



Newsletter #27 ~ October & November, 2009

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October & November, 2009 Newsletter

Dear Neighbors,

I am sorry for the delay in getting this newsletter out. I know that many people look forward to reading it close to the dates when the Township Committee meetings actually occur. My re-election campaign diverted a lot of my energy in late October and early November.

Since I was not re-elected, I cannot continue reporting on Township Committee meetings from a Committeeman's perspective. Therefore, this will be the final regular issue of my monthly E-newsletter. In the future, I will publish commentary on an occasional basis and obviously from a different perspective.

This edition covers the results of the local election and the Township Committee meetings of 10/21/09 and 11/19/09.

The next Township Committee meeting is this Wednesday December 16th. This is an important meeting, because the Township Committee will take a final vote on the local "pay to play" ordinance I have proposed – and it will also be the final meeting of my term. I urge you support the pay to play ordinance at this meeting. It would impose discipline on Morris Township government and the people who do business with and profit from Morris Township. It would also set an ethics standard for other NJ communities.

Summary of the Township Election

Your November 3rd ballot included candidates for Governor, Assembly, Freeholder, and Township Committee. I was up for re-election for the Township Committee, since my first 3-year term expires at year end. In our local election there were four people running for two spots. Unfortunately, I finished third in the race and have lost my position as Committeeman.

I am very disappointed to have lost the opportunity to serve you in a way and at a time when the need for what I can offer is the greatest. Those of you who read my newsletter know I have been working hard to bring you "open government" in Morris Township. And, of course, after working so hard at the job and taking time away from other parts of my life to serve, it feels strange to me to be unable to continue as a Committeeman. Because I love our township and am trying to make it a better place for everyone, I will look for other ways to serve.

I'm not big on hindsight, but many people have asked me why I lost the election. Low voter turnout and negative campaigning against me contributed to my defeat, but the dominant factor was negative sentiment towards Governor Corzine. This carried down to minority Democrats in Morris County (as well as many other places across New Jersey). This macro trend was too great for me to overcome.

To those who supported me, "Thank You!" And thanks for seeking balance in our local government. It has been an honor to serve you for the past two and a half years.

I hope you support my colleague and compatriot, Ron Goldberg, as he begins 2010 as the lone Democrat on the Township Committee. In 2010 there will be much less balance on the Township Committee.

As always, if you have any questions about the election or any other Township matter, please reach me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com. I will continue to respond to e-mails sent to this address.

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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:	
October 21st Township Committee Meeting	Other Commentary from Township Committee Members
November 12th Township Committee Meeting	Building Applications Around Town
Public Commentary	Other items of interest
Jeff's Commentary	Upcoming Committee Meeting on December 16th

October 21 Township Committee Meeting...

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

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_agenda_10-21-09.pdf

On October 21 our meeting opened up with a liquor license violation settlement hearing. Tiffany's restaurant was charged with the serving of an over-intoxicated patron. They plead guilty and will have their liquor license suspended for a short period of time.

Ordinances for Final Consideration...

Our meeting continued with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption". This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. Although there were four items up for Final Consideration, only one of them was voted on.

Ordinance 26-09 is called the "Citizen Service Act", a piece of new legislation co-sponsored by Committeeman Goldberg and me. As explained in my August newsletter, this will establish a communications process to make it easy and quick for everyone who wants to serve to find out about and ask for the opportunity to get an appointment to any of our various Boards and Committees. It will provide a simple and uniform process for making an application. The key components of the Citizen Service Act are:

- 1) Establishes an open application procedure by which community residents may indicate their interest in appointed municipal positions by filing a standardized application form.
- 2) Provides for a notification process by which citizens who apply for citizen appointments will be notified when the position is under consideration.
- 3) Creates a simple, universal application form and public directory of appointed municipal positions

for citizens wishing to apply for a municipality's committees, board or commission.

4) Ensures that the municipality maintains a current updated list of all vacancies for each appointed municipal position.

I am pleased that this ordinance passed by a 5-0 vote.

Ordinance 27-09 relates to "DUMPSTERS AND OTHER REFUSE CONTAINERS". Final vote on this ordinance was postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

Ordinance 28-09 relates to "STORM DRAIN INLETS ABUTTING PRIVATE PROPERTY". Final vote on this ordinance was postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

Ordinance 29-09 relates to "FERTILIZER USE". Final vote on this ordinance was postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

A copy of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or can be viewed online at <http://morristwp.com/ordinances09.asp>

Ordinances for Introduction...

