



Secaucus Monthly

March

2019

A look at the Community, including upcoming events, important notices, meetings, and more.



Lifesaving Classes at The Secaucus Public Library

The Secaucus Public Library, along with representatives from Hudson Regional Hospital, hosted a CPR class in February. This well-attended class is an example of the dozens of classes, events, and recreational opportunities available to residents. For a list of upcoming events, visit SecaucusNJ.gov/EventList

Monthly Newsletter Available Online

The Secaucus Newsletter is available monthly by visiting SecaucusNJ.gov

Newsletter Submissions

Do you have any photos taken in our Town to share?

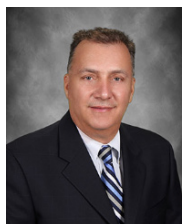
Send articles and photos to Pia Valentin: pvalentin@secaucus.net for consideration.

The Mayor's Corner

Secaucus has an incredible range of services and facilities available to all residents. One of these services, which I am very proud of, is the Secaucus Medical Escort. For a nominal fee, senior or disabled residents who need transportation to medical facilities in Hudson County, and parts of Bergen and Essex counties, can schedule a pick-up from their homes in Town.

We have seven vehicles available for transportation, two of which accommodate wheelchairs. Rides are available 5 days a week, from 8:00 a.m. with the last pick-up at 3:15 p.m. Last year alone, over 11,000 trips were scheduled and made—to me that's not just a large number, it is an indication of how many times the Medical Escort team helped people take care of their healthcare needs. It also shows us how popular the program is.

I invite you to book your appointments early and schedule your ride in advance to be sure the team can help.



Behind this very successful and well-utilized program, there is an amazing team of drivers and dispatchers who make sure you get to and from your home safely and to your appointments on time. John Dubiel, Assistant Superintendent, does a great job to make sure the program runs smoothly. I cannot thank the Medical Escort team enough for the lives they touch and for the impact they make.

To schedule a ride or get answers to your questions about the Medical Escort program, please call 201-330-2082.

Secaucus—The Jewel of the Meadowlands

Secaucus is truly The Jewel of the Meadowlands. It is a great place to live, work and visit any time of the year. Residents cherish the community feel that the Town offers. There are a range of free and open-to-all events including music concerts and movie nights, Restaurant Night, holiday events, parades, street fairs and much more. Secaucus is truly a Town that has something for everyone. Seniors can enjoy Bingo afternoons, bocce and bowling leagues, free rides to grocery stores, trips to Broadway shows and avail of medical escort services, computer classes and more. Eligible seniors also have a few housing options available as and when vacancies occur.

Children have plenty of opportunities to stay involved and active in Secaucus. The Town offers free Pre-K, as well as full-day kindergarten. The Secaucus Library offers short pre-school programs that are highly popular. The Town offers before- and after-school care and children can attend Beyond the Bell programs covering a range of interests including music, dance, art, yoga, science lab and more. There are also several privately-owned childcare centers in Town for parents who need those services. Our extensive summer camp programs give younger residents ways to stay active and offer many of our High School and college-age residents gainful summer employment. And if that is not enough, there are always free skating and pool sessions, holiday events, movie nights, as well as recreational and league sports.



For residents of all ages, Secaucus has an abundance of parks and recreational facilities including several soft-terrain children's play areas, basketball and tennis courts, baseball and soccer facilities, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, indoor track and gym, and several boat launches and trails along the Hackensack River including the beautiful Secaucus Greenway. Numerous small parks dot various neighborhoods and the Mayor and Council are constantly working to acquire and maintain open space for use by the community.

Because of its proximity to New York, over 20 hotels, top restaurants and easy commuting options to New York City, Secaucus is a favored destination for people visiting the area. With the opening of the American Dream shopping and entertainment complex in the Meadowlands, Secaucus hotels and businesses will get a boost, and residents will have additional employment opportunities available.

The Town is served by an all-volunteer Fire Department with state-of-the-art equipment. The Police Department, staffed at the highest level ever, ensures the safety and security of residents, visitors and businesses. The Department of Public Works does a great job keeping the Town clean, green and beautiful. Let's face it, Secaucus is a great place to live, work and play!

