

# ree City Times



## Forest Hills Borough Community Newsletter

### Leveraging Technology to Improve Services in Forest Hills

By Seth Abrams, Borough Manager



In retrospect, 2024 brought a lot of changes to the Borough: three long-term employees retired, we brought in a new manager and public works foreman, and a number of long-term projects, such as the total renovation of the Westinghouse Lodge, were completed. Additionally, a lot of behind-the-scenes work has been going on to introduce technology. While they may not be glamorous, these new platforms can greatly increase internal efficiency, which means better service to you and potential cost savings in the future.

First, our asset management software will use technology to improve our tracking and completion of work orders in public works. This change, along with our GIS software, will allow us to track all our assets, from tools and computers to sewer lines and playground equipment. Aside from creating a database of our assets, this can help the Borough Manager and Treasurer create more accurate budgets and plan for upgrades and replacement of higher cost assets.

In October, a new Citizen Action Center went live, giving people the ability to pay their municipal bills online, including refuse and fire fees. It can also remember your card number (if you choose) and allow you to monitor your accounts, even if you choose not to pay through the Citizen Action Center portal. You will find a link to this on the Borough website under "[Electronic Bill Paying](#)."

Our new recreation software rolled out this summer. In addition to taking care of pool, tennis and other class registrations, it allows for online registration of the lodge rentals. Additionally, other tasks that require administrative labor will be handled online. We expect 2025 pool passes, classes and other activities to be even smoother.

Finally, one of the biggest changes is in front of you now. The Tree City Times is being published electronically only. This allows us to increase the number of issues published and make the newsletter a bimonthly product. With publication every other month, news will be timelier and will be of greater value to you, our readers and residents.

For those who do not wish to have it emailed, The Tree City Times will continue to be available on our website which will also be updated in the coming months.

To ensure that you receive the Tree City Times, we are asking that you either go to: <http://eepurl.com/iYRbO-/> or use the QR code below.





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## Municipal News

### **Borough Receives DCNR Urban Forestry Community Grant**

*By Mark Haibach, Tree and Shrub Committee*

In November 2024, Forest Hills was awarded a \$160,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program. The Borough applied for the grant this past April to fund two projects — a detailed inventory of all Borough street trees and significant trees in Borough Parks, and tree maintenance and planting at Main Park.

For the tree inventory, arborists will locate Borough trees using GPS and residential address; tag each tree with a unique identification number; identify the tree species; measure its diameter, height, and spread; and evaluate its health/condition and priority for future maintenance (pruning, treatment, removal/replacement). The Borough plans to house the information collected during the inventory in a map-accessible database that residents can view online and to use the information to prepare an urban forest management plan for Forest Hills.

The Borough hopes to select an arborist company to perform the inventory by the spring of this year and to complete the inventory, online map database and forest management plan by the end of the year. Keep a watch for further updates on the inventory in Tree City Times.

Tree maintenance and planting in Main Park will entail pruning and selective removal of trees that pose potential hazards to those using the park; removal of non-native, invasive trees and shrubs; and planting 85 native trees and shrubs to enhance the park. Our tree services company, Horhut Tree Experts, completed a tree hazard evaluation of all the Borough parks and developed a list of trees recommended for pruning or removal. You might have noticed these trees marked with either a large white dot indicating pruning or a white X indicating removal.

The Borough hopes to complete the tree maintenance work at Main Park in 2025 and to perform the tree planting in the fall of 2025 and spring 2026. The Tree and Shrub Committee is looking for volunteers to help us tend the newly planted trees and monitor their health. Please contact Mark Haibach at [markhaibach90@gmail.com](mailto:markhaibach90@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping.

The grant was prepared by the Tree and Shrub Committee and the Borough's grantwriter, Maureen Ryan of Write Connections LLC, under the leadership of Council President Barbara Martin. The Borough gratefully acknowledges Steve and Jaime Horhut of Horhut Tree Experts for alerting the Borough of the grant opportunity and Jason Rihn of Bartlett Tree Experts for his technical advice.

