



## Town Council Opening Remarks August 10, 2021

*(The following remarks were delivered Mayor Brindle at the August 10, 2021 Town Council meeting.)*

Good evening, everyone, and thanks to all who are joining us in person and online tonight.

Just as we did prior to the pandemic, our meetings continue to be live streamed for viewing only on Facebook, and public comment will be accepted in person only. As always, the replay will also be available afterwards on Facebook, YouTube, and TV 36.

### Secretary Buttigieg Visits Westfield

We were thrilled to host Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg yesterday right here in Town Hall to meet with members of the RVL Mayors' Alliance and Congressman Tom Malinowski for a robust discussion about the importance of infrastructure improvements in the region. In moderating this roundtable, I shared my personal experience about the toll that an inconsistent and increasingly unreliable commute takes over time -- a story shared by so many residents in Westfield -- and the reason I co-founded the RVL Mayors' Alliance. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal would enable, among many other key improvements, the long overdue Gateway tunnel to be built and pave the way for the one-seat ride this region deserves. I was grateful to have the opportunity to host this important conversation yesterday to bring us one step closer to our goal.

### Edison School Fields Project

Thanks to all of the residents who have provided their feedback on the Edison Fields project to date, all of which has been very helpful. The Recreation Commission is collecting this input and gathering follow-up data in order to provide additional information for the next meeting, focused on many of the consistent areas of most concern to residents -- such as traffic, parking, lighting, stormwater and environmental concerns, and the scale and scope of the project itself.

The Recreation Commission has been diligently working with Jim Gildea and the design firm Spiegle to address the questions that have been received. Based upon this input, they are also recommending reducing the scope of the project to a scale that is more consistent with what was recommended in the Strategic Parks plan.

For the latest status, I am going to ask Recreation Commission liaison Scott Katz to provide an update and information on the next meeting.

Comments from Councilman Katz:

- We have had two successful public input sessions and have put together a comprehensive list of questions and concerns.
- We have heard from the neighbors loud and clear, and as a result, are going to revisit the Parks Master Plan to see if scaling the plan back to the original recommended size and scope can address many of the neighbors concerns while fulfilling the commonly acknowledged need for more usable field space in Westfield.
- We have scheduled the first meeting of the Edison Neighborhood Advisory Group for next week, which includes five representatives from the impacted neighborhoods and members of the Recreation Commission.
- As a result of this potential revision, we need to do additional due diligence which will require additional time to address some of the issues in greater detail.
- This is all contingent upon further discussions with the BOE and that meeting is currently being scheduled.
- As a result, we believe the most productive course of action is skip the September 1 meeting in order to provide a more detailed revised proposal and answers to as many questions as we can in preparation for the scheduled September 20 meeting.
- This is not a fait accompli, and we are working very hard to listen to both the concerns of the neighbors as well as the needs of the user groups.]

Please continue to send your feedback to [edisonfields@westfieldnj.gov](mailto:edisonfields@westfieldnj.gov), and plan to attend the meeting on September 20 at Edison at 7:00PM for additional information and details based on input received to date.

#### COVID Vaccination Clinic

The Health Department will be holding a COVID vaccination clinic tomorrow from 4:00 - 7:00 PM for those 12 and over, where the Pfizer and J&J vaccines will be offered. No appointment is necessary, and adults seeking vaccination are able to bring children in their care into the building with them to make the process easily accessible for all.

As we continue to hear more about the highly contagious nature of the Delta variant of COVID, I urge everyone to take the proper precautions and follow the CDC guidance to help prevent additional infections. The CDC recently reiterated that if you get sick with the alpha variant, you could infect about two other unvaccinated people, whereas if you get sick with the delta variant, the estimation is that you could infect about five other unvaccinated people. While we are fortunate to have a high vaccination rate in Westfield, please remember that children under 12 are not able to be vaccinated yet, and we must rely on masking, distancing, and other best practices to keep them and other vulnerable members of our community protected. I continue to urge everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated.

## Downtown Happenings

Sweet Sounds was postponed to tomorrow night due to anticipated weather issues this evening. The expanded capacity with the full closure of Quimby for Sweet Sounds has been very successful and enables more residents and visitors to enjoy this fantastic summer tradition in Downtown Westfield.

And for our history buffs, don't miss the March to Yorktown reenactment on August 29 at 11:00 AM beginning in Mindowaskin Park, where historical interpreters representing French Generals Rochambeau and Chastellux along with other interpreters will march through Town to commemorate the 240th Anniversary of the March to Yorktown, Virginia. On August 29, 1781, Continental soldiers, including the 1st Rhode Island Regiment passed through Westfield on the way to Princeton to meet with two columns of the French army before the combined forces continued on to Yorktown, VA, to besiege the position of British General Lord Cornwallis.

I'm always thrilled to see different components of Westfield's amazing history brought to life for the benefit of the community, and as a native of Yorktown, Virginia, this march is a piece of American history that is particularly familiar to me. It's wonderful to see its connection to Westfield commemorated by the dedicated volunteers of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

## Tonight's Agenda

We have another busy agenda tonight. We will vote on a resolution to award a contract to Boxcar for the use of the coffee kiosk in the South Avenue train station parking lot in response to call for bids. I am very excited about the potential that Boxcar can bring to this space, starting with coffee sales and concierge services, as we begin to see increased usage of the lot and the gradual return to commuting.

We will also vote on three resolutions pertaining to public safety tonight:

- Authorizing the award of a contract for crossing guard management services to All City Management Services (ACMS) for the third consecutive school year. The Police Department continues to be very pleased with ACMS' management of the program, which removes the administrative burden and filling of empty posts from their daily responsibilities.
- Authorizing the purchase of ten new portable radar speed signs that were provided for in the 2021 capital budget, which will allow us to gather additional speeding data in known trouble spots to enhance enforcement efforts.
- Authorizing acceptance of the SFY21 Body Worn Camera Grant Program, expanding upon our current body worn cameras in the department.

Also on tonight's agenda is a resolution authorizing an award of contract for the AddamsFest Beer and Wine Garden concession for the return of this very popular event on October 16. Councilwoman Mackey will speak in more detail about how she and her team of volunteers have been planning for this year's AddamsFest, which will mostly consist of outdoor events and of course all applicable COVID protocols.

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

Thank you.