



Newsletter #21 ~ April, 2009

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April 2009 Newsletter

Dear Neighbors,

I am pleased to be sending you this latest update in a series of E-newsletters containing commentary on our Township Committee meetings and other helpful information about our municipality. If you did not see the prior newsletters, you can view them at www.JeffGrayzel.com .

This edition covers the month of April including the Township Committee meeting of 4/15/09 and also provides updates on some community issues. Make sure you catch all of the upcoming events in our community. See the listings under "Other items of interest" near the end of this newsletter. Also note that the next Township Committee meeting will take place on May 20th.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to any (and all) of your friends & neighbors. There are many people who still do not get the newsletter and who surely would be interested in what goes on in our Township. They can subscribe to the newsletter by sending an e-mail to Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com . You can let them know that I only send one e-mail per month and do not use their address for any other purposes.

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April 15 Township Committee Meeting...

You can view a copy of the agenda via a link to our Township website:

http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_04-15-09.pdf



Ordinances for Final Consideration...

Our meetings usually open up with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption". This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. There was just one item up for Final Consideration:

The first ordinance, #5-09, was to increase the parking fees for both yearly and daily parking at the convent station train station. Mr. Goldberg made a motion for this ordinance to be rescinded. A discussion ensued as to the reasons this ordinance was being rescinded (the ability of people to afford the fees in this economy). The floor was then opened up to the public prior to a final vote on this matter. Many residents were in attendance to speak about this particular matter, and every single one of them, except one, was against any fee increase. The Township Committee then voted to rescind the proposed ordinance and leave the current fees in place.

The second ordinance, #609, relates to a zone change for the property located at 240 Martin Luther King Avenue in Morris Township, which is the property recently placed under purchase contract by Morristown with the intent of placing their DPW there. This zone change would restrict this property to residential use only, which is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. The floor was then opened up to the public prior to a final vote on this matter. Many residents were in attendance to speak about this particular matter, and every single one of them was against the Morristown DPW proposal. The attorney for Morristown also came to the microphone and spoke as a member of the public, whereupon she reminded the Township Committee that a super-majority was required to pass this zoning ordinance. The Committee then voted and passed the ordinance by a 5-0 vote.

A copy of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or they can be viewed online at <http://morristwp.com/ordinances09.asp>

Ordinances for Introduction...

There were two ordinances for introduction at this meeting.

Ordinance, #7-09 accepts a dedication of a portion of Jockey Hollow Road and Sugarloaf Roads. This is being done in conjunction with the Delbarton project at the South side of their property to add ball fields off Sugarloaf Road. As part of their approval they were required to provide road improvements for the increased traffic. The new portions of the roadway are to be given to the Township, and this ordinance allows the Township to accept those new portions of roadway.

Ordinance, #8-09 authorizes the funding to acquire a portion of the St. Mary's Abbey (Delbarton) property for preservation as open space. As detailed in a previous newsletter, Delbarton is selling 187 acres to a consortium of purchasers that include Morris Township, Morris County, the Great Swamp Watershed Association, and the Trust For Public Lands. Morris Township will gain 10 acres at the end of Wood Road that will be dedicated to open space.

A copy of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or it can be viewed online at <http://morristwp.com/ordinances09.asp>

This concludes "Ordinances for Introduction". The above ordinance will be publicly debated at the May 20 meeting. At that time, a formal public hearing will be held and the public will be able to ask questions, make comments or give testimony. The Township Committee will consider the comments and testimony and then take a vote on adoption of the ordinance.

Report of Bid Receipt Committee...

The next item on the agenda was a review of one project that had gone out to bid. See the agenda for the list of projects. Our Township Administrator announced the bid results and noted the bidder

selected for each project. A description of the project can be found on the agenda:
http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_04-15-09.pdf

Of note, in the resolutions that followed (see next section) was included a resolution to accept a bid that had been previously presented at our March meeting. At that time I had asked for a postponement of our resolution to accept the winning bid so I could gather additional details. See my commentary in the resolutions section below.

Resolutions...

Several resolutions were then up for a vote. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_04-15-09.pdf

First the Mayor informed the public that two new resolutions had been added to the agenda related, both related to the Delbarton open space acquisition. The first authorized the township to enter into an agreement with respect to funding and assignment of interest between the Township, the county Park Commission and the Trust For Public Land. The second authorized the Township to enter into a conservation partnership agreement between the Morris County MUA, the County Park Commission and the Trust For Public Land

I requested that several of the resolutions be split off for a separate vote since I had to exclude myself from the votes on Delbarton (because I reside within 200-feet of their property line) and also because I wanted to discuss another item, 71-09, before a vote was taken.

