



THE BOROUGH OF CLAYTON

SPRING
2022



The Borough of Clayton's Community Newsletter,
bringing information right to your doorstep.

A Message from Mayor Tom Bianco:



We entered 2022 with the continuation of the COVID-19 Pandemic and having to manage through the upheaval it has caused in our daily lives. The good news is the positivity and infection rates are improving, and we may be moving into a new "normal" whereby we manage the disease instead of it managing us. With immense gratitude and deep appreciation, I want to thank our police officers, volunteer firefighters, public works employees, and municipal office employees who have been so dedicated in continuing to take care of our residents' needs during these difficult times. While many companies and organizations nationwide permitted their employees to work remotely in an effort to prevent them becoming infected, our police and firefighters were on the front line offering essential health and safety services. Our public works employees continued taking care of our water and sewer systems, our streets and roads, and our facilities. Our municipal office employees continued the day-to-day operations that keep our Borough functioning. I sincerely thank all of them for their heroic support.

We also entered 2022 without our long-time friend, former Mayor, and truly our "town father", Gene Costill, who passed away on April 21, 2021. And, sadly, former Councilman John Walton recently passed away. We remember them and their service to our town. They will be missed.

As we proceed this year, I am hopeful that we will meet and enjoy our traditional community events and activities. The Egg Scramble will be held on April 9th and the Special Events Committee is already planning for Clayton Day 2022. There is nothing like community gatherings for reminding us of the simple joys of life, and how uplifting it is to be engaged with each other.

Keep strong, keep positive, and keep hope.

A Big Welcome for Councilman Dave Chapes



Councilman David Chapes (pronounced "Chaps") filled an open Council seat on May 13, 2021, and won a seat for a full term in the November 2021 election. Dave has lived in Clayton for 22 years. He has been married to his wife Jessica for 15 years and they have two children, David and Gia. Dave has worked for the Glassboro Highway Department for many years and is a member of UFCW Local 360. Councilman Chapes is the Council Liaison to the Environmental Committee and Board of Health. Councilman Chapes is enthusiastic about and committed to being an involved and active Councilman. He has always given back to the Clayton community, volunteering as a Clayton Little League coach for 9 years and board member for 6 years, and also served on the Parks and Recreation and Economic Development Committees. He is a proud member of the Clayton Elks Lodge. He is excited to be working with Mayor Bianco and his fellow councilmen and councilwomen in keeping Clayton a great community for all.

A Warm Welcome for Local Heroes

Two of our military's finest were honored by their families and Clayton friends upon returning home from active duty:

Captain Robert Nesko, United States Air Force, returned to Clayton to visit his parents, Kevin and Bridget Nesko, after a six-month deployment in Afghanistan, one of the most volatile and dangerous countries in the world. Having attended George Mason University and the University of Maryland, Captain Nesko joined the Air Force in 2014 and became a pilot. While he currently lives in Maryland with his wife and two children, he still considers Clayton to be "home." He was welcomed home on Saturday, October 9, 2021, by family, friends, and members of the governing body who gathered to celebrate his safe return.

Staff Sergeant Brandon Muller, United States Air Force, returned home on December 23, 2021, after a deployment in Qatar. While a student at Clayton High School, he was actively involved with the Junior ROTC. He currently works in Maintenance Operations for the Air Force and is stationed in the United Kingdom. His family, friends, and neighbors celebrated his return with many hugs and handshakes.

Operation Yellow Ribbon South Jersey coordinated the surprise gatherings for these two fine servicemen. Both Captain Nesko and Staff Sgt. Muller deserve recognition for their valiant work, and commitment to our country, as do all who serve in the US military, protecting us and our freedom.

Goodbye Pastor Ron!

Senior Pastor Ron Markloff's last official Worship Day at the First Baptist Church of Clayton was Sunday, January 2, 2022. Pastor Ron came to the church as an interim Pastor in June of 2014 and became Pastor in June of 2015. With his fellow pastors, he has faithfully ministered to his congregation, caring for the needs of church members and others with programs such as Youth Group, a children's nursery, the Orange Center, First Look Pre-school, Women of Worth and a food pantry.

Pastor Ron was instrumental in assisting Chief Andy Davis with establishing the Clayton Police Department Chaplain Program and became its very first Chaplain in November of 2017. His guidance and assistance during critical and stressful incidents involving law enforcement have been immeasurable. Pastor Ron is leaving the First Baptist Church to be Regional Executive Director of Venture Church Network, an organization he has been involved with for a number of years.

Mayor and Council and the Clayton community sincerely thank Pastor Ron for his service to his church, the Clayton PD, and our town, and we extend best wishes to him and his family in whatever the future brings.

Coming Soon to Clayton

Two new projects are about to get underway in the near future:

* Fairview Development, LLC has received Planning Board approval to construct a \$25 million high-end, 90% market rate, apartment complex on South Delsea Drive next to Kenny's Liquors. Dream Homes & Development Corp. is the owner/developer. The project consists of 112 condominium rental units targeted primarily for young professionals. There will be 5 buildings with one building being "mixed use", both retail and condos. Amenities for residents include a walking path and a picnic/gathering area with a gazebo, picnic tables and chairs. The ground-breaking is expected to occur by the end of 2022, and project completion is expected within 18 months. This project offers an excellent housing choice for existing and new Clayton residents and is a fine ratable for our tax base, generating approximately \$600,000 in annual tax revenue.

