



## A Message from Mayor Paul Sarlo and the Wood-Ridge Borough Council

# DONNA RICKER MEMORIAL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS

(Continued from Inside Page)

Councilman Dominick Azzolini, who is the Borough's Liaison to the South Bergen Joint Insurance Commission, stated that "the bleachers were over 40 years old, weren't compliant with Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards and didn't have safety features to prevent objects and people from falling between the benches to the ground below. The new bleachers have ramps to allow people in wheelchairs or who have difficulty climbing stairs to comfortably and safely access the bleachers to enjoy a game."

Councilman Ed Marino, who chairs the Council's Finance Committee, explained that the cost of the new turf was partially offset by a \$200,000 grant from the National Football League and that the weight room's renovation and new equipment was paid for by a private fundraising drive that raised \$75,000. Mayor Paul Sarlo and Borough Administrator Chris Eilert were responsible for both fundraising efforts. "Mayor Sarlo and Administrator Eilert spent a lot of time and energy raising the money for the weight room and following through with the application process for the NFL Grant. Their hard work helped give our young athletes beautiful new facilities and saved the town money at the same time," said Councilman Marino.

Councilman Joe DiMarco, who chairs the Council's Buildings and Grounds Committee, asked everyone who uses the field or the track to be mindful of the rules which are posted on signs throughout the facility. "Sunflower seeds cannot be blown or raked out of the turf, gum sticks to the turf and the track which must be cut out to remove it, dog urine bleaches the color from the turf and the track surface, and bike tires or skateboard wheels can rip the track's rubber surface when braking or skidding," said Councilman DiMarco. "We have the rules, not because we want to be difficult, but because we want to protect the investment that we've made in our facilities so they last for at least another 10 years."



We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our residents for your cooperation, patience and understanding during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are very pleased at the positive response of our residents to stay-at-home orders, mask-wearing and other mitigation efforts during these unprecedented times.

The period from March to June was a very scary and stressful time for everyone. Those months presented challenges and hardships and required sacrifices and resiliency that few of us could have ever imagined. It reminded many of us of the stories we heard from our parents and grandparents about what it was like during World War II when our country's civilian population was subject to many sacrifices, such as rationing and curfews, in an effort to support our military and win the war.

The greatest challenge was faced by those infected with COVID-19 and, of course, the greatest sacrifice was borne by those who died. Additionally, the families of the victims of COVID-19 experienced significant hardship. As a community, we stand in solidarity and fellowship with everyone who suffered as a result of this horrible virus.

While hopefully the worst is behind us, we ask all residents to remain vigilant and to continue to follow all required health protocols and mitigation efforts.

As we look forward and pray for a future in which medical breakthroughs make COVID-19 a thing of the past, the Mayor and Council want to acknowledge those who helped to shine a bright light of hope during an otherwise dark time.

The **FIRST THANK YOU** goes to you the residents of Wood-Ridge for the fortitude you showed during the pandemic and for the support you gave to those in need.

It was heartwarming to see residents looking after the elderly and those with health conditions by bringing them groceries or picking up their prescriptions or simply talking to them so they would not be lonely. It was uplifting to see so many families spending quality time with each other by taking walks, riding bikes, or sitting together in their yards.

As a community we owe a special debt of gratitude to our public servants who remained hard at work throughout the pandemic to provide for the needs of our residents. They deserve our thanks and our praise.

The **BIGGEST THANK YOU** goes to our Volunteer EMT's who faithfully answered dozens of ambulance calls every day, for both COVID and non-COVID health emergencies, during the height of the pandemic.

**THANK YOU** to our Volunteer Fire Fighters for assisting our EMT's any way they could and for being ready, willing, and able to respond to emergencies.

**THANK YOU** to our Police Department for keeping our community safe and for providing the initial first response to residents who called for an ambulance.

**THANK YOU** to our Public Works Department for keeping our streets and parks clean and most importantly for disinfecting the public buildings every day to provide a safe environment for their fellow public employees to work.

**THANK YOU** to our Administrative Employees for continuing to work at Borough Hall while it has been closed to the public in order to keep our local government operating and answer all the phone calls and e-mails from their fellow residents.

**THANK YOU** to all of our school administrators, teachers and staff who have been working diligently to educate our students whether

virtually over the internet or in-person at school.

**THANK YOU** to all of our coaches and moderators of our recreation programs who volunteer their time in order to provide our children with activities and programs that are safe.