Discussion was held on resolution #71-09 which concerns the bid that included three projects: the police parking lot, the Ginty Field parking lot, and the Ginty Field walking path. I made the following comments:

"This project has some parts that are worthy and other portions that I believe are an extravagance. I very much appreciate all the hard work the engineering department did in preparing the plans and preparing the bid packages. However we are under tremendous financial pressure right now. I have had many citizens saying that we need to not only hold the line on taxes, but reduce them. One person even suggested that we try to trim our tax bill by 20%. While we are not here to debate the budget tonight, I do know that this project will add to the long-term debt of this municipality. The debt will need to be serviced through interest payments which will affect taxes. We need to make some very tough choices this year. For me, the decision making process for this project bid has two elements: (1) The first is our finances. I wish we were further along in the budgeting process to know the full scope of the hardship we are facing and the choices we must be making. But we are sitting here tonight without full understanding of the constraints we are under. (2) The second component is prioritization. Improving the police parking lot is not the top priority of police chief. He has another capital project ranked higher than this one. So, to sum up, I cannot in good conscious say to our residents that I am trying to control taxes while at the same time approving projects that are not immediately critical to this municipality. For these reasons I will be voting against this bid."

The Township Committee voted 4-1 to accept this bid and move forward with all three of the projects included in it. I was the lone dissenting vote.

With regard to the resolution acknowledging the Municipal Audit, I asked our Municipal Attorney to clarify to the level of understanding required to satisfy "familiarized themselves with (the audit)". It's a very arcane document. Also, I stated that I was disappointed that the audit did not make any recommendations related to our practices in Morris Township, and that kind of commentary by our auditor is critical to ensure that we are operating with best practices.

Another resolution that was not listed on the agenda, but added at the meeting, was one to increase the daily parking fee at the convent station parking lot from \$3 to \$4. A discussion ensued about the finances of the parking lot and the trends for permit parking. A vote was taken and the votes for the

increase were from Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Snyder, and the votes against were from Grayzel, Rosenbush, and Caffrey. So the proposal to increase fees was shelved for the time being. However, we all agreed that we should revisit this issue after we see how many people renew their yearly permits, which need to be done by June 30.

Copies of all resolutions passed may be obtained from our Township Clerk or by visiting the twp website link: <http://morristwp.com/resolutions09/4-15-09RESOLUTIONS.pdf>

Public Commentary...

Every Township meeting has a "public commentary" portion during which any member of the public can make a statement concerning anything related to Township matters, or ask the Township Committee anything they wish.



The following comments were made at the April 15th meetings:

- The first resident suggested that instead of holding a public auction we should consider selling the surplus items on the online E-bay website. He was told that this had been considered in the past. He also suggested that maybe some of the surplus property could be used by the Minutemen.
- The next resident suggested that parking fees be increased only for non-residents and that senior citizens get a discount.
- The next resident had two questions:
 - Asked if we could use the surplus funds in the budget to reduce taxes.
 - Asked why we hired an enforcement officer for the parking lot.
- The next resident asked if the parking lot enforcement officer pays for himself in terms of his salary vs. the fines he collects.
- The next asked several questions:
 - With regard to the budget process, he wanted to know where we were in the process compared to last year. He also wanted to know if there was going to be a public budget session as we had last year.
 - Asked about the "fair and prevailing wage" clause that we have in our construction contracts.
 - He asked about the process by which people are appointed to the various board and committees (e.g. planning board)
 - He asked why all bids were rejected on the proposed information services contract. He also inquired as to what the plans were to fill that position.

I urge more citizens to come to the Township meetings to ask questions and to air their comments. Doing so at a public forum gives you the opportunity to get an immediate response from the Township Committee, and often times helps the Committee improve regulations related to the issues at hand.

Jeff's Commentary...

The final portion of each meeting allows for each member of the Township Committee to make any general comments they please. Since there were two meetings in the month of February I will combine commentary from both meetings into this single summary. I made the following comments at these two meetings:

- Thank you to Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Snyder for the thoughtful consideration they put into the parking lot ordinance and parking lot resolution tonight. I know you two put a lot of time, effort, and thought into what you had proposed. It is a tough decision to make to ask for increased fees, so let's wait until July when we see what the renewals are on the permits, end then if there is a drop-off resulting in lower revenues coming in then we can revisit the issue of raising fees.

