



Newsletter #12 ~ July, 2008

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July 2008 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 Click on the "newsletter" link.

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 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 1-2 e-mails per month and do not use their address for any other purposes.

This newsletter covers the Township Committee meeting of 7/16/08 and also provides updates on some community issues. Make sure you catch all of the upcoming events in our community. See the listing under "Other items of interest" near the end of this newsletter.

July 16 Township Committee Meeting...

You can view a copy of the July 16 Township Committee meeting agenda via a link to our Township website: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_07-16-08.pdf

Alcohol License Violation

The first item on the agenda was an administrative hearing for an alcohol license violation at Tiffany's restaurant on Speedwell Avenue. Evidence was presented relating to the serving of alcohol after the mandatory closing time. Their license was suspended for ten days, meaning that Tiffany's will not be able to serve liquor on the days of its license suspension.

Ordinances for Final Consideration

The meeting continued with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption". This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. There were three such ordinances from June 18 meeting.

The first ordinance, 21-08, dealt with the installation of new stop signs at several intersections currently lacking them. The streets that will be getting new stop signs are:

- Fairchild Avenue (at Hathaway Road)
- Hathaway Road (at Fairchild Avenue)
- Gordon Place (at Fairchild Avenue)
- Springbrook Road (at Alvord Road)



- Armstrong Road (at Springbrook Road)
- Alvord Road (at Old Harter Road)
- Skyline Drive (at Rolling Hill Drive).

The second ordinance, 22-08, was an amendment to a zoning ordinance to clarify language. It was carried to our next meeting pending concurrence by the Planning Board

The third ordinance, 23-08, related to declaring certain of our municipal employees eligible for the new defined benefit program offered by the State of New Jersey. Morris Township participates in several health and benefit plans offered through the State.

A copy of any of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430.

Ordinances for Introduction

There were three ordinances for introduction at this meeting.

The first ordinance dealt with personnel procedures within the police department. This ordinance updates the present ordinance to incorporate the proper New Jersey State statutes and procedures for hiring, removal or suspension of any sworn police officer.

The second ordinance granted easements to two properties that for decades have garage structures which encroach on the Township's right-of-way. This easement will allow the structures to legally stand until they are otherwise taken down. Since the easement is transferable, it becomes easier for the current owner to sell the property.

The third ordinance relates to new regulations handed down by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). Please see my last newsletter for a discussion of this newly promulgated legislation. This ordinance specifically related to the TH-4 building zone on which the proposed townhouses at 250 James Street are to be built. Our newly introduced ordinance would require a 15% set-aside of units to be sold as low- and moderate-income housing units according to the new legislation.



Of note, the new COAH regulations are being questioned by many municipalities across the state. This ordinance is most probably one of the first to be instituted by any municipality in the state to take account of these new state regulations.

This concludes the ordinances for introduction. These ordinances will be publicly debated at our next meeting on August 20 when we hold a formal public hearing on each of the ordinances introduced at this meeting, and at which point the public will be able to ask questions about each ordinance.

Resolutions

Several Resolutions were then passed. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_07-16-08.pdf

These were routine, without controversy or need for explanation, so no discussion took place. Copies of all resolutions passed may be obtained from our Township Clerk.

Public Commentary...

Every Committee 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 first resident stated that Morris Township is not friendly to bikers and walkers. He spoke of the lack of appropriate shoulders on many of our roads to enable him (and others) to walk or bicycle to the train station. He was referred to the new Morris Township Trails & Pathways Plan.

- The second resident spoke about the need for our cat/dog ordinance to be stricter and to assess fines when appropriate.
 - The second resident also spoke about the need to extend water service for fire hydrants down Jockey Hollow Road. A house on Brigade Hill Road burned down several months ago. This street and others in the area could use closer access to fire hydrants.

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. I made the following comments:

- I commented on the wonderful July 5 fireworks display in Lewis Morris Park. Thanks to the Washington Association for sponsoring this free event to the community.

Our Township received a letter from the County Park Police thanking the Morris Township Office of Emergency Management team for their time and effort in support of this event. Our OEM team provided the portable lighting, and not one of the 3,500 attendees was injured or even tripped during an event which would have normally been in total darkness. There was special recognition of Rob Brabandt for his efforts in support of the Park Police. Thanks to Rob and the rest of the OEM team that helped out at this wonderful event.



