

# Summer Concert Series Kicking Off!

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Hackensack residents won't have to go far to enjoy some great music over the next few months as the city's Summer Concert Series is set to kick off on July 12th. Four shows are currently scheduled, all of which will be held on Tuesday nights from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. on the Courthouse Green. The currently scheduled concerts are:



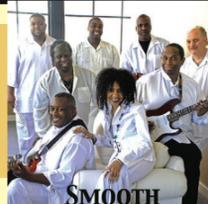
**JULY 12th** Cast of Beatlemania



**JULY 19th** Beginnings (Chicago Tribute)



**JULY 26th** Eaglemania (Eagles Tribute)



**AUGUST 2nd** Smooth (Motown Tribute)

Make sure to check the city website [Hackensack.org](http://Hackensack.org) for rain dates or schedule changes. Don't forget to bring your blankets and chairs, and refreshments will be available at each show. We hope to see you at the Summer Concert Series!



Mayor **John P. Labrosse**  
Deputy Mayor **Kathleen Canestrino**  
Councilman **David Sims**  
Councilman **Leonardo Battaglia**  
Councilwoman **Deborah Keeling-Geddis**  
City Manager **David Troast**  
Chief Financial Officer **James Mangin**

City of Hackensack – 65 Central Avenue – Hackensack, NJ 07601 – 201.646.3980 – [www.hackensack.org](http://www.hackensack.org)

The City of Hackensack is an Equal Opportunity Employer

SUMMER 2016

# TAXPAYER REPORT



## FIRST HACKENSACK TAX RATE CUT IN TEN YEARS!

Average Homeowner Will Pay \$400 Less in Property Taxes

Tight spending controls in the new budget adopted by Mayor John Labrosse and the City Council and a new property reassessment are delivering the first real reduction in the city tax rate since 2006. As a result, the owner of a home now assessed at \$234,000 (the citywide average) will see a tax cut of approximately \$400 this year!

Earlier this year, the city reassessed all properties to more fairly distribute the tax burden between residential and commercial taxpayers. As a result, two out of three Hackensack homeowners will see their taxes frozen or reduced.

*“When our new administration took office three years ago, Hackensack taxpayers were in a \$30 million hole and city finances were in total chaos,” said Mayor John P. Labrosse. “Since then we have paid off nearly all of those old bills and delivered the first tax rate reduction in ten years.”*



*“This is just the beginning of our program to reduce property taxes and revitalize our great city“*

— Mayor John Labrosse

Mayor Labrosse is referring to the \$30 million in unpaid tax appeal refunds that were piling up when he and the new Council took office in 2013. The new Mayor and Council brought in a new professional management team and worked closely with the state Department of Community Affairs to tackle the problem. “Through debt negotiations and direct payments, we have already wiped out \$24 million of this debt that we inherited and the last \$6 million will be gone by next year,” the mayor adds.

CONTINUED INSIDE...



**NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TAKING SHAPE – SEE INSIDE!**

A MESSAGE  
FROM MAYOR  
**JOHN LABROSSE**



At a recent City Council meeting, a large number of people expressed concerns about the possibility of bringing in a private company to take over garbage collection duties in Hackensack. Most of these concerns focused on the potential impact on current city employees if a private vendor is hired. As your Mayor, I can tell you that the City Council and the administration share those very same concerns. But we also have an obligation to Hackensack taxpayers to explore this issue and find out exactly how much money can be saved. And we want to make absolutely certain that the level of service that is currently provided is at the very least maintained and hopefully expanded.

We emphasized that no decision has been made and that this is strictly a fact-finding mission to see exactly what kind of savings can be achieved. This is the absolute truth. We simply won't know if this is a worthwhile effort until we see the actual numbers.

However, there have been several significant developments. Two important meetings were held – one with city sanitation employees who could be affected, and the other with some leading members of the Clergy in our city. **Deputy Mayor Kathy Canestrino** and I attended both of these meetings and we both believe they were very constructive and very valuable.

Kathy and I discussed these meetings with **Councilmen Dave Sims and Leo Battaglia** and I am very pleased to report that we have reached a consensus that the jobs of all current permanent employees will be protected if the city decides to move forward with a private company. **Let me be clear: if a contract is awarded, there will be no lay-offs of any permanent employees.** All of the current sanitation workers would have the option of transferring into other city departments. No one will lose their job, their salary or their benefits.

We hope that resolving the issue of protecting our current employees will allow our administration and our taxpayers to objectively evaluate these proposals when they arrive later this summer. Let's all work together to make the best decision for our entire city. We look forward to doing exactly that.

# First Hackensack Tax Rate Cut in Ten Years - City Future is Bright

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE...

*The Mayor and Council have virtually frozen city spending since taking office. The new budget increases spending by just 2% -- but three quarters of that amount helped pay down the tax appeals. "We are always looking for ways to reduce spending and stretch every tax dollar to the maximum. We are determined to continue reducing taxes and maintaining the sound fiscal management practices that our administration has brought to city government."*

*Despite the tight spending controls, municipal services have actually increased, new parks are opening and new and updated recreation facilities are being built. After years of neglect, a major street repaving program is underway. Some large roads like Prospect Avenue have already been completed and many more will be done over the coming year.*

*The Labrosse administration is also working hard to encourage new growth and business development throughout the city and to revitalize Main Street. "There is no reason why Main Street cannot become a destination for Bergen County residents to enjoy restaurants, entertainment, shopping and other amenities," says Mayor Labrosse. "And a revitalized Main Street will be the anchor of a real renaissance for this city's future that will benefit every resident and property-owner."*

# New Performing Arts Center Taking Shape Thanks to City Investment, Private Donations

*Construction will soon begin on Hackensack's brand new Performing Arts Center, which is being funded by \$1.5 million in city bonds as well as \$400,000 in private donations raised by the Hackensack Main Street Business Alliance. Located at 102 State Street at the site of a former Masonic Temple, the Performing Arts Center will include a 224 seat theater and stage with new audio, video and lighting systems. In addition the building will include a marquee, gallery space and dressing rooms on the first floor as well as a pre-function lobby, concession stand and theater on the second floor.*



*The Performing Arts Center is the centerpiece of the City's overall objective of transforming its downtown into a lively, expressively artistic, cultural destination. As part of the effort, the City has partnered with the Main Street Business Alliance, Northern New Jersey Community Foundation, ArtsBergen and the National Consortium for Creative Placemaking. These organizations have been working together with local artists on projects like murals, art shows, outdoor concerts, comedy and a host of other cultural pursuits. The newly-created Cultural Arts Board (City of Hackensack) and Cultural Arts Team ("CAT" - Main Street Business Alliance) will continue to develop new and unique cultural opportunities designed to attract people from throughout Bergen County.*



Residents interested in Hackensack's cultural offerings can visit  
**[Hackensack.org/ArtsCalendar](http://Hackensack.org/ArtsCalendar)**