

For Immediate Release

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Editor Mark Rosman NewsTranscript

Borough Residents are Submitting Ideas

Freehold Borough residents are telling their governing body what projects they want funded under the new Participatory Budgeting program.

During multiple meetings the public is being introduced to a unique opportunity to have a voice in how the borough spends part of its capital budget. The residents and major stakeholders are presenting ideas on how they would like to improve the town's infrastructure.

An Innovation Committee of seven town residents has been conducting the meetings along with the council's liaison, Ron Griffiths. Meetings have already been held with seniors, the Youth Government and the general public. Freehold High School's Student Council is also working with the program.

Any resident can submit an idea before the April 15th deadline on a form that is available online at the borough's website, or a paper copy available at borough hall, 51 West Main Street.

The next meeting will be held on March 30th at 7:00 pm in Borough Hall. The Innovation Committee will then host a final meeting on April 10th at the same venue and time. At the April meeting, those submitting ideas can campaign for their projects. They will have a chance to explain their ideas and tell the public how it will benefit the community.

Fourteen year old residents can vote.

After all project ideas are vetted by the committee and the borough's professionals, a final list will be placed on a ballot. All residents aged fourteen (14) and above will be eligible to vote on the approved projects. That vote will take place in late May or early June and the announcement of the winners will be done in mid-June.

The improvements accepted by the public vote will be funded by the borough and implemented as quickly as practical. The borough has allocated \$200,000 for the cost of these projects. These expenses will not increase the Borough's budget or resident's property taxes.

The councilman explained the program is new to New Jersey, but already utilized in 1,500 cities throughout the world.

The Borough hopes that Participatory Budgeting will directly involve residents in the budgeting and Borough-building process, foster civic engagement and community

spirit, and help ensure that the Borough's capital plan reflects the priorities of Freehold Borough residents and stakeholders.

More information about Participatory Budgeting in Freehold Borough can be found at: freeholdboroughnj.gov/participatorybudgeting

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