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### **Helping to Keep Our Neighborhood Safe**

*By Police Chief Chuck Williams*

Our community depends on its neighbors to help keep criminals from succeeding in their goals. Your eyes, ears and ability to be a good observer can stop potential crime. Observation is simply defined as paying close attention and fixing your mind on something. Knowing your neighborhood and the people who live next door can make you a better observer of things that are unusual or suspicious.

Suspicious activity can be a person whose actions or conduct don't fit the norm of the neighborhood.

A vehicle that stays in one location for a long period of time or continues to circle the same area. The sound of a scream or a yell for help, glass breaking, an alarm sounding or even gunshots. All of these things would be good rea-



- continued on pg. 3

son to call 911 immediately. Sometimes your intuition or gut feelings play a role in what you perceive as suspicious, making it the right time to call 911.

In any situation, when you feel something is just not quite right, calling 911 gives us a chance to look into the situation while it's still ongoing and may stop a crime before it occurs. Thank you for your continued help and support in keeping Forest Hills the safe community it is.

## New EAC Workshops for 2025



In order to best plan for 2025 events, the Environmental Advisory Council surveyed residents on their interest in various events. Forest Hills participants in past EAC programming were first asked to not only rate their satisfaction with 2023-2024 activities, but what topics they would like to see us explore in the new year. Overall, composting, erosion prevention, gardening and cleanups were among the most popular options. We listened. Here are the upcoming workshops:

### Backyard Composting — January 18

An hour-long workshop where participants learn all about the best practices for creating your own compost at home. Presented by Pennsylvania Resources Council.

**Location:** Borough Building, 4400 Greensburg Pike, Community Room

**Time:** 1-2 p.m.

### Gardening for Erosion Prevention — March 8

Presented in conjunction with the Forest Hills Tree & Shrub Committee. Participants will learn about effective native plantings to prevent run off damage. Presented by John Buck, a certified professional soil scientist with more than 30 years experience in environmental sciences.

**Location:** Borough Building, 4400 Greensburg Pike, Community Room

**Time:** 1-2 p.m.

### Earth Day Community Clean-up — April 26

Join the community-wide clean up! Help tidy Forest Hills public spaces and meet new neighbors. Stop in at the borough building for supplies, safety vests and locations. In conjunction with the event, C.C. Mellor Library is offering kids' story time, an informative display and related books.

**Location:** Borough Building, 4400 Greensburg Pike, Community Room

**Time:** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Please join us for one or all of these workshops and share any ideas you have for future topics by emailing EAC member Pat Harris at [goodboyrocky18@gmail.com](mailto:goodboyrocky18@gmail.com).

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## Know What's Happening! Sign Up for Savvy Citizen.



Do you want to receive important notifications about what's happening in Forest Hills Borough: sign up and download the Savvy Citizen app.

Savvy Citizen notifies you of the incidents and government-sponsored happenings and events, such as closed roads, voting reminders and traffic incidents. Events are populated by Borough officials and notifications go out to subscribers. To learn more or subscribe, visit <https://www.savvycitizenapp.com/Citizen>.

## Community News

### Interested in Volunteering as a Flivver Driver?

The Flivver is a bus service that was started in 1974 and recently celebrated 50 years of service to the Forest Hills Borough. All of the drivers gladly volunteer their time to serve this community.

The bus is a 12-passenger vehicle that takes senior citizens ages 55 and older and persons with special needs to grocery stores, the drug store, banks, doctors' offices, hairdressers and anywhere else within Forest Hills Borough. (The bus does not have handicapped lifts.) While the Flivver is a charity, contributions from riders are always welcome and help offset the cost of gas and maintenance.

The Flivver operates Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Riders can call the Flivver at 412-519-3955 and be picked up usually within 15 minutes of their call. There are so many people in the borough who are grateful for the freedom the Flivver provides.

The Flivver is always looking for volunteer drivers. You do NOT need to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and you can be trained to drive in a matter of hours. Those who are interested in driving a three-hour shift, twice a month, can call Don Newcomer at 412-708-0511.