- Thank you to the Minutemen for coming out tonight to make their presentation on how they are structured and the service they provide. And thank you to each and every volunteer who donates their time to this organization, and in turn all the residents of Morris Township. These volunteers are vital to the community and I hope that more residents will volunteer to join them.
- Just today Gov. Jon Corzine signed two bills designed to improve safety for teen drivers. "Kyleigh's Law" is named after Kyleigh D'Alessio, a 16-year-old honor student from West Morris Central High School who was killed in a December 2006 car crash that also claimed the life of the teen who was driving the car. This law now requires drivers under the age of 21 to display identifying markers on their vehicles. Another bill limits young drivers to only one passenger in a car unless accompanied by an adult, forbids the use of wireless communications and starts the ban on late-night driving at 11 p.m. instead of midnight. The decal gives law enforcement a tool to identify novice drivers and make sure they abide by passenger limits, the late-night driving curfew and other aspects of the state's Graduated Driver License program. Both of these bills had passed the State Assembly on March 15 and were awaiting signature by the Governor. I am not sure when enforcement of the new regulations will begin, but those of you who have teen drivers can get more information from our police department.
- The Beautification Committee held its first meeting of 2009 two weeks ago. We had two new members join us and two more who said they would come to the next meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday April 28.
- On tonight's consent calendar there was a letter of resignation from Jean Bohn who recently resigned from the Beautification Committee. Jean was another long-serving member and we will miss her touch. Jean has a great green thumb, and she is one of the people who work on the Wick Garden in Jockey Hollow historical park. I would like to thank Jean for her dedicated service to Morris Township to make our community a better place for all of us.
- Some of you may have read in the newspaper today about Morristown Mayor Cresitello saying that Morristown is now looking at another site outside of Morris Township to relocate their DPW facilities. I am glad that they heard us when we said that we do not want their DPW in our residential neighborhood. However, this should not distract us from continuing our pursuit of shared services as Morris Township has already suggested to Morristown. The residents of both towns should know that Morris Township is still interested in sharing services, and that we would like to proceed with first studying shared DPW and fire department services. We look forward to hearing from Mayor Cresitello on these initiatives.

Other Commentary from Township Committee Members...

The following comments are combined from those made at both the February 4 and 18 meetings.

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Please vote in the School election April 21
- I'm encouraged that Morristown is seeking an alternative to 240 MLK for their DPW site, according to the Star Ledger. This Committee can now use its energy in positive ways rather than for defensive actions. I'm hopeful that shared services talks are still important to Morristown, since I know they remain important to Morris Township.
- Mr. Rosenbush, Mr. Rossi and I are in negotiations with our new labor union, Council 6 of NJ Civil Service Assoc. It's another set of evening meetings, but it's important for the Township and the employees.
- Please note that the TV curbside pick up program begins April 20 with your phone call to DPW. See the Messenger and Announcement on our website
- Little League opening day is Saturday. Best of luck and Play Ball!

Ray Snyder made the following comments:

- Shindler elevator gave a donation for the Minutemen. Thanks to Shindler for this.
- Jim Reilly is being recognized as a 60-year volunteer at the Woodland firehouse. He sets an

example of volunteerism in the community.

Dan Caffrey made the following comments:

- Thanks to the Minute Men. They do a terrific job.
- Saturday is neighborhood clean-up day. Please join one of the civic organizations organizing a clean-up day activity.
- The school budget election is on April 21 and we should support the school district.

Mayor Scott Rosenbush made the following comments:

- We hope that Morristown understands our position on the property at 240 MLK Boulevard. Discussions are still ongoing related to shared services.
- The annual Whippany river clean-up is scheduled for May 2. Anybody interested in helping out is welcome to join in.
- The Mayor then made two mayoral proclamations:
 - Proclaimed June as *"MYASTHENIA GRAVIS AWARENESS MONTH"*
 - Proclaimed April 8, 2009 as *"NATIONAL START! WALKING DAY"*

Closed Session...

The Township Committee then recessed into "closed session" which occurs when there are legal or personnel matters that cannot be discussed in public. Minutes of the closed session are released to the public when the matters discussed are resolved.

Te Township Attorney John Mills announced at the Township Committee meeting (prior to recessing into closed session) that the closed session would deal with personnel, land acquisition, real property, and legal matters.

Morris Minute Men Presentation

The Minute Men ambulance squad gave a presentation to the public at our April 15 meeting. The Morris Minute Men First Aid Squad is a volunteer, non-profit organization which has been serving the communities of MorrisPlains and Morris Township, NJ since 1941. Emergency medical services are provided to these communities 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Their operational expenses are paid through the generous donations of the citizens of our community.



