



"Crossroads of the
American Revolution"

The Town Crier



2023- Q3

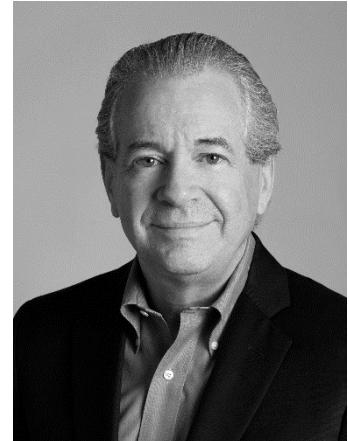
Hopewell Township Newsletter

From the Mayor- Your Tax Bill Explained

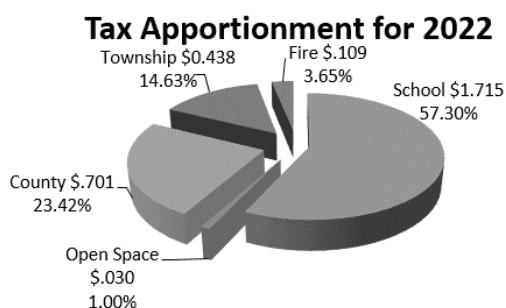
In May, the Hopewell Township Committee adopted a budget that includes a slight reduction in the municipal tax rate for local residents, despite inflationary pressures.

I have had people say to me, "I don't see this reduction in my tax bill." Here's why that may be the case for you.

Under state law, a municipality collects taxes on behalf of itself and other entities. This is shown in the chart below, which is also included with your yearly tax bill. Hopewell Township collects taxes on behalf of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District, Mercer County, and the Fire District, as well as an open space assessment. If one of those entities increases its tax rate—and that's a decision for which each entity is solely responsible—it affects the overall amount collected. As a result, a collective increase by these entities may be higher than the Township decrease, resulting in a higher overall bill. Please understand I am not criticizing any of our governing partners by saying this, as each organization has its own economic pressures and priorities. Just as we do our best to manage costs in the Township, so do they.



When you received your tax bill for August, you may have noticed it was an estimated bill. That's because Mercer County had not adopted its budget, and until the budget is adopted and approved by the state the County tax rate is not finalized. Our Tax Collector sent the bill for the third quarter of 2023 using an estimated rate for the County. The County passed its budget in early September and the actual tax rate has been used for your fourth quarter 2023 and first and second quarter 2024 bills with any necessary adjustments reflecting the actual County budget.



Also, if your home was reassessed higher over the past year, you may see an increase in the *amount* you are paying, but you are still paying a lower *municipal rate* (or percentage) for every \$100.00 of assessed value than last year.

The Township's staff is always available to answer any questions you may have. You can reach Mary Kennedy-Nadzak, the Tax Collector, or Daniel Keough, the Tax Assessor, through the Township's switchboard at (609) 737-0605 or by email at mkennedy@hopewelltwp.org or dkeough@hopewelltwp.org.

Michael Ruger, Mayor, mruger@hopewelltwp.org



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Senior Services in Hopewell Township

Did you know that your brain never stops growing and changing? Even past middle age, neurons reshape pathways in the brain in response to learning and experiences. Furthermore, staying engaged in one's community is critical to maintaining health as we age. For example, studies show that seniors who participate in community senior programming have better health, more robust social interaction, and less depression and stress than their peers.

Lucky for us in the Hopewell Valley, the Hopewell Township Senior Services Department, headed by Coordinator Randi Malkiewicz, offers a wide array of activities, services, and learning opportunities.

This includes regular exercise classes Monday through Friday such as Healthy Bones, Creative Well-Being, Chair Yoga, Qigong, Active Aging, and T'ai Chi. Additionally, the Hopewell Valley Senior Center, located at 395 Reading Street in Pennington, offers the Mercer County lunch program and social activities like bridge, art, games, and Mahjong. Anyone 60 years of age or older is welcome to join the lunch program to meet and socialize with other seniors while enjoying a nutritious meal. New participants are most welcome! Register by calling 609-989-6650.

There are also special events throughout the year, including the Senior Fair in January (where resources and opportunities to get involved are displayed in the Township Auditorium, along with a tasty lunch), the spring and fall Birthday Breakfasts, the Ice Cream Social celebrating National Senior Citizens Day in August, the Senior Picnic at Washington Crossing Park in September, the Artists' Choice Art Show, and afternoon play previews at the performing arts center with the high school and middle school students.

