



Newsletter #16 ~ November, 2008

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November 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 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.

This edition covers the month of November including the Township Committee meeting of 11/12/08, 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.

Click links below for newsletter topics:

**November 12 Township
Committee Meeting**

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**Report of Bid
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**GENERAL INFORMATION
ABOUT HAPPENINGS AROUND MORRIS TOWNSHIP**

November 12 Township Committee Meeting...

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

http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_11-12-08.pdf

Auction of abandoned car...

The meeting opened with a brief auction of an abandoned car. There was one bidder in the audience who paid \$500 for this 2002 Nissan Quest.

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 four such ordinances from the October 15 meeting.

The first ordinance, #34-08, amended a prior salary ordinance in order to correct the listed salary for a Communication Officer in the police department.

The second ordinance, #35-08, is intended to strengthen our existing ordinance regarding the rules and regulations related to the towing of vehicles. These changes increase the requirements that towing companies need to abide by both before and after they tow a vehicle to their storage yard.



The third ordinance, #36-08, is an ordinance that allows us to partially fund the improvement project for Burnham Road. At the prior meeting it was suggested by Mr. Goldberg and agreed by the Committee that the \$150,000 fee listed in the original ordinance be split between the sewer capital fund and the general capital fund in order to more accurately reflect the percentage of costs for this project that are related to improvement to our sewer system. Thus, ordinance #36-08 was amended to be for funding in the amount of \$75,000 to come from the sewer capital fund.

The fourth ordinance, #37-08, was the sister ordinance to #36-08 above that allocated funding in the amount of \$75,000 to come from the general capital fund.

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

Ordinances for Introduction...

There were five ordinances for introduction at this meeting that were listed on the agenda. The exact title of each ordinance can be found by viewing the agenda:

http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_11-12-08.pdf

The first ordinance, #38-08, created no parking zones along portions of Westminster Place, Indian Head Road, and Wheatsheaf Farm Road (in the new townhouse development).

The second ordinance, #39-08, authorized the Township to contribute \$1 million dollars from our Open Space Trust Fund to help acquire a portion of the 187 acres at St. Mary's Abbey (Delbarton) for open space preservation. Please see my July newsletter for more details regarding this matter.

The third ordinance, #40-08, rescinded a previously approved ordinance to allow JCP&L an easement to install a power line at the Collinsville Firehouse. This easement was no longer necessary, so the ordinance was rescinded.

The fourth ordinance, #41-08, established development fees charged to developers of new residential or commercial space. The money will be used to build or rehabilitate affordable housing units in the Township. (See my September newsletter for more information on this matter, and also see the special meeting notice below.)

The fifth ordinance, #42-08, updated the rules and regulations relating to our swimming pools. This included the establishment of a fee schedule for the 2009 pool season.



This concludes the "ordinances for introduction". These ordinances will be publicly debated at the December 17 meeting. At that time, a formal public hearing will be held and members of the public will be able to ask questions, make comments or give testimony.

Report of Bid Receipt Committee...

The next item on the agenda was a report from Fred Rossi, our Township Administrator, regarding bids received for 5 separate items up for bid. Please see the agenda for a listing of these items. Four of the 5 items were recommended for award (i.e. purchase) with the exception of the Vacuum Street Sweeper

that had only one bid be submitted and which was considered too high. It will be re-bid at a later date.

Details of each individual project may be obtained from our Township Administrator.

Resolutions...

Several Resolutions were then passed. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_11-12-08.pdf

These were routine and without controversy. Copies of all resolutions passed may be obtained from our Township Clerk.

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 my last newsletter I inadvertently left out one piece of public commentary. At our last meeting we passed a resolution related to the possible relocation of the Bicycling Hall of Fame. It has lost its quarters in Somerville, NJ and is looking for a new home. One proposal is to move it to Morristown, which we supported in our resolution. The President of the Morris County Freewheelers, a recreational bicycling group, is a resident of Morris Township. He thanked the Township Committee for supporting the move to the area and commented that there would be many benefits for the community related to increased awareness of bike safety, motorist awareness of bikers, and improving conditions for bikers. The facility would be a museum and an attraction that would be a destination for people from near and far. For more information on the Freewheelers, visit their website at <http://www.mafw.org/>
- The first resident who spoke at the November 12 meeting complained about the noise pollution from the NJ Transit trains as they travel along the stretch parallel to Madison Avenue (before passing under Normandy Parkway). Trains are required to blow their horns prior to passing over road crossings, and this creates a lot of noise for the nearby neighbors. He stated that N.J. State now allowed for changes in the types of horns used which would help reduce the noise pollution. He further stated that some other municipalities along the line had surmounted the bureaucratic and legal barriers that NJ and NJ Transit had raised, but that, after years of excuses, Morris Township had accomplished nothing. Mayor Nace replied that the Township has made attempts to help, but that NJ Transit is difficult and unresponsive.
- The second resident who spoke asked several questions:
 - 1) He had noticed a fox caught in an old-style foot trap adjacent to a soccer field and called police about it. Responding police found another trap set near a chicken coop adjacent to the soccer field. He wanted to know if these traps were legal, and what agency was responsible to follow up. He was told that they were illegal and the police were responsible to investigate.
 - 2) Asked about the new Recreation Foundation (tax exempt) organization that was formed. He was told that it was privately run and not affiliated with the Township.
 - 3) Inquired as to the status of the traffic study related to the new Jets sports complex on Park Avenue. He was told that the report is now in draft form and that a final version would be available shortly for public review.
 - 4) Asked about the township policy related to employees taking home vehicles.
 - 5) He asked about the Township Information Technology department and what kinds of projects