### WHEMS Annual Subscription Drive



Woodland Hills EMS will be sending out Subscription Drive information soon. Signing up for this program helps us help you. Your donation helps us with training, updated equipment and employee retention programs. As a member, you will not be charged for most treatment and no transport calls. If you are transported, WHEMS forgives 50% of what insurance does not pay.

Please sign up and talk to your neighbors about participating in this program. Currently we have less than 25% community participation in the four municipalities that use this program. Chalfant Borough does not participate in this program but instead has elected to have a 0.5 mill EMS tax added. Under the agreement with Chalfant, WHEMS does not charge its residents for **any** EMS service. It does not matter whether insurance or Medicare covers the transport. Chalfant residents do not have to worry about getting a bill when calling 911. If you would like more information on this and how you can talk to your local leaders, please reach out to Chief Frank Mastandrea at [whems340@gmail.com](mailto:whems340@gmail.com).

With the new Subscription Drive this year, WHEMS will be moving toward a more digital platform. This year, you will still receive the mailer in early February. When you sign up, you will have several options going forward. You can choose to receive reminders in the future by email, text, automatic renewal or, if you like the old way, you can continue to receive our mailer. The portal

- continued on pg. 5

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**- WHEMS Annual Subscription Drive continued**

will allow you to see when you donated and ways you can help WHEMS in the future. This allows us to quickly identify subscribers, reduce paper use and mailing costs, provide residents with a secure payment portal and have the most up-to-date information to help us better serve the communities we cover. We are very excited to bring this technology to our communities. If you have any questions or problems, please reach out to Chief Mastandrea.

**How to Winterproof Your Home**

Standard homeowner policies will cover winter-related disasters such as burst pipes, ice damming and wind damage, but consumers should keep their property well-maintained so that filing an insurance claim can be avoided altogether. Take steps now to protect your property from damage that could occur from freezing temperatures, snow and wind.

**Outside your home:**

- Clean out gutters by removing leaves, sticks and other debris so melting snow and ice can flow freely.
- Trim trees and remove dead branches, as the weight of ice and snow could cause branches to break and may damage your home, car or injure someone walking by your property.
- Seal cracks or holes on outside walls and foundations with caulk or weather stripping to prevent melting snow from seeping in.

**Inside your home:**

- Maintain a constant temperature in your home to keep your pipes from freezing.
- Adding extra insulation in your attic could prevent heat from escaping through your roof, causing snow to melt faster and overload your gutters.
- Check your pipes for cracks or leaks, and wrap any exposed pipes with insulation or heating tape.
- Make sure that smoke and fire alarms are working properly, and consider installing a carbon monoxide detector.
- Know where your pipes are located and learn how to shut the water off if your pipes freeze.

Source: Pennsylvania Insurance Department, [www.insurance.pa.gov](http://www.insurance.pa.gov).



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Visit our website at [www.pittsmiles.com](http://www.pittsmiles.com)

## Rotary Club of Forest Hills Chili Cookoff



**16th**



After the huge success of last year's cookoff, the 16th Chili Cookoff will again be held at Keane Hall, St Joseph the Worker Parish, St. Maurice Campus on Sunday, April 27. We welcome back our guest judges, Chris Fennimore and Rick Sebak of WQED, and our DJ/MC Jared Evans of Radical Trivia! Chili Tasting and voting, baked good sales, raffles and music will be from noon to 3 p.m. Judging and awards will take place at 3 p.m.

If you would like to be a contestant this year, please email us ASAP at [fhillsrotary@gmail.com](mailto:fhillsrotary@gmail.com) and we will send you an application. Prizes for Best Meat Chili (\$300), Best Veggie Chili (\$300), Best Theatrical Entry (trophy and bragging rights) and the People's Choice (\$200) will be awarded.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased from any Rotary Club of Forest Hills member or online through our Facebook page. Proceeds this year will go to the [Woodland Hills Foundation's Backpack of Hope program](#).