- I mentioned that I had received a letter from a resident about parking at the Convent train station on Wednesdays, which is the day of Broadway matinee performances in NY City. He stated that all the daily resident spots are taken but that there are multiple open spots for monthly parkers. I suggested that our parking committee conduct a survey each day for 2 weeks at 11am to see how many open spots there are in each category of parking spaces that we have (e.g. resident monthly, resident daily, meter), then we can use the results to reallocate spaces to each category.
- I informed the public of the closure of Inamere Road to through traffic (over the bridge) on Monday, July 7 for bridge reconstruction. The closure will be in place until May of 2009. Residents on Inamere Road, as well as those wishing to access the parking area for Patriots Path, will have access via Lake Road. Access to Streeter Pool will be via Sussex Avenue. Motorists who commonly use Inamere Road are encouraged to familiarize themselves with alternative routes.

Also, I am happy to report that the new Inamere Road Bridge will incorporate a sidewalk so that people can more safely access the Streeter pool by foot or bicycle.



- I told the public to be aware that starting on August 4 there will be periodic lane closures on route 287 South-bound from MP 30.11 to 35.5 (portions in Morris Township). Repairs include crack sealing and a 1-inch overlay of pavement.
- I mentioned reading about a Morris County Service called Project Lifesaver, and wanting to pass information along to the community. Project Lifesaver is a program for those who are at risk of becoming lost due to memory loss and or cognitive impairment.

Morris County Sheriff's officers recently rescued a 79-year-old man registered in the program. He had wandered away from his home. Once his family realized he was missing, they called the police. The man was wearing a 1-ounce, battery-operated radio wrist transmitter that emits a tracking signal every second. The signal can be tracked on the ground or in the air over several miles. Each wristband has a unique radio frequency, so the Project Lifesaver team can positively locate and identify the wearer. The team found the man in six minutes, in a Morristown building about a mile from his home. The officers then safely reunited him with his family, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Project Lifesaver is a rescue service that trains, equips and deploys law enforcement and public safety agencies to find individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia disorders. It also helps to find children with cognitive disorders who may wander and become lost due to confusion and memory impairment. For more information call the Sheriff's office at (973) 285-6675 or visit <http://www.mcsheriff.org>

Other Commentary from Township Committee members...

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Thanked our Health Officer and Department for keeping us well informed and safe during the Salmonella scare.
- Thanked Bill Foelsch and the Recreation employees for the enjoyable, well run summer concert and movie events

Scott Rosenbush made the following comment:

- He congratulated the police department for their work with the "Vets with Vettes" veterans program.
- Based on the comment about Brigade Hill Road, he suggested that the Township examine all areas lacking water service.

Rick Watson made the following comments:

- The finance committee is looking at new ways to save money for the Township.
- Noted that we had record attendance at our outdoor concert on July 15 (over 250 attendees)
- Requested that the recreation department move the sign that was stationed in front of the gazebo and memorial walk.

Mayor Nace made the following comment:

- He noted that September is ovarian cancer awareness month, and congratulated the people who organize the events around occasion every year.
- Asked residents to come out to our next outdoor concert on July 29.

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

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

Land Preservation in Morris Township



On July 23 it was announced that the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), in conjunction with several agencies including Morris Township, had come to an agreement with St. Marry's Abbey to purchase 188 acres in a land preservation deal valued at \$13.75 million.



The following is a portion of the press release from TPL:

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has reached an agreement to purchase 188 acres of land from the Order of St. Benedict of New Jersey that owns and manages Delbarton School and St. Mary's Abbey in Morris Township. The agreement is subject to the approval of the Abbey's local governing board, as well as higher ecclesiastical sign offs. The Monks have owned this property for more than 80 years. It is one of the last large undeveloped tracts of land in Morris County, and adjoins the Lewis Morris County Park and Morristown National Historic Park. The expected fair market value for the property is \$13,750,000, which The Trust for Public Land is currently working to raise.

Once conveyed, Morris County Park Commission plans to include the property in Lewis Morris County Park. TPL is submitting an application this week for funding from the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund. Additional funding for the purchase is expected to come from the Morris County Park Commission, The Township of Morris Open Space Trust Fund, the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund, the Great Swamp Watershed Association, The Trust for Public Land, Morris County Municipal Utilities Commission and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program.

The sale of this land will enable the Order to provide some financial support for the monks, while also preserving a significant portion of Abbey land for open space. Located in the heart of Washington Valley and near General George Washington's encampment, conservationists and neighbors alike have set their sights on seeing the property conserved. If it were developed, approximately 30 homes could have been built on the site. Conservation of the land will also enhance and expand the Patriots' Path trail system.

"We are pleased that we will be able to secure enough funds to provide for the continuing existence of our Order and to preserve a significant amount of land in perpetuity for the Abbey, Delbarton School and our neighbors," said Abbot Giles Hayes, O.S.B., the superior of the monastic community. "We have enjoyed this natural environment for many years, in fact we regard it as sacred, and we can now be certain that it will remain preserved for the future."