they work on. He was told that their current project is to update the time clocks (used for employee check-in) at several facilities.

6) Lastly, he wanted to thank Mr. Nace and Mr. Watson for their years of service on the Township Committee since they were stepping down at the end of the year. He wished them well.

- The third resident to speak complained about the flooding problem on Tracey Court that is caused by the overflowing of Watnong Brook during heavy rains. He asked the Township to investigate some remediation of this problem.

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. Given my extended remarks about COAH made earlier in the meeting, I limited myself to the following brief comments:

- Recently the Morris United Soccer recreational season ended another successful season. I have 2 kids who participate in this wonderful soccer program. The Morris Colonial and Wildcat football programs have also recently ended their seasons. I thought this would be an appropriate time to thank the leaders of these organizations for the work they do on behalf of the community, and to thank all the volunteer coaches who put in the time to coach our kids.
- Speeding on our local roads is an issue that has been important to me ever since my wife was struck 9 years ago by a speeding vehicle as she pulled out of our street in her car. Ever since I started campaigning for election 5 years ago, I have spoken to the need to improve safety by increasing our efforts to control speeding through our neighborhoods, which would also make our streets safer for our kids.



Therefore it gives me great pleasure to inform the public that the Morris Township police department will be distributing lawn signs obtained from the "Keep Kids Alive, Drive 25" organization. The mission of this organization is to reduce child death and injury on our roadways by promoting driver awareness. We will first place these signs on Sherman Avenue and the surrounding Fairchild neighborhood for a period of time and then move them to other neighborhoods around the township. For more information on this program, and to order your own lawn signs if you wish, please visit <http://www.keepkidsalivedrive25.org/>

These signs are one small step in the quest to improve street safety in Morris Township. The Police Department, Engineering Department, and the Engineering Sub-Committee of the Township Committee are looking at other measures in this regard. I continue to urge them to pursue a test of speed bumps in 1 or 2 areas so that we can determine how these devices may help us to better control speeding and increase neighborhood safety.

- The Township police department reported a "successful" Halloween. There were very few incidents on either Halloween or the night before. The bicycle unit was deployed both nights to patrol the neighborhoods that had known prior activity.
- During leaf collection season many people, myself included, wonder when leaf pick-up is scheduled for their own street. If you are one of those people, you can check the municipal website. On the right side of the home page you will see which sector is currently being collected. Once your sector is indicated, you will know that pick up will occur within the next few days.

Other Commentary from Township Committee members...

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Attended meeting of SEAMLESS, the Southeast Morris County municipal representatives who meet monthly to discuss common problems and solutions and seek and share related best practices and information. The next meeting is January 27th, fourth Tuesday of the month, at the Madison Library. Traffic, parking, trails, bike paths and shared services are some of the current topics.
- Noted the Veterans Day ceremonies and the great job done by the High School marching band.

Scott Rosenbush made the following comment:

- Attended a meeting of the Ten Towns Committee. This group monitors streams that discharge into the Great Swamp. The Township gives them annual financial support.
- Noted the great public turnout on Veterans Day. He thanked the Veterans Day Association, the group who puts on the events.

Rick Watson made the following comments:

- Noted the Veterans Day ceremonies and the public turnout.
- Congratulated Dan Caffrey and Ray Snyder on winning the election for Morris Township Committee.
- Informed the public that he is part of the Communications Committee. He thanked everyone who contributed to the recent Municipal Messenger newsletter.
- Noted a news article that the Mayor of Hanover had refused a bribe and turned in the person who offered it.

