

FALL/WINTER

ISSUE 2012-02

The Official Newsletter for the THE BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG



FROM OUR MAYOR

Greetings!

I hope your summer went well and you are looking ahead to the changing colors of the autumn leaves. You know, there is something about our town that makes coming home special, whether it be the mountains, the valleys, or the waterways - our landscapes are special!

I want to bring you up to date on some projects that will affect most residents.

On June 18th, the Borough Council hosted a public hearing for all residents to offer their points of view on two important issues. The first was the Police Consolidation report completed by Somerset County. Many residents spoke and all that did speak were not in favor of consolidation. The consolidation looked potentially good on early analysis, but in conclusion proved not to be. An example of this is the projection of a \$98 per household, per year savings, after the first ten years of its implementation. Also if the consolidation did not work, there was no escape clause. After a thorough review of the study and hearing input from residents, at a meeting held on July 19th, the Council voted unanimously to reject the County's proposal. 18 additional municipalities in Somerset County came to the same conclusion.

Another item of importance to you as a taxpayer pertains to the proposed renovation and reconstruction of our current Library. At the public hearing, the sentiment of the residents that spoke on the proposal after the presentation by the architect was rather mixed. The Library Study Committee was formed in 2006 and many hours were spent doing research on what may be the best option for our Library and our residents. The Council has decided to reach out to our residents by way of a referendum question that will appear on the November 6th General Election ballot. This will be a non-binding referendum question and will give the Governing Body a clearer idea of what the residents want for the Library.

There has been a renewed interest in tennis in the Borough, however, the courts at Mobus Field have been damaged due to storms and normal wear and tear, deeming them unusable right now. The same conditions exist on the Camp Endeavor courts. The Recreation Commission has appointed a committee to research and make a recommendation to improve the courts at Mobus Field. The project will be engineered to address drainage and overall improvements. The committee is optimistically looking at corporate and private donations as part of the financing.

In October, the County will begin the reconstruction of Mountain Boulevard from Old Stirling Road in Warren to Brookdale Road. This project will consist of straightening the series of bends between Wetumpka Lane to Winans Lane. The County will also be working with NJ American Water Company to replace a 50 year old water main at the same time. NJ American Water will start at Brookdale and proceed west to Old Stirling Road. Mountain Boulevard will remain open during the construction, however, there will be temporary lane closures. Also this fall, the Borough will begin its 2012 road improvement projects, which include drainage improvements on Glen Eagles, and milling and paving of Hill Hollow and a portion of Johnston Drive.

I would like to welcome Dr. Barbara Resko as the Watchung School's new Superintendent. Although not new to the Borough, she is now at the helm of our wonderful schools and I look forward to working with her.

Last but certainly not least, our volunteer list is reading "empty." If you could spare any time, if you have a special talent, or have any improvement ideas, don't keep them to yourself! In this newsletter is a volunteer form. Please fill it out and send it in. We depend on our volunteers in so many ways and they are an intricate part of what makes Watchung such a wonderful place to live.

Welcome home!

Jerry

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

ATTENTION: ALL HOMEOWNERS IN WATCHUNG ARE YOU IN NEED OF CUTTING A TREE?

The tree ordinance in Watchung has been revised effective November 2011. It requires that you obtain a tree removal permit before cutting any dead, damaged, or live trees on your property.

You can obtain the permit from the office of the Borough Engineer, or on the Borough of Watchung Official Web Site (www.watchungnj.com/forms)

The permit must be displayed on your property in a prominent place. Failure to obtain this permit before cutting any trees can result in a significant fine. Compliance is essential.

WHEN TO PROPERLY PRUNE TREES

Provided by the Watchung Environmental Commission

Introduction

The objective of pruning is to produce strong, healthy, attractive plants. By understanding how, when and why to prune, and by following a few simple principles, this objective can be achieved.

