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Newsletter #24 ~ July, 2009

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July 2009 Newsletter

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you are enjoying the summer.

I am pleased to offer 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 July including the meeting of 7/15/09 and also provides updates on some community issues. Make sure you note 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 Wednesday August 19th.**

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.

Table of Contents

Many people have told me that the newsletter has been too long to read in the available time. So I have tried to make this issue a faster read by providing an index of topics below so you can jump to what you are most interested in reading about:

Click links below to jump directly to these newsletter topics:	
June 15th Township Committee Meeting	Other Commentary from Township Committee Members
Open Space Presentation	Building Applications Around Town
Public Commentary	Other items of interest

Jeff's Commentary	Upcoming Committee Meeting on August 19th
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July 15 Township Committee Meeting...

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

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_final3_07-15-09.pdf

You will see that several agenda items were moved to ensure that funding resolutions were approved (releasing funds) before related spending ordinances were introduced.



The first item on the agenda was a presentation to Mary and Paul Carman on their 60th wedding anniversary. Paul is a long-serving volunteer fireman in Morris Township. It was a pleasure to honor these long-time residents.

Open Space Presentation

Next on the agenda was a brief presentation on preserving 3 acres of open space at the end of Indianhead Road. This presentation had to be made prior to passing a resolution authorizing the Township to apply for grant monies to help pay for this preserved property (see resolution 131-09 on the agenda). The public was informed that this property is part of a 4-unit subdivision that was recently approved by the Planning Board. The Township has the opportunity to purchase 3 acres that sit at the top of a ridgeline. This property is contiguous with other property the township has previously purchased at the top of this same ridgeline. Preserving this land would preserve a nice view-shed for Township residents (i.e. instead of everyone seeing a house at the top of a hill we would continue to see the existing trees along the ridge).



The matter was opened up for public commentary and we had one citizen who came to the microphone. He asked why we were spending township dollars to preserve something that could otherwise become a ratable (i.e. property taxes on a new home) that would help to reduce everyone else's property taxes. He was told that the Township has an open space fund for the express purpose of purchasing and preserving land that the municipality deemed worth saving. The open space committee had recommended this specific purchase. He was told that 4 homes were now being built where only two used to exist, so the ratable base was being increased on this parcel as it is. It was also brought to the attention of the public that we recently helped preserve 188 acres at Delbarton where 32 or more homes could have been built.

Report of Bid Receipt Committee...

The next item on the agenda was a review of one project that had gone out to bid, which was the installation of a water line on Jockey Hollow Road. We had previously been working on the engineer's estimate of a \$350,000 cost but the low bid came in at approximately \$200,000. The Township is benefiting from the fact that contractors are desperate for work in this poor economy.

Jockey Hollow Water Road water line extension

Next on the agenda were two resolutions related to the Jockey Hollow Road water line extension. This matter was discussed extensively at last month's Township Committee meeting (for more information see <http://www.jeffgrayzel.com/nl/NLJune09.pdf>). At that time we rejected a proposal based on the engineer's estimate of the project cost, of which we were asking the area residents to pay a portion of via a special assessment (which most objected to). However, since then we had formal bids received for the project that were significantly less than what the engineer had estimated. Given the reduced

cost the Township Committee felt that this was now something that was worth pursuing as a public safety improvement project. It will allow fire hydrants to be installed along the length of Jockey Hollow Road, thus providing increased fire protection for the homes in this area.

Two resolutions were then presented:

RESOLUTION 146-09: Authorized the cancellation of certain previously-approved general capital projects. By cancelling the remaining (unused) funds on these older capital projects we can use the remaining funds to pay for this project without increasing taxes to pay for it.

RESOLUTION 147-09: This resolution was tabled until the next meeting. Its purpose was to authorize the Township to enter into a cost sharing agreement with Delbarton/St. Mary's Abbey and the Southeast Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (the local water company) for the installation of the water main. Both of those entities will pay a portion of the project cost, and the Township will pay the remainder. The exact cost-split has not yet been determined so we postponed our vote until our next meeting.

Ordinances for Final Consideration...

The meeting then continued with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption". This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. There were three items up for Final Consideration:

Ordinance 19-09 allows for a No Parking sign to be installed on Mountainside Drive.

