



Newsletter #7 ~ March 31, 2008

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March 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. This newsletter covers the Township Committee meeting of 3/5/08 and 3/19/08 and also provides updates on a couple of issues in the community. If you did not see the prior newsletters, you can view them at www.JeffGrayzel.com and click on the "newsletter" link.

March 5th Committee Meeting...

You can view a copy of the agenda from the March 5 Township Committee meeting via a link to our Township website: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_03-05-08.pdf

The March 5 meeting was to have opened with the continuation of an administrative hearing for an alleged liquor law violation. The hearing was continued until April 16. I will provide information once the hearing is completed.



The postponement made for a very short Township Committee meeting since there was not much else on the agenda. There were no Ordinances for Public Hearing and Final Approval at the March 5 meeting since nothing new had been introduced at prior meetings.

Our Township Administrator then reviewed the bid process and final awards for several engineering projects that had previously been approved. The individual projects are listed on the agenda (see the internet link).

March 19th Township Committee Meeting...

You can view a copy of the agenda from the March 19 Township Committee meeting via a link to our Township website: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_03-19-08.pdf

Tim Quinn promoted to New Chief of Police...

This meeting opened with the swearing-in of our new Chief of Police, Tim Quinn. Chief Quinn has been with the Morris Township Police department for 30 years. A nice bio on Chief Quinn was written in last week's NewsBee newspaper, which outlines his experience and achievements. See the story at: <http://www.morrisnewsbee.com/>

I wish Chief Quinn well in his new capacity.

Ordinances...

The meeting continued with final consideration of previously introduced ordinances and with new ordinances for introduction.

There were no ordinances for Public Hearing and Final Approval at the March 19 meeting. However, there were several for introduction, as follows:

The first item for final introduction was an ordinance to purchase back-up generators for several of our fire stations. The updated generators are needed in case power is lost to the station in a storm to allow the station to stay operational (and specifically to allow the garage doors to be opened so that the trucks can leave on a call).

The second ordinance for introduction was to allow for a handicap parking space to be placed in front of a house for resident who had requested such. An ordinance is required for this because it is a specific change to our parking regulations.

The third ordinance for introduction was for an update to an existing ordinance related to walls and fences. We had a situation in town where one neighbor disagreed with another over the right to build a tall masonry wall between their properties. The intent of the existing ordinance is to allow this (within reason of course), but the language was not clear. So the Planning Board, at the suggestion of the township engineer, proposed new language for the ordinance, which was then referred to the Township Committee for final approval.

The fourth ordinance for introduction related to updating the Township Code for Municipal Solid Waste. This came about because the state has put out new regulations relating to recycling. The State of NJ wants to see more of our solid waste (i.e. regular garbage) being recycled, and their recent directive outlined some minimum standards every municipality should have in the municipal code. Morris Township actually does an excellent job of recycling (although more is always better since it saves us the cost of paying to dump the garbage), but some of the language in our code needed to be updated to conform to the new state directive.

Copies of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk.

Several Resolutions were then passed. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_03-19-08.pdf

Copies of these resolutions may be obtained from our Township Clerk.

Plymouth & Mackenzie road drainage improvements...

Our Township Administrator then reviewed the bid process and final awards for a long-awaited (by the residents of these streets) engineering project to improve stormwater drainage in this area. With this selection of a contractor via the bidding process, this project can begin.

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.



- One speaker on March 5 asked about the proposed conversion of a gas station on Madison Avenue into a convenience market and Dunkin' Donuts shop. He also made comments related to increased traffic and possible loitering this would bring to the area. He was advised that this development application was being heard by the Board of Adjustment, and that he should address his comments to that body. The next meeting of the Board of Adjustment in Monday March 24 at 7:30pm. The meeting is held at our municipal building and is open to the public.

- Another speaker on March 5 requested that a sidewalk be installed on James Street to

connect Springbrook Rd and the Footes Lane community to Morristown, so that people could walk safely along James street into town (to go to the library or to get an ice cream). The Mayor responded that generally there was a policy of not installing new sidewalks except in an area that might be deemed dangerous, but that the engineering committee (who oversees sidewalk repair and construction) would take it into consideration in the future.

- Another speaker on March 5 asked if the public commentary at the township meetings could occur at the beginning of the meeting instead of the end, so that people did not have to stay up late in order to speak to the Township Committee. He also suggested we have our meetings broadcast over public access cable television or internet.
- At the March 19 meeting there was only one person who asked questions during the public commentary portion of the March 19 meeting. He asked the following:
 - He asked for clarification as to what the resolution in opposition to Purchasing Agent was all about. He was informed that, as stated in the text of the resolution, that this was opposing a state mandate that each municipality appoint a "Qualified" purchasing agent, which imposes a financial burden on us (and other municipalities) during a period in which the state is reducing funding to municipalities. The effect would be to add a cost to the local level which would be paid by the municipal taxpayers.
 - He then brought up the fact to the Committee that two local towns had recently been in the press (Pequannock and Kenilworth) related to Committee meetings being broadcast on cable. Kenilworth now broadcasts meetings and Pequannock hosted Cablevision for a presentation to Committee and public as a forum to discuss possibility. I asked the Committee if they would be willing to host such an event. He reiterated his point by saying that it was a shame that meetings were not broadcast on cable and how this particular evening could have been shared with more members of our community to witness the swearing-in of Chief Quinn.