There is also the very popular Grandpals program, where seniors are invited to local elementary schools to read to kindergarten and first grade students, fostering intergenerational relationships with big

benefits for our youth and seniors alike.

Finally, we all are excited that the new Hopewell Valley Senior and Community Center, which will be located off Reed Road, behind the ShopRite, is slated to break ground in early 2024. This Center will give our Seniors a larger, modern, dedicated space for the Mercer County lunch program, flexible space for exercise classes, and more space for lectures and classes, like our Senior Explorations Program, which offers a wide variety of daytime learning experiences on topics like history, literature, poetry, and more. We envision a separate entrance with dedicated parking, but in a center that brings the whole community together. After the last few years where we have been forced to be apart so very much, this is a golden opportunity to really come together as a community.



But don't wait for the new center! Activities are ongoing now, and there are options for everyone. In the 2023 budget, the Township Committee approved a new registration system for all senior programs called My Senior Center. This gives easier options for registering for classes, communication about events and weather cancellations.

For more information, or to register for the Senior Newsletter, My Senior Center, or any of the events listed above, see the Township webpage, www.hopewelltwp.org/Seniors, or contact Randi Malkiewicz at 609-537-0236 or seniorservices@hopewelltwp.org.

Courtney Peters-Manning, Deputy Mayor, cpeters-manning@hopewelltwp.org

More information:

¹ <https://agingresources.org/interesting-facts-about-older-adults/>
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-senior-centers>

Learn more about volunteer opportunities to serve Hopewell Township!

Did you know that resident volunteers help Hopewell Township run?

In fact, nearly 100 residents serve on the Township's various citizen volunteer boards, committees, and commissions. These boards, committees, and commissions provide invaluable input and counsel and are critical to helping our Township run.

As Committee Members, we serve as liaisons to - and often members of - many of these bodies. We are incredibly grateful to those who volunteer their time and expertise, and I have personally been blown away by the passion and care of those who serve.



As a part of our continued commitment to transparency, please see below for an overview of these bodies and more information can be found at www.hopewelltwp.org/committees.

Additionally, if you are interested in volunteering services on a specific boards, committees, or commissions, please send a letter of interest and your resume to the Township Clerk, Katherine Fenton-Newman, at kfentonnewman@hopewelltwp.org. While many may be filled at the moment, vacancies can open at any point.

- Affordable Housing Committee. The Affordable Housing Committee monitors the long-term compliance of the Township's lower income housing obligation within housing developments containing low/moderate income housing.
- Agricultural Advisory Committee. The Agricultural Advisory Committee is vested with the responsibility of promoting and preserving agriculture as a viable economic activity within Hopewell Township.
- Board of Health Advisory Committee. The Board of Health Advisory Committee provides expert counsel to the Board of Health as they strive to achieve the goal of protecting, improving, and promoting the health, productivity, and wellbeing of all Hopewell Township residents.
- Citizens Equity Advisory Committee. The Citizens Equity Advisory Committee conducts a systematic review of existing and proposed Township regulations and practices for potential discriminatory effect and to offer suggestions on how to remedy such effects.
- Deer Management Advisory Committee. The principal task of the Deer Management Advisory Committee is the planning and implementation of our Township's Deer Management Program.
- Environmental Commission. The Environmental Commission is charged with keeping an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, in order to obtain information on the proper use of such areas and may make recommendations to the Planning Board.
- Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission is charged with developing regulations governing the designation, establishment and preservation of historic landmarks and districts within the Township.
- Open Space Advisory Committee. The Open Space Advisory Committee works with partner municipalities on a long range program to acquire and preserve natural resources, manage the pace of growth and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough.
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee provides advice and assistance in the planning, coordination and implementation of parks and recreation development in Hopewell Township.
- Planning Board. The Planning Board develops and updates the Master Plan of the Township, which guides land use and development, as well as maintains and recommends changes to the Official Zoning Map and the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the Planning Board reviews and controls the creation of land subdivisions, site plans of permitted non-residential uses and conditional use applications within the Township.
- Senior Advisory Board. The Hopewell Valley Senior Advisory Board supports and promotes programs and projects that maintain the dignity and independence of Hopewell Valley senior citizens.
- Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee. The Committee works to support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and promote tourism in the Township and the entire Hopewell Valley.
- Woolsey Park Advisory Committee. The Woolsey Park Advisory Committee advises the Township on long-term uses of Woolsey Park to ensure that proposed uses are compatible with each other and with the long-term interest of Woolsey Park.
- Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment has the power to grant variances and other relief from the zoning ordinances of the Township.
- Youth Advisory Board. The Youth Advisory Board the Township Committee on issues concerning the youth in the community. Note that Youth Advisory Board members are middle and high school students.