Ordinance 20-09 allows for the conversion of several parking spots in the municipal building parking lot to be converted into short-term (15 minutes) parking spots in order to allow people doing quick business at town hall to have easy access to the building.

Ordinance 21-09 provides for salary increases to our non-union employees for the 2009 fiscal year.

The only remarks from the Township Committee came prior to passage of the final ordinance related to salary increases. It should first be noted that our non-union employees are being given a 2.0% salary increase this year, which is due to the tough times facing our municipality because of the poor economy. This compares to a 3.9% increase that our unionized employees are receiving under contracts negotiated over two years ago that we are locked into through the end of this year.

We had two public comments, the first of which came from one of our non-union employees. He said that he has worked for the Township for a long time and that he was one of our most reliable employees. He asked why he was being compensated less than other employees just because they have a contract.

The next comment came from a resident who asked for clarification on the meaning of the wide salary ranges shown in the ordinance for certain job functions.

After public commentary was closed I then remarked that I previously had pointed out that we have no incentive pay component of the salaries we pay. While our unions are covered by specific contracts, we have the opportunity with our non-union employees to set aside a certain amount of money to use as "pay for performance" similar to what is done at most corporations. Instead of all getting paid the exact same salary increase as has been our practice, I suggested that we set up a pool of money equivalent to what that total increase would have been (so the group as a whole would not be short-changed) and we give them a smaller base increase and leave a certain portion of money to give our best performers a higher increase. For this reason I voted against the salary ordinance as proposed, which still passed by a 4-1 margin.

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 23-09 allows for the stop sign at the intersection of Burnham Road and Lake Road to be moved from Burnham Road and onto the portion of Lake Road heading Westbound. This allows Burnham Road to become the through street onto the bridge heading over Speedwell Lake.

Ordinance 24-09 appropriates funding for the installation of the Jockey Hollow water line. The exact amount of funding may change at the next meeting prior to a final vote and adoption of this ordinance (when final cost-sharing is determined).

No public comments were made on either of these ordinances. However, I made a remark relative to #23-09. I said I had received several complaints from residents about increased speeding along Burnham Road since it was resurfaced. I wondered if changing the location of the stop sign would encourage drivers to speed faster down Burnham Road knowing there was no stop sign at the end. I informed the public that I had requested that the police department conduct a traffic study of the Burnham Road//Mill Road intersection and take a look at shifting the stop sign that is currently on Mill Road at this intersection so that it would reside on Burnham Road, thus helping to address the traffic concerns of neighbors. I had previously suggested that we make this intersection a 4-way stop, but this idea has not received support.

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 ordinances will be publicly debated at our next Committee 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.

Resolutions...

Several resolutions were then up for a vote. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_final3_07-15-09.pdf

These were without much controversy and all passed. However, I did make the following two comments:

- Based on the increasing legal bills for the law firm of Coffey and Associates I asked our municipal attorney to give us an update on the status of the Combe landfill litigation that is in the process of settlement.
- On our list of resolutions tonight we have yet another award of a non-fair and non-open contract award to Hatch Mott Macdonald engineering firm. I know that Hatch Mott does an excellent job and they know all the intricacies of our sewer system, but we cannot continue to award large contracts without going out to bid on them. As evidenced by the bids that just came back on the Jockey Hollow water line project, which were 43% under our estimates, there is a competitive market right now for work and we are probably short-changing ourselves by not bidding this out. I request that all future work that is usually awarded to Hatch Mott McDonald be put up for public bid.

Later on in the evening AFTER our closed session, we returned to our chambers and passed the following 3 resolutions:

1. Resolution #149-09: To allow our municipal attorney to prepare ABC charges for a liquor violation at Tiffany's Restaurant;

2. Resolution #150-09: provides for the settlement of a tax appeal for a home on Canfield Road.

3. Resolution #151-09: Allows the Township to enter into an employment agreement with a Township firefighter who has been placed on probation.

Copies of all resolutions passed may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or they can be viewed on the Twp website at: <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.