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 Comments...

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 informed the public that the trails committee was making progress on the Trails Plan for Morris Township and that we were hoping to have the final report ready for presentation at a public meeting in early April. (See additional information below.)
- We had a fire on Fairmount Avenue fire. One home was badly damaged. We all need to make sure our smoke detectors are working properly. Our thanks to the firemen who quickly contained and then extinguished the blaze. These individuals put their lives on the line to support the community.
- I received a complimentary e-mail from a resident who said the newly installed parking spaces at the Convent Train Station are having a positive effect. Although they are not the solution to the overall parking problem, it has helped ease the situation a bit. I congratulated our parking committee and those involved in moving quickly to get those new spots in place.
- I gave the public a follow-up on the status of our negotiations with the Teamsters union who represent our DPW employees. They have been working without a contract since January 1, 2006. The process is hopefully nearing an end and we hope to have resolution (finally) at an upcoming negotiation session. I expressed my regret that the process has taken so long.
- I informed the public that township budget will be tight this year. We need to review all the

services that we provide and need to assure ourselves that we have efficient delivery of all our services. We need to review headcount across all departments in our municipal government.

Other Comments...

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Thanked the DPW teams which worked through the night during the last storm to salt and plow so our roads would be safe.
- Thanked our Health Dept employees for a vigorous and thorough response to the beef alert.
- Attended an affordable housing conference organized by the Housing Coalition. Acknowledged the upcoming challenge to Morris Township when final affordable housing rules are promulgated this summer.

Scott Rosenbush made the following comments:

- He congratulated the Morris Township Fire Department on receiving a \$21,000 grant from the Fund Insurance Company to purchase fire equipment. The fire department will be purchasing air masks, an air mask fit test machine and full-body rescue harnesses.

Mayor Nace made the following comments:

- Morris County has awarded the traffic study for the Jets complex on Park Avenue. Several municipalities are participating in this project to study the effects of this new facility on surrounding traffic patterns.
- The Deed restriction for the paper street off of Fredrick Place has been signed.
- See upcoming newsletter for info on the Relay for Life, a Mayoral Wellness activity.
- Sat., March 15 is St. Patrick's Day parade in which the Morris Twp. Committee will be marching.
- Pleased that an engineering contract has been awarded for improvements at Plymouth and Mackenzie Roads.

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 land acquisition and union negotiations.

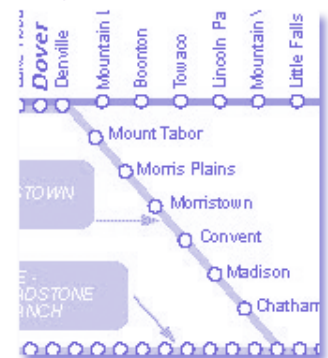
THE FOLLOWING SECTION CONTAINS GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HAPPENINGS AROUND MORRIS TOWNSHIP.

Updated map of our Convent Station Train Station parking lot

As you read in my last newsletter, several new resident spaces were recently added to the Convent Train Station parking lot. An updated parking map showing the recent improvements (new resident spaces created) can be found at:

http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/parking_map.pdf

We urge commuters to also utilize the temporary parking for the Morristown Train Station located at Headquarters Plaza. A free shuttle bus, which now operates until 9pm at night, runs between the train station and the temporary parking facility. More info can be found at the following link: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/Morristown_sta.pdf



Trails Committee announces first public meeting

It has been announced that the recently-formed Morris Township Trails Committee will make a public presentation of their draft plan on Wednesday April 9. The Trails Committee has been charged with assembling a plan to increase walking and bicycling from their neighborhoods to schools, parks, playgrounds, historic sites, transit stations (train), and other destinations via a network of trails and pathways. While this is a long-term vision, this journey must start with the first step (so to speak), which is the Morris Township "Trails and Pathways Plan".

The presentation will begin at 7:00pm on April 9 at our Municipal Building at 50 Woodland Avenue.

NEW SECTION:

Building Applications around town

Several people have asked me "What is happening on Kahdena Road across from Fosterfields?" After I tell them about the approved plans for a townhouse development they tell me that they had heard nothing about this previously. This was a project approved by the Planning Board in early 2007. There was minimal public opposition to the project, and so it was approved.

If residents are opposed to certain types of developments, they need to voice their opinions in-person at the hearings. In order to keep the community informed about other development proposals in Morris Township, I would like to start communicating to the community the various projects that are 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).

