Rachel McGreevy
Mayor

mayor@neptunecitynj.com

January 2025

Dear Neptune City Neighbors,
As we step into 2025, I am proud to share with our residents, Neptune City's most valuable asset, the exciting, challenging and rewarding work we've been focused on since taking office last January 1, 2024.
It's been my honor to sustain and grow the vision our esteemed Council began; to meet and know our residents and business owners both present and prospective, to serve our front line – police, fire and first aid who serve us, and to strive towards progress that serves us all better.

Engaging Residents
First, I'm proud to offer consistent and productive office hours to increase transparency, communication and confidence in local government. These are values shared by all Neptune City residents and are the foundations of good government. Addressing the issues in town that affect each of us differently and equally is the challenge, and privilege, of public service. Another early achievement was to help create the Community Relations Committee, engaging greater involvement and support for the many community events held in Neptune City throughout the year, as well as creating a Green Team, an important step as we strive to take actions that protect our environment and make progress towards a sustainable future.

Emergency Service and Response
In response to resident input, we were tasked with reviewing the usage of the emergency horn system (for Fire and First Aid calls) which is used to notify our First Responders of urgent and emergent incidences in town. At the urging of residents, we engaged the Fire Department and Office of Emergency Management in a multi-month and multi-faceted review and assessment of the uses of the borough's emergency response system. As a result of observing both the concerns of residents and the needs of our first responders, and studying the correlation between the use of the horn and response, it was determined to suspend the horn for First Aid calls, enacted since May 6, 2024.

The emergency horn will continue to be utilized in response to Monmouth County's dispatch of the Borough's Fire Department, OEM, and ANSWER Team between the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Again, as a result of resident input and collaboration with the Fire Department and OEM, the hours of operation were reduced by two hours from 8 PM to 6 PM. The Borough intends to continue to work with emergency representatives to review and assess the use of the emergency horn and consider all suitable alternatives. However, residents must bear in mind, municipalities that do not operate a town siren or horn must have Paid Members on duty or duty crews on- call to guarantee a response to residents in need of emergency services.

Addressing Local Flooding

In January, Neptune City took the lead in facilitating a stakeholder group that includes Neptune Township, Bradley Beach, Monmouth County as well as state and federal representatives to work collaboratively to address coastal flooding along Route 33/Shark River/Route 35/East End Ave and the surrounding region. The stakeholder group established important collaboration across levels of government and a strategic partnership with surrounding towns to plan for the future and successfully compete for funding that will address ongoing coastal flooding challenges. The group has been meeting regularly since last January and is making significant progress assessing the current infrastructure needs, prioritizing improvements and addressing short-term projects.

It was determined by our engineers that a Regional Flood Mitigation Study would be necessary to develop a comprehensive plan to seek local, state and federal funding. We were able to secure a funding request from the state which was championed by Dir. Arnone and our State Legislators, Senator Vin Gopal, Asw. Margie Donlon and Asw. Luanne Peterpaul. We learned in October that the state granted us funding which will pay for the study and allow us to update drainage area mapping, conduct extensive data collection, evaluate existing conditions and formulate recommendations for flood remediation strategies.

Also as a result of these efforts, a collaborative investigation of East End Avenue flooding was conducted by Monmouth County and it was determined that the flooding can be partially addressed with the installation of a valve on the outfall as well as elevation of the roadway. This project will move forward in the near future and we believe this will not only improve water quality but significantly improve the quality of life for East End residents.

Redevelopment

We have managed the final stages of several redevelopments over this past year and have focused on the best possible outcome for the Borough while engaging residents throughout the deliberations. This included informal meet and greets with residents and in May, we held a Town Hall with Shipwreck'd, East Coast Cannabis and subsequently approved a license of Class 5 Cannabis Retail dispensary at 300 W. Sylvania Ave, which will bring new revenue to Neptune City.

East Coast Ice and Laird Ave. Redevelopment

For historical reference, on September 28, 2020, pursuant to the process provided in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), the Borough passed Resolutions directing the Land Use Board to conduct a preliminary investigation of the encompassing property in the Redevelopment Area.

The LRHL is a process for municipalities to improve areas in need of redevelopment. The process was utilized following the Borough acquiring the title to the Ice House Site via sheriff's sale in 2018.

The Land Use Board presented a preliminary investigation report on March 9, 2021 and a public hearing was held. Based on the findings, the Land Use Board made its recommendation to designate the Redevelopment Area as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" pursuant to the LRHL. Shortly thereafter, the Borough passed a Resolution adopting the Land Use Board's recommendation.

As required under the LRHL, the Borough further authorized the Land Use Board to prepare a redevelopment plan for the Redevelopment Area, which was adopted on April 25, 2022 and amended on August 28, 2023.

On July 25, 2022, the governing body designated Genesis Redevelopment, LLC ("Genesis") as the redeveloper for the Redevelopment Area which also included 96 Laird Ave. The Laird Ave. piece of the redevelopment was initiated by a private seller who came to an agreement with their buyer, also Genesis Redevelopment. The

Borough agreed to zoning changes to allow construction of seven townhouse units with parking at the Laird Avenue property along with rehabilitation of the long neglected Laird Avenue Park.
While the planned commercial use for storage facilities at the Ice House property was determined in prior years, we understood concerns from the community and impacts to the neighborhood. We worked hard to engage residents in their concerns working within the enacted RDA that the Borough had previously adopted. As evidence of our commitment to continued community investment to meet the expectations of residents, the Borough is **actively pursuing grant funding for immediate improvements to Laird Ave. Park.**

Long over-due improvements to Adams Field are also moving forward bringing community re-investment that meets the needs of residents in all 4 districts of the Borough.

