



"Crossroads of the  
American Revolution"

# The Town Crier



2023- Q4

*Hopewell Township Newsletter*

## Open Communication and Transparency: Critical in Local Government

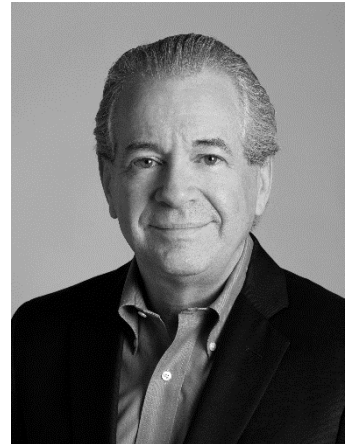
The Township Committee and professional staff recognize the importance of open communication and transparency and have prioritized initiatives to ensure a diversity of communication channels, so all residents can be reached across mediums.

The Township Committee and professional staff remain steadfast in our commitment to open communication and transparency. We've prioritized a series of initiatives and enhancements to ensure that residents are informed and engaged through a variety of communication channels.

### Recent Communication Enhancements

As a part of this commitment there have been several significant enhancements over the past two years to ensure regular, open communications. These include:

- **Introduction of Hybrid Meetings.** In 2022 the Township Committee adopted hybrid meetings, which allows residents to fully participate in meetings, including public comment, whether they are physically at the Municipal Building, via Zoom from their computer, or from their phone. While Township Committee meetings have always been broadcast on local television and videos posted online, the technology investments made to support fully hybrid meetings ensures greater accessibility to residents. Since the introduction of hybrid meetings, we've been thrilled to see an increase in attendance and participation.



You can find information on upcoming Township Committee Meetings by going to  
<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/AgendaCenter> or using the QR code above.

- **Introduction of Township Email Newsletter.** In our first *Town Crier* of 2023, I shared that a Township email newsletter was coming. In March 2023, the Township officially launched a monthly email newsletter to provide residents with key upcoming information and Township updates. This includes the dates of upcoming Township Committee, Boards, and Commission meetings, other upcoming Township and partner events, as well as recent Township news and important announcements. Overall, we've been so happy to see the number of subscribers grow as well as deep engagement with the newsletter itself.



You can subscribe to the email newsletter by going to [www.hopewelltpw.org/EmailUpdate](http://www.hopewelltpw.org/EmailUpdate) or using the QR code above.

- **Increased Mail Newsletter (*Town Crier*) Frequency.** The Township's mail newsletter - the *Town Crier*, in which you're reading this article, reaches the mailbox of every single Township resident and is an important resource to ensure residents are informed about important Township news. Over the past two years, the Township Committee has been committed to ensuring this newsletter, and the critical information it provides, reaches residents quarterly.

These initiatives complement the Township's existing presence on social media, the regular publication of press releases, and updates to the official website.



### The Future

Looking ahead to 2024, the Township remains committed to continually enhancing communication and transparency. Plans are underway for improvements to the Township websites among other initiatives.

But most importantly, your voice matters and understanding of your needs matters. As Mayor and Communications Liaison for the Township Committee, we also invite your feedback and any suggestions on ways the Township can best reach you as well as what types of content you would like to see across the ways we reach you. Feel free to email either of us directly.

**Michael Ruger, Mayor, [mruger@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:mruger@hopewelltpw.org)**  
**David Chait, Committee Member, [dchait@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:dchait@hopewelltpw.org)**



## Order more free at-home COVID-19 tests today on [COVIDTests.gov](https://COVIDTests.gov)!

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional 4 free at-home tests as of November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, place two orders for a total of 8 tests.

Ordering tests is easy and takes only a few minutes:

- **Step 1: Head to [COVIDTests.gov](https://COVIDTests.gov) to order.**
- **Step 2: Fill out your contact and shipping information.**
- **Step 3: Submit your order and have them delivered to your mailbox.**



Call 800-232-0233 (TTY 888-720-7489) to get help in English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages.