Here are some facts about the Minute Men:

- The Morris Minute Men have four ambulances as well as a Rescue truck.
- They are the largest all-volunteer squad in Morris County with over 100 members.
- They responded to over 2,900 "911" calls in 2008.
- They have 8 times the call volume of the Mendham ambulance squad.
- They have overnight crews and provide bunks at their headquarters for sleeping.
- There is a certified EMT that goes out on every ambulance dispatched.

More information on the Minute Men can be found on their website:

<http://www.morrisminutemen.org/>

If you are interested in joining the ambulance squad you can contact:

join@morrisminutemen.org

Morris School District presentation

Dr. Tom Ficara, Superintendent of the Morris School District, gave a



presentation of the school budget that was to be up for a public vote on the April 21 school board elections. Based on a shift in total ratables (due to the vast number of construction projects in Morristown) the share of the budget paid by Morris Township residents is being reduced. Thus, the average home in Morris Township will pay \$74 less in school taxes this year.

More information on the Morris School District budget can be found on their website:

http://www.morrisschooldistrict.org/content/budget_Schooltime%20March%202027%20FINAL.pdf



**THE FOLLOWING SECTION CONTAINS GENERAL INFORMATION
ABOUT HAPPENINGS AROUND MORRIS TOWNSHIP.**

Building Applications Around Town...

This section provides the community with some information about building projects around town. There are always new projects and continuing projects that come before the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment. I will only highlight the larger projects and not get into details on the minor ones, such as a homeowner adding a front porch to their home).

If residents encourage or are opposed to certain types of developments, they need to voice their opinions in-person at the hearings.

The **Board of Adjustment** held its regular meeting on April 27. Please see the following agenda for the descriptions of the applications heard at this meeting, all of which were small projects:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/boa_04-27-09.pdf

The next **Board of Adjustment** held meeting will be held on May 18, and the agenda has been published online: http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/boa_05-18-09.pdf

The **Planning Board** held two regular meetings on April 6 & 20, and these agendas can be found online:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_04-06-09.pdf and
http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_04-20-09.pdf

At the April 6 meeting the board heard the continuing hearing for the Atlantic Health Systems building at 475 South Street. The applicant agreed to move the external emergency power generator to a location along the side of the building which puts it further away from the neighbors on Blackberry Lane.

At the April 20 meeting, the first application on the agenda was the continuing hearing of the Major Subdivision on Shadyside Street. This applicant is requesting to subdivide 1 lot into three building lots. At this meeting the applicant presented altered plans that showed a conceptual building outline that would conform much more with our zoning requirements. The project engineer reviewed the revised plans and took questions from the planning board members. Many of the questions related to the large retaining walls needed on both the property and those to be placed all around the proposed road extension. The questioning of the engineer was then opened up to the public, but only one person was able to ask questions before time ran out. This application will be continued at the June 1 meeting.

The second application was by the Morris County Golf Course to rebuild both their pool and pool house as well as expand the parking area adjacent this portion of their facility. The project engineer reviewed the plans and the planning board members asked several questions. The questioning of the engineer was then opened up to the public, and two residents were stood up to ask questions. This hearing will continue at the May 4 meeting when the project architect will review the plans for the pool house structure.

There was a third matter on the agenda related to the request by the of the townhouse development at the corner of Kahdena Road and Deborah Drive to remove the age restriction imposed on the sale

of these units. The Planning Board attorney then presented his recommended option for accommodating this change within our zoning regulations.

The Planning Board voted 8-1 to "recommend" to the Township Committee, who has ultimate control over the implementation of all zoning regulations, the changes in the zoning regulations as outlined above. I was the only dissenting vote, believing that the zone we were creating had become so broad that it was no longer a meaningful zone for planning purposes. This matter will now be heard by the Township Committee at their May 20 meeting, and the public will be allowed to make comments on the proposed ordinance amendment.

The Planning board also had a regular meeting on May 4, and the agenda can be found online at: http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_05-04-09.pdf

The only one item on this agenda was the continuing hearing for the Morris County Golf Club to build a new pool and pool house. This application was approved.

The next planning board meeting is scheduled for June 1. The agenda will be available on the township website several days before the meeting.

All of the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment meetings start at 7:30pm at our municipal building and are open to the public. As with all public meetings, I urge our residents to attend so that they can have a say in how our township is managed and how it is developed.