Remember if a tree needs to be cut down – a tree removal permit is needed in Watchung. Obtain a permit from the Borough Engineer or www.watchungnj.com/forms

Reasons For Pruning

The main reasons for pruning ornamental and shade trees include safety, health, and aesthetics. In addition, pruning can be used to stimulate fruit production and increase the value of timber. Pruning for *safety* involves removing branches that could fall and cause injury or property damage, trimming branches that interfere with lines of sight on streets or driveways, and removing branches that grow into utility lines which should be done by the utility companies only. Safety pruning can be largely avoided by carefully choosing species that will not grow beyond the space available to them, and have strength and form characteristics that are suited to the site.

Pruning for *health* involves removing diseased or insect-infested wood, thinning the crown to increase airflow and reduce some pest problems, and removing crossing and rubbing branches. Pruning can best be used to encourage trees to develop a strong structure and reduce the likelihood of damage during severe weather. Removing broken or damaged limbs encourages wound closure.

Pruning for *aesthetics* involves enhancing the natural form and character of trees or stimulating flower production. Pruning for form can be especially important on open-grown trees that do very little self-pruning.

All woody plants shed branches in response to shading and competition. Branches that do not produce enough carbohydrates from photosynthesis to sustain themselves die and are eventually shed; the resulting wounds are sealed by **woundwood** (callus). Branches that are poorly attached may be broken off by wind and accumulation of snow and ice. Branches removed by such natural forces often result in large, ragged wounds that rarely seal. Pruning as a cultural practice can be used to supplement or replace these natural processes and increase the strength and longevity of plants.

Trees have many forms, but the most common types are pyramidal (**excurrent**) or spherical (**decurrent**). Trees with pyramidal crowns, e.g., most conifers, have a strong central stem and lateral branches that are more or less horizontal and do not compete with the central stem for dominance. Trees with spherical crowns, e.g., most hardwoods, have many lateral branches that may compete for dominance.

To reduce the need for pruning it is best to consider a tree's natural form. It is very difficult to impose an unnatural form on a tree without a commitment to constant maintenance.

(Environmental continued)

Pollarding and **topiary** are extreme examples of pruning to create a desired, unnatural effect. Pollarding is the practice of pruning trees annually to remove all new growth. The following year, a profusion of new branches is produced at the ends of the branches. Topiary involves pruning trees and shrubs into geometric or animal shapes. Both pollarding and topiary are specialized applications that involve pruning to change the natural form of trees. As topiary demonstrates, given enough care and attention, plants can be pruned into nearly any form. Yet just as proper pruning can enhance the form or character of plants, improper pruning can destroy it.

When to Prune

Conifers may be pruned any time of year, but pruning during the dormant season may minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches.

Hardwood trees and shrubs *without showy flowers*: prune in the dormant season to easily visualize the structure of the tree, to maximize wound closure in the growing season after pruning, to reduce the chance of transmitting disease, and to discourage excessive sap flow from wounds. Recent wounds and the chemical scents they emit can actually attract insects that spread tree disease. In particular, wounded elm wood is known to attract bark beetles that harbor spores of the Dutch elm disease fungus, and open wounds on oaks are known to attract beetles that spread the oak wilt fungus. Take care to prune these trees during the correct time of year to prevent spread of these fatal diseases. Usually, the best time is during the late fall and winter.

Flowering trees and shrubs: these should also be pruned during the dormant season for the same reasons stated above; however, to preserve the current year's flower crop, prune according to the following schedule:

- Trees and shrubs that flower in early spring (redbud, dogwood, etc.) should be pruned immediately after flowering (flower buds arise the year before they flush, and will form on the new growth).
- Many flowering trees are susceptible to fireblight, a bacterial disease that can be spread by pruning. These trees, including many varieties of crabapple, hawthorn, pear, mountain ash, flowering quince and pyracantha, should be pruned during the dormant season. Check with your county extension agent or a horticulturist for additional information.
- Trees and shrubs that flower in the summer or fall always should be pruned during the dormant season (flower buds will form on new twigs during the next growing season, and the flowers will flush normally).

Dead branches: can be removed any time of the year.

Pruning Guidelines

To encourage the development of a strong, healthy tree, consider the following guidelines when pruning.

