



# JEFF GRAYZEL

## MORRIS TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

**EMAIL UPDATE**

Newsletter #4 ~ January 2, 2008

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Dear Neighbors,

I am pleased to be sending you this latest update in a series of E-newsletters since my swearing in as a Morris Township Committeeman seven months ago. I will be sending newsletters containing highlights and some commentary monthly after each Township Committee meeting in order to keep you informed of happenings in our municipality. This letter covers the Township Committee meeting of 12/19/07. If you did not see the prior newsletters, you can view them at [www.JeffGrayzel.com](http://www.JeffGrayzel.com)

This is by far the longest newsletter I have published to date. Please take the time to read it and comment on it. In this issue I have also included many internet links to provide you with additional information.

A copy of the actual Township Committee meeting agenda from 12/19/07 can be found via a link to our Township website:

[http://morristownship.org/agendas/twpcomm\\_07-12-19.pdf](http://morristownship.org/agendas/twpcomm_07-12-19.pdf)

**Special Presentation...**

The Township Committee meeting of 12/19/07 opened with a presentation by Pam Fisher, Director, Division of Highway Safety, NJ Dept. of Law and Public Safety. The topic of her presentation was "CAMERAS FOR SPEED ENFORCEMENT". She spoke about a bill pending in the NJ Assembly (bill #43-13) that would create a pilot program in which traffic-light-mounted cameras at selected busy intersections capture photographic evidence which would then be used to cite cars that ran red lights. Currently cameras are not allowed in the State of NJ, but there are many other states that do use them. Ms. Fisher asked the Township Committee to support the Assembly legislation.

The Mayor then offered a resolution in support of the State Assembly bill. Given my interest in promoting safety on our streets and controlling speeding around town, I was part of the unanimous vote in support of this measure.

Mayor Nace then urged citizens to sign a petition in support of limited use of cameras to assist in traffic enforcement. It can be found on our Township website:

<http://morristownship.org/pdfs/PETITION%20TO%20GOVERNOR%20JON%20CORZINE.pdf>

Please take a moment to help.

**Tribute to 18 years of service...**

The Township Committee meeting continued with a presentation of a certificate of Recognition to Kathleen Hyland. Mrs. Hyland is retiring on Dec. 31, 2007 at the end of her current term. She has served on the Township Committee for 18 years, and was Mayor from 1992-1993. The Mayor also announced that to recognize her service and as a memorial to her and her late husband, Patric, (who was on the Township Committee prior to Kathleen) two wooden benches were being purchased for placement along the Memorial Pathway at Ginty Field. I wish Kathleen health and happiness in her retirement.

As an aside, if your family is interested in purchasing a personalized brick on the memorial pathway you can find information at the following link:

<http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/MemorialPaverFlyer06.pdf>

**Ordinances...**

This Township Committee meeting had very short agenda, but one item in particular (the third ordinance below) had a lengthy discussion.

The first item was to have been a formal vote on an "ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS ADDING SECTION 57-164, DEVELOPMENT FEES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO CHAPTER 57 'LAND DEVELOPMENT' ". However, the mayor postponed the vote until a future meeting to allow time to realign the ordinance with newly promulgated State "COAH" regulations.

The second item was the final consideration of an ordinance to create a handicapped parking space on a specific street in town. The ordinance passed with a 5-0 vote.

The third ordinance discussed was for the purchase of approximately 15 acres of land on Mt Kemble Ave at the southern end of Morris Township for a recreation complex. The purchase price is \$3.8 million, all of which is fully funded (and will not affect our tax rate). This ordinance passed by a 5-0 vote. More information on this project can be found immediately below and by using the links provided.

### About the proposed Mount Kemble Recreation Complex...

As stated above, we passed an ordinance to purchase 15 acres off of Mount Kemble Ave to establish a recreation complex for soccer game fields. This type of recreation facility is clearly needed in Morris Township, because we do not have enough game-sized fields to support the growing soccer, football, and lacrosse programs for school aged children.



A press release from Morris Township can be found at this link:

<http://morristownship.org/notice-MtKembleLand.html>

A map of the parcel can be found at this link:

<http://morristownship.org/pdfs/MtKembleLand.pdf>

I think this is a very good project for Morris Township for the following reasons:

1. We have a deficit in our inventory of large "rectangular" fields for soccer and other sports requiring this shape of field. We do have an excess of baseball fields, but unfortunately none of these lands are large enough or shaped properly to make them usable as soccer, football, lacrosse game fields. In addition, many of the existing soccer fields are run-down from over-use, and we need to, but cannot due to our deficit, "rest" them (take them out of service) for a year to allow them to re-grow the grass that has been lost.
2. The proposed recreation complex is located in between an office complex and route 287, and thus would have minimal impact on the adjacent neighborhood. Proximity to housing would be an issue with other theoretical locations around our town. The current concept is for these fields to have lights to extend their use. Design criteria include protecting the Frederick Place neighborhood from visual and light pollution. (And yes, we will be addressing all citizen concerns during the site plan hearings.)
3. While the proposed recreation complex is in a corner of Morris Township that may make it inconvenient for some people to access, it is one of the very few remaining parcels that can be developed into such a project (remember, you need relatively flat land for fields)