There was only one ordinance for introduction at this meeting.

Ordinance 30-09 relates to the installation of a mid-block on Washington Valley Road at the Seeing Eye property to allow passage across Washington valley Road in a defined crosswalk that leads from one part of their campus to another.

An additional ordinance was introduced by me during my public commentary. I had asked that it be placed on the formal agenda prior to the meeting, but this was denied. So I resorted to introducing it verbally later in the meeting. The title of this ordinance is "**Public Contracting Reform Ordinance**" and is based on an ordinance prepared by the non-partisan Citizens Campaign group. This is essentially a local-level pay-to-play measure that goes well beyond the regulations that the state of New Jersey has (and you can only imagine how weak those are!).

Although I had previously circulated the text to this proposed ordinance to my fellow Committeemen, I formally presented them with another copy at our meeting, and then read it into the record by title. My motion for introduction received a second from Ron Goldberg – and the debate began. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that introduction of this ordinance would be allowed provided that a final vote was made in two months time (as opposed to the standard 4 weeks) so that everyone would have the opportunity to read the ordinance carefully and have the opportunity to ask questions about any of the language.

This local pay-to-play ordinance has now been passed on the local level in almost 70 municipalities around the state of New Jersey. My hope is that we can pass it in Morris Township as well to ensure that our government is operating at a high ethical standard. It will be up for a final vote at the December 16th meeting.

A copy of this ordinance may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or 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_agenda_10-21-09.pdf

and the text can be found at:

http://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm_resolutions_10-21-09.pdf

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://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm_resolutions_10-21-09.pdf

November 12 Township Committee Meeting...

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

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_agenda_11-12-09.pdf

Ordinances for Final Consideration...

At the November 12th meeting we opened with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption". This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. There were two items up for Final Consideration:

Ordinance 27-09 relates to "DUMPSTERS AND OTHER REFUSE CONTAINERS". See description above under our Oct. 21 meeting notes. Final vote on this ordinance was once again postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

Ordinance 28-09 relates to "STORM DRAIN INLETS ABUTTING PRIVATE PROPERTY". See description above under our Oct. 21 meeting notes. Final vote on this ordinance was once again postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

Ordinance 29-09 relates to "FERTILIZER USE". See description above under our Oct. 21 meeting notes. Final vote on this ordinance was once again postponed so that the language contained therein could be modified.

Ordinance 30-09 relates to the installation of a mid-block crosswalk on Washington Valley Road at the Seeing Eye property to allow passage across Washington valley Road in a defined crosswalk that leads from one part of their campus to another. This ordinance passed by a 5-0 vote.

NOTE: It was agreed at the October 21st meeting that the "Public Contracting Reform Ordinance" would have a final vote delayed until the December 16th meeting.

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 three ordinances for introduction at this meeting. These three ordinances were fashioned after models provided by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The NJDEP requires such ordinances be enacted to put us (and other municipalities) in compliance with State stormwater regulations.

Ordinance 32-09 relates to a new stop sign to be added to the intersection of Briant Avenue and Delmar Avenue, as well as a repositioning of the stop sign at the intersection of Delmar Avenue and Burnham Road.

Ordinance 33-09 relates to the installation of "no parking when snow-covered" regulations on section of Parkview Plaza around the cul-de-sac.

Ordinance 34-09 relates to a speed limit reduction along the entire length of Picatinny Road to 24 miles per hour (from its current 40mph posted limit).

A copy of these ordinances may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430, or 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_agenda_11-12-09.pdf and the text can be found at:

http://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm_resolutions_11-12-09.pdf

All of the other resolutions were without controversy. All of the resolutions passed.

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://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm_resolutions_09-16-09.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. The following combines commentary at both the October and November meetings.

The following comments were made at the **October 21** meeting:

- Eight residents of Indianhead Road and the surrounding area came to complain about the intersection of that street with Mendham Road (route 510) and expressed their concerns about the safety of entering and exiting their street.
- A resident of Victoria Lane complained about a problem with standing water on several of the properties on her block. She requested that drainage be improved to relieve the problem.
- The president of the Minute men ambulance squad thanked the Township Committee for helping with letters for their fundraising drive.
- Another resident told us of a newspaper article about the Mount Olive fire department acquiring a new fire suppression device and suggested the Township look into this.