**THANK YOU** to everyone working at hospitals, medical offices, health clinics, pharmacies, and other medical facilities for the dedication you show to those who are sick and suffering.

**THANK YOU** to all the truck drivers and delivery drivers and all the workers at warehouses and food packaging facilities who ensured we had food and other vital products.

**THANK YOU** to everyone working in essential businesses such as grocery stores, hardware stores, convenience stores, gas stations, take-out restaurants, public transit agencies, utility companies and construction companies for continuing to work every day to serve the needs of the public.

And **THANK YOU** to everyone and anyone we haven't specifically mentioned who continued to work and serve the public during the pandemic for doing your part to keep our society functioning.

As we have said before, Wood-Ridge is a special town because it is made up of special people. Each and every one of you makes Wood-Ridge a special town by working together, emphasizing the positive, recognizing the greater good and realizing that we are all in this together. And so, we thank you all for your continued patience, cooperation and understanding. Most of all thank you for doing your part to keep Wood-Ridge on the Road to Progress despite these challenging circumstances.

Stay safe and healthy and may God bless you and your families.

*Sincerely,*



Paul A. Sarlo  
Mayor

Philip Romero  
Council President

Catherine Cassidy  
Councilwoman

Ezio I. Altamura  
Councilman

Dominick Azzolini  
Councilman

Edward Marino  
Councilman

Joseph DiMarco  
Councilman

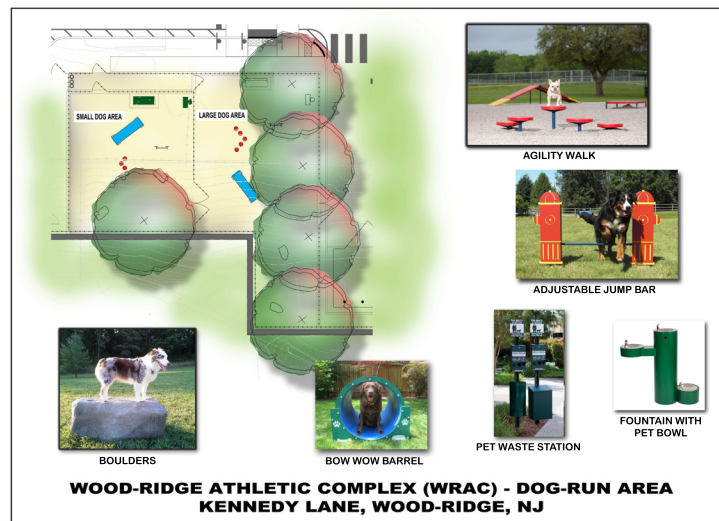
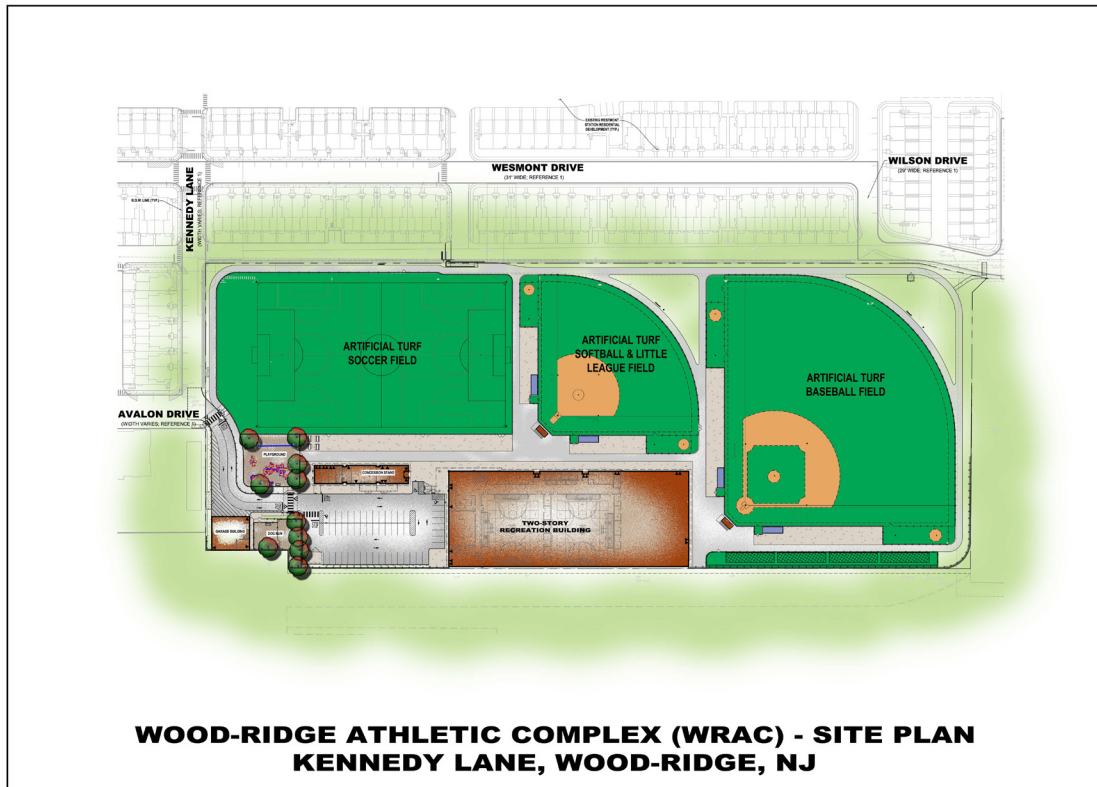
# NEW WOOD-RIDGE ATHLETIC COMPLEX UNDERWAY