- Prune first for safety, next for health, and finally for aesthetics.
- **Never prune trees that are touching or near utility lines; instead consult your local utility company.**
- Avoid pruning trees when you might increase susceptibility to important pests (e.g. in areas where oak wilt exists, avoid pruning oaks in the spring and early summer; prune trees susceptible to fireblight only during the dormant season).
- Use the following decision guide for size of branches to be removed:
 - under 5 cm diameter - go ahead,
 - between 5 and 10 cm diameter - think twice, and
 - greater than 10 cm diameter - have a good reason.

Improper pruning cuts cause unnecessary injury and bark ripping. Flush cuts injure stem tissues and can result in decay. **Stub cuts** delay wound closure and can provide entry to canker fungi that kill the cambium, delaying or preventing woundwood formation.

Volunteers Needed

The Borough is looking for residents who are willing to work on our volunteer boards and committees. Please let us know if you would have an interest in serving. Call (908)756-0080 or mail in the form below to the municipal building. You can also fill out this form on the Borough website: www.watchungnj.com. Look on the Bulletin Board and download the form into Microsoft Word. You can email the form to [volunteer form @watchungnj.com](mailto:volunteerform@watchungnj.com).

Please send this completed form to:

Volunteer Pool

Borough of Watchung
15 Mountain Boulevard
Watchung, NJ 07069

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please include me on the list of potential volunteers for the following boards, committees and commissions.

Board of Adjustment

Board of Health

Environmental Commission

Historic Committee

Library Advisory

Municipal Alliance

Open Space Committee

Planning Board

Recreation Commission

Traffic & Beautification

Village Center Committee

Other (Explain) _____

I have the following experience, skills, talents or special interests:

A Message from Dr. Barbara A. Resko, Superintendent of Schools



The Watchung Borough School District (PreK-8) opened the 2012-13 school year with over 720 students in grades PreK-8.

The administration has been reconfigured and streamlined. I have the dual role of Superintendent and Director of Special Services; Mrs. Mary Nunn will now be Principal of Bayberry Elementary and Valley View Middle School. Mrs. Necole Fabris, former fourth grade teacher, has been appointed as the Assistant Principal at Bayberry School.

Our preschool program for 3-4 year olds at Bayberry School is in its second year of operation. Parents/guardians of Watchung resident children have the option of enrolling them on a half-day or full-day schedule. After-care is also available. Children are accepted into the program throughout the year on a tuition basis. Please contact Mrs. Nunn, Principal, at 908-755-8184 for more details or registration information.

Other initiatives for the 2012-13 school year include:

- Completion of an environmentally "green" Solar Panel Project to offset heating/cooling costs at Bayberry School;
- Implementation of a new teacher evaluation system, Teachscape, based on Danielson's Framework for Teaching;
- Utilization by students and staff of an expanded array of technological tools including iPads, e-Readers, and SmartBoards; and
- Alignment of curriculum areas with the common core state standards.

I encourage residents to visit our schools during American Education Week in mid-November. Please also join us for our Winter Band/Chorus concerts in December. Information concerning these events and other important school information is posted on the district webpage at www.watchungschools.us.

As the new Superintendent, I look forward to sharing with you more of our district's accomplishments as the year unfolds. Thank you for your support of our educational programs. Your comments and suggestions regarding ways to improve our district are always welcomed by contacting me at the above website.

FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The 2012 Leaf and branch pickup will commence on November 1st and continue through November 30th. All leaves **MUST BE IN BIODEGRADABLE PAPER BAGS. NO PLASTIC BAGS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR PICKUP.** Pickups will not be scheduled for any specific time or location. **PLEASE NO GARBAGE IN BAGS!**

BRANCH PICK UP:

- ◆ Branches must be tied in bundles, cut to 4' lengths, and weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle.
- ◆ Small twigs/branches should be put in biodegradable paper bags.
- ◆ For limbs too large to bundle—Please call for special pickup
- ◆ Tree trunks and stumps **will not be collected.**

Regularly scheduled leaf pickup takes place in the higher density neighborhoods within the following areas: Brookdale, Stirling and Hillcrest Roads north to Evergreen Lane; Mountain Blvd from Washington Drive to Rock Ave.; Johnston Drive to the water tower including Upper Drive and Johnston Drive Extension. Any resident living in a more rural area in another part of the Borough other than the areas listed previously can have leaf pickup by calling Public Works at 756-0091, ext. 214. Only **BIODEGRADABLE PAPER BAGS ARE TAKEN.** All residents are urged to compost leaves. Due to the State's new Stormwater Regulations, the Borough now has an ordinance prohibiting placement of leaves in the street.

