



Secaucus Residents Celebrate 125th Anniversary

The Town of Secaucus came together for a day filled with music, games, performances, and fireworks showcasing the heart and pride of a community 125 years strong.

Mayor’s Corner

Year after year the Council and I work diligently on the budget to minimize tax increases as we know how hard you work to support your family and business. We know that every penny we can save is a help to you. While it was not easy, this year we adopted a budget that reflects no municipal tax increase. This was done despite another sharp increase in our health insurance, contractual increases, pension contribution increases, and overall costs rising just as you see in your household or business.

As you may know, your annual property taxes are comprised of municipal, school and county taxes. We do not have control over the school or county taxes. This year the school taxes on the average household will reflect an increase of about \$75.00. However, the greatest shock to us came when the county adopted their budget, which reflected an increase in our town’s contribution to county taxes of \$6,200,000.00, a 30.36% increase. This increase came as a total surprise and, from what we have learned, is the greatest percentage increase ever realized by a municipality. Since learning this information, I have been speaking with officials at the county and state level seeking tax relief. The County Commissioners passed a resolution in support of our request for state aid and Senator Brian Stack spearheaded efforts to bring this difficult situation to the forefront. Senator Stack assured me he would fight to help our community, and his tenacity produced results.

We were recently notified by Senator Stack that the State has agreed to provide aid to Secaucus in the amount of \$3 million, which will help minimize impacts of the county tax increase. With this state aid, the anticipated increase of \$400 in county taxes is now reduced to approximately \$200 on an average assessed home. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Senator Brain Stack, County Executive Craig Guy and County Commissioners for their support of our residents and business community.



125th Anniversary

On the days leading up to the scheduled celebration of Secaucus’ 125th Anniversary celebrations on May 31, 2025, the Mayor and Town Council watched the weather very closely. Forecasts of rain, thunderstorms and wind gusts threatened to force a postponement or possible cancelation of the much-anticipated event. Just 24 hours before the scheduled kick-off, Mayor Gonnelli announced that the event would go on as planned. The decision raised many eyebrows and questions of ‘what ifs’ floated around, but the organization committee went headlong into the preparation and what an enjoyable event it turned out to be!

Residents, many sporting commemorative 125th Anniversary t-shirts, gathered in large numbers as the Middle School and High School bands, chorus and jazz bands kicked off the celebratory performances for the day.

Continued on Page 2

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Important Notice: Renewal of Residential Parking Permits Required

Secaucus residents must apply for a residential parking permit or be subject to the non-residential parking restrictions and related violations, fines, and penalties. Starting July 15, 2025, residents who previously applied for a residential parking permit must renew their residential parking permits. Permits will be mailed to the resident once processed and there is no cost associated with an initial application and renewal application. Enforcement of the new residential parking permits will begin on January 1, 2026. To apply for or renew a residential parking permit visit www.secaucusnj.gov/departments/clerk and click the “Apply for Residential Parking” link. You will need your driver’s license and vehicle registration to complete the application. While we encourage residents to complete the process online, you may also visit the Town Clerk’s Office between 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Residential parking permits will not be issued to anyone with outstanding traffic violations, a suspended driver’s license, or suspended vehicle registration. For more information, please see Chapter 127A of the Town Code titled “Residential Parking.”

125th Anniversary Celebration



Continued from Page 1

The Secaucus Cheer team performed a special routine as bocce, cornhole and pickleball teams played with a goal of finishing at the top. A petting zoo, piglet petting station, face painting and balloon twisting lines swelled and ebbed as the day progressed. The Pinto Foundation conducted several rounds of watermelon eating contests, and the Secaucus Emergency Fund



and SHS Class of 2026 conducted 50-50 raffles with winners announced at the event. Pig races at the eastern section of Buchmuller Park drew cheers and rallying cries as the animals raced around the track.

As the day continued, two major concerts, Yatch Rock and Metro Pop, anchored the stage, while enthralling performances by young Secaucus residents from Vasudha Dance Academy, ICC Filipino Choir, KultureKool and Dance Power Studio thrilled audiences. An inflatable obstacle course, climbing wall and bumper cars kept the younger residents occupied. As the sun set, the sky became darker and the last band concert winded down, a fireworks display enthralled the audiences—a fitting ending to a day that was packed with entertainment, a spirit of community and pride in the 125-year history of a close-knit Town.



View pictures from the event at www.secaucusnj.gov/gallery.