Boat Yard
Monmouth County has acquired private properties along the Shark River on Riverview Ave., including the Campbell's Boat Yard property, to install a waterfront Park in Neptune City to be owned, operated and maintained by the County. The Monmouth County Open Space Grant is funding the project, a fund Neptune City Residents have paid into over the years through county taxes. Preservation and beautification of the Boatyard property is a unique opportunity to benefit from our local investment, over time.
In 2025, we aim to do an even better job of facilitating dialogue with residents and considering resident viewpoints in future development and redevelopment.

Code Enforcement
With the retirement earlier this year of our longtime Code Enforcement Official, that resulted in a gap in service and an immediate need for Code Enforcement in the Borough, we were able to identify and successfully secure a shared service arrangement for Code Enforcement with Lake Como to ensure that code is enforced uniformly while making sure that we're saving our residents as much money as possible while doing so.

Highlights of Community Outreach and Engagement

St. Patrick's Day Lunch – Raised over $1,000 for the Blessing Box

Women's History Month - "Celebrating Women Through Art" - raised over $1,500 for the Sarah Stern Art Scholarship
In April, we hosted a luncheon at Minimi Mexican Deli for Neptune City employees in honor of **Local**

Government Week, and our enthusiasm in recognizing our team made us one of 26 towns featured by the New Jersey League of Municipalities in the June 2024 magazine, the official publication of the NJLM!

First ever **Cops vs. Kids** Basketball game on April 12! The event raised over $1,000.

The First (Annual???) **Mayor's Pizza Challenge in Partnership with Pete & Elda's** Raised over $2,000 for the 7th and 8th Grade Class Trip to Washington, DC.

In August, with the help of Sen. Vin Gopal, we brought the **MVC Mobile Unit** to Neptune City.

The Food Truck Festival raised in excess of $5,700 for our volunteer firefighters United Fire Company No. 1 Neptune City

The **NCPD held National Night Out** in Aug. and relaunched Neighborhood Watch in October.

The **NCFD engaged with the community** throughout the year including Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

Of course the events in town could not happen without the DPW. So many events not mentioned including all **the great community events brought to us by the Board of Rec including music and movies** in the park and the **many events and programs that occur every week at our wonderful Library.**

Business Outreach
Neptune City is ready to welcome new business and to continue supporting our existing business community. We know our businesses are the backbone of Neptune City. We were proud to host the Jersey Shore Chamber of Commerce for a tour of local businesses in Neptune City in June. It was our honor to fill a packed day and showcase and lift up our small businesses and show the Chamber all that Neptune City has to offer.

Traffic Safety Improvements
In an effort to reduce speeding and increase pedestrian safety along West Sylvania Avenue, the County worked with the Borough to:
• Install edge lines down West Sylvania Ave. to connect sections of road where the edge lines were missing. The edge lines created shoulders of 3-10 feet along the corridor.
• Installed a striped transition area for left turning vehicles between Bennett Avenue and Tucker Drive immediately east of East End Avenue. This allows for a left turn lane for Bennett to prevent left turns from blocking the eastbound through traffic.
In conjunction with Monmouth County Highway Department, Monmouth County Engineers, and Commissioner Director Tom Arnone, the blinking red light was reinstalled at Steiner Ave and 4th Ave. and the temporary Stop Sign lights that were at 4th Ave and Steiner Ave, were repurposed and moved to 4th Ave and Memorial Dr.
It is our hope, along with the hope of our partners, that these improvements will help mitigate the traffic concerns of residents, slow down traffic, and significantly reduce accidents in these prone areas.

<u>Priorities for 2025</u>
Municipal Budget – Update Public on Neptune City's Fiscal Health, long term planning and facilitating dialogue with residents on priorities for Neptune City's future.

Supporting our Departments – We cannot accomplish anything without healthy and strong departments. Our employees are essential to keeping Neptune City a such a great place to live.
Launch of the Grant Committee. The **Grant Committee** has been created to attract more resources to our Borough through outside funding and appointed volunteers and Council Liaison will be meeting soon. This will be done in collaboration with our Departments and with the Finance Committee.

Launching a Business Roundtable – The Borough engages local businesses throughout the year with various events and activities and we hope the Business Roundtable will allow us to create opportunities to get

involved and further leverage the time, talent and resources of our community stakeholders while increasing the economic impact for Neptune City businesses.

Relaunching the **Shark River Roundtable** to focus on the health and vitality of our river in collaboration with surrounding towns.

We hope this information is helpful and we encourage your feedback, ideas, questions and concerns. Please contact Borough Hall at 732-776-7224 or email me at mayor@neptunecitynj.com.
Wishing everyone a safe year ahead!

Best wishes,

Rachel McGreevy

Rachel McGreevy
Mayor, Neptune City

106 W. Sylvania Avenue
Neptune City, NJ 07753
(732) 776-7224 Fax (732) 776-8906
www.neptunecitynj.com