In addition to the three public comments made above (see open space and ordinance sections above), the following comments were made at the July 15th meetings:

- The next resident informed us about a curb that had been torn up by a plow during the past winter season and complained about the flooding the lack of curbing has caused.
- Next, a resident of a community off James Street presented the Township Committee with a petition requesting the installation of a sidewalk or walking path along James Street so that residents can safely walk into Morristown. She noted that one issue is that the border between the Township and Morristown is located along a portion of the length so a cooperative effort would be necessary. She urged us to pursue this for the safety of all the residents along James Street.



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 at the July 15 meeting:

- We just completed a second tour of duty for the "Keep Kids Alive Drive 25" lawn sign program (to raise awareness of speeding in residential neighborhoods) on Sherman Avenue in the Fairchild section of the Twp. It will now embark on its next tour of duty on Springbrook Road next week.
- The Police Department recently participated in the "Click It or Ticket" enforcement program that ran for 2 weeks. We had a grant for hours of enforcement. 205 summonses issued of which 6 of the summonses were for unrestrained children in the vehicle. Pre and Post surveys of seatbelt usage were both over 90% compliance which is around the state and national average. This program is meant to raise awareness of the importance of wearing seatbelts because it prevents injuries and saves lives. But it is not just during this period that we need to wear our seatbelts.
- The police department recently received a Cannondale bicycle for our Police Bike Unit from the Neumann Foundation who is giving New Jersey Police Departments 101 bicycles in memory of Officer Keith Neumann of the Essex County Sheriff's Department who was shot and killed 20 years ago during a drug raid. He was also a bike patrol officer. The significance of 101 is that was his badge number. Thanks to the Neumann Foundation for including Morris Township in their generous grant.



Other Commentary from Township Committee members...

The following comments were made at our meeting:

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Had no comments at this meeting.

Ray Snyder made the following comments:

- Had no comments at this meeting.

Dan Caffrey made the following comments:

- Congratulated the Carmans on their anniversary.

Mayor Scott Rosenbush made the following comments:

- Noted that our residents overall tax bill including municipal, school, and county taxes will go down this year. This is due to a school tax shift from Morris Twp. To Morristown. All of us here in our Township municipal offices worked very hard to hold our municipal tax increase to 1.8%
- Many people have been asking about the status of our red light camera pilot program previously announced. We are still evaluating the technology and the vendors. Field tests showed that there are significant numbers of cars running the red light at the Columbia Road/ Normandy Parkway intersection.
- Thanks to the Beautification Committee for their work in sprucing up Speedwell Avenue with new plantings.
- Made two Mayoral appointments of Jane Byron and Siobhan Kirk to the Beautification Committee.

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.

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.

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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 want to hear about development in their neighborhoods or are either opposed to or supportive of certain development projects, then they need to voice their opinions in-person at the hearings. (Letters are not admissible at these hearings).

The **Board of Adjustment** held its regular meeting on July 27. Please see the following agenda for the

descriptions of the applications heard at this meeting, all of which were small projects:

http://morristwp.com/AGENDAS/boa_06-22-09.pdf

The next **Board of Adjustment** held meeting will be held on August 24, and the agenda will be published online a few days before the meeting.

The **Planning Board** held a regular meeting on July 20. The agenda can be found online:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_AGENDA_07-20-09.pdf

There were three major items on. The first was by Colgate Palmolive Corporation to add a rail line into their facility off Hanover Avenue. They will now be able to receive delivery of raw materials via rail instead of by truck. It is estimated that approximately 28 truck deliveries per month will be eliminated, which means 28 less trucks on our roads. I view this is a very positive development.

The second application was by Morristown Beard School to upgrade a temporary gravel parking lot into a permanent gravel lot with appropriate drainage.

The third, and last, application on the agenda was the request by the Wheatsheaf townhouse development to remove the previously approved age restriction. This project had been previously approved a couple of years ago by the planning board as a "planned community" for aged 55+ individuals, but the developer has found that there is presently no market for purchasing these types of units. I have discussed this in several of my newsletters over the past month. See my website to view these past newsletters www.jeffgrayzel.com/

The developer presented 3 witnesses, the most interesting of which I thought was the traffic engineer. He stated that the intersection of Kahdena Road and Mendham Road was already over-loaded during the morning rush hour with prolonged wait times for drivers on Kahdena turning left onto Mendham Road. He then told us that he estimated 12 additional rush hour trips would be generated out of this new non-restricted townhouse development at the peak rush hour (which I think underestimates traffic coming out of a 23-unit development). This means that this overloaded intersection will now be having even more cars added to it.

