



## **HAMILTON TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT OF LAW**

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### **2021 Annual Report for the Department of Law**

The Department of Law had a remarkable year in 2021. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued to rage, our department never stopped working, and working hard. As we like to say internally, there is always the day we plan, and then the day that happens. Highlights include, but are not limited to, the following matters:

1. Just before the first of the year, the Department closed on the property located at 1750 Whitehorse-Mercerville Rd.
2. The Trenton Water Works litigation continued.
3. The Altice investigation continued.
4. We oversaw multiple litigations that were being handled by outside counsel, including police lawsuits.
5. We settled the Van Horn environmental litigation to the Township's benefit.
6. We continue to be involved with the negotiation pre-suit and the subsequent lawsuits involving the former Congoleum site (PRIII).
7. We responded to Notices of Claim, and we obtained insurance restitution with regard to damage to Township property.
8. We continued to negotiate with Verizon.
9. We managed the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA") responses and unlike previous years, the Township was not sued once for alleged non-compliance - including by an activist group that sued other municipalities for OPRA and Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") violations.
10. The Department was involved with labor negotiations and grievance procedures.
11. The Department guided the rewrite of the Hamilton Township Animal Shelter's policies and procedures, as well as participated in the weekly Animal Shelter meeting concerning euthanasia and other decisions.
12. Because of the ongoing Trenton Water Works litigation, we were involved with the response to legionella.
13. We closed on the two East State Street properties the Township purchased, and we finalized the foreclosures on the remaining East State Street properties.
14. We foreclosed on several other abandoned properties within the Township.
15. We represented the Tax Assessor's office on tax appeals.

16. We redrafted significant portions of the Code, including, but not limited to, Animals, Body Art, Outdoor Dining and Cannabis. Of course, we also composed other ordinances and resolutions covering a variety of issues.
17. We represented the Housing, Zoning and Abandoned Property divisions in Hamilton Township Municipal Court to assist with the backlog; at first once a week, then twice a month.
18. We participated in the Re-examination of the Township's Master Plan.
19. We participated in the Sewer Rate Study with Robbinsville Township.
20. We continued to assist with issues related to post-Fire Consolidation, including discussions concerning firehouses.
21. We streamlined the Township's agreement process by going digital; executing most professional services agreements, for example, within the first quarter.
22. We assisted, where requested, on matters related to the Project Freedom development known as "Freedom Village at Hamilton Wood".
23. We facilitated the solar farm redevelopment at the former landfill site on Patterson Avenue.
24. We worked with the Township Engineer and other stakeholders regarding Dam Site #8 and the land rights.
25. We assisted the Business Administrator in her response to the State Comptroller.
26. We prepared certain deeds for the Department of Water Pollution Control.
27. We worked with the Abandoned Property, Tax Assessor's and Engineering offices to clean up the Township's tax maps for zombie properties.
28. We started negotiating with the YMCA for the acquisition of 185 Sawmill Road.
29. We composed numerous Indemnity and Hold Harmless, license, easement, usage of Township property and shared services agreements.
30. We hired and trained a third attorney, who then left for a higher paying position before the end of the year.