Old man Winter is just around the corner. The Public Works Department works hard to maintain public streets, thoroughfares and right-of-ways clear for safe passage of vehicular traffic during and following periods of snowfall.

Public Works would like to remind residents that the pushing/plowing of snow onto Borough roads is prohibited by ordinance. Please take the time to advise your contractors. Remember, the icing over of residual snow in the roadways creates unnecessary safety hazards and removal takes a severe toll on the Borough's equipment. For further information regarding property maintenance and snow removal, visit http://www.codedsystems.com/watchung_nj.htm to review the Watchung Borough code and check the bulletin board on our borough website @ www.watchungnj.com.

REMINDER: DOG LICENSES MUST BE RENEWED BETWEEN JANUARY 1-31

FREE Rabies Vaccination for Cats & Dogs

Rabies continues to be a concern in our state, with an average of 200 – 300 reported cases each year in all animals. Rabies is caused by a virus which can infect both people and animals. While the majority of rabies cases in the state have been in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks and foxes, cats are also a relatively common victim of rabies. These cases can pose a significant threat to unvaccinated domestic animals, which can contract the virus from wild animals and transmit the infection to humans.

The rabies vaccine is available at no charge for domestic cats and dogs, through the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission. Because the vaccine is provided by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, residents can bring their pets to any of the locations below. Cats must be transported in a carrier and all dogs must be leashed.

South Bound Brook

Saturday, November 3
9:00 am to 10:00 am
South Bound Brook Municipal Garage
44 Washington Ave.

Green Brook

Saturday, November 3
11:00 am to 12:00 noon
Green Brook Fire House
115 Greenbrook Road

Watchung

Saturday December 1
9:00 am to 10:00 am
Watchung Fire House
57 Mountain Blvd.

Bound Brook

Saturday December 1
11:00 am to 12:00 noon
Bound Brook Police /Borough Hall
230 Hamilton Street

In addition, residents are reminded to take these rabies prevention measures:

- ◆ Immediately report a bite from a wild or domestic animal to the local health department (*so that post-exposure treatment can begin immediately if needed*)
- ◆ Immediately report any wild animal showing signs of unusual behavior
- ◆ Be sure all family pets and agricultural animals are up to date on their rabies vaccinations
- ◆ Animal-proof home and yard
- ◆ Do not feed or handle wild animals
- ◆ Avoid contact with stray animals or pets other than your own
- ◆ Try to prevent your pets from coming into contact with wild animals
- ◆ Screen off vents to attics and other areas that could provide shelter for bats

Watchung Rescue Squad

The Watchung Rescue Squad continues to fulfill its mission to provide fast and professional emergency medical services to the residents and businesses within the borough of Watchung. Since the beginning of the year, the members of the rescue squad have responded to over 200 calls, and have provided EMS standby for various town events. With the addition of a new first responder vehicle, squad members are excited and looking forward to continue providing EMS standby for local and out of town events, EMS command during large-scale incidents, and responding to calls in a more efficient and timely manner.

During the month of May, the rescue squad began its annual Fund Drive, in an effort to raise money for medical supplies and other daily expenses required to keep our ambulances on the road. Our fund drive efforts will continue through the end of the year. We would like to thank residents for their continued support and generosity during these hard economic times.

In the upcoming months, the members of the rescue squad look forward to begin preparation for the 22nd annual Tree of Lights Festival, which will be held on Saturday, December 1st. We also look forward to continue EMS training, and responding to calls on a daily basis within Watchung and to neighboring towns. If you would like to join us and become a part of the action, inquire about membership at our building located around the circle at 10 Stirling Rd, or call (908)755-1297.

