboy, NJ

(732) 442-8740
Fax: (732) 442-4151

Happy Easter

BAYSIDE CREAMERY

Serving Over 40 Flavors of Premium Ice Cream

Season Opening
Thursday, April 1st, 2021

Open Everyday
1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

273 Front Street
Perth Amboy, New Jersey
732-442-7200

Novena to St. Rita

O holy protectress of those who art in greatest need, thou who shineth as a star of hope in the midst of darkness, blessed Saint Rita, bright mirror of God's grace, in patience and fortitude thou art a model of all the states in life. I unite my will with the will of God through the merits of my Savior Jesus Christ, and in particular through his patient wearing of the crown of thorns, which with tender devotion thou didst daily contemplate. Through the merits of the holy Virgin Mary and thine own graces and virtues, I ask thee to obtain my earnest petition, provided it be for the greater glory of God and my own sanctification. Guide and purify my intention, O holy protectress and advocate, so that I may obtain the pardon of all my sins and the grace to persevere daily, as thou didst in walking with courage, generosity, and fidelity down the path of life. *(Mention your request.)*
Saint Rita, advocate of the impossible, pray for us.
Saint Rita, advocate of the helpless, pray for us.
Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be three times each. K.M. & C.M.

The Miraculous Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past I have asked for many favors. This time I ask you for this my special one *(mention favor)*. Take it, Dear Jesus and place it within your own broken heart, where your Father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favor, not mine. Amen.
Say this prayer for 3 days, promise publication and your favor will be granted. Never known to fail. A.L.S.

Novena to St. Anthony

O Holy St. Anthony, reach down from heaven and take hold of my hand. Assure me that I am not alone. You are known to possess miraculous powers and to be ever ready to speak for those in trouble. Loving and Gentle St. Anthony, reach down from heaven I implore you and assist me in my hour of need. Obtain for me (mention your request here.) Dearest St. Anthony, reach down from heaven and guide me with thy strength. Plead for me in my needs. And teach me to be humbly thankful as you were for all the bountiful blessings I am to receive. Amen
L.J.G.

A Petition to St. Jude

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world, now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. St. Jude worker of Miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us.
Say this prayer nine times a day for nine days. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.
Thank you, St. Jude D.B.

Roast Pork Dinner

SOUTH AMBOY - The Trinity United Methodist Church at 815 Bordentown Avenue in South Amboy is holding their Roast Pork Dinner on Saturday, April 17 from 4 pm – 6:30 pm. The dinner is TAKE OUT only and includes Roast Pork, mashed potatoes, gravy, carrots, green beans, applesauce, and a homemade dessert. Call Lori at 732 763 6232 to place your orders starting April 1. Delivery options. Tickets are \$14.



A.C. Bus Trip

San Salvador Seniors
PERTH AMBOY - The San Salvador Seniors are sponsoring a bus trip to Resorts Casino in Atlantic City on Thursday, April 8, 2021. Bus will depart from behind St. Stephen's Church (St. John Paul II) Parking Lot on Mechanic Street, Perth Amboy at 12 Noon. Cost: \$30 per person. For more information, call Joe at 732-826-0819. Updated details will be posted at www.amboyguardian.com and our April 7, 2021 issue.

Pet of the Week



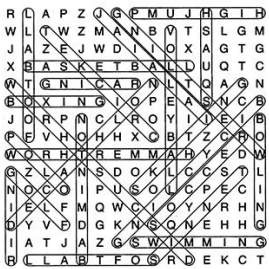
PERTH AMBOY - Super sweet but shy Paige from Prospect and Oak Sts. was trapped Jan. 16 right before the snowstorms. I don't have the heart to put her back out into the streets of Perth Amboy... is there anyone that would like to foster her or may be even adopt? She deserves a loving home even though she's a timid girl. She's spayed, vaccinated, dewormed, tested negative for fiv and leukemia and is deflead and has her nails trimmed. Adoption donation fee applies. Email Vmoralessps@yahoo.com for adoption application. Text 1.732.486.6382 for more info. Adoption will take place at approved adopter's home. Allforthepaws.org

Have a Special Pet?

E-mail us your Pet Photos to AmboyGuardian@gmail.com with Pet of the Week in the Subject line and explain why your pet is special. Please include Name and Phone# for verification.

Remember to Say Your Novenas!

