

Wantage Township Summer 2019 Newsletter

Mayor: Ron Bassani

Deputy Mayor: Jon Morris

Committeeman: William Gaechter

Administrator: Michael L. Restel

My fellow citizens of Wantage Township, I hope this newsletter finds you well and ready for summer. As in the past, in my capacity as your Mayor, I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to each of you and thank you again for the continued confidence you have placed in Deputy Mayor Jon Morris, Committeeman Bill Gaechter, and myself. We are honored to represent you in our continued efforts to manage the well-being of Wantage Township. Please feel confident that we continuously strive to do our best in our efforts to navigate today's economic challenges and plan for the future of Wantage. Some highlights:

2019 Budget - Once again, we finalized our budget for this year; it appears we will be able to roll out a budget with a minimal increase. This comes as a result of your Committee working hard to find even more ways to do more with less. We have expanded our shared services with other municipalities, aggressively negotiated for services where we could, and contracted services where applicable to save taxpayer dollars. At the same time, we look to "buy local" in an effort to support our local commercial base. I ask that you look to do the same whenever possible.



Open Space Committee - As a member of the Open Space Committee, I am excited to report we have made great strides in 2019. For those who do not know, the Open Space Committee is responsible to utilize appropriated monies in an effort to secure properties that would allow our Township to remain rural as well as expand our parks and recreation programs. We adopted a new Open Space Master Plan that was adopted by the Committee and will hopefully help us manage our long-term plans and growth. Recently, with the help of a substantial Green Acres grant, we finalized the purchase of the property across the street from the entrance to our very own Woodbourne Park. Our goal is to utilize this prime real estate to expand both our passive and recreation activities afforded to our citizens. While we have received many suggestions on how to best utilize this property, we still want and need to hear from YOU! Please send your suggestions to the Municipality, or, if easier, feel free to email me directly at rbassani@wantagewp-nj.org.



Land Use Board - The Land Use Board continues to strategically manage the future development of Wantage. Our desire is to manage commercial growth, bringing in businesses, which equate to jobs and ratables into defined areas of our Township (Wantage Economic Development zone). As always, controlled growth will allow us to maintain our farmlands and keep Wantage rural.

Ordinances (Laws) – Another core responsibility of your Committee is protecting its citizens. We have all read or heard of the “**dirty-dirt**” issue some of our neighboring towns have been dealing with. What you may not have heard is that Wantage is also battling this same issue. We have met and discussed this heated issue with our Assemblyman, State Senator, Congressman, and the DEP directly in an effort to implement laws at a Federal and State level to help us. In the meantime, to best protect Wantage Township, we, like many other municipalities, have recently passed strict ordinances (laws) that prohibit the importing of soil into our town. This law requires homeowners, landscapers, excavators, and others to only bring “certified clean” soil into Wantage Township. There is not enough room in this newsletter to provide all the details surrounding the ordinances on this subject, so before you import or move dirt, please visit our website and find ordinance 2019-04 to better understand both your and your contractor’s responsibilities to insure “toxic” matter does not innocently find its way here in Wantage. Beware of Facebook or Craigslist ads or any other means of those who are advertising “free fill”, as that free fill might cost you everything you own if it is found later to include toxic material and the burden of cleanup finds its way to you. I think you will agree, it’s not worth the risk. Now, lastly, we need your help to protect Wantage from those who are looking to take advantage of others, not exclusively, but especially in this area as the consequences are dire and long-term. So, we are asking simply that “if you see something – say something”. We are setting up a hotline for you to call, anonymously, to help us protect you and Wantage from those who would do us harm, for money!



And consistent with that, please plan to get more involved— The greatest challenge we face as your Committee is not what you may think. It is not taxes, the budget, maintaining our over 120 miles of roads, or individual complaints. It is simply "apathy". Please get involved in your town. Start by visiting our Township's website (www.wantagetwp.com) to know what is going on in Wantage. Keep informed by coming to scheduled meetings, all posted on our website. Take advantage of the recreation and activities we offer to you, our citizens.

Again, I want to thank you for the privilege to serve you as Mayor and want to help you should the need arise. I can always be reached via email at rbassani@wantagetwp-nj.org or through our website. I look forward to continuing to serve the needs of our town and to representing the citizens of Wantage Township. Thank you for taking the time to read this message.

Ron Bassani
Mayor, Wantage Township