In general, the Planning Board meets on the first Monday of the month and the Board of Adjustment meets on the first Monday of every month and the Board of Adjustment meets on the fourth Monday of the month. However, there may be other meetings interspersed. I suggest you check the township calendar to confirm the exact dates:

<http://plus.calendars.net/morristwp>

The Planning Board will hold a special meeting on Monday March 31 to discuss Delbarton's proposal for the building of new fields and a fieldhouse at the southern end of their property (off Sugarloaf Road). More details can be found on the Planning Board agenda:

http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_03-31-08.pdf

The Planning Board will hold a regular meeting on Monday April 7 to discuss two minor subdivision projects. The first is a request to subdivide one lot into three on Valley View Street and Shadyside Street. The second is to subdivide one lot into two on Woodside Road. The complete agenda can be found at this link: http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_04-07-08.pdf

If you live near either of the properties above you may want to come to the meeting to hear their proposals.

The Board of Adjustment will hold its regular meeting on April 28 when they will continue a hearing for 219 Madison Avenue, which is a proposal to turn the 3 service bays of the gas station into a Dunkin Donuts store. The agenda for this meeting is still not available, but will be posted on the Township website about a week before the meeting: <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:

There are many items of interest this month. Please read through this long, but interesting, list!

- Registration for 2008 Swim Pool Memberships is now open. Membership is good for entrance to both pools. Returning pool members may renew their memberships On-Line on the Township Website or by mail. New members must register through the Department of Parks & Recreation Office. For more information on pool memberships or other services provided at the pools, please call the Department of Parks & Recreation at 973-326-7371. For those of you who are unaware, many renovations to our pool facilities are being



completed prior to the season. You can find a summary of these improvements at this link:
<http://morristwp.com/pdfs/poolimprov.pdf>

- **The Department of Parks & Recreation has published their spring/summer recreation guide.** This guide contains a wealth of information about the park facilities in the Township as well as a multitude of programs for both youths and adults taking place in the Township. The guide is mailed to every home in Morris Township, but can also be viewed online at:

<http://morristwp.com/pdfs/summer08.pdf>

For more information about any of our recreation programs, please call the Department of Parks & Recreation at 973-326-7371.

- **On April 2nd the Recreation Department is offering the first of two free "Trek The Trails" bicycle rides.** These Bicycle Outings are for youths in grades 4 through 8. Moms, Dads & Grandparents are encouraged to ride, too. Representatives from Marty's Reliable Cycle shop will check bicycles for maintenance and safety, and discuss proper riding techniques; and then will lead the group for an off-roadway ride through the countryside on paved and graveled surfaced segments of the trailways. Participants must bring their own bicycles, bicycle helmets, and water. The rides are free. Pre-registration is required by calling the Parks & Recreation Office at 973-326-7371. Date/Time/Place:

1. Thursday April 2nd from 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM for a Patriots Path Ride, meet at Streeter Pool Parking Lot

2. Friday May 13th from 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM for a Loantaka Brook Path Ride, meet at Ginty Pool Parking Lot

- **Voting for School Board Elections** and school budget approval occurs on April 15th. Polls are open limited hours from 2:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. Please check your election notice (in the US mail) for your polling place as some of them are different from where you vote in the general election.

- **Earth day is Saturday April 19.**

a. If you want to organize a neighborhood clean up, our DPW department will provide you with gloves, bags, and other tools you might need. Call them for more information at 973-326-7398.

b. The Morris Township Parks Department is asking residents to join in at their local parks for clean-up activities. Gloves will be distributed at each park. For more info contact our Parks Department at 973-326-7371.

c. The Morris County Park commission is holding an Earth Day celebration in Lewis Morris Park. 11:00a-4:00pm. The festival features live animals, games, children's crafts, guided walks, food, canoe rides, and more! Location: Lewis Morris County Park, Morris Twp.

Cost: \$4 per person or \$10 per carload



- **Sign-ups for kids T-ball, softball, and Little League are underway.** Spots are filling up quickly. If you would like to enroll your child please contact our Recreation Department at 973-326-7371.

- **Electronics Recycling Day 04-12-08.** Additional info can be found online at
http://morristwp.com/pdfs/Elec_Recy_04-12-08.pdf

- **I had previously reported that our DPW had begun accepting dry-cell batteries** (A, AA, AAA, C, D, 9V) for recycling at the DPW depot on Jane Way. As an alternative, you can now

recycle dry cell batteries at the Municipal Building. A battery recycling container is located in the center lobby at the information table.

- **CURBSIDE CONTAINER COLLECTION OF LEAVES, GRASS, BRUSH** has resumed for the spring season. More info can be found online at:
http://morristwp.com/dept_dpwcollectionservices.asp#leaves

- **The Morris Township Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association Local #70** is sponsoring two \$1,500.00 Scholarships for a Township resident graduating from high school in 2008. More information can be found online at: <http://www.fmba70.org/scholarship.html>

- **For those of you the travel on Mt. Kemble Avenue (Route 202)** please take note that there is construction taking place near Springbrook Road beginning March 2 for a period of several months. You can expect road closure and/ or detours during that period. More details can be found online at: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/RT202_Detour%202-25-08.pdf

Upcoming Committee Meeting...

The next Township Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 16th (there is only one meeting in April). I urge you to please 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 comments you would like to share with me then please send 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

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