



BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN

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**Message by the Mayor
Jason F. Cilento
Redevelopment Updates**

As we begin to flatten the curve here in Dunellen from COVID-19, I want to provide the residents and community an update on redevelopment in the Borough of Dunellen. I know many people have questions on where we are in the process of some of our projects. Although COVID-19 put a pause onto some redevelopment matters, we will soon be seeing construction on the Art Color (to be named Dunellen Stations) property and other areas in Dunellen.

The present timetable for Dunellen's major project on the site of the Art Color property has work beginning by summer's end. Many factors affect the timetable. Some of these are the need to obtain various State and County approvals, and, of course, the vicissitudes of COVID-19 as supply chains are affected and the Governor's orders may alter some short-term plans. Currently, the developers are awaiting site plan approvals from Middlesex County. This pending item is one of the last remaining procedural steps before construction may begin and is one reason things have been inactive on the 19-acre site. The second reasoning, as noted, is the pandemic of COVID-19. Obtaining fill has been difficult. However, it is anticipated that by late July this factor should be ameliorated. The grounds have been prepared for the Prism areas which will encompass the retail and apartments section of the development. The fill is still needed for the K. Hovnanian Townhouses.

The traffic light agreement for the new light at the intersection of South Washington Avenue and New Market Road has been approved and the Borough Council has approved the three-party agreement (Borough, County, developers) for the sewer pipe line from South Washington Avenue to Second Street, and the pipe from the reconstructed North Washington Avenue pumping station into Green Brook to the PARSA intercept. The Borough is finalizing details with the developer on cost sharing and contributions for the new pumping station at the end of North Washington Avenue. These enhancements will improve the aged infrastructure and increase pedestrian and traffic safety.

In April, the Borough entered into a formal Agreement with 528 North Ave. Urban Renewal, LLC. for the building of 40 new apartments at 528 Bound Brook Road, the bend where North Avenue turns into Bound Brook Road going west toward Middlesex Borough. This new

development will replace aging and decaying buildings in this area. It will bring new life to an area of town in need of rehabilitation. The Borough negotiated that the development be an environmentally friendly structure, including electric vehicle parking, with attractive street-side landscaping and streetscape improvements. In addition, the developer has generously offered to make park enhancements to Morecraft Park due to the park's proximity to the project site. This enhancement will also benefit all in our community, as well as the school district which uses Morecraft Park for physical education classes.

In addition to the Art Color project and 528 North Ave development, there is another smaller development in the process of being approved. It is being undertaken by Villani Builders. To date, Villani Builders has developed three mixed use buildings with retail on the first floor along North Avenue. In May, Villani Builders presented to the Borough Council an architectural plan on a fourth project at the corner of Jackson Avenue and North Avenue. The project will have multiple apartments, including affordable housing to meet our state mandated quota, and retail space on the first floor for office and professional services. This concept plan was approved by the Borough Council and will be presented before the Planning Board in the coming months.

As these projects begin to take root in our Borough, we will start to see significant improvements in our downtown, not only aesthetically, but economically. Now more than ever, developing a vital downtown that respects the needs of our community will be an important factor as we begin to reopen our economy. All of our downtown businesses, from Mom and Pop Shops to professionals to restaurants will greatly benefit from these developments. I look forward to Dunellen's future as we continue revitalizing our downtown. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the Council Members.

Thank you for taking the time to read this most recent update. Be well, and stay safe.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason F. Cilento". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

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