Mayor Nace made the following comments:

- Commented on the Ten Towns Committee meeting and the comments by the resident about Watnong Brook. He noted that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection does not allow the dredging of streams in most cases. He said the Ten Towns Committee was looking at funding the restorations of certain streams.
- Noted that there was a dedication of park benches in honor of Kathleen Ginty Hyland and her late husband Patric Hyland, both of whom served on the Township Committee. The benches are located along the memorial pathway at Ginty Field.
- Commented that the SEAMLESS group is made up of towns to the east and south of Morristown, and that they were looking to create another group for the neighbors to the North.
- Stated that speeding and traffic calming is a priority of Morris Township. He noted the targeted enforcement using hand-held radar guns.
- Commented on the development by Morris County of certain portions of the Greystone property. He would like to see their phase 2, which includes rectangular playing fields with lights, expedited because there is a need for these fields. He said that Morris Township would like to partner with the County on this project.

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.**

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** was to have held a regular meeting on November 10. The agenda for this meeting can be found online at the township website: http://morristwp.com/agendas/boa_11-10-08.pdf

The meeting was supposed to hear continuing testimony regarding the Madison Avenue Gas Mart project, but the applicant requested a postponement of the hearing so the meeting was cancelled.

The next regular **Board of Adjustment** meeting will take place on December 8. The meeting agenda will be available on the township website several days before the meeting at the following link: http://morristwp.com/agendas/boa_12-08-08.pdf

The **Planning Board** held its regular meetings on November 3, and this agenda can be viewed here: http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_11-03-08.pdf

The major item on the agenda was for the St. Mary's Abbey sports field. They requested an amended site plan to a previously approved plan for a clubhouse adjacent to the newly approved sports fields at Delbarton. The plans were changed to remove the squash courts and put in a food service area so that they could service food during games. They also requested relief from a requirement for a 250-foot buffer along Sugar Loaf Road which had been a requirement of the CCRC one in which this parcel resided. Since the CCRC plans have been abandoned (see below) the planning board approved their request for a reduced buffer.

The **Planning Board** also held a regular meeting on December 1, and this agenda can be found online: http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_12-01-08.pdf

The major item on the agenda was the hearing for the subdivision of the Delbarton property in order that they may sell off a large parcel for open space preservation (see my July newsletter for more info on this).

Of note, the hearing of the application by Joel Meer to subdivide a property on Shadyside Road was postponed until February 3, 2009. No new testimony was heard at this meeting. Applicant proposes to subdivide the property into three lots, two of which are proposed for new construction. Applicant also seeks several other variances for insufficient lot depth and setbacks and waiver relief for steep slope disturbance are also being requested.

The **Planning Board** will also hold a **special meeting on December 15**. This special meeting is related solely to the new Council of Affordable Housing (COAH) legislation. All municipalities are required to submit a Plan by December 31 of this year on how they will work towards achieving their affordable housing requirements as determined by COAH. At this special meeting our Township Planner will present to the public details of the plan that our Planning Board will submit to the State of New Jersey.

For more information on COAH you can visit their website at: <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/affiliates/coah/index.html>

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.

Election Results...

In the recent election, Morris Township had its highest turnout ever for an election of any kind. A total of 12,680 residents of Morris Township casted their votes. There were many newly registered voters

and this accounts for the increased turnout. Of interest, there were about 1,000 people who voted only in the Presidential election and did not participate in the other elections on the ballot such as US Senate, US Congress, Country Freeholder, County Clerk, and Morris Township Committee.

While many of you know the Statewide results of the election for President, you may be surprised to learn that Barack Obama beat John McCain among Morris Township voters as well (8,400 to 8,050). However, President-Elect Obama was the only Democrat to win this year in Morris Township. The Republican candidates won the elections for all other elections amongst Morris Township voters. For Township Committee, Dan Caffrey and Ray Snyder beat Colette Chapman and Manfred Ricciardelli in a highly contested race.

I look forward to a productive 2009 on the Morris Township Committee leading up to my re-election bid in November.

Special Meeting scheduled to discuss affordable housing legislation...

As stated above, the Planning Board will also hold a **special meeting on December 15**. This meeting is related solely to the new Council of Affordable Housing (COAH) legislation and how Morris Township plans to deal with it. All municipalities are required to submit a Plan by December 31 of this year on how they will work towards achieving their affordable housing requirements as determined by COAH. At this special meeting our Township Planner will present to the public details of the plan that our Planning Board will submit to the State of New Jersey.



For more information on COAH you can visit their website at:
<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/affiliates/coah/index.html>

Other items of interest...