Some additional facts about the project are:

- The \$3.8 million purchase price is already fully funded. We have been saving for this project for several years via our open space tax. We have also received an open space grant from Morris County in excess of \$1.4 million specifically for the purchase of this lot, and we hope to receive additional funding from the State of NJ "Green Acres" fund to offset a total of 64% of the purchase price (which would leave us with plenty of money in our Open Space Trust Fund to purchase additional open space in the future). Our local property taxes will NOT increase for this land purchase, because the money is already in hand.
- The facility is projected to cost about \$2-3 million dollars in additional funds to build. This includes grading the land, creating appropriate drainage, building an access road from the adjoining office complex, and building the actual artificial turf fields, lighting, and associated facilities (bathrooms, etc). Funding for the initial stages of this project will probably be incorporated into our upcoming budget process. I know people are very concerned about rising taxes, so we need to look for ways to offset these costs when we budget for 2008.

- Before a shovel is put in the ground to begin construction, a complete site plan will be presented to the public for review and commentary. Right now we have only a "concept plan" which will be developed into a site plan once the formal land purchase is completed. The community will receive proper notice of any public meetings scheduled in relation to the site plan.
- Vehicular access to the site will only be via Mount Kemble Avenue. Plans will prevent disruption to the adjoining neighborhood (Frederick Place).

### **Public Commentary...**

Every Committee meeting has a "public commentary" portion during which anyone can make a statement concerning anything related to Township matters. The lone speaker this night was Michael Broderick representing the local International Brotherhood of Teamsters union which bargains for non-management employees at the DPW, Sewer, and Recreation departments. Mr. Broderick made a statement relating to the ongoing contract negotiations between the Township and the union. This union has been out of contract since January 1, 2005 (2 years), and he urged the Township Committee to make a better offer in order to settle the negotiations.

### **Jeff's Comments...**

The final portion of the meeting allows for each member of the Township Committee to make any general comments they please. I made the following two comments:

- » I thanked the members of the road department who came out to work at 1:00 a.m. during the snow storm of December 16.
- » I thanked Mrs. Hyland for her service to our Township and for helping me get up to speed during my first 7 months on the Township Committee.

### **Other Commentary...**

Other members of the Township Committee had these comments:

- » Kathleen Hyland thanked our Township for the privilege of serving and for many good years and memories.
- » Rick Watson thanked the DPW for their good work and thanked Mrs. Hyland for her service to Morris Township.

### **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. The Township Attorney John Mills announced at the meeting (prior to recessing into closed session) that the closed session would deal with personnel matters.

### **Winter Safety Tip...**

I want to share with you a lesson learned from a scary moment I had while sledding with my 2 boys in our backyard. As you know, it got very icy after the last snowstorm several weeks ago. Our backyard has a very modest slope, but the icy surface made the sled carrying my boys take off like a rocket. The sled hit a tree as I watched helplessly out of reach. The boys were frightened (as was I watching it all happen). Luckily, the elder rolled them both to the side just before impact, and the younger's head just grazed the tree. He received a minor cut and bruise on his forehead. Tragedy was averted.

The lesson learned is this: Just as you would have your kids or grand-children wear helmets for biking or skate-boarding in the summer, it is highly recommended by officials that they wear them for skiing, skating, and sledding as well. You can believe it's a new rule in our family!

### **Morris Township Tip....**

Morris Township now recycles dry cell and rechargeable type batteries (Example: AA, C, D, 9 volt). They will be accepted at the Dept. of Public Works Recycling Depot located on Jane Way. If you have any questions, please call our DPW office at 973-326-7398.

### **The Next Meeting...**

The next Township Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 2nd. This annual "Reorganization" meeting is where all the various board and committee appointments will be announced and oaths of office taken. They Mayor will also be making his annual "Mayor's Address." No other legislative business usually occurs on this night.



**Ron Goldberg** will be sworn into office as the incoming Township Committee member, and I would like to invite all of you to come to the meeting to welcome him into his new post. The meeting is open to the public and refreshments are served afterwards.

A copy of tonight's agenda can be found at the following link:  
<http://morristwp.com/agendas/2008orgagenda.pdf>

The subsequent Township Committee is on Wednesday, January 16th and is for regular matters. Please try to attend. Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and your questions reinforce the requirement that a township government be responsive to its citizens.

This newsletter closes out the 2007 year, so let me take this opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed being your representative on the Township Committee for the past 7 months (since my swearing in on May 16). I came in knowing I had a LOT to learn. I hope that my open communication with our community is appreciated and has made people more aware of what is happening here in our town.

Best wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy new year.  
Sincerely,  
Jeff Grayzel  
*Committeeman, Morris Township Committee*

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[Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com](mailto:Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com)

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