Register and Vote!
Election Day is November 6th

Watchung residents age 18 and over may register to vote or request forms for Vote By Mail Application at the Borough Clerk's office, 15 Mountain Blvd., Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 4 PM, or by calling 908-756-0080 and requesting that forms be mailed. Either form may also be obtained through the Somerset County Government page on the Internet at <http://www.co.somerset.nj.us>. Or the Borough Website at: www.watchungnj.com

Qualifications to register to vote are:

18 years of age or older by the date of the election, citizen of the United States; a resident of New Jersey for at least thirty (30) days prior to the election; and a resident of Somerset County for twenty-one (21) days prior to the election.

Polls are open from 6 AM to 8 PM on election days. The County Clerk must receive request forms for Vote By Mail ballots not later than October 30, 2012 -7 days prior to the election.

ELECTRONIC WASTE- New Location

Starting September 8th electronics will no longer be accepted at Somerset County first Saturday of Month drop-off events.

County residents can take electronic waste to: **Newtech Recycling Inc.** in Franklin, on selected Saturdays and on weekdays. This service will continue to be **free of charge**.

Newtech Recycling will be open to collect electronic waste from 8 am to 2 pm on following Saturdays in 2012:

Sept.8, Oct. 6, Nov. 3 and Dec. 1

They will also accept electronic waste Monday through Friday from 7 am to 5 pm.

For more information, contact Newtech Recycling at (732) 564-3110 or visit their website at www.newtechrecycling.com.

Vote By Mail Law

1. An applicant can apply once for all elections in a calendar year.
2. An applicant can apply once for all future general elections. This means they actually get a ballot automatically every November. The old law only provided for an application to be sent.
3. All applications must be received in the Office of the County Clerk 7 days prior to an election. Not postmarked, but physically received.
4. An individual may still go to the County Clerk's Office in person up to 3 pm the day before the election. A voter may also send an authorized messenger up to 3 pm the day before as well. The major difference is that the voter no longer has to be sick or confined to have a messenger. A single messenger can only pick up 10 ballots statewide for an election and cannot be a candidate in that election.
5. There is no longer a permanent and totally disabled category. Those voters are likely to become individuals who check the A box and receive ballots for all elections in a calendar year.
6. The old yellow applications for military voters are no longer valid. There is a special status box on the Vote by Mail Application that can be checked.
7. The new application is available on the County's website at:

www.co.somerset.nj.us/clerk

or

The Borough's website at
www.watchungnj.com

PUBLISHED BY THE BOROUGH

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15 Mountain Boulevard
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Fax: 908.757.7027

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MAYOR GERALD M. MOBUS

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Thomas Franklin
William Nehls

Debra Joren, Council President
Karen Cassidy

Stephen L. Black
Stephen Pote

Administration - 756-0080

Thomas E. Atkins, Administrator
tatkins@watchungnj.com

Michelle DeRocco, Borough Clerk
mderocco@watchungnj.com

William Hance, Chief Finance Officer
bhance@watchungnj.com

Engineering Office

Tom Herits 756-0091
therits@watchungnj.com

Watchung Art Center

For more information call—561-0190

Watchung Hills Regional High School

Grades 9 through 12
108 Stirling Road
Warren, NJ 07059
647-4800

Police

Emergency 911
Non-emergency 756-3663

Emergency Management

Contact Police Dept. 756-3663

Tax Assessor

Ed Kerwin 756-3366
ekerwin@watchungnj.com

Construction Official /Zoning Officer

Ed Bennett 756-6093
ebennett@watchungnj.com

Watchung Public Library

561-0117
Monday-Friday.....10am-9pm
Saturday.....10am-4pm
Sunday.....closed
(Closed Saturday during July and August)

Bayberry Elementary School

Kindergarten through 4th Grade
Bayberry Lane
755-8184

Fire Department

Emergency 911
Non-emergency 561-9389

Municipal Court

Jodi Hanson Rodriquez 757-1407

Tax Collector

Ray Murray 756-8333

Public Works Facility

Robert Burns 753-6115
rburns@watchungnj.com

Valley View Middle School

Grades 5 through 8
Valley View Road
755-4422