Five Eagle Scouts Honored

This may be the first time when Secaucus has five scouts who were achieved the rank of Eagle in a single year. Derek De Leon, Adrei Mikel Delos Santos, Nicholas Elissa, Luke Gutteridge and Justin Rowe from Troop 222 were honored with the Eagle Scout Award at a recognition ceremony on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at the Immaculate Conception Church. Each scout completed a project that successfully identified a need in the community, raised funds for it, planned and completed the work with a sizable positive impact on our residents. The new Eagles were also invited to the Town Council Meeting on June 24th, where they were officially recognized by Mayor Michael Gonnelli and the Town Council. Here’s a summary of their Eagle projects:



- Derek De Leon collected and repaired 25 adult bicycles and donated to the Hudson TMA who distributed the bicycles to those who need it most.
- Andrei Mikel Delos Santos replaced curtains that cover the storage under the stage at Immaculate Conception Church, and renovated, painted and repaired the walls of the Gymnasium.
- Nicholas Elissa rebuilt and redesigned a 25 ft retaining wall, landscape design that minimizes the use of weed killer and replaced landscaping fabric with 3-5 inches of ivy growth on top of it at St. Mark’s Church.
- Luke Gutteridge collected 500 servings of food, and cash donations for the Secaucus Food Pantry.
- Justin Rowe renovated and repainted the walls of the Immaculate Conception Church Cafeteria and replaced its ceiling panels.

Congratulations to all Eagles on their successful scouting career!

Girl Scouts Contribute to a Blooming Town Center

Spring blooms in the center of Town make Secaucus a welcoming Town and brings smiles to everyone passing by. The DPW plans, plants and maintains the blooms, however, each year the Girls Scouts of Secaucus get the project started during the first weekend in May. This year, this awesome group of scouts gathered to plant saplings in planters around the center of Town. Congratulations and thank you for beautifying the town!



Harmony Suites Donates to Secaucus PBA Golf Fundraiser

Harmony Suites, located at 455 Plaza Drive, made a generous donation of \$5,000 to the Secaucus PBA in support of their biggest fundraiser of the year. This is the third year in a row that Harmony Suites became an event sponsor and donated funds to support the PBA. Funds raised from this event allow the PBA to give back to the community through programs like Santa Run, donations for residents in need, as well as the long standing George Rennie Scholarship.

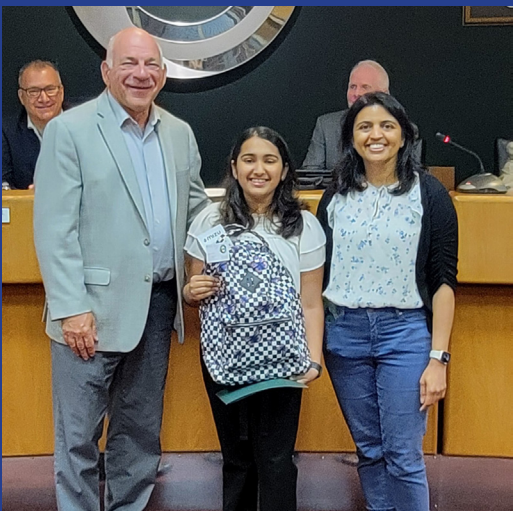
Accepting the check on behalf of the PBA, Sergeant Vince Defazio said, “we truly appreciate the commitment Harmony Suites has shown to our law enforcement community, and their generosity will go a long way in helping us give back to the people we serve. On behalf of the Secaucus PBA, I thank Harmony Suites for it’s support—it truly makes a difference!”

Sharing his appreciation for the department, Alex Patel, owner of Harmony Suites, said, “the Secaucus Police Department and the PBA play a critical role in keeping our community safe. We are grateful for their dedication and service, and we are proud to support the men and women who work tirelessly to protect us every day.”



Secaucus Student Receives State Technology Award

Tvisha Dhir, a Secaucus resident and high school student, is a member of the Technology Student Association club which participates in many competitions and a variety of technology education courses. Technology projects are completed throughout the school year and are then submitted or presented at The College of New Jersey in Trenton for the state conference. This year, the competition took place on April 30th. Tvisha competed in a competition called Construction Challenge where she had to build a prototype with solutions that could fix an issue that occurs in her community. She chose flooding and built a model with solutions used around the world to help reduce the amount of water collected on Meadowlands Parkway. She won 1st place at the state conference and attended the national conference in Nashville, Tennessee on June 27th. She was invited to the Town Council meeting on May 28th and was applauded for her efforts and accomplishment. We wish Tvisha the very best in the national conference!



