



### ***Letter from the Mayor***

As Spring moves in to Summer, Mountain Lakes is always extremely busy; from games on the field to runners on the Boulevard, graduations and gardening, our Community has an extraordinary amount of opportunities to participate, contribute, and enjoy!

Borough Council has kept pace by focusing on goals and activities we established earlier in the year.

- Ensuring responsible, efficient use of resources
- Informing and engaging the community
- Preserving the environment and the unique character of our community
- Providing high quality services, programs and infrastructure

These goals are designed to serve our residents today and ensure that future generations of Lakers enjoy the character and beauty of our town as much as we do!

Our infrastructure always needs attention and we have a tremendous and dedicated Department of Public Works who helps us identify and prioritize needs. Over the past year, the Borough has paved several miles of roads and installed hundreds of new street signs throughout the borough. We are always pursuing road grants through NJDOT and will continue to invest in our infrastructure while minimizing costs to the tax payer. We are also scrutinizing our water works system and replacing mains when necessary – Pollard Road is up this year. The third such infrastructure project we are still in the planning stages of is the Sunset lake dam, a DEP mandated update to ensure the residents on East Shore Drive, extending across the Boulevard to Crane and Pocono, are safe in the case of cataclysmic storm.

The planning and designs for the Beach facilities are currently out for public bidding. We thank those residents and volunteers for their participation and contribution though out the long journey of this investment. The input has provided a broad range of perspectives and opinions that have been considered before the work begins this fall. It is anticipated Council be able to make an award of contract by end of August/early September of this year.

Another significant project is at our Borough Hall which includes the Mountain Lakes Police and Volunteer Fire Department. This facility has its share of inadequacies which we have discussed this year, but frankly has been part of the local conversation for decades. We have an exceptional team in place that has evaluated the current facility, studied the work that has been done over the years and provided some options that will provide our professionals and volunteers the facility they require to perform their jobs in a safe and efficient manner. We will be discussing this on an ongoing basis in the coming weeks and months, so please stay tuned! Informational

tours will available for those curious as to what needs to be done – please be on the lookout for opportunities to soon learn more about this exciting and much needed investment.

Last year and in to 2017, resident input also revealed a significant drop in postal service that what we were accustomed to here in Mountain Lakes. Council and Borough Administration were made aware of late deliveries, inconsistent delivery times, and days without delivery to name a few. While the Post Office is obviously a Federal agency, we were able to work with local, regional, and even Congress to identify the issues and where the system was broken or flawed for the residents of Mountain Lakes. Over time, with persistence and communication, we have seen service return to our expected levels. While never perfect, we have a better process by which we can solve for such problems in a timely manner when they arise.

On Council, we have considered and adopted several resolutions and ordinances that will improve our quality of life in the short and long term. A few are listed below, but please refer to the ordinance database or Borough Council meeting minutes for a comprehensive listing.

### **Affordable Housing**

Two resolutions were passed (108-17) that simply supported legislation being considered by the State to reduce the Affordable Housing burden and provide some protection from Builders Remedy suits. Every Municipality in the State is struggling with this in one way, shape or form, and we are joining other municipalities create some protection.

### **Stigma Free Community**

St. Clare's approached Mountain Lakes to join the growing number of Communities that have signed on to be a Stigma Free Community. This designation means we are committed to availing education and services to our residents and employees about mental health and drug abuse. Sensitive topics such as these tend to stay in the darkness and rarely discussed. However, the professionals at St Clare's and throughout the State recognize that only through awareness, education and dialogue that we can truly help those who affected by disease.

### **Historic Preservation**

We also adopted recommendations made by the Historic Preservation Committee and made some enhancements to one of the most admired Preservation ordinances in the State by including dwellings

Finally, in an effort to better understand community feeling and priorities, the Borough fielded its first survey in seven years. We are grateful for all of the high level of participation and the time devoted to provide clear, meaningful feedback as to what you like and what you are looking for from the Borough. These results will help us continue to plan and invest strategically in the most cost effective way possible. We will be sharing and discussing the results in the coming months and look forward to the discussion on how we can maintain Mountain lakes as a premier community in the Country!

On behalf of Borough Council, I thank you all for your input and participation in maintaining Mountain Lakes as a little "slice of heaven" we call home. It is no wonder that in the spring of 2017, NJ Monthly magazine rated our home town as the best place to raise a family in Morris County! We are confident with our dedicated Borough employees, tireless and passionate volunteers, and caring and thoughtful neighbors, we will maintain this status for years to come!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter L. Holmberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "H".

Peter L. Holmberg

Mayor, Mountain Lakes NJ