- The official Morristown "First Night" Program has been released and admission buttons are on sale. Check www.firstnightmorris.com for more information on this wonderful New Year's Eve program and for locations of button outlets (Morristown's Kings supermarket is an easy place to get them).
- **Home heating aid available to Morris residents:** Morris County residents in need of home heating assistance this winter can apply for aid through the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs. The heating assistance program is designed for lower-income residents who pay their own heating bills or pay for heat through their monthly rent payments. Individuals and families must meet eligibility requirements. The applications are evaluated by household size, monthly gross income, heating bills and other documents. The Bush administration in September released \$450 million in emergency relief funds to help needy residents pay soaring heating bills. New Jersey received \$25 million of those funds. Morris Hispanic Affairs administers the home heating aid program in Morris County, with funds provided by the state Department of Community Affairs. For an application, call the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs office in Morristown at (973) 644-5627.
- As many of you know, the traditional television signal will be turning to "all digital" in early 2009. The switch from analog to digital broadcast television is referred to as the digital TV (DTV) transition. In 1996, the U.S. Congress authorized the distribution of an additional broadcast channel to each broadcast TV station so that they could start a digital broadcast channel while simultaneously continuing their analog broadcast channel. Later, Congress mandated that February 17, 2009 would be the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog. Broadcast stations in all U.S. markets are currently broadcasting in both analog and digital. After February 17, 2009, full-power television stations will broadcast in digital only. For more information on the DTV transition see this link: <http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html>



Importantly, older television sets are incapable of receiving the new digital service without a special converter box that will convert the digital signal into the older analog signal that the older televisions accept. This will necessitate the Cablevision subscribers to either have a digital-ready television (newer model TV) or have a digital converter box (for older model TV's). For example, Cablevision plans to move the public educational and government access channels (PEG channels) to the digital spectrum of their systems, so older televisions will not be able to view these shows without a converter box.

Cablevision is offering their subscribers a free digital converter box if they request it before the extended deadline of December 31, 2008. So for those residents without digital TV's, or digital service, I urge you to get the free digital converter available from Cablevision before the December 31 deadline if you are a customer of theirs. Residents that have questions about this equipment offer should contact the phone number on their monthly Cablevision invoice. Verizon has a similar offer for their customers, and you may also purchase converter boxes at many electronics stores such as Radio Shack (at the Morris County Mall on Ridgedale Avenue). If you do so, you may also be eligible for a government-sponsored rebate check for the purchase of a converter. Call 888-DTV-2009 for more information.

This change will tend to impact our senior population who often have older television sets. If you have a senior-citizen neighbor, please alert them to this change in television service.

- Leaf collection will be ending within the next couple of weeks. This service started October 14 and runs to approximately December 13. **We cannot predict a specific collection day for your street but you can check the municipal website for the latest collection information.** Please note the following rules:



- * Pick ups are scheduled by sector. To locate your sector, click on the following links to find if your street is in **Sector 1, Sector 2 or Sector 3**.
- * Leaves, grass clippings and plant waste are to be placed in neat piles at the curb for collection.
- * **Pile leaves on unpaved surfaces and more than ten (10) feet from any storm drain.**
- * **Please do not place brush (twigs) in piles of leaves.** During this period only, residents may bring light brush to the Department of Public Works Site on Jane Way. **Also, please do not place light brush out with regular garbage.**
- * Curbside container collection of grass and brush (in containers) has been discontinued for the remainder of the year. This service will start again in the spring.
- The Township of Morris, County of Morris, New Jersey has an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan which promotes the availability of housing to persons of low and moderate income regardless of individual race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Be advised applications for the resale waiting list will be available and accepted beginning November 3, 2008 until December 12, 2008. For more information please see this link: <http://morristwp.com/pdfs/housingannouncement.pdf>
- Due to the success of two earlier single day collections, the Department of Public Works has started a continuous electronic recycling program at the DPW yard located on Jane Way. As in the past, all acceptable electronic equipment must be brought to our yard. This program is available daily Monday thru Friday from 6:30 AM to 3:00 PM. You may bring electrical and electronic items

to our yard during these times for drop off. The commitment to reduce electronic waste has been proven by the residents of Morris Township. Your participation has allowed us to recycle approximately 14 tons of electronic waste. Your continued support of all of Morris Township's recycling programs is necessary for us to provide a "Greener" future for generations to come. For a list of acceptable materials see this link: http://morristwp.com/pdfs/electronics_5-16-08.pdf

[Upcoming Committee Meeting...](#)

The next Township Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 17th. As usual, I urge citizens to attend our meetings. Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and [your questions require the Township Committee to be responsive to our citizens.](#)

**The Next
Meeting:
December 17th**

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 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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