David Chait, Hopewell Township Committee Member, dchait@hopewelltwp.org

Lawrence Hopewell Trail: An Excellent Amenity for Hopewell Township Residents!

Hopewell Township is fortunate to have rich farmlands, wild and scenic Delaware riverways, the Sourland Mountain Preserve, and the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain. The Township has a continuous commitment to preserve open space and natural resources and support the active lifestyle of the residents of Hopewell Valley.

To support this initiative, Hopewell Township is proud to be partnering with a nonprofit, Lawrence Hopewell Trail Corporation (LHTC), from its conceptual planning and initial phase. The Township has played and continues to play a critical role in helping secure grants through the Open Space Trust, NJDOT, and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. It is gratifying to be part of a rare collaboration among businesses, employers, individual landowners, schools, and other nonprofits that have contributed portions of their property and financial support to build a 22-mile multi-use trail loop.

LHT is a valuable amenity in Hopewell Valley connecting, the local communities and neighborhoods with alternative forms of transportation to reduce the reliance on cars. This provides residents the opportunity to stay connected with nature. The trail has served thousands of bikers, joggers, and walkers each year for over 20 years. The LHT trail is handicap accessible and offers outdoor educational activities for young children, families, and senior citizens. During the pandemic, people used these trails creatively to stay connected with family and friends and maintain a sense of community. LHT has become a popular attraction in Mercer County for migrating bird watching. In addition, the trails

are known to raise property value, and realtors are using them as selling points in Hopewell Valley and the surrounding area.

The LHT's retired founders and co-presidents Becky Taylor and Eleanor Horne have built a solid foundation to make this trail a reality and grow further. The current LHT volunteers and board members are tirelessly working to plan several free activities monthly, such as the Saturday Morning Walking Club, the Bike Club, and Trails Day, just to name a few. The "History Along the LHT" project is now underway to highlight the rich history, cultural heritage, and importance of Hopewell Valley in state and U.S. history. On September 30th, LHT hosted its 8th Annual Full Moon Ride. It was a very well-attended fun event with participants from the age of twelve years and up. Enjoying music and gathering with friends and family under the moonlight was a wonderful opportunity. Please stay tuned for additional planned fall season events and more events in the upcoming year.



I encourage all residents to use and enjoy the LHT activities, stay connected with nature, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. For more details on all current and future events, please visit lhtrail.org.

Uma Purandare, Hopewell Township Committee, upurandare@hopewelltwp.org

Hopewell Township Clean Communities Day is October 14th!



Each year community members gather to beautify our area by collecting the garbage that has accumulated throughout the Township. It's a great day for the Township and community organizations to take pride in our town by coming together to help clean it up. As a bonus, organizations can earn money for their time!

New Jersey Clean Communities started in 1986 with the passage of the Clean Community Act. It is grant-funded and promotes litter cleanup throughout the state. Protective gear is provided, and participants earn an hourly wage for their organizations. It's a great way to get involved in your neighborhood and learn about litter abatement.

Hopewell Township Clean Communities Day is on Saturday, October 14th. Meet at the Public Works building at 9am. Your group will receive protective gear, the tools needed, and an assigned area. Be sure to bring water, snacks, and sunscreen! Questions? Contact Melissa at MLaing@hopewelltwp.org.

Printable/ downloadable flyer- www.hopewelltwp.org/CleanCommunities23

Preserving Hopewell Township's Special Character and the Environment

Hopewell Township is undeniably a special place, with its rolling hills and preserved farmland and open space, and miles of recreational trails. Getting to this point, where 43% of the Township is permanently undeveloped, and protecting our fragile environment does not just happen; it takes dedicated work and vigilance. I wanted to share insights on how we have worked to accomplish this.

First, and most important, is the Township Master Plan. The underlying ethos of our master plan is that development should be limited to what the land can support. There are shallow shale formations through much of Hopewell Valley, which limits how much water can infiltrate the ground and recharge our aquifer. In the northern parts of the Township, as few as 2 of the 40+ inches of rainfall we receive each year are returned to the aquifer. As a result, development in these areas is limited to one home every 6 or 20 acres. The aquifer in this region needs more area to dilute effluent from septic systems.

