



## BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN

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### Message from the Mayor Jason F. Cilento August 2021

I hope my August 2021 Message from the Mayor finds you and your families in good health. Please always know my office door is open to you for your comments, questions or concerns. You can call my Borough Cell at (732) 882-4551 or email me at: [jcilentto@dunellen-nj.gov](mailto:jcilentto@dunellen-nj.gov).

Here are some important things happening in the Borough of Dunellen.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** To date, nearly 60% of Dunellen's residents aged 12 and up have received at least one COVID-19 shot. Although there have only been 8 new COVID-19 cases since my report to the Borough Council on July 6, 2021, I ask Dunellen residents to remain vigilant in our fight against this virus. The Delta-Variant, as I'm sure you heard about, should be taken seriously as it makes its way into New Jersey.

The vaccine has proven to be the most effective tool in preventing serious illness associated with a COVID-19 infection. Speak with your doctor and pharmacist if you have any concerns about the vaccine—and take solace in the fact that our doctors know us and understand our health needs. In most cases, the vaccine prevents serious illness which can result in severe medical complications and even the need to be admitted to a hospital for treatment. Getting a vaccine is now very easy and accessible. The Borough's Coronavirus page on our website has essential information on coronavirus and how to obtain a free vaccination. You owe it to yourself, your family, and your community to get vaccination.

The way we get past the pandemic is working as a team. #DunellenStrong

**Sydney McLaughlin:** Dunellen residents joined in supporting Sydney McLaughlin during her Olympic Trials for women's 400m hurdles on Friday, July 30 in Columbia Park. This event was made possible through the efforts of the Dunellen Parks and Recreation Department, the Mayor and Dunellen Borough Council, Dunellen's Police, Fire and OEM, Middlesex Borough Rescue Squad, and all the residents who came in support of Sydney McLaughlin and all United States Olympians.

**CBA Progress:** The Dunellen Borough Council recently enacted ordinance (2021-15) designed to control the distribution of unsolicited newspaper circulars and other kinds of handbills and printed matter that are delivered to your home or driveway. The ordinance sets strict rules for placement and penalties if a delivery company does not comply with them or continues to deliver after being notified by the resident not to deliver. We are in active discussion with one of the

major circular companies to work out a reasonable protocol for delivery and as this develops, we will notify the Dunellen community. Meanwhile, if you would like to “opt-out” of receiving these handbills and circulars, to go [https://www.dunellen-nj.gov/municipal\\_news/recently\\_enacted\\_ordinances\\_that\\_effect\\_dunellen\\_residents.php](https://www.dunellen-nj.gov/municipal_news/recently_enacted_ordinances_that_effect_dunellen_residents.php) and follow the directions.

**Cannabis Town Hall:** On Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, the Dunellen Municipal Alliance sponsored a Cannabis Town Hall at Lincoln Middle School. Panelists included myself, Mara Carlin of the Wellspring Center for Prevention, Dunellen Police Officer Nicholas Goldman, and Middlesex County Assistant Prosecutor Middlesex County Assistant Prosecutor Christopher L.C. Kuberiet. In addition to hearing about the Dunellen Borough Council’s reasoning for opting-out of the various categories of cannabis sale and distribution (opting-out merely means that the Council can choose in the future to again entertain some categories of cannabis business, rather than have business imposed on our town without fully fledged-out rules and regulations from Trenton), the audience was treated to a comprehensive review of the very current state of marijuana/cannabis law and how it affects our youth. Cannabis is not legal: it is decriminalized, and everyone should make themselves acquainted with the law. We will be forming a Task Force consisting of Council members, representatives from the Municipal Alliance, the School District, the Dunellen Police and others to examine the issues and make recommendations to the Council on the best course of action for Dunellen.

**Road Repairs and South Madison Avenue Culvert:** The Borough has recently concluded several important infrastructure repairs and others are to be addressed soon. The South Madison Avenue Roadway Improvement project is mostly complete. Just the addition of traffic signal devices at Walnut Street and South Madison Avenue remain to be installed. With the help of Middlesex County, the South Madison Avenue Culvert project is nearing completion. As of this writing, all that remains is some PSE&G pipe replacement and then the immediate road adjacent to the culvert on both sides will be paved. The county Mill and Pave program will take care of repaving the remainder sections of South Madison Avenue, Grove Street and Madison Avenue, as well as all of South Avenue, High Street and Lehigh Street. All streets will be restriped with pedestrian and bicycle safety in mind. In addition, the Borough Council will be voting on August 2<sup>nd</sup> on improving ADA compliant ramps at these intersections. The Pulaski Street Culvert project is estimated to begin work early next year, and due to this culvert project going to re-pave between South Avenue and Walnut Street, we have decided that that section of Pulaski Street will not be paved through the county mill and pave program, but will however be fixed up by PSE&G so the road is passable until the culvert project begins. Unfortunately, the BID for the Fire House embankment came back higher than anticipated due to the increase in prices for material, so we will work with our engineers on a plan for early next year, and therefore, the Fire Department parking lot which would have been paved through the mill and pave program will be postponed until next year. Lincoln Avenue Roadway Improvement is estimated to be completed by this fall. Major repairs on the sewer pipes at the Grove Street and Gertrude Terrace intersection were done earlier in July and a water main line also had to recently be repaired.

**Park Improvements:** At the July 6<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, contracts were awarded to re-roof the shed in Gavornik Park and to repave and repair the basketball courts in Gavornik Park and Morecraft Park. It was a pleasure to work with Dunellen’s Recreation Director Alex Miller, as

well as Council Members Sigmon, Burke and Reid in their roles as Recreation Commission liaisons, to see these necessary improvements completed in our parks.

**Redevelopment:** As you can see, significant work is being done at the Art Color (Dunellen Stations) redevelopment site. Other smaller but important redevelopment projects include 150 North Avenue and 440 North Avenue, both of which will have commercial, residential and affordable housing components. 390 North Avenue, home to Dunellen Bagel and Lucky 7 Days, will soon see facade improvements and enhanced architectural details to the two buildings on the property, restriping of the parking lot spaces, new landscaping, a new bike rack and new space for outdoor dining. The Planning Board approved this project at their June meeting. The new improvements will improve the appearance of the property and downtown. The developer plans to attract a new food establishment to the vacant space previously occupied by Chicken Holiday.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

Yours very truly,  
Jason F. Cilento, Mayor  
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