### Super Bowl Pool / Charity Bingo



This fall, the Rotary Club of Forest Hills will sponsor a Charity Bingo fundraiser. Proceeds will benefit local community projects. More details to follow! Also, if you would like information about our yearly Super Bowl Pool, please email us at [fhillsrotary@gmail.com](mailto:fhillsrotary@gmail.com).

### Local Giving



In December 2024, the Forest Hills Rotary donated gift cards through its Perry Hipple Fund to be given to families in the Woodland Hills School District who might need an extra boost for the holidays. Club members also collected toys for the Forest Hills Police Department's Toys for Tots Drive.

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## Winter Fun at C.C. Mellor

**All About Vaudeville** – Join us for a presentation by Paul Roth of OSHER about the early days of Vaudeville at 2:30 p.m. on Jan. 6 at CCM Forest Hills. Refreshments will be served.

**Skull ID** – Become a wildlife detective and identify mystery skulls! See and feel real skulls, pelts and taxidermy while learning how to interpret animal characteristics. Join us at 6 p.m. on Jan. 9 in the CCM Edgewood Fiction Room.

**History of Your House** – Do you want to learn the history of your home? Join Hollen Barmer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 16 in the CCM Edgewood Fiction Room for a Q&A and some hands-on research. Make sure to register in advance and provide the address you are looking for because you will get to leave with a copy of the historical deed card of the property.

**Backyard Composting** – Join the Forest Hills Environmental Advisory Council at 1 p.m. on Jan. 18 at CCM Forest Hills for a presentation by the Pennsylvania Resource Council to learn about the ways that composting can improve your soil.

**Craft Supply Swap** – New Year = New Crafting Projects! Come bring your extra/unused crafting supplies and swap for supplies for your upcoming year. Stop by from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on January 18 in the CCM Edgewood Fiction Room. Items must be in good condition to give away.

**Financial Workshop for First-time Homebuyers** – Learn how to shop for a home, navigate loan options and plan for down payment and closing costs from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 1 at CCM Forest Hills. Experts cover everything from credit to closing. Grants available for down payments in some areas. Breakfast and lunch provided. Those interested should register through NeighborWorks.

**How to Avoid Getting Scammed** – Join Aaron Thomas, a financial advisor from Edward Jones, at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 20 at CCM Edgewood for a presentation on how to avoid getting scammed.

**Greenhouses in the Gilded Age** – Join us for a presentation by Lori McDermott at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6 at CCM Forest Hills all about the glorious greenhouses of Pittsburgh's Gilded Age. Refreshments will be served.

**Tape Town** – Beep! Beep! Time to play with cars! Come see the library transformed into a make-believe mini town with roads and areas to visit. We have plenty of cars to share or you can bring your own. Taking place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Feb. 8 at CCM Edgewood and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 1 at CCM Forest Hills!

**Paper-craft Storytime** – Learn how to make your own unique cards at CCM Forest Hills. Come enjoy a special Saturday Storytime with beginners' origami and collage on Feb. 8 at 10:30 a.m. For kids ages 4-8.

**Native Plant Winter Sowing Workshop** – Learn about native planting in the southwestern PA region, as well as take some winter seeds to start your garden with. Join May Torpey from Protect PT from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 13 at CCM Edgewood.

**Clothing Swap** – Out with the old, in with the new—to you, that is! Refresh your wardrobe without worrying about price tags. Find your new favorite outfit and give your gently used clothes a new home from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Feb. 14 in the CCM Edgewood Fiction Room. We accept clothing of all types and sizes, for all ages. Clothes should be clean and in relatively good condition.

Our full slate of regular programs will continue through the spring including Baby Talk, Family Storytime, Music and Movement Storytime, Tween Club, Teen Group, Makerspace Monday, The Wanderers, Forest Hills Social Hour, Knitting Group, Conversation Salon, The Seekers, Fourth Tuesday Book Club, Drop Dead Book Club, Great Outdoors Book Club, Mahjong and Crating Circle.

