

Jeanne Kingsley

What is your top initiative for improving Berkeley Heights as a place to live? Why is this your top initiative and how do you suggest it be implemented?

We all know too many Berkeley Heights families whose children cannot afford to start their lives here or parents and grandparents who cannot afford to retire here. As a Councilwoman I will continue to focus on keeping taxes stable and improving affordability. I have led the way on fiscal responsibility by delivering budgets without increases, and finding efficiencies through shared services to maintain A+ services.

A vibrant downtown is important to current and future residents. What actions would you advocate for, in the face of Covid19 and the mini Main Street at the Connell property, to maintain the viability of our downtown businesses without impacting the taxpayer?

A vibrant downtown is important for the strong sense of community that longtime residents of Berkeley Heights cherish as well as for the values of our homes. The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously strained our small businesses and one of the best ways we can help is encourage shopping local and continue working on downtown beautification. As a Councilwoman I have been a leader on bringing improved pedestrian walkways, sitting areas and other streetscape enhancements to our downtown and have secured hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and private funds with no cost to the taxpayer.

What programs would you support to enable Berkeley Heights seniors to remain in town as productive members of the community ?

Seniors are the root of our community and should be cherished and celebrated. As a Councilwoman, I have worked hard to bring dedicated space to the new municipal complex specifically earmarked for our seniors.

This new space will offer our seniors recreational and gathering opportunities which will allow for a plethora of programs that current conditions do allow. Once opened many private and public grants will be available to fund the new senior programs with no additional cost to the taxpayer. Lastly, I was a leader on securing funding for a senior bus to improve their transportation options which allows for our seniors to remain independent.

Susan Poage

What is your top initiative for improving Berkeley Heights as a place to live? Why is this your top initiative and how do you suggest it be implemented?

A top initiative of mine is to focus on continued fiscal responsibility and smart planning. This means tackling the infrastructure needs of the township with regard to drainage, roads, and sewers, completing the Municipal Complex project under responsible management, and attending to the Master Plan as we work to move the Township forward in a post-COVID world. When things are left to deteriorate, it costs more in the long run. Preventative maintenance is key for Berkeley Heights as a whole, just as with a home.

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Bret and I have a plan we are calling THRIVE* (The Heights' Revitalization of In-town Venue Engagement) Program:

One goal is to support the Economic Development Committee as they tackle the challenge of revitalizing a downtown that was challenged pre Covid. Supporting local businesses must last longer than the short-term. I voted to enable restaurants to quickly obtain outside eating permits and I would like to continue allowing outside dining as well as music in our downtown area to bring people out to spend money locally. We have to make it easier for our social business to attract people from both the community and beyond. I am in support of the Connell rezoning. Our town is being offered an opportunity to greatly improve upon a redevelopment project while getting more for our community - Connell rezoning is an OPPORTUNITY! We can reduce the square footage future office space and create a bevy of recreation spaces for residents: It is SMARTER redevelopment

What programs would you support to enable Berkeley Heights seniors to remain in town as productive members of the community?

Now that our new Municipal Complex will have a dedicated meeting place for our seniors, we will dedicate funds to increased programming and activities for seniors. Working together with the Mayor's Senior Citizen Advisory Board, the Grants Committee and the Recreation Commission, we can identify funds to provide outdoor exercise equipment and enlist Union County College to offer Senior Scholars classes in Berkeley Heights. Other possible new programs include:

1. A Wellness Check Program to ensure that in the event of a state of emergency the Township is aware of senior needs.
2. Increased Senior Activities through partnership with the Recreation Committee, and Union County including engagement both from a physical and mental standpoint.
- 3 An Adopt-a-Senior Program to increase community engagement with our seniors.

Many seniors want to age in place and we must make sure that there are activities and services for them to do so as we do all residents of our township.

Brett Sayre

What is your top initiative for improving Berkeley Heights as a place to live? Why is this your top initiative and how do you suggest it be implemented?

My top priority is making sure that we are fiscally responsible in all areas of government. The pandemic has left many residents of our town in compromised economic situations and the government's responsibility is to ensure budgets match the reality of the times.

A vibrant downtown is important to current and future residents. What actions would you advocate for, in the face of Covid19 and the mini Main Street at the Connell property, to maintain the viability of our downtown businesses without impacting the taxpayer?

Maintaining strong businesses is extremely important to our town's long-term health both financially and socially. Susan and I have a five-pronged program called THRIVE to ensure our town is able to give its businesses the support they need. When our local businesses succeed, Berkeley Heights succeeds.

It is an unprecedentedly challenging time for small businesses. However, Berkeley Heights has had issues attracting and keeping businesses for far longer than this. We need out-of-the-box thinking and strong economic solutions. THRIVE's goals are supporting entrepreneurs, incentivizing new business, creating collective visibility, reducing empty storefronts and building community connectivity. This program is important because of the challenges brought by the pandemic, and development projects coming on board in the near-term will bring new retail opportunities to town. With the right support, we can reduce turnover and burden on the taxpayer. Read more at www.poageandsayreforbh.com

What programs would you support to enable Berkeley Heights seniors to remain in town as productive members of the community?

Our seniors have a history of being overlooked when it comes to planning and development. During the pandemic, it has become more evident that they are vulnerable and at risk of being left behind. As part of a more global focus on inclusion, our plan to improve their experience and help them better age in place includes increasing connectivity to manage their lives comfortably and safely, enhance senior accessible transportation, entertainment and recreation and ensure access to town-wide information that impacts them. Through the Mayor's new Senior Citizens Advisory Board, the town is able to coordinate and increase efforts, and working hand-in-hand will accelerate addressing their needs and concerns. Our new Municipal Complex will have dedicated space for seniors and we will be able to increase programming and activities. Working with the Grants Committee and Rec Commission we can identify funds for outdoor exercise equipment, Senior Scholars classes and more in Berkeley Heights

Jeff Varnerin

What is your top initiative for improving Berkeley Heights as a place to live? Why is this your top initiative and how do you suggest it be implemented?

Nothing is more important than family, and I want my son to be able to start his adult life in New Jersey. That is why my ultimate focus will be on affordability. I have deep professional experience managing large budgets and finding efficiencies to reduce cost. As your Councilman I am confident I can make progress in lowering the cost of local government and deliver tax relief.

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As a scientist working on finding a vaccine for the COVID-19 pandemic, with a lifelong friend who died from COVID-19 and as an involved member of the community in Berkeley Heights, I know firsthand how devastating this disease has been. A focus of our local government must be on attracting patrons to our downtown businesses and removing burdensome obstacles that prevent their success. I have been and will continue to be a highly visible advocate and leader improving efforts for our downtown beautification and small business advocacy.

What programs would you support to enable Berkeley Heights seniors to remain in town as productive members of the community?

Seniors in Berkeley Heights need tax relief. They pay exorbitant taxes that go towards a school system they do not utilize. I know all too well the horrible trade-offs that our seniors must make on a regular basis. My parents had to make the difficult decision to leave New Jersey and place distance between them and their grandchildren in order to have an independent, secure and active lifestyle in their retirement. As a Councilman I will work to find ways to reduce government spending and deliver tax relief for seniors.