

# Borough of Wanaque

PASSAIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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WANAQUE, NJ 07465



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April 30, 2020

Dear fellow residents,

Good evening. This is Mayor Dan Mahler calling with an update on the coronavirus situation in Wanaque. Currently, the increase in the number of confirmed positive cases is slowing down while many of the prior confirmed positive cases have reached the end of their quarantine period and have become inactive. We are starting to see some improvement.

Yesterday, the governor announced the opening of all State parks as of Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The parks in Wanaque and in Passaic County will also be opening on May 2<sup>nd</sup> subject to the same limitations as outlined in the Governor's Executive Order. These limitations include: no organized activities, no sports activities, no picnic activities, parking limited to 50% of the available spaces, and social distancing must be maintained with cloth face coverings recommended. In addition, the following will remain closed: all playgrounds, ballfields, pavilions, restrooms and indoor facilities. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of the parks while keeping social distance.

Second Quarter real estate taxes are due May 1<sup>st</sup>, with a grace period ending on May 11<sup>th</sup>. This week the Governor issued an Executive Order allowing municipalities the option of extending the grace period until June 1. However, the Executive Order failed to grant the municipalities an extension of the time to pay County and School taxes.

Here in Wanaque only 23% of your real estate taxes stay in our town treasury. The remaining 77% of your real estate tax bill by statute must be paid to Passaic County and the school boards in full by May 15<sup>th</sup>. If we were to extend the grace period, we would not have funds available to pay the County, the school boards or our municipal obligations including the salaries of our police officers and other municipal employees. If this extension were granted, Wanaque would have to borrow funds to meet these obligations. These additional borrowing costs would result in tax increases, which no one wants.

We had forwarded a proposed Resolution to the state which would allow extensions only to persons directly affected by the pandemic who pay their taxes directly. Taxes escrowed by mortgage companies would not receive an extension. The state rejected our proposal stating that extensions must be afforded to every taxpayer regardless of their situation. As a result, Wanaque will not be extending the grace period past May 11<sup>th</sup>.

In closing, we cannot express enough the need to practice social distancing, stay at home whenever possible, wear a face covering in public and be vigilant.

Expanded information on these and other related issues are on the Wanaque Borough web site at [www.wanaqueborough.com](http://www.wanaqueborough.com) and the Wanaque Facebook pages for the Wanaque municipal offices and the Wanaque police. Thank you and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Mayor Dan Mahler