The application was passed with absolutely no concessions made by the developer. In my opinion the developer got a free pass. I made several points at the meeting, but emphasized the precedent the Planning Board was setting by not requiring the developer to install sidewalks, since children would now be a part of this development. One other Planning Board member agreed with me on this point I made about setting a precedent for future developments that would ask for a waiver for a sidewalk. So the final vote was 7-2 in favor of approving the zone change without any changes to their plans.

The next planning board meeting is scheduled for August 17. On the agenda for this meeting is the continuing hearing for the subdivision of one lot into three on Shadyside Street. The agenda will be available on the township website a few days before the meeting at:

<http://morristwp.com>

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.

[Other items of interest...](#)



- **Concert series at Ginty Field:** August 16th (a make-up date) and 18th are the final two shows for our summer concert series, which are sponsored by Provident Bank and the Parks & Rec Advisory Committee. Bring a blanket and picnic dinner and come enjoy the music. The complete schedule with a description of the type of music can be found online at:

http://morristwp.com/pdfs/Morris_Township_Concert_Flyer_2009.pdf

- **Pay your property taxes online:** There is no fee if you pay via your bank checking account. For details see this link:
https://www.cit-e.net/morris-nj/cit-e-access/TaxBill_Std/?TID=62&TPID=5979
- **Pay your sewer bill online:** There is no fee if you pay via your bank checking account. For details see this link:
https://www.cit-e.net/morris-nj/cit-e-access/Edm_UtilityBill/?TID=62&TPID=7761
- **WIBIT makes U.S. debut at Sunrise Lake in Morris Twp.** Wibit, an evolution of water play for all ages that was made popular in Europe, has made its American debut at Sunrise Lake at Lewis Morris County Park in Morris Township. Wibit provides a track where players can overcome obstacles and race each other in a friendly competition on the water. Wibit kayaks are also available for a relaxing ride around the lake or for a race with family or friends to see who's the fastest. Lifeguards are on duty to supervise the aquagames. More information about Sunrise Lake and its summer hours of operation may be obtained by calling 973-829-8257. For more information on Wibit see www.wibitsports.com/
- **The Parks & Recreation Office has openings in the following summer programs** taking place during August: Cheer Leading Clinics, Multi Sports clinic, Squirt Sports clinic. See the Parks & Recreation brochure for details or call 973-326-7371.



- **Historic Churches of Morristown Tour:** The Morris County Tourism Bureau is hosting this tour on August 8. The description reads "Morristown is a town of towers and spires, home to several churches and many schools. Join us as we visit Morristown's six historic churches... and learn about key historical figures that are buried in two of the church cemeteries." The tour is led by the Morris County Heritage Commission. Tour starts at 6 Court Street & group size is limited to 25. Contact the MCTB for more information at 973-631-5151 or on their website at www.morristourism.org



- **Streeter & Ginty Pools still taking memberships:** There is still time to join! Membership info can be found on the Township website: http://www.morristwp.com/dept_recpools.asp
- **Fosterfields Harvest Festival:** Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 13, 2009 and come enjoy a 1920s Country Fair and Harvest Festival at Fosterfields in Morris Twp. Join the festivities as an old-fashioned country fair is recreated! Enjoy wagon rides, farm animals, period music, crafts, exhibits, a farmers market, and hands-on activities. Time: 12:00p-5:00p
- **Harter Road overpass replacement:** The NJ Dept. of Transportation has begun the replacement of the Harter Road overpass over route 287. Harter Road will be closed for 3 months beginning July 17 and traffic detoured to alternate routes.
- **Expanded plastics recycling in Morris Township:** Morris Township now recycles classes 1 through 7 plastics. Formerly, we accepted only class 1 and 2 plastics bottles. Remember that increased recycling REDUCES our taxes. See this link on the Township website for more information: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/ABC's_of_Recycling1-7Rev1.pdf



Upcoming Committee Meeting...

There is only one Township Committee meeting scheduled for the month of August which will take place on Wednesday August 19th. The draft agenda should be online on August 14 at <http://morristwp.com/>

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.

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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