**Dawn Marling, Hopewell Township Health Officer, [healthofficer@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:healthofficer@hopewelltpw.org)**

# Creating New Trail and Recreation Amenities in Hopewell Valley: #LoveWhereYouLive



This past month, the Township Committee authorized final engineering and funding for one of two unfinished segments of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail in Hopewell. It is so gratifying to see the vision of LHT co-founders Becky Taylor and Eleanor Horne, for this 22-mile loop connecting Hopewell Township and Lawrence Township, come to fruition!

The LHT trail is a tremendous example of what's possible when local government cooperates with private corporations and the community in a public-private partnership. Together, we've created a wonderful new recreational resource for the community and made Hopewell Valley a more walkable and bikeable community. But our work is not yet done!

Beyond completing these last LHT trail segments, we now must look ahead and create a vision for what comes next. Within Hopewell Valley, we will be working to create new neighborhood access for pedestrians and bicyclists to the LHT trail. We are partnering with the County and neighboring municipalities on our "Complete Streets" program, which will create dedicated bike lanes from the D&R Canal to the east side of Mercer County. This will include a new signalized crossing to help people (and motorists) safely cross Route 31.

Additionally, we will be partnering with local land trusts and environmental organizations to broaden access to local nature preserves and open space. This includes new programs with the D&R Greenway, Watershed Institute, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, to name just a few. I am personally excited that plans are underway for a new "Planets" trail (future location and starting point to be announced) and that we are will be increasing trail access up to the preserve at Baldpate Mountain. Science shows that there is a measurable health benefit to getting outdoors and enjoying all Nature has to offer. It's one of the reasons

our family was first attracted to Hopewell Valley over twenty years ago, and our expansive park and open space network is a benefit to all residents.

Looking ahead, we will continue to analyze opportunities to preserve additional land, with a focus on enhancing and connecting existing blocks of preserved land and protecting areas being actively farmed. But with 43% of Hopewell Township land already preserved as farmland and open space or reserved for outdoor recreation, there may be a limit to how much we can preserve. Accordingly, we are going to also focus on how we can increase access to existing preserved lands and maintain the trails that have been built. This will include new parking lots with pervious pavement or gravel at key trailheads, the new neighborhood connections referenced above, and ongoing work to upgrade and maintain existing trails.

Recently we met with representatives from Township-based recreational leagues and other community partners, to understand their future needs for additional fields and indoor recreation facilities. I am excited to announce that we will be upgrading our turf field this winter at Twin Pines. We are also exploring the potential of a second turf field at the Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC). With these enhancements, we are looking at more efficient LED lighting options and at the addition of outdoor shelters/picnic areas and improved restroom access at both fields. Second, we are looking at the addition of new outdoor fields at the newly acquired properties off of Scotch Road and the potential expansion of pickle ball courts at the MAC. Members of the community have recently asked us to consider a new cricket field – it's a growing sport both in the US and internationally, and we look forward to exploring the possibilities. Finally, we are investigating public-private partnerships that could help us bring new indoor turf, basketball courts and other facilities to the Township. While still in the planning stages, I am excited about the potential of these new recreation amenities.

Hopewell Valley's trail network and extensive recreation amenities are a real asset to our community, and another reason for us all to #LoveWhereYouLive. If you have ideas on what else we can do to promote trails, open space and new recreation amenities, or would like to talk further, please feel free to reach out.

**Kevin D. Kuchinski, Township Committee Member, [kdkhopewelltp@gmail.com](mailto:kdkhopewelltp@gmail.com)**

# Hopewell Township Renews its Bronze Sustainable Jersey Certification

Hopewell Township has been proudly participating in the Sustainable Jersey certification program since the program was first introduced by the New Jersey Environmental Commission in 2009. The certification program, which includes a rigorous review, is a prestigious designation for municipal governments in New Jersey. We are thrilled to share that in 2023 Hopewell Township received our Bronze certification.



The Sustainable Jersey Bronze certification is a joint effort by the Hopewell Township Committee, Hopewell Township Environmental Commission, and Hopewell Valley Green team. This designation is a true testament to our collective commitment to building a sustainable community that is beneficial for current residents and for generations to come.

