



## Mayor Brindle's Opening Remarks

May 11, 2021

Good evening, everyone, and thanks for joining us virtually tonight. Please remember that public comment will only be accepted via Zoom, although we are live streaming for viewing only on Facebook. The replay will also be available afterwards on Facebook, YouTube, and TV 36.

Things may look a little different at this meeting. We are traveling back in time at the request of the [Westfield Historic Preservation Commission](#) to celebrate National Preservation Month.

I'm speaking to you in front of the building on Prospect Street that functioned as Westfield's Town Hall and Police headquarters from 1910 until the new municipal building was erected in its current location in 1954.

I would like to thank the Historic Preservation Commission, the archives of the [Westfield Historical Society](#), and Dr. Stanley Lipson for providing us with these wonderful Zoom backdrops. You'll be hearing from everyone else about their backdrops a little later.

### COVID-19 UPDATES

- As you know, Governor Murphy recently announced the state will lift many of its major COVID-19 capacity restrictions on May 19 due to an ongoing improvement in the numbers as vaccinations increase. This includes removing indoor caps on restaurants, stores, and personal services, as well as all outdoor gathering caps -- with indoor masking and social distancing remaining in place, and venues required to keep groups six feet apart.
- Yesterday, the FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for adolescents aged 12-15, which must now go before the CDC for approval tomorrow. Governor Murphy indicated that the New Jersey Department of Health is currently finalizing guidance for parents, guardians, and practitioners, and they anticipate being able to transition to vaccinating eligible adolescents as soon as Pfizer receives its emergency use authorization.
- The seven-day average for confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Jersey is down 29% from a week ago and down 67% from a month ago, and the rate of transmission is 1.07. More than half of New Jersey's adult population has been vaccinated. As always, more detailed information about statewide numbers is available on the NJ COVID-19 Dashboard.

## LOCAL UPDATES

■ Thanks to the Mental Health Council for putting together some wonderful community programming to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month. The CAKE Crumb Trail is a free, month-long, self-guided tour for participants of all ages that reinforces our commitment to being a stigma free community, with stops designed to highlight the importance of compassion, acceptance, kindness, and empathy as part of an ongoing focus on mental wellness and behavioral health. There will also be a free Zoom webinar on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on May 19 at 7:00PM. For details on both events, visit [westfieldnj.gov/mentalhealthevents](https://westfieldnj.gov/mentalhealthevents).

■ This week is National Police Week, and I'd like to take a moment to extend my thanks on behalf of this Council and community to the extraordinary [Town of Westfield, NJ Police Department](#) for their ongoing professionalism, dedication, and commitment to community policing. At a time when our community is experiencing a wave of car burglaries and thefts, our Police Department continues to do a tremendous job under very difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. As I hope you've seen, last week they issued a detailed advisory to the community about this activity. The department is operating with enhanced patrols throughout Town -- both in very obvious and less overt ways -- and they are using every tool at their disposal to address these criminal acts. However, they need your help to displace crime by staying vigilant and securing your cars and homes at all times. You can read the advisory on our website, which I encourage you to share with your neighbors, to find out more about the current policing efforts and what you can do to help keep Westfield one of New Jersey's safest communities.

And if you'd like to meet with members of the department, don't miss Pizza With the Police on May 20 from 4:00 - 6:00PM, where you can enjoy a slice and discuss any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you to [Outta Hand Pizza](#) for hosting this event!

■ The Cannabis Commission will host a public meeting via Zoom on Thursday, May 13, at 7:00PM to provide an update on its activity to date, and will include the opportunity for public comment. I think it's important to provide the context that, under the new state law, all municipalities must take action to either opt in or opt out of permitting any class of cannabis establishment or distributor to operate in the municipality. Once a municipality permits cannabis establishments or distributor operations in their community (i.e., once they "opt in"), that action remains valid for five years. If a community opts out, it can thereafter decide to opt in, even before the expiration of the five-year period.

The meeting will also be streamed on Facebook Live, but, just as we do with Council meetings, anyone wishing to speak must join by Zoom. The meeting will be available for replay afterwards, and public comments are also being collected by email at [CannabisComments@westfieldnj.gov](mailto:CannabisComments@westfieldnj.gov) through May 20. Details about the commission, its purpose, and its members can be found at [westfieldnj.gov/cannabis\\_commission](https://westfieldnj.gov/cannabis_commission).

■ Join us on May 20 at 7:30PM for the next panel discussion in our Facebook Live series with Streetworks about the future of retail. "Retail: (You Can't) Just Buy it Online" will take a closer look at this shifting landscape, the importance it plays in all communities, and the opportunities it presents for Westfield. In addition to Streetworks' Richard Heapes, the conversation will also feature DWC Executive

Director Bob Zuckerman, Phil Abramson of [Topology](#), and Mike Berne of MJB Consulting, one of North America's leading retail experts and futurists.

- Don't miss [Greta's Run](#), a beloved annual community event to honor the late Greta Schoenemann. The run will be virtual once again this year, and participants are asked to run individually any time leading up to Sunday, May 16. All proceeds will benefit [Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss](#). For more information and to register, visit [imagineenj.org/gretasrun](http://imagineenj.org/gretasrun).

- Just 25 days until Memorial Pool opens! There is no wait list this year, and the fantastic staff is ready to deliver another safe and memorable season. To renew or join, visit [westfieldnj.gov/pool](http://westfieldnj.gov/pool).

- We have a busy agenda tonight as we are taking action on some great initiatives. Very excitedly, we are voting on a resolution to award a contract for the 2021 road paving work, which will supplement the work scheduled to be completed by utility companies this year, totaling nearly 18 miles of paving this year. You can see the full list of roads scheduled to be completed through 2024 at [westfieldnj.gov/roadimprovements](http://westfieldnj.gov/roadimprovements).

- We will also vote on a resolution to implement retroactive salary increases for 2019 and 2020 as the result of the recently negotiated five-year collective bargaining agreement with our PBA Local #90.

- As I mentioned, it's National Preservation Month so it's timely that tonight we will vote on an ordinance on second reading to historically designate 923 Central Avenue, which will be the sixth designation since I took office. This home, built circa 1757, is believed to be the Cornelius Ludlum, Jr. homestead, which was built adjacent to the farm owned by his father Cornelius Ludlum, Sr. According to the HPC, the vernacular farmhouse reflects the simple construction of homes typical of the Revolutionary period. The house is shown on the "dot map" of Revolutionary homes that was compiled by Union County and local historians in the late 1960s. Although modified over the years, the central section of the home still displays original construction with peg and beam rafters and carpenter marks.

This designation is a great example of the homeowner being open-minded and learning about the history of a home, and why conversations should occur before a house gets demolished. I'd like to thank the HPC for their ongoing dedication to prioritizing voluntary designation and their passion for preserving these important pieces of Westfield's history.

While we're discussing history, let's hear from everyone else tonight about the historical backdrop behind them.

- I have two proclamations to read tonight -- one recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness Month, and another recognizing the amazing work of our Vulnerable Populations Workgroup in vaccinating underserved populations.

With that, let's get to work. I want to remind everyone that I will once again be enforcing Robert's Rules this evening to ensure we stay on topic and the meeting runs efficiently.

Thank you.