Demolition of a former industrial building has been completed at the west end of the Wesmont Station neighborhood and construction is underway on a major addition to the Borough's recreation facilities. The Wood-Ridge Athletic Complex will span 12 acres and include a soccer field, a softball/little league field, a baseball field, a playground, a dog run, a concession stand, and walking paths. The soccer field is scheduled to open in October 2020 and the two ball fields and concession stand are scheduled to open in April 2021. All three fields will feature synthetic turf, bleachers, and field lighting. A recreation center with two gymnasiums is also planned for the complex, but the construction schedule has not yet been established.

"We are very excited to be on the verge of opening the first field in the new Wood-Ridge Athletic Complex," said Mayor Paul Sarlo, who has nicknamed the complex "The WRAC", pronounced as "Rack". Mayor Sarlo stated that "this is a major milestone for our community that will literally double our inventory of recreation fields and open space. Our high school and recreation soccer programs will finally have a home of their own and our high school baseball and softball programs will no longer experience the scheduling conflicts that come from sharing Donna Ricker Memorial Field. Additionally, the complex will feature amenities for the public to use and enjoy such as the walking paths and the playground and dog run."



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) Artists' renderings and construction photos of facilities at the all-new Wood-Ridge Athletic Complex, including photos of the new soccer field being rolled out at the WRAC.



# WOOD-RIDGE ROLLS OUT ALL-NEW DONNA RICKER MEMORIAL FIELD



The Borough has completed renovations of the facilities at Donna Ricker Memorial Field at Wood-Ridge High School. The upgrades include new turf on the field, new rubber surface on the track and new bleachers that meet modern safety and ADA requirements. Additionally, the High School's weight room was renovated and re-outfitted with new cardio machines, dumbbells, free weights, and other equipment funded by a private fundraising drive.

"The synthetic turf on the field and the rubber surface on the track, which were both 13 years old, were badly worn and beyond their useful life of 10 years," stated Councilman Ezio Altamura, who serves as the Council's Liaison to the Recreation Commission.

Council President Philip Romero, who chairs the Council's Public Works Committee, explained that "the field's use is considered 'High Intensity' because it is used year-round by 5 different sports – football, soccer, baseball, softball and track & field – for both our High School teams and our Recreation teams. The fact that we were able to get 13 years out of the field is a testament to the maintenance and grooming that we perform on a regular basis."

"The track is used every day by hundreds of our residents for jogging, walking and exercise, in addition to being used by both our High School and our Recreation Track & Field teams," noted Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy. "We are happy to see so many residents using the new track as part of their exercise regiment."



## New Marshall Lane Playground Under Construction

The Marshall Lane Playground, which will feature jungle gyms and swings for children ages 3 to 12, is under construction and scheduled for completion by the end of October 2020. It is located in the Wesmont Station neighborhood at the intersection of Marshall Lane and Roosevelt Drive. The Marshall-Roosevelt intersection is at the west end of Innes Road, which will remain closed to vehicles, but will be accessible by foot or bicycle to residents living in the "Sunshine City" neighborhood located off 10th Street in the northwest end of town.