"The sale of this land by the monks for conservation purposes benefits everyone," said Dene Lee, project manager for the New Jersey Field Office of The Trust for Public Land. "As a result of the commitment of TPL's partners and the Abbey, generations of residents, as well as visitors to Morris County will enjoy its serene beauty in perpetuity. At the same time, the monks are ensured good neighbors and a fair price that allows them to continue their ministries and care for those retiring in their order."

"The Morris County Park Commission is pleased to partner on this land preservation project," said Dave Helmer, Executive Director of the Morris County Park Commission. "It is fitting that a preservation project of this magnitude will protect open space contiguous with the first county park under the Park Commission's stewardship and the first National Historic Park. This acquisition will increase the total land preservation area of Lewis Morris County Park to over 2,000 acres."

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 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 July 28. The agenda for this meeting can be found online at the township website: http://morristswp.com/agendas/boa_07-28-08.pdf

The next **Board of Adjustment** meeting will take place on August 25th. The meeting agenda will be available on the township website several days before the meeting. One item on the agenda will be a continuing hearing for 219 Madison Avenue, a proposal to turn the 3 service bays of the gas station into a quick mart and Dunkin Donuts shop.

The **Planning Board** held a regular meeting on July 21 at which time they heard testimony for two development proposals. The first was for the Auto dealership at 170 Madison Avenue, which was formerly the BW dealership and now will be the MINI dealership. They are requesting to add on to the existing structure to house a new customer service area, and are also proposing to add parking lot space to increase the impervious coverage on this lot from 73% to 91%.

The second development proposal was for ninety-two townhouses at 250 James Street (site of former Verizon Wireless office building). A site plan showing the layout of the 23 buildings housing 4 town houses each was presented. The Board will continue hearing this project proposal at a special meeting of the Planning Board on August 18 at 7:30pm.project.

The next **Planning Board** meeting will take place on August 4th. The meeting agenda is available on the township website: http://morristswp.com/agendas/plbd_08-04-08.pdf

Two hearings will resume at this meeting: The expansion of the MINI car dealership at 170 Madison Avenue and the Subdivision of a lot into 3 building lots on Shadyside Street. If you live near these properties, you may want to come to the next meeting to hear their proposals. The agenda for this meeting can be found online at the township website a few days prior to the meeting.

In addition, a tentative "special meeting" of the **Planning Board** has been scheduled for Monday August 18th for discussion specifically of the project at 250 James Street. Please check the township website for confirmation that this meeting will be taking place.

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.

Speedwell Avenue Beautification project

The Speedwell Avenue Beautification project will be starting construction beginning the week of July 21, 2008. New pavers will line the sidewalks from Mill Road to Hanover Avenue. The contractor anticipates starting construction at the intersection of Mill Road and continuing north towards the intersection of Hanover Avenue. It is estimated that construction will take approximately four weeks.

Other items of interest:

- The Recreation Dept's summer Playground Program has started and will continue into August. You can sign your child up for any of these weekly programs by visiting our Recreation Annex at 24 Woodland Ave (next to Ginty Field) between the hours of 9am-1pm. Call the Recreation Department at 973-326-7371 for more information.
- The Recreation Dept has announced their Morris Twp summer concert series. The third concert was just held this past Tuesday, July 29th See this link for the complete list of all concerts throughout the summer: http://morristswp.com/pdfs/concert_08.pdf
- The Department of Parks & Recreation will hold another "Big Screen Movie" night on

Thursday, July 31 at Ginty Field. The movie "The Fantastic Four" starts at dusk. For more information about any of our recreation programs, please call the Recreation Department at 973-326-7371.

- The annual National Night Out program will be held on August 5 from 5-8pm at Mennen Sports Arena. Join the Morris County Park Police and over 40 law enforcement and community agencies for FREE food, entertainment, ice skating, giveaways, and more! This event is free. For more information please contact 973-326-7600
- Curbside container collection of leaves, grass, and brush is an ongoing service provided by our DPW through the Fall. Pick-ups are on alternating Wednesdays (i.e. every house get a pick up every other week). By putting your brush and twigs out for this collection you also reduce the amount of trash that goes into our Solid Waste Disposal stream, which costs much more to dispose of. So using this service instead of putting these items in the trash save us all on taxes. Please review the following update as to how your rubbish should be placed at the curb: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/Brush_4-22-08.pdf

Upcoming Committee Meeting...

The next Township Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday August 20th (there is only one meeting in August). I urge you to attend!! Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and your questions require the Township Committee to be responsive to our citizens.

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

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 lengthy newsletter. I hope it has helped you be more informed about what is going on around our town.

JEFF

The next
meeting...
Aug.
20th

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

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