Golden Age Club Honors Members

On May 8th, 48 members of the Secaucus Golden Age Club met at the Bistro Restaurant to honor some of their longest service and active members. Past Event Coordinator Charlie Makarski, Secretary Eleanore Reinl, President Carol Pietz, Past Treasurer Elaine DeGilio and Vice President Maureen McDonald were recognized for their service.



The Golden Age Club is a social group of senior residents whose aim is to build friendships through shared experiences including concerts, plays, musicals and more. If you, or someone you know, would like to join the club, please send an email with name and contact information to cpietz174@gmail.com or momcd@comcast.net.

Junior Firefighter Wins Scholarship

Mriam Awad has been awarded a scholarship from the New Jersey & New York Volunteer Firemen’s Association (NJ&NYVFA) in recognition of her dedication to volunteer emergency services and academic excellence.

The scholarship was presented on June 6, 2025, at the NJ&NYVFA Annual Convention held at the Lyndhurst Senior Center. Due to a scheduling conflict, Mriam was unable to attend, however Former Chief George H. Heflich Sr. graciously accepted the award on her behalf.



Pictured is Chief Heflich presenting the scholarship check to Mriam in front of Engine 4.

Mriam has been an incredible asset to Washington Hook & Ladder for the past two years. She will be attending Rutgers University in New Brunswick this fall, where she plans to study Biomedical Engineering.

Hugely Popular Restaurant Opens in Secaucus



Dallas BBQ officially opened its doors on Thursday, May 29th with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Mayor Gonnelli, Town Council members, fourth generation owner of Dallas BBQ, Stuart Wetanson, and leadership and staff of the restaurant. First opened in the late 1970s, Dallas BBQ has 12 locations nationwide including the latest one in Secaucus. Located at 475 Harmon Meadow Boulevard, it has approximately 300 interior seats, offers takeout, delivery and catering as well as private parties. It is open for lunch, dinner late at night and everything in between. Mr. Wetanson proudly shared that the location in Town is proving to be very successful with over 20,000 clients served in the first two weeks of its soft launch! We wish them continued success.

SHS Student to Participate in World Swim Championship



Secaucus ninth grader, and varsity swimmer for Secaucus High School, earned a spot to participate in the Virtus World Swimming Championship to be held in August in Bangkok, Thailand. The competition invites athletes in category II1 (intellectual disability), II2 (Down Syndrome) and II3 (autism spectrum). Last year the championship was held at Orlando, FL, which was Melanie’s very first time competing in this event with AWL (Athletes Without Limits). She represented team USA proudly, winning several medals and even broke some world records, including 100 IM, 200 IM and 100 breaststroke! At the May 28th Council Meeting Mayor Gonnelli congratulated her on her achievement and announced that a special Splatter Experience Paint Party fundraiser will be held at 4:00 PM on July 13 at Mill Creek Point. Please join in and let’s help our amazing athlete’s journey to the Virtus Championship.

Major Improvement Projects to Launch Soon

The last few weeks brought a string of good news to Secaucus on the grant front. The Town received notice of 4 new grants:

- The NJ Department of Community Affairs awarded the 2025 ROID grant in the amount of \$20,000.00, and will fund one-on-one aides at the inclusive summer camp.
- The 2025 Open Space Grant in the amount of \$247,293.00 for Buchmuller Park resurfacing will allow the Town to complete the resurfacing of a section of the children’s playground area that has been impacted by underground movement and has become uneven. The renovation of this section will expand the footprint of new rubberized surface, adding to an adjacent section that was recently completed.
- Another 2025 Open Space Grant will fund the expansion of recreational facilities in the Shetik Field Sports Complex. Two new pickleball courts will be added near the basketball and tennis courts. This will significantly expand the offerings in the area.
- A 2024 Community Block Development Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$90,484.00 will be allocated to repaving Washington and Lincoln Avenues.
- The New Jersey Department of Transportation announced LFIF 2025 funding of \$2.0 million for American and Hartz Way Roadway Preservation Project. Funds will be utilized for repaving and rehabilitating the roadway to address pavement deterioration due to heavy use. Pedestrian safety and accessibility will also be improved along both corridors and will involve ADA compliant sidewalks, enhancements at NJ Transit bus stops and improved striping.
- A 2025 Local Aid Infrastructure Fund (LAIF) grant in the amount of \$3.0 million to reconstruct Castle Road and a portion of Meadowlands Parkway, to include new pavement, sidewalks and a bike lane. We expect construction will be done in 2026.