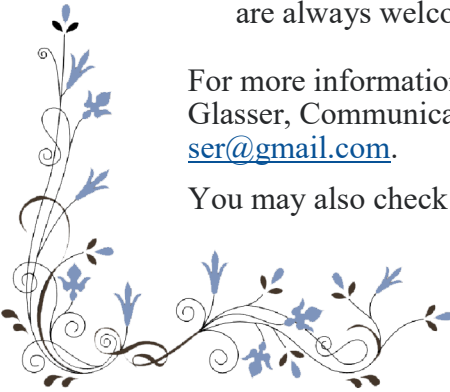
Learn more at [ccmellorlibrary.org](http://ccmellorlibrary.org).



## Garden Club of Forest Hills

The Garden Club of Forest Hills bade farewell to its 101st year at a joyful “Winter Solstice Celebration” on December 5, 2024. Members, however, will not rest on their laurels until meetings resume in March. They will be checking out seed catalogs, planning 2025 garden additions and considering designs for the club’s March flower show before kicking off another year of green-and-growing activities.

- Mark your calendar! Club members will present “Spring Thaw,” a Design Specialty Show, March 21-22 at the Forest Hills Pool Lodge off Braddock Road. The free show will be open to all from 3 to 5 p.m. that Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. that Saturday. Floral arrangements by members and interested others will be displayed in multiple classes, including Table Artistry, Cascade Design, Mono-Botanic Design, and Petite Design.
- Then members will continue working in Borough gardens as well as in their own. They'll focus on changes to the Hillside Garden in the Main Park as two large trees were removed. New varieties of deer-resistant plants and shrubs will be added, the current well-worn bench will be replaced and soaker hoses will be laid. By the way, help from Borough residents is always appreciated.
- Meetings and programs of this century-old Forest Hills organization will resume March 6. They will begin with coffee and tea at 9:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month at Christ Lutheran Church, 400 Barclay Ave., Forest Hills, 15221. Guests are always welcome.



For more information, talk with any current club member or contact Amy Shugerman Glasser, Communication Chair, at 412-271-1697 (home) or [amyshugermanglasser@gmail.com](mailto:amyshugermanglasser@gmail.com).

You may also check out the club at [facebook.com/TheGardenClubOfForestHills](https://www.facebook.com/TheGardenClubOfForestHills).



## **OUR BIG EXCITING NEWS! MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**There are so many talented members that will showcase their artistic skills with their floral designs.  
Please stop by and check it out!**

### **THE GARDEN CLUB OF FOREST HILLS PRESENTS DESIGN SPECIALTY FLOWER SHOW “SPRING THAW” OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**Friday, March 21, 2025 3 pm to 5 pm • Saturday, March 22, 2025 10 am to 2 pm**  
Forest Hills Pool Lodge 400 Braddock Road 15221  
**ALL AGES ARE WELCOME, FREE parking, FREE Admission.**

Contact [amyshugermanglasser@gmail.com](mailto:amyshugermanglasser@gmail.com) for more info and check us out at [www.facebook.com/TheGardenClubOfForestHills](https://www.facebook.com/TheGardenClubOfForestHills)

*Objectives of the GCFH are “to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening in the community; to aid in the conservation of natural resources; and to encourage and sustain community beautification.”*



## 2025 Council Meeting Dates

Council will meet on the dates indicated beginning at 7:00 PM at the Borough Building, 4400 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Meetings are held in person and by virtual link found at [www.foresthillspa.gov](http://www.foresthillspa.gov).

Council will conduct a “workshop” session on the first Tuesday of each month, except as noted below, for the purpose of discussing items for action at the regular meeting. Council may act on items and conduct any other business which may lawfully come before Council. Regular business meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month.