Update on W heatsheaf Townhouse Development

As I stated above (in the section on Planning Board matters), the Township Committee will be reviewing a request from the developers of the townhouse development at the corner of Kahdena Road and Deborah Drive to remove the age restriction imposed on the sale of these units.

The Township Committee will consider this request, which will be in the form of a zone change for this property, at their meeting on May 20. The meeting starts at 8:00pm, but I do not yet know where on the agenda this matter will be placed. Please check the township website for the agenda a few days before the May 20 meeting date.

Leaf, Grass and Brush pick-up has begun

Morris Township DPW picks-up these items from your curb every other Wednesday. Please check the municipal calendar to determine your pick-up days. For more information see this link: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/Curbside_Collection_Leaves,_Grass_&_Brush.pdf

Please do not throw leaf and brush debris into the regular garbage. Not only is it against regulations to put this debris into the solid waste stream, but it is also more costly to the municipality to dispose of it this way (as regular garbage). Leaf and Brush debris is brought to a county facility where it is "recycled" into mulch.

Other items of interest...

- **New Saturday hours at DPW depot.** Effective immediately, the MORRIS TOWNSHIP RECYCLING DEPOT on Jane Way Will now be open from 8:00 AM TO 3:00 PM on Saturdays. http://morristwp.com/pdfs/New_depot_hours.pdf
- **The Township Environmental Committee has two openings.** If any members of the public are interested, please contact the Chairman Ted Largman at tedleazer@netzero.net or our Township Administrator, Fred Rossi, at 973-326-7361.
- **The public is invited to visit more than a dozen historic sites and museums throughout Morris County free of charge** on "Be Our Guest" Day, scheduled for Sunday, May 17, from noon to 5 p.m. The sites are opening their doors and waiving their usual admission fees, although guests are encouraged to contribute a non-perishable food item for the Interfaith Food Pantry in lieu of the normal admission fee. In Morristown, participating sites are Acorn Hall, Fosterfields Living Historical Farm, Historic Speedwell, Macculloch Hall, the

Morris Museum, Schuyler-Hamilton House, and Washington's Headquarters. Free shuttles will run between the Morristown-area sites, and between Fosterfields and Craftsman Farms. Participating sites in other parts of the county are the Denville Historical Society and Museum; the Ford-Faesch Ironmasters House, Rockaway Township; the Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum; the Montville Township Museum; the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms, Morris Plains; and the Washington Township Historical Society Museum. "Be Our Guest" is sponsored by the Morris County Tourism Bureau and Morris County Alliance for Tourism. This is the third year it has been held, and the first year it is being held in conjunction with National Tourism Week. To ensure the site you want to visit is open, or to learn if additional sites join the program closer to the actual event day, please contact the Morris County Tourism Bureau at www.morristourism.org or 973-631-5151.

- **Route 202 (Speedwell Avenue) construction:** Starting May 20, Route 202 from Mile Post 46.00 to M.P. 46.91 (Morristown Town, Morris Twp. & Morris Plains Borough) will have intermittent lane closures as the road is being resurfaced. Lane closures should be limited to nighttime so as not to affect daytime traffic.
- **The Morris Township Recreation Department has published their Spring/Summer brochure.** See all of the wonderful activities listed. If you did not get a copy in the mail then you can check it out online at: <http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/spring09.pdf>
- **Call the Morris Township Recreation Department** at 973.326.7371 for more information on any of the programs offered.
- **Have you recently lost your job?** The Morris County Career Network, part of the Morris County Professional Services Group, has begun holding twice-a-month networking meetings at St. Peters Church located at 70 Maple Ave in Morristown. They meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays from 9 – 11am. They can help you refine your interview skills, learn strategies for career change, generate leads, and more. For more information go to: <http://www.doverpsg.com/>

Upcoming Committee Meeting...

There is only one Township Committee meeting scheduled for the month of May which will take place on Wednesday May 20th. Please try to attend one of our meetings to see how your local government operates. Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and your questions require the Township Committee to be responsive to our citizens.

**The Next Meeting:
May 20th**

Other Township meetings and events can be found online on our municipal calendar: <http://plus.calendars.net/morrisTownship>

Please feel free to forward this e-mail on to others. If you know someone who would like to subscribe, please have them contact me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com .

As always, if you have any questions about any of the above or if you have a comment you would like to share with me, then please send me an e-mail to Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com .

Thank you for taking the time to read through this newsletter. I hope it has helped you be more informed about what is going on around our town.

JEFF

Committeeman, Morris Township

[Jeff's Web Site](#) | [Contact Jeff](#)

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