Elected Officials

Mayor Michael J. Gonnelli
Mayor@Secaucus.net
O: 201-330-2005

Councilman John Gerbasio
JGerbasio@Secaucus.net
C: 551-226-0955

Councilman James Clancy
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Councilman Robert Costantino
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Councilwoman Orietta Tringali
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Councilman William McKeever
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Secaucus Continues Crackdown on Unlawful Housing

Because of its proximity to New York City and desirability of neighborhoods across Secaucus, there has been a spike in demand for rental housing in Town. This demand has resulted in some homeowners making unauthorized changes to existing properties, creating dwelling spaces that are not lawful, and in many cases, creating unsafe or even hazardous rental spaces. Mayor Gonnelli and the Council passed an Ordinance last year to help curb this rising problem.

Unlawful rental units adversely affect the community in many ways. Some streets, which already have limited parking, are further congested. Public schools are unduly burdened by an increased student population and corresponding increase in cost to the taxpayer. Increased demand for emergency services and police, trash and recyclables pick-up, building inspections, increased traffic, etc. all affect the quality of life for everyone. Perhaps most important, quite often, illegal units fail to meet health, safety and building code standards creating unsafe conditions for the tenant, homeowner and first responders.

For years now, the Town has required that a Certificate of Continued Occupancy be secured by a homeowner for every real estate sale and every time there is a change in tenancy. The new Ordinance adopted in June 2018 provides for annual registration of every rental unit in Town, with limited exceptions. We are setting up an internal process for registrations and will be letting property owners know when that process will begin.

The Mayor and Council hired a Housing Inspector to investigate complaints, develop a data base, inspect properties and work with property owners to remedy violations. Any person violating the Ordinance will be subject to fines of \$500 to \$2,000 per day per violation. The responsible party will also be required to pay an amount equal to six times the monthly rental to the displaced tenant of an illegal apartment, which is in line the New Jersey Statutes governing illegal tenancies. An additional restitution fee may be imposed to pay for costs borne by the school system and the Town as it relates to illegal occupants.

The Mayor and Town Council remind all homeowners and property title holders to take active measures to curtail and correct any unlawful rental units.

Resident Submissions



Chuck Gasser & Grandson Kobe enjoying some time in the Plaza.



Senior Citizen Valentine's Day Breakfast

Clarendon Elementary School Gym was decorated with red, white and pink balloons, ready to welcome Secaucus seniors to the Valentine's Day Breakfast on February 13th. The atmosphere was festive and cheerful as fourth and fifth graders served breakfast, and entertained seniors with song and dance. Mayor Michael Gonnelli and Councilman William McKeever announced the recipient of Senior of the Year Award—Elva Robinson, who received the announcement with joyful tears.



Senior Spotlight: Marie and Joseph DeMartine

Even a short conversation with World War II veterans Marie and Joseph DeMartine literally transports you to the “old days” in Secaucus. Vivid details about the sights, smells and sounds in the Town, the marshy pig and celery farms, rides on the trolley from Hoboken to Paterson Plank Road, walks among the tall weeds with large rats running around, dinner at Clappy's Anchor Inn or Bill's Diner, the cutlery kids used to find in the pig-feed that came from New York restaurants—the DeMartines love talking about it all.

Marie and Joe are lifelong residents of Secaucus, except for a few years when they served in World War II. Marie, an original “Rosie the Riveter,” worked in San Diego from 1942 to 1945 and was “employed in the performance of essential war work in the production of airplanes and parts for the US Army and Navy,” declares a certificate she received from Ryan Aeronautical Company.

Joe signed up to be a Marine when he was 18 and served in the South Pacific in WW II. “I went to New York to sign up for the Marines, and then I went, for the first and last time, to watch a game at the Yankee Stadium,” smiles Joe. “War back then was really hard. We had to keep it dark every night. San Diego was completely camouflaged,” recalls Marie. As for Joe, he would rather not talk about the war.



After the war, the DeMartines continued to serve veterans and others in the community. Joe is an active member of the VFW and Marie is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. “The veterans used to do a lot of good work with the facility on County Road. We organized lunches and music bands for them,” recalls Marie. The couple, both in their 90s, still contribute to veteran's affairs. “I go to the VFW everyday and take care of things there,” says Joe. Marie loves to play Bingo at the Senior Center.

Last year, Hudson County honored Marie and Joe with the Veteran of the Year award, the first time a husband and wife duo won the honor. Today, they continue to touch and inspire everyone who meets them with their welcoming smile, their positive attitude and patriotic spirit.

