

SADDLE RIVER FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Residents encouraged to install sprinkler system

BY JONATHAN LEKSTUTIS
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In a town with lots of large houses – but only 75 fire hydrants and a limited number of firefighters – Rich Silvia, the fire marshal, said the borough needs to do more in fire-safety prevention and response.

This includes plans to install over 100 more hydrants within the next year, according to Borough Administrator Chuck Cuccia. Also, late last month, the borough held an educational seminar with the Sprinkler Association of New Jersey and will likely hold another one on Oct. 8.

The seminar reached about 25 residents, who showed up at Borough Hall on July 31 to hear how sprinklers can help prevent massive fire damage. To kick the night off, Mayor Samuel Raia spoke about the importance of the issue. He was followed by Silvia, who

gave a Power Point presentation on the dangers of a house fire.

“A fire can be deadly to the home and deadly to the people living in the home,” Silvia said.

Silvia then showed a short film about how a fire could decimate a home, which could have been prevented with a sprinkler system. Following the presentation, Silvia and Vincent Fichera, the executive director of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, answered questions from the audience.

Resident Patty Nazzaro asked Fichera how the system could help prevent roof fires.

Fichera responded that roof fires are rare, but conceded a sprinkler system would have a hard time preventing one.

Another resident, Jim Monks, asked if the sprinkler system could affect electrical fires, and Fichera assured him that a sprinkler system would aid in fire prevention

against an electrical fire.

In an interview after the presentation, Fichera discussed the cost of such a system.

“It’s tough to answer that question because every situation is different,” Fichera said. “It depends if it is a new house or an old house. If it’s new, it might cost the homeowner 2 to 3 percent of the construction cost. If it’s an old house, it might be more expensive because they may have to renovate the home a lot.”

Mayor Samuel Raia said he was considering installing a sprinkler system in the near future.

“These sprinkler systems can save lives and property,” Raia said. “We put this ceremony together tonight so everyone knows about the options that they have.”

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