While the above lists new grants, three other major improvements are underway or have recently concluded thanks to funds from other grants:

- Ivanoski Park on Charles Street is being completely refinished and refurbished and will soon be an inclusive park with facilities available for individuals with all abilities. Funds from two grants--\$500,000.00 from Hudson County Open Space and \$750,000.00 from NJDEP’s Open Space grants are allocated for this inclusive park.
- Plaza Center streetscape has been improved with new curbs, expanded sidewalks and new landscaping in the area with an LRIG grant from the NJ Department of Community Affairs
- Preliminary, design and engineering stage work has begun on building the renovation of the playground area at Schmidts Woods. The existing playground will be slightly expanded (no trees will be impacted) and inclusive playground equipment will be installed, thanks to a \$630,000 Green Acres grant from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection.

“We actively seek out new grant opportunities because each grant allows us to make substantial improvements to our infrastructure and facilities without impacting our budget. I am extremely happy with the news about these new grant awards,” said Mayor Michael Gonnelli, on hearing news about the recent grant awards.

Secaucus Youth Showcase Service Projects

Each year, Hygiene Project-Secaucus Cares, a service-oriented youth group, organizes a Kindness Institute program where students learn about organizing service projects and leadership skills. They follow up this educational initiative with select service projects that address specific needs in our community and beyond. This year, individual and group participants launched a range of service initiatives—from raising funds for socks, coffee, personal items, books and food for local shelters to collecting reusable bags, canned goods, non-perishable foods, personal hygiene products and more. At the culmination of the service period, the students presented their projects to the public at the Secaucus Library. A panel of judges choose winners based on several criteria including effort, organization, presentation skills and overall impact. “Participation in this program has been increasing and the level of complexity of each project is also getting growing. I am really proud of each and every project,” said Hygiene Project Director Cathy Wolf. All participants were invited to the Town Council meeting on May 28, 2025. Councilmembers Orietta Tringali and Rob Constantino presented medals to each of the participants and thanked them for their contributions to those in need.



SHS alumna Alyssa Craigwell Shines at MSU

Former Secaucus High School basketball star, Alyssa Craigwell, made waves at Montclair State University as the freshman played her first season as a Red Hawk. She was named 2025 Rookie of the Year by Sports Information Directors and the NJAC Rookie of the Year at the All-NJAC level with First Team honors. Averaging 15.8 points and 5.8 rebounds a game, the 7-time Rookie of the week, Alyssa also led the season with 60 steals and 36 blocks. She was the first D-3Hoops.com honoree for Montclair Women’s Basketball since 2020 and was instrumental in the team’s NJAC Championship run and the first NCAA tournament first round victory for MSU. The team concluded the season with a 34-5 record capturing its eighth NJAC Championship in program history. With Alyssa’s stellar performance, the MSU Red Hawks advanced to the NCAA tournament and a 2nd round win beating Christopher Newport. The Mayor and Town Council honored Alyssa at the April 8th Town Council meeting and congratulated her on her brilliant performance. Alyssa promises to be a rising star at MSU and we wish her the very best in the next season!

Torch Run 2025



Members of the Secaucus Police Departments led the 42nd Annual New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run on the morning of June 6, 2025. The Torch Run which began at the police headquarters made its way through Clarendon Elementary School, Huber Street School and ended at the Secaucus Middle and High School complex. The run aims to raise awareness of and to promote the Special Olympics movement. Law enforcement officers also took part in other fundraising events throughout the year including Lincoln Tunnel Challenge 5K and golf outings. The Special Olympics Summer Games were held June 6-8 at the College of New Jersey.

Secaucus Nominee for 2025 Senior of the Year

Maureen McDonald, an active member of the Secaucus senior community, was honored as at a special luncheon organized by the office of Hudson County Executive, Craig Guy, on May 14, 2025. Maureen was the Secaucus nominee for the Senior of the Year for her active involvement in the Senior Art Club and Golden Age Club, and for her selfless involvement and impact on many senior events in Town. Mayor Gonnelli was not able to attend the luncheon due to a scheduling conflict but Councilmembers James Clancy and Orietta Tringali attended and congratulated Maureen on the well-deserved honor.

