

## From the Desk of Mayor Frank Nunziato

At Monday's meeting, we heard from a group of residents who passionately spoke about the conditions of the baseball diamond on which the Babe Ruth and RHS varsity teams play at Memorial Park. "Diamond 2" as it's known, has for decades maintained a dirt infield as opposed to a traditional grass infield. By all accounts, a dirt (or clay) infield is less desirable to a grass one. I, myself, played on that field in high school under those conditions and remember the envy my team would have when we visited other towns with grass infields.

The upgrade of Diamond 2 is long overdue and accounted for in the larger redesign of Memorial Park currently being worked on. Last month, Mr. Keeler, a generous resident, offered a donation that would pay to sod the Diamond 2 infield before the start of the 2024 baseball season, which will begin in about two months. He was made aware that any work done at this time would likely be replaced once redesign construction begins.

The Borough Administrator, Bob Kakoleski, and I met with Mr. Keeler, at which point we agreed the Borough would look into the possibility of accepting his donation, and feasibility of placing sod on the infield on Mr. Keeler's requested timeline, considering we are in the middle of winter.

Immediately following that meeting, Bob began weeks of research, spoke with several professionals, including the resident's proposed contractor of choice, as well as two companies the Borough has in the past contracted with for improvements at Memorial Park. He consulted with the necessary Department Heads and DPW grounds team and explored every scenario that would help or hinder this project - specifically the unpredictability of weather in February and March. He shared all these findings with my colleagues and me in a detailed and timely manner.

Ultimately, the input collected from the professionals offers no guarantee that the field could be ready in time for the start of the season, which could require the rescheduling of High School and Babe Ruth baseball.

It is the collective professionals' recommendations that the potential risks and complications of beginning the project

at this time of year outweigh the potential rewards for the 2024 season. There were just too many variables in play to guarantee a successful project at this time.

I encourage you to watch the Borough Administrator's detailed explanation of these findings on the YouTube recording of Monday's meeting which can be found on the Borough website.

My colleagues and I are all disappointed that this is such a difficult project to execute so quickly, and are in agreement this conversation should have begun last fall. If that had happened, boys baseball would likely have begun in March 2024 with a beautiful grass infield on Diamond 2.

This offer was not taken lightly. The Borough must responsibly vet all projects, whether they're paid for with public or private funding. While frustrating at times, we are required to follow several statutory requirements in terms of procurement methods and awarding contracts. Unfortunately a project on public land can't be expedited the same ways you could expedite a project at your house.

I would like to thank the Borough Administrator for his diligence on this matter and for listening to input from the community. As a result of the issues brought forth to him last month, Bob is exploring immediate improvements to Diamond 2 that are feasible before the baseball season commences. This includes replacing some of the existing clay with the clay and conditioner recommended by Mr. Keeler's contractor, at the Borough's cost.

While we believe it's unlikely our concerns will change, we will continue to evaluate achievable options in the coming weeks.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Keeler for his generosity and desire to invest in the community. I know his offer comes from the heart and I look forward to collaborating with him and the rest of the Rutherford baseball family in preparation for the 2025 season.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Frank Nunziato

## Public Parking in Kip Garage

We will be converting the Kip Garage public parking spaces to a pay station kiosk. Be on the lookout for more information and new signage in the coming weeks!

## REC

## Ice Skating at Memorial Park

The ice skating rink has been set up for this season in the Memorial Field Parking lot. It is only usable when weather conditions permit, as we need a stretch of sub-freezing days to make it skateable.

**Users will skate at their own risk. Badges will not be required.**

### Councilwoman Christie Del Rey-Cone cdelrey-cone@rutherfordboronj.com

Hello Neighbors. The New Year is underway and we are excitedly looking forward to some exciting projects. I participated in the Rutherford Civil Rights Commission's (RCRC) first meeting of the year and I am excited to share that the Commission is still accepting applications for new Commissioners. Not only is the RCRC responsible for the wonderful, annual Multicultural Festival (which will be celebrating its twentieth year this year!) but also for educational collaboration on topics that are integral to fostering an accepting community. If you are interested in applying to join the Commission and have questions, please reach out to me. I was a Commissioner myself before I became a Councilwoman so I can speak directly to the wonderful work this organization fosters. I also had the opportunity to join the 2024 kick off meeting with the Green Team which already has had two successful events since the start of the year. Please remember that the Green Team is a wonderful source of information and collaboration if you have any questions at all about sustainability. Wishing you a wonderful weekend and looking forward to the year ahead.

### Councilwoman Susan Quatrone squatrone@rutherfordboronj.com

Would you enjoy playing a few rounds of mini golf with friends, family and neighbors in a beautiful library setting? Or dancing into the night with fun music while supporting a great cause?

If so, please join us for the Rutherford Public Library's two biggest (and most creative) fundraising events of the season!

#### Tickets are on sale now:

##### Mini Golf Fundraiser at the Rutherford Public Library

Play an 18-Hole Course Inside the Library and Support a Great Cause

Friday, March 1: Adult Night (6-9PM)

Saturday, March 2: Family Day (10:30-3:30PM)

Tickets on Sale Now at [RUTHERFORDLIBRARY.ORG/FRIENDS](https://RUTHERFORDLIBRARY.ORG/FRIENDS)

##### Rutherford Public Library Gala 2024

Saturday, March 23: Il Villaggio

2024 Honoree: Dan Meredith

Open Bar and Live Music!

Tickets On Sale: [RUTHERFORDLIBRARY.ORG/FOUNDATION](https://RUTHERFORDLIBRARY.ORG/FOUNDATION)

See you in the stacks and on the dance floor!



### Rutherford Civil Rights Commission Application

[www.rutherfordboronj.com/committees/civil-rights-commission](http://www.rutherfordboronj.com/committees/civil-rights-commission)

*Civil Rights Commission appointments are subject to Mayoral and Council approval.*

*All appointees are subject to meeting attendance requirements and will be asked to sign the Borough policy and procedures manual in existence at the time of your appointment which includes a code of conduct pertaining to social media.*

### Councilman Ray Guzmán rguzman@rutherfordboronj.com

#### Police Liaison:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31st 2024 - Please join the Police Department and Matera's on Park for our first ever "Hot Chocolate with a Cop" event on Wednesday January 31st.

The event will take place from 2:30 pm until 4:30 pm inside the LOFT (Located directly above Matera's).

Attendees will receive a FREE delicious Hot Chocolate and commemorative mug. All are welcome!

### Councilman Matthew Cokeley mcokeley@rutherfordboronj.com

#### Arts Committee Liaison

Youth Arts Banners are back! In partnership with the Rutherford Arts Council, submissions will be accepted now through February 15th.

This year's theme is "Dream in Art."

[Visit rutherfordnj.recdesk.com to register](http://Visit rutherfordnj.recdesk.com to register)

For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact the RAC via Katie Pippin at [rutherfordartscouncil@gmail.com](mailto:rutherfordartscouncil@gmail.com).  
**Text any questions 848-219-1167**

*Printed banners are 24x48".  
Banner placement is at the discretion of the Borough.*