* Clayton Healthcare, LLC has received Planning Board approval to construct and operate a pharmacy and two retail stores on the old Simpkins Hardware site across from Borough Hall. Mr. Samir Talotti is the owner and pharmacist developing the parcel. This project will add to the economic vitality of the downtown by rehabilitating a blighted property and providing additional retail offerings in our Borough.

A Message from Clayton Police Chief Andrew Davis

It is an honor and privilege to serve the Borough of Clayton as the Chief of Police. It is truly amazing the level of support that our police officers receive from this community, whether it be from the local businesses supporting our National Night Out Program, to local churches joining our Police Chaplain Program, or the private citizens who have sent messages of support and encouragement to our individual officers. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your love, support, and encouragement and know our police officers feel the same.

I am extremely blessed to have some of the finest police officers, clerical staff, and crossing guards in our county working for our police department. I am grateful for their dedication, commitment, and the excellence with which they perform their jobs and duties. I would like to introduce our two newest police officers on our force. I am excited to watch as their careers progress. I have no doubt that they will make us all proud.

In addition, I am excited to announce that Sergeant Lauren Franklin has been promoted to Police Captain. His promotion ceremony was held on Thursday, March 10th at Borough Hall. His fellow officers and many town residents joined Mayor and Council in witnessing and celebrating the event with Captain Franklin's family and friends. I always love hearing him speak to our school students giving them encouragement and relating that he himself sat in the exact same seats that they are sitting in now. Capt. Franklin has been a pillar of the Clayton Police Department since he was hired in 2001. I could not have asked for a better officer to be 2nd in Command of our Police Department. Capt. Franklin has been performing many of the duties of Captain since 2016, and a great many of our successes can be attributed to him. I am grateful to the Mayor and Borough Council for accepting my recommendation and appointing Lauren Franklin to the position of Captain. I have no doubt that Captain Franklin will continue to serve the community and this agency with the same dedication, compassion, and honor which has earned him the respect of all those who interact with him.



Ptlm. William Perretti



Capt. Lauren Franklin



Ptlm. Alexander Ruiz

- Age 28
- Born and raised in Clayton
- Bachelor's Degree from Rowan University, Law and Justice Major
- Graduated Cape May Police Academy
- Cape May Police Department 2019-2021 (SLEO-II Officer)
- Clayton Police Department 02/17/2021 (SLEO - II Officer)
- Clayton Police Department 08/12/2021 (Patrolman)

- Age 45
- Born and raised in Clayton
- Graduated from Gloucester County Police Academy
- Associates Degree in Law Enforcement from Rowan College
- Clayton Police Department 2001 - 2008 (Patrolman)
- Clayton Police Department 2008 - 2016 (Detective)
- Clayton Police Department 2016 - 2022 (Sergeant)
- Happily married to wife Danielle for 20 years and proud parent of two wonderful daughters Paige & Brooke

- Age 24
- Born and raised in Washington Twp. (Gloucester County)
- In process of obtaining Bachelor's Degree for Criminal Justice
- Graduated Camden County Police Academy
- Camden Metro Police 2019 -2021 (SLEO-II Officer)
- Clayton Police Department 1/13/2021 (Patrolman)
- Recently married to high school sweetheart Madison Digioia in November of 2021

Pet Licensing

Licenses for dogs and cats must be obtained by April 15, 2022. You must have a current rabies certificate for each cat and dog you own, and the rabies vaccinations must be good through November 1, 2022 or later.

The fees are:

- \$8.20 for spayed or neutered pets (\$12.20 after April 15, 2022)
- \$11.20 for non-spayed or non-neutered pets (\$15.20 after April 15, 2022)

****Don't forget, the single use bag ban begins on May 4, 2022. Residents can visit www.bagupnj.com for more information.****

Snowman/Pole Decorating Winners!

Congratulations to the WINNERS of the 2021 Snowman/Pole Decorating Contest:

- **Most Festive: Buddy the Elf**
- **Most Town Spirit: Heart of the Community**
- **Best Overall: Ursula**
- **Best Business: Neri's Cafe**



A BIG "Thank You" to everyone who participated! Let's shoot for a snowman bonanza in 2022!

Clayton Senior Center in Full Swing!

The Clayton Senior Center has re-opened after being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current hours are:

- Tuesdays 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Wednesdays 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Fridays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

As the pandemic subsides, the Borough will look into additional potential activities for seniors. Please check the Borough's website for updates.



Upcoming Events in the Borough!

Spring Leaf Collection	March 28, 2022 - April 14, 2022	Schedule on website!	Throughout town!
Egg Scramble	April 9, 2022	See website for times (per age group)!	Autumn Pasquale Memorial Park
Spring Shred Event	April 23, 2022	2:00 PM to 5:00 PM	Sandelier Park
Movies In The Park	June 8, 2022	6:30 PM	DJ Bentz Soccer Complex
Clayton Day - Concert - Fireworks	June 11, 2022	3:00 PM to 6:00 PM 7:00 PM Dusk	DJ Bentz Soccer Complex
Farmers Market	July 16, 2022	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	Acme Parking Lot
Arts & Oddities	September 24, 2022	4:00 PM to 10:00 PM	Core 3 Brewery