Book Grants and Donations Received

Scholastic Book Fairs has given a grant to the Town to be used toward the purchase of books to mark Read Across America. The grant of about \$4,000.00, to be used by the two elementary schools, was made possible by the efforts of Miriam McGaney, Lauren Costa and Pamela Liptak from Scholastic. In addition, Command Web, a printing and publishing company based in Secaucus will also be donating children's books as part of the effort to encourage school kids to read. "Scholastic and Command Web have been really generous with grants and book donations for years now. It goes a long way in Mayor Gonnelli's efforts to make our students happy," says Maryam Eldesouki, Administrative Assistant, who coordinates the effort for the Town.

Recycle Coach App: Recycling Simplified

Are water filters recyclable? How about old books? Is there trash pick-up on a holiday? Need quick answers to questions about trash and recycling in Town? There's an app for that! The Environmental Department for the Town of Secaucus has partnered with Recycle Coach, a FREE waste and recycling app that has been exclusively customized for Secaucus residents. The app connects residents with local disposal information on your desktop, mobile or digital assistants.



Besides helping keep track of recycling days and regular garbage collection pick-up, the app features an effective search tool that answers just about any question you may have about the recyclability of an item. You can find local disposal information for over 10,000 common and not-so-common household items. If the item is not recyclable, it gives options and/or suggestions for its disposal. If you have an item that's not listed, call Amanda at the Environmental Department at 201-864-7336 to have it added in the app.

Download the Recycle Coach app today and make recycling easy!

Upcoming Library Events

Low Vision Support Group-HIP: March 7, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Panasonic Room.

Film Screening: March 12, 1 p.m. Secaucus Public Library. Thomas Edison Black Maria Film Festival in honor of Women's History Month.

St. Patrick's Celebration: March 14, 6.30 p.m. Secaucus Public Library. Live music, Irish food, kid's crafts and more.

Life Coaching Workshop: March 27, 6:30 p.m. Secaucus Public Library. Follow-up workshop. First-timers welcome.

Need Help Finding A Job?

If you, or someone you know, need help finding a job, reach out to Tara Acquaviva, the Employment Coordinator at the Department of Social Services. The Department helps with resumes, maintains a job database, conducts job fairs, and connects residents with hiring managers at local businesses. More than 160 residents have secured permanent, temporary-to-permanent, or seasonal jobs in a variety of skilled and unskilled positions. Companies including Century 21, Union Beer, Ferguson Plumbing, Hudson Regional Hospital, ZT Systems and Hartz Mountain actively hire through this program.

“I put in a lot of effort to make connections with people who hire. When I help someone find a job, it’s life changing for them and very rewarding for me,” says Tara. “At Social Services we work as a team to help residents. For example, a veteran came for help at Social Services and we were able to provide him with meals and got him a job the same day. That was very satisfying,” she says.

To get help finding a job, call Tara at 201-863-2532, email tacquaviva@secaucus.net, or drop by The Department of Social Services at 101 Centre Avenue.

Low Vision Support Group

Once a month, a support group meets at the Secaucus Public Library to help residents and their families cope with vision loss and prepare them for more independent lifestyles. Trisha Abel, a legally-blind Secaucus resident, works for non-profit Heighted Independence and Progress (HIP) and coordinates this program for Hudson and Bergen County residents. Free transportation is provided to registered residents who wish to attend the meetings. Activities include information sessions, training, guest speakers, recreational activities, and lessons on technology and tools for an independent life. The Secaucus meeting has grown to 44 members from just 11 in April 2018. “It’s a fun, happy group; everyone participates, and we learn a lot. New members are always welcome” says Trisha.

If you, a family member or friend needs help coping with vision loss, please join the Low Vision Support Group. Find out more at the Secaucus Public Library or call Jen May at 201-330-2084.

Secaucus Recreation News



The Secaucus Boys Junior Varsity Boys Basketball team went undefeated this season. Way to go!!

Weekly Kids Night

Every Sunday, 5-8 p.m., until March 24th. Recreation Center at Koelle Blvd. Open pool and basketball for ages 5 to 12. Must be accompanied by an adult.

Family Fitness Day

Fun was had by all who came to the 7th Annual Family Fitness Fun Day on Sunday, February 10th, at the Secaucus Recreation Center. Twelve local fitness and health-minded companies donated their time to teach 30 minute classes of Cross fit, Max Challenge, Bollywood Dancercise, Kickboxing, Tap, Hip Hop, and Yoga. All the activities kept the participants warm during the cold February day. Participants also enjoyed cooling down and centering themselves with various types of Meditation (by Art of Living), and Reiki (by Earthy Naturals & Thingz). Hudson Regional Hospital was on hand to provide blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol screenings and Goya provided healthy snacks. Lucky winners of give-a-ways received a membership to the Secaucus Recreation Center, 10-week challenge to the Max Challenge, 1-month membership to Submit 2 Fitness, 1-month membership to Edie's Dance Factory, and a complete spinal analysis and treatment from A New You Holistic Healthcare.