More broadly, our master plan precludes large-scale development outside existing sewer service areas, most notably the VRC and MRC districts. By restricting where sewer systems are allowed, we have successfully limited development in much of the Township. Our land-use ordinances also include limitations on development in stream corridors and stream corridor buffering, requirements for tree replacement when healthy trees are removed, and other environmental protections.

Second, successive Township Committees have worked hard over the past two decades on land preservation. The updated Recreation & Open Space element of the Master Plan catalogues the approximately 43% of Hopewell Township that is now preserved open space, farmland, or outdoor recreation space. During my time on the Committee, we have preserved over 1500 acres, including the new Mt. Rose and Woosamonsa Ridge preserves. And we are now working to expand access to these preserved lands.

As an example, our Public Works team recently created a new pathway to the Lawrence Hopewell Trail in Mt. Rose from an old AT&T parking lot on the preserve that will improve residents' access to this segment of the trail. A second example is the new parking lot we built at one of the trail heads at Woosamonsa Ridge. As the final segments of the 22-mile LHT trail are completed, we are exploring opportunities to expand connections from

residential neighborhoods to our trail network. You may also notice new bike lanes on repaved roads as part of our "Complete Streets" program. Additionally, we are working with the County and State to install a new signal at Ingleside Avenue so that bikers and walkers can safely cross Route 31. Making Hopewell a more walkable and bikeable community will help reduce traffic and combat climate change.

A third strategy for protecting the environment is working towards stronger storm water management protections, to help combat the extreme flooding we've experienced in recent years. The Township engineer and I have been meeting with the Watershed Institute and other municipalities in the Stony Brook – Millstone watershed on regional storm water solutions. As part of this, we are exploring two test projects in the Township. At the Princeton West Innovation Campus, current plans include increased vegetative buffering requirements and storm water management capacity to reduce runoff into the Stony Brook. A second project seeks to improve storm water management on the Shop Rite site on the 31 Circle, as part of this area's reimaging.

Looking ahead, we need to thoughtfully consider how to further strengthen our Township Master Plan. This includes consideration of new protections to prevent Amazon-scale warehouses anywhere in Hopewell Township. With the significant loss of trees due to Superstorm Sandy and the Emerald Ash Borer, we should also explore how to encourage tree replacement across Hopewell Valley. Hopewell Township already has Tree City USA recognition, partnered with the State on the Salem Oak preservation project, and has been working to create an arboretum in Woolsey Park, so this would be a natural extension of what we are already doing.

I welcome ideas from the community on other steps we can take to protect the environment and preserve Hopewell's special character.



Kevin D. Kuchinski, Township Committee Member, kkuchinski@hopewelltwp.org



IMPORTANT Polling location information for the upcoming general election

Polling places have changed in Districts 4, 5, and 8 for the upcoming General Election on November 7, 2023.

Hopewell Township-4	
Locations	Districts
Hopewell Twp Mun Bldg, 201 Wash Cross-Penn Rd, Auditorium	1,7,9
Union Fire Company, 1396 River Rd, Rt 29, Auditorium	2,3
Pennington Borough Hall, 30 North Main St	4
Pennington Borough Senior Center, 393 Reading Ave	5,8
Hopewell Railroad Station, 2 Railroad Pl	6,12
Project Freedom Community Center, 700 Heritage Ct	10,11

District 4, formerly at the Mercer County Library, will now be voting at Pennington Borough Hall, 30 North Main Street. Districts 5 and 8, formerly at HVRSD Administration Building, will now be voting at the Hopewell Valley Senior Center, 393 Reading Avenue in Pennington Borough.

Polling locations for all of Hopewell Township can be found here voter.svrs.nj.gov/polling-place-search and in the image.

Make sure you're registered! Go here- voter.svrs.nj.gov/registration-check

The Township election info is here- www.hopewelltwp.org/elections

The County election info is here- www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk/elections

The State election info is here- Vote.NJ.Gov

Katherine Fenton-Newman, Clerk, kfentonnewman@hopewelltwp.org



www.hopewelltwp.org/photocontest23
Get your entries in- photo contest ends Oct 31!



Titusville, NJ 08560-1410
201 Washington Crossing- Pennington Road
TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL