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Photo by Nicole Zanchelli

Long Hill Mayor Guy Piserchia reminds community members of the heroism demonstrated by first responders during 9/11 at the Shrine of St. Joseph Ecumenical Candlelight Vigil last Saturday.

SHRINE OF ST. JOSEPH PAYS TRIBUTE TO 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPT. 11

By NICOLE ZANCHELLI
STAFF WRITER

LONG HILL TWP. – For many, Saturday, Sept. 11 felt all too familiar. Beautiful blue skies, cold crisp air, the same sort of day that forever changed American lives 20 years ago.

As the sun set behind the Tower of Remembrance at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Stirling, community members honored the nearly 3,000 lives taken on 9/11 at the shrine's Ecumenical Candlelight Vigil.

A bagpipe player led the line of Long Hill police officers, first aid squad members, Millington and

Stirling fire department volunteers, and Liberty Corner first aid squad members before the tower.

Pestering mosquitoes didn't deter community members from filling every seat at Saturday night's vigil.

"We come together as people of faith, to pray for and remember the deceased, to ask God's continued blessing upon our first responders and their families, and to pray for peace for the whole world," said the Rev. Dennis Berry, director of the Shrine of St. Joseph.

In between speakers, musician Gregory Floyd of Warren serenaded attendees with his vibrato and smooth melodies, adding both a heartwarming and mystic tone to the candlelight vigil.

Dr. Rafael Kaplan, joined by his father Rabbi Rob Kaplan, formerly of Temple Beth Am in Parsippany, sounded the shofar, a musical instrument made from a ram's horn, to serve as a sharp reminder of the numerous lives that were taken on 9/11.

As the first sound of the shofar echoed like the sirens of the firefighters, police officers and first responders, Rabbi Kaplan urged

attendees with his vibrato and smooth melodies, adding both a heartwarming and mystic tone to the candlelight vigil.

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FEMA assistance available to residents

By NICOLE ZANCHELLI
STAFF WRITER

LONG HILL TWP. – Residents can claim financial reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for any damages brought on by the remnants of Hurricane Ida.

Morris County was added to FEMA's list of designated disaster areas on Saturday, Sept. 11.

Mayor Guy Piserchia and Township Administrator Nancy Malool detailed the process of applying for financial services at the Township Committee's Wednesday, Sept. 8

meeting. The session was held virtually over Zoom as a precaution due to Wednesday night's inclement weather.

Piserchia noted some township residents had expressed concern that Morris County was not in the initial group of counties FEMA had designated for disaster assistance. But he called it "standard" that the agency would continue to add more. "FEMA is working their way through the process," he said.

Affected property owners may apply by visiting disasterassistance.gov or by down-

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Invasive species law discussed by committee

LONG HILL TWP. – After months of deliberation, the Township Committee remains unsure how to regulate the planting of invasive species, specifically bamboo.

The committee plans to draft an ordinance before it meets later in the month, however.

The governing body's meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 8 was held virtually over Zoom as a precaution due to the night's inclement weather.

"At this point, we're still considering it, but I don't think we have anything definitive that we can decide this evening," said Mayor Guy Piserchia.

Committeeman Matthew Dorsi cited the case of his neighbor on Essex Street in Stirling whose driveway is being pushed up by bamboo roots planted by another neighbor.

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Relocation of Long Hill police pondered

LONG HILL TWP. – Flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Ida has once again rendered the township Police Department on Mercer Street unusable, raising questions off whether it's time for the police to relocate.

Water rose to nearly three and half feet outside the police station in the days following the storm. Without a home base, police officers are now working out of their patrol cars and sometimes out of the Millington Fire Station.



AHMED NAGA



GUY PISERCHIA

For the effects of Hurricane Ida, Police Chief Ahmed Naga reported that replacing damaged equipment and repairing the police station will cost roughly \$400,000.

The question remains, why is the township police department, an emergency service, still stationed in a flood zone?

"I think there's a sense of frustration because it's clearly in the definition of insanity where we keep doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome and there's really not a different outcome," Naga said.

While the police station seems to get rebuilt after

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Flood waters from the remnants of Hurricane Ida surrounded the Long Hill Township Police Department's headquarters on Mercer Street in Stirling.



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