A Partnership Works Towards a Clean, Beautiful Secaucus

Every season, islands and planters throughout Secaucus transform the Town to a delightful visual treat. The center of Town comes alive with radiant hues of tulips in Spring, bright marigolds and impatiens in Summer, colorful mums in Fall, and holiday decorations in the Winter—all meticulously planted by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and assisted by a group of helpful residents of Integrity House, a provider of substance abuse treatment and recovery services.

The DPW has been working with Integrity House for many years and DPW Coordinator Rocky Bhutani has expanded the program considerably since 2010. “We have Integrity House residents helping us every day. We do everything from landscaping, to trash pick-up, snow removal and even detailing of DPW trucks. With this partnership, we accomplish a lot—the Town stays clean and beautiful and Integrity House residents get the confidence to be able and independent when they finish the program,” says Rocky. In the winter, the team helps about 50 senior or disabled residents who need assistance with shoveling snow off their properties. They also clean bus shelters and pick up trash around shrubs and bushes on the sides of streets all around Town.

“Secaucus DPW, including Rocky and Integrity House members, do an amazing job cleaning and making the Town beautiful. It really gives us a reason to be proud of the Town we live in. I thank everyone at the DPW who work so hard and make this possible,” said Mayor Michael Gonnelli.



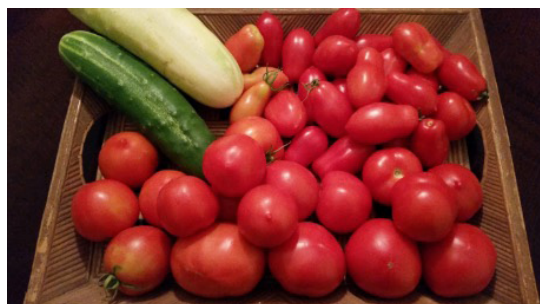
Wildflowers on the Rt. 3 island planted by Secaucus DPW and members of Integrity House

Washington Hook and Ladder Company Blood Drive

The Washington Hook and Ladder Company organized a blood drive on January 31st. Despite the extreme cold weather with temperatures dipping to the low teens, 18 members of the community came in to donate. The blood collected will impact 24 lives. “I am so happy to be part of this effort. I hope I can continue what my father started and organize at least one blood drive every year,” said Donald Ciecuch, a Secaucus High School Junior and Junior Firefighter in The Secaucus Volunteer Fire Department, who initiated this effort.

Sign up for Fresh Organic Produce

The Secaucus Environment Department is set to continue the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program again this year. The CSA is for individuals and families interested in eating fresh, healthy and organic while supporting local farmers and earth-friendly farming practices. For residents who sign up for a “share a bag” of farm fresh organic vegetables from New Jersey’s Genesis Farms will be available for pick-up at the Recreation Center on Koelle Blvd. every two weeks. The sizable biweekly share is \$510.00 for the period beginning Wednesday June 12th to November 20th this year. To learn more about Genesis Farm, please visit their website csgatgenesisfarm.com. To sign up for updates or to buy a share, email Genesis Farm at csgardeninfo@gmail.com.



Secaucus Coalition Makes an Impact at National Conference

Secaucus Coalition Coordinator, Dave Bratton and Director, Dana Harrigan, presented at this year’s Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Forum, held in National Harbor, MD. Their presentation, “Crazy Cool Prevention,” illustrated creative approaches to substance abuse prevention. The presentation included videos, stories, data, and examples of innovative strategies that make an impact in communities. The work of the Secaucus Coalition was showcased, including the “Flush Responsibly” campaign that helped more than quadruple last year’s collection of unused medication in Secaucus.

The presentation was well received and garnered praise from participants. “Truly awesome and inspiring presentation today. Can’t wait to sample some of your ideas in our coalition,” commented Anastasia Tuskey, Will County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, Joliet Illinois. “This was one of my favorite classes at the CADCA National Leadership Forum. Thank you for all of the great ideas,” wrote Renee Berg, Coalition for Auburn and Lincoln Youth, California.

For more information about the Secaucus Coalition, visit www.secaucuscoalition.org, or check out the Secaucus Coalition Facebook page.



SECAUCUS COALITION