As a part of this process Hopewell Township put together a framework to build a sustainable community that will thrive into the next century, save tax dollars, ensure clean land, air, and water, and improve working and living environments. Some examples include:

- Water conservation element and innovative and stringent stormwater management requirements guidelines with the Hopewell Township Master plan to balance the groundwater recharge.
- Solar panels for the Township's Public Works building as well as retrofitting the lighting in all the municipal buildings, which has already begun.
- An adoption of the Sustainable Land Use pledge and a commitment to new land use ordinances to mandate sustainable design considerations for all new land development projects.

In all, Hopewell Township has dedicated almost 43% of the land to recreation, open space, and conservation. And there so many more activities that support sustainability.

For example, the Township's Public Works department conducts electronic recycling and hazardous waste collection as well as paper shredding events to help reduce waste going to landfills, toxic leachates, and greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the Township recently built five electric vehicle public charging stations at the Municipal building, including one that is handicapped accessible. The charging stations are accessible to the public 24 hours/7 days per week and do not require municipal approval or account. The Township also purchased hybrid vehicles which are environmentally friendly and projected to save thousands of dollars in gas costs.

Hopewell Township administers smoke and tobacco-free workplaces and actively works with the Hopewell Valley Municipal Alliance (HVMA), a volunteer organization with representatives from various community sectors to promote positive youth development. HVMA's activities include programming on smoking and vaping education and outreach, social media outreach, and providing educational resources. Furthermore, the Health Department distributes the Social Support Resources brochure at local events which includes resources for tobacco, vaping, and cannabis cessation.

The Township participates in the prescription medicine disposable program and has installed a box at the township building to securely dispose of unused and/or expired prescription medicine to prevent improper disposal that could contaminate the waterways with harmful chemicals.

The Hopewell Township Environmental Commission along with the Hopewell Valley Green Team offers educational materials and a range of product options that encourage residents to adopt sustainable practices and support the government's initiative to reduce green gas emissions, reduce and recycle waste, and promote public health as well as economic health for Hopewell Valley residents.

The Township Committee would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the members of the Environmental Commission and the Hopewell Valley Green team for their unwavering support during this process. We also would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of Hopewell Township staff, who were instrumental throughout this process to track the progress of the application and fulfill the requirements in a timely manner.

We are committed to continuous work on sustainability efforts! We wish to continue to work on sustainability initiatives and aspire to achieve the Silver Certification by next year!

Please visit the Sustainable Jersey website for additional information and to learn more about how to contribute to local sustainability initiatives.

**Uma Purandare, Hopewell Township Committee, [upurandare@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:upurandare@hopewelltpw.org)**

<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/certification/search-participating-municipalities-approved-actions/certification-report/>



# Hopewell Township Participates in Womanspace 22nd Annual Communities of Light

Womanspace's Communities of Light celebration is the culmination of a month of activities aimed to bring awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault, and action to bring survivors out of the darkness and into the light. On Monday, December 4, the Hopewell Township Police Department, the Hopewell Township Committee, and Township staff participated in the 22nd annual event at the municipal building.



Luminary kits were sold at local businesses, as well as through the Police Department, and candles were lit at homes and businesses throughout the Township on December 3 and 4.

Womanspace has led the way in bringing awareness to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Mercer County. Their mission of preventing abuse and protecting families aligns with the Hopewell Township Police Department's community mission. The HTPD values its ongoing relationship and partnership with Womanspace, who are always there to provide assistance to survivors. Through their Domestic Violence Victims Response Teams, volunteers who meet with victims at the police station, and trainings they frequently provide to Township police officers, Womanspace is devoted to educating, empowering, and serving those impacted in our community.

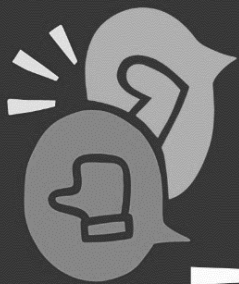


**Jim Rosso, Chief of Police, [jrosso@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:jrosso@hopewelltpw.org)**  
**Courtney Peters-Manning, Deputy Mayor, [cpeters-manning@hopewelltpw.org](mailto:cpeters-manning@hopewelltpw.org)**



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