<b>Workshop Session</b>	<b>Business Meeting</b>
January 7, 2025	January 15, 2025
February 4, 2025	February 19, 2025
March 4, 2025	March 19, 2025
April 1, 2025	April 16, 2025
May 6, 2025	May 21, 2025
June 3, 2025	June 18, 2025
July 1, 2025	July 16, 2025
August 5, 2025	August 20, 2025
September 2, 2025	September 17, 2025
October 7, 2025	October 15, 2025
*November 5, 2025	November 19, 2025
December 2, 2025	December 17, 2025

## 2025 Advisory Council Meeting Dates

Advisory Councils will meet on the dates and times indicated below. Meetings may be held in person and by virtual link found at [www.foresthillspa.gov](http://www.foresthillspa.gov).

<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	<b>Tree &amp; Shrub</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
Jan 6, 2025	Jan 8, 2025	Jan 16, 2025
Feb 3, 2025	Feb 12, 2025	Feb 20, 2025
Mar 3, 2025	Mar 12, 2025	Mar 20, 2025
Apr 7, 2025	Apr 9, 2025	Apr 17, 2025
May 5, 2025	May 14, 2025	May 15, 2025
Jun 2, 2025	Jun 11, 2025	Jun 19, 2025
Jul -no meeting	Jul 9, 2025	Jul 17, 2025
Aug 4, 2025	Aug 13, 2025	Aug 21, 2025
Sep 3, 2025	Sep 10, 2025	Sep 18, 2025
Oct 6, 2025	Oct 8, 2025	Oct 16, 2025
Nov 3, 2025	Nov 12, 2025	Nov 20, 2025
Dec-no meeting	Dec 10, 2025	Dec 18, 2025
<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>	<b>Planning Commission</b>	<b>Zoning Hearing Board</b>
Jan 27, 2025	Jan 23, 2025	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday when advertised
Feb 24, 2025	Feb 27, 2024	
Mar 24, 2025	Mar 27, 2025	
Apr 28, 2025	Apr 24, 2025	
May 19, 2025	May 22, 2025	
Jun 23, 2025	Jun 26, 2025	
Jul 28, 2025	Jul 24, 2025	
Aug 25, 2025	Aug 28, 2025	
Sep 22, 2025	Sep 25, 2025	
Oct 27, 2025	Oct 23, 2025	
Nov 24, 2025	Nov-no meeting	
Dec 22, 2025	Dec 4, 2025	

## How to Reach Us

**Monday and Thursday:** 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Tuesday:** Lobby closed to the public – phones are answered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Wednesday:** 9:00 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.

**Friday:** 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- ◆ The Drop Box in front of the building is accessible 24 hours a day.
- ◆ The administrative offices are located at **4400 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh PA 15221.**
- ◆ Our phone number is **412-351-7330.**
- ◆ General emails can be directed to [admin@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:admin@foresthillspa.gov). Messages will be forwarded to the correct department.

### Borough Staff

Seth Abrams, Borough Manger, x0

Annette Dietz, Executive Secretary, x200

Anne Hockenberry, Finance Assistant/Billing, x201

Allison Serakowski, Finance/Treasurer, x202

Mike Smith, Public Works, x207

Walt Reamer, Recreation Director, x272

Chuck Williams, Police Chief, x0

Police Non-emergency, 412-473-3056

### Elected Officials

Barbara Martin, Council President, [bmartin@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:bmartin@foresthillspa.gov)

Markus Erbedinger, Vice President, [merbedinger@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:merbedinger@foresthillspa.gov)

Angelo Baiocchi, President Pro-Tem, [abaiocchi@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:abaiocchi@foresthillspa.gov)

Ian Bacon, Councilmember, [ibacon@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:ibacon@foresthillspa.gov)

Joseph DeCrosta, Councilmember, [jdecrosta@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:jdecrosta@foresthillspa.gov)

John (Jack) Lawrence, Councilmember, [jlawrence@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:jlawrence@foresthillspa.gov)

Cecil Watkins, Councilmember, [cwatkins@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:cwatkins@foresthillspa.gov)

Frank Porco, Mayor, [fporco@foresthillspa.gov](mailto:fporco@foresthillspa.gov)