Answers
From Puzzle
On Page 17

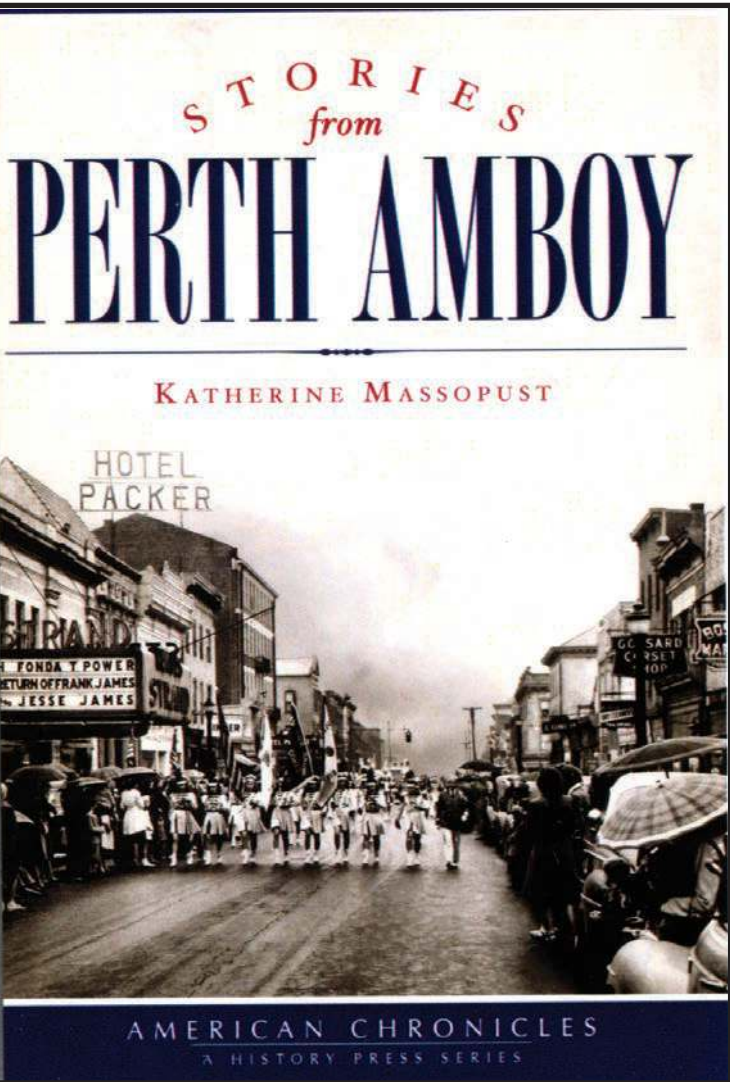


LOOKING BACK



PERTH AMBOY – The Hibernians on Brace Avenue. The Hibernians were originally located on New Brunswick Avenue. The Hibernians of Perth Amboy were established by Patrick Burke Sr., who was an immigrant from Ireland. Burke also broke in the horses for the city. About 120 years later, his great grandson R.J. Kawka Jr. will hopefully carry it on. BUILDING FUND DONATIONS NEEDED. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

**Photo Courtesy of AOH Archives*
This photo was restored under a grant from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission to the Kearny Cottage Historical Association.



Stories From Perth Amboy

PERTH AMBOY - Stories From Perth Amboy by Katherine Massopust is available from Katherine at 732-261-2610 or at the Barge Restaurant, 201 Front St., Perth Amboy - 732-442-3000 or at: www.amazon.com A Great Gift! Get it now along with Then & Now: Perth Amboy!



Perla Ceballos
Realtor/Agent



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Happy Easter!



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ELIZABETH - Spacious, well maintained 2 family home. Close to airport, center of town, Transportation & More. 2 car driveway, large garage and backyard! 3 Bedrooms, 2 Bath per floor. Hardwood floors throughout, kitchen/dining area open floor plan. Separate utilities per floor. **\$589,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Don't miss this opportunity to own this single family in the heart of Perth Amboy, within blocks from train station, Downtown and Business district. Currently is being used as 2brs, buyer is responsible for C/O, termite and all repairs. **\$175,000**



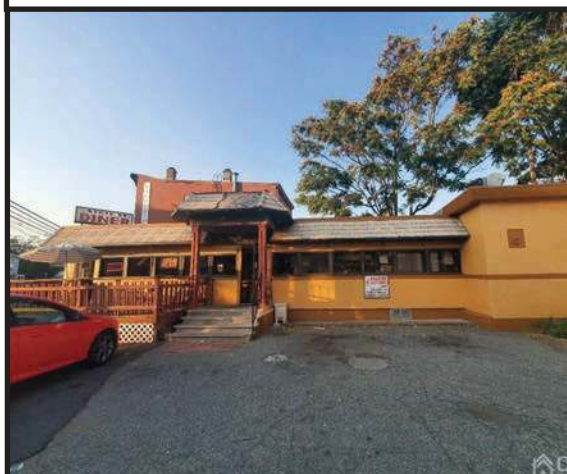
PERTH AMBOY - Smith St, to Elm St: beauty salon in business for more than 15 years, close to downtown, waiting for new owner to star making money. **\$55,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Excellent investment property. **\$429,900**



PERTH AMBOY - Great brick two family with lots of potential but needs lots of work. buyer is responsible for all trash-out, smoke cert, termite and all repairs. it is being sold strictly in AS IS condition. **\$295,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Great investment opportunity, great location, large parking lot, close to mayor highways. Well established restaurant in business for many years. Has lots of potential, hurry it won't last! **\$340,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Package deal 3 properties included in this price as well as 3,000Lb. bridge crane overhead spanning the width of the garage, one family rented for \$1,550.00, huge 2000sqft. warehouse space in the rear, 12ft. overhead doors lots of space, ideal for General contractors, Plumbers and Electricians and vacant land 50x100. this property has many possibilities buyer is responsible for due diligences. **\$569,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Perth Amboy waterfront area, 3 family, 3,720 square foot property, 50 x 150 lot with big patio, garage and driveway. Move on one side and rent the others two. Great investment!!!! Huge attic and basement for entertainment or storage. Property needs TLC, tenants for more than 5 years and wants to stay. **\$524,000**



PERTH AMBOY - Located in downtown business district. **\$100,000**