



Dear Friends & Neighbors:

Update regarding 232 County Road

I'd like to update everyone on where things stand with respect to 232 County Road and the Borough's affordable housing plan.

The Borough filed its affordable housing plan on June 6. Under the affordable housing legislation adopted last year, any objections to that plan had to be filed by August 31. Two objections were filed on time: one by the contract purchaser of 232 County Road, and one by Fair Share Housing Center. For context, Fair Share Housing Center has filed objections to over 400 municipal housing plans across the state. Our matter has been assigned to a Program Judge. Under the law, the Program Judge has until December 31 of this year to conduct a hearing and issue a decision on those objections, unless the parties reach a mediated resolution before then. As part of this process, all parties are required to participate in compulsory mediation, and we are currently engaged in that mediation process.

The Borough participated in the **first compulsory mediation conference on Thursday, November 20**. I am advised by our attorneys that all discussions in mediation are confidential. That means we cannot disclose what was said or what proposals were discussed at that conference. I can tell you, however, that no resolution was reached on November 20. **A second, and likely final, mediation conference is scheduled for December 9.**

We are working toward a resolution that both satisfies the Borough's constitutional obligation to provide affordable housing and addresses the concerns raised about the specific site at 232 County Road. Please know that the Council and I are acutely aware of the issues you have raised, including traffic and safety concerns and the historic nature of the property at 232 County Road. **If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through mediation, the Council and I are prepared to continue to vigorously oppose the objections that have been filed against our Housing Plan.**

Let me briefly explain the process going forward. If there is no mediated resolution, the Program Judge will issue her decision by **December 31, 2025**. That decision is a recommendation to a Superior Court Judge, who will then decide whether to accept, reject, or modify the Program Judge's recommendation. The Superior Court's decision can then be appealed to the Appellate Division. I cannot predict how long the Superior Court and any appeal might take, but I can say that this litigation path is considerably longer than if we are able to reach a mediated resolution in December of this year.

I know many of you will have questions when we open the meeting to the public, and that is entirely understandable. However, as I mentioned earlier, because this is active litigation and we are in a confidential mediation process, the Council and I are limited in what we can say beyond the information I have just shared.

Please be assured that the Council and I are continuing to work toward a solution that is in the best interests of Demarest and fulfills our constitutional obligations. This remains a top priority for all of us.

I will continue to keep you informed of developments, as permitted by our counsel and the rules governing mediation, both through my email updates and at future Council meetings. Thank you.

Holiday Announcements – Please mark your calendars

Borough Hall will be closed next **Thursday and Friday 11/27 & 11/28 for Thanksgiving**. I wish all of you and your families a wonderful holiday!

The **Christmas Tree Lighting and Concert** is scheduled for **December 2 at 7 pm** at the Gazebo.

The **Menorah Lighting** is *tentatively* scheduled for **Sunday December 14** for the first night of Hannukah. We will confirm this date next week!

The Art School at Old Church

Register now at The Art School at Old Church for *Winter Semester* (Jan 4-Mar 13). Visit tasoc.org or call **(201) 767-7160** to choose from over 80 visual arts and craft classes and workshops for children, teens, and adults. **Mark your calendars for the upcoming 51st Old Church Pottery Show, December 5-7, 2025. Twenty-six renowned potters from across the U.S will exhibit and sell their work at the annual fundraising event.**

DAA Youth Recreation Basketball registration is open now through **December 1** for the 2025-2026 season. **Open to Boys and Girls Grades K to 8.** Please go to daarec.org to register.

Demarest Library

The Demarest Library offers a conversation group for English language learners with weekly meetings on **Wednesdays from 1 pm – 2:30 pm. Registration is not required.** These groups are relaxed, conversation-focused, and full of friendly students. For more information, please reach out to geo.von.griffin@demarest.bccls.org, give the library a call at 201-768-8714, or stop by the upstairs desk for a chat.

Join Ms. Jen for a read aloud of *Balloons Over Broadway* by Melissa Sweet on **Tuesday, November 25th** from **3:30 - 4:15 pm** to learn about the puppeteer who invented the first balloons for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Then we will get creative and make our own favorite characters using balloons, markers and paper! Register [here!](#)

Have a great weekend and wishing everyone in our community a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Mayor Brian K. Bernstein

*My Friday emails to the residents are now reaching **1,177 people!** My goal is for every Demarest resident to be up to date on what is going on around town, please help with that goal by forwarding this email to your friends so they can visit demarestnj.gov and sign up for my weekly emails! The link can be found about halfway down the homepage.*

Borough of Demarest | 118 Serpentine Rd. | Demarest, NJ 07627 US

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