At the **November 12** meeting the following public comments were made:

- The first resident complained that the leaf collection process is unacceptable because it takes too long and the leaves have to sit out for long periods prior to collection. He suggested the Township invest in additional equipment.
- The second resident complained about the speeding on Old Glen Road
- Three residents of Parkview Plaza expressed their opinions about the proposed no parking zone.

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. The following combines my comments at both the October and November meetings:

- I am very pleased to have had the Citizen Service Act passed at tonight's meeting. I truly believe it will benefit our Township greatly by providing a broader and richer pool of applicants to fill our appointed Board and Committee seats. In order for it to be effective we need to be pro-active in making sure the public is aware of the opportunities that open up. Now volunteer positions with the Township will be openly available to all residents, providing the mayor with the opportunity to open his appointments to a wider spectrum of Township residents. I hope our residents take advantage of this opportunity and that the Mayor will take advantage of the benefits of this ordinance and seek the most qualified people for each of his future appointments.
- To continue my quest for open and responsible government, I have introduced a municipal-level "Pay-to-Play" Act that would place limits on political contributions by those doing business with the Township. This ordinance will expand on state regulations and our existing local practices. It will sever the links between political donations and government contracts, and ensure that contracts will instead be driven by merit and cost-effectiveness. This legislation recently was passed in Parsippany and has previously been passed by over 100 governing bodies in the State of New Jersey.
- I attended the Morris Township Fire Inspection night along with the rest of the Township Committee. At this event all of our volunteer firefighters dress in uniform and greet the Township Committee at their respective firehouses. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of these fine men and women for their dedication to protecting the residents of Morris Township, and to thank them for volunteering their time which provides a big savings on all the tax bills paid by our residents.
- I attended a meeting of our Local Emergency Planning Committee, which was run by our Twp Office of Emergency Management. This was a meeting of all our related municipal services (e.g. police, fire, health, public works as well as representatives from the County, School District, and Army post at the armory. They discussed events of the past year and how each department participated in each of those incidents. I would like the public to know that we have an extremely dedicated OEM team that is extremely well prepared to assist the public if a disaster should strike Morris Township.
- Morris Township has received a \$25,000 grant from office of natural and historic resources within the State of NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection. This money will be used towards the construction of two new trails within Morris Township that are nearing completion. One is on Washington Valley Road in a preserved piece of open space behind the Washington Valley Schoolhouse. The second is on open space called "Jockey Hollow Top" which lies between Mt. Kemble Ave at the bottom and the ridgeline at Rolling Hill drive. Many thanks to Bill Foelsch, our recreation Director, for securing this grant.
- I attended two trail opening ceremonies this past Sunday. One trail is behind the Washington Valley Schoolhouse and accessed on Washington Valley Road. The second is at the end of Rolling Hill Drive and is accessed off the cul-de-sac by Saunders Field. Both are a wonderful addition to the network of trails we already have in Morris Township. Thank you to the two Eagle scouts Phil Trackenberg and Matt Hansen for their work on each of the projects and also to our Rec. Director Bill Foelsch for helping to oversee the project work.
- The Morris Twp H1N1 flu vaccine clinics very successful with 800 kids vaccinated last Friday and 700 more this past Monday. We had several comments from parents about how smoothly and well the clinic was run. Thank you to all members of our health department for this success. Our next flu clinic is scheduled for this Monday Nov. 16. See the Township website for details.
- The public is hereby informed that the Township Police Department will be running a drunk driving enforcement program called "Over the Limit Under Arrest". This year-End crackdown will run December 7th to January 3rd. The Police Department is p expected to receive a \$5000 overtime grant for these enforcement efforts.
- There was a headline in the Star Ledger titled "**Teens find their highs in family drug**

chest". I wanted to inform the public of a program called "Operation Medicine Cabinet". This is a statewide initiative for residents to get rid of unused, unwanted, and expired medicine. The goal of the program is to allow citizens of New Jersey to deliver all of their unused, unwanted, or expired medications to law enforcement officials who can, in turn, dispose of these controlled substances in a safe and non-hazardous manner, preventing these pills from falling into the hands of juveniles or into the illicit market in our communities. This event takes place Saturday November 14th from 10:00am to 2:00pm at the Morris County Public Safety Academy West Hanover Avenue, Parsippany, NJ. [If you would like to dispose of medicines after this date then please contact our police department.]

- As you may know at our October meeting I introduced legislation for a local pay to play law for Morris Township. This legislation will be up for a vote at our meeting in December when the full contingent of Committee members is here to discuss the matter. I urge the public to join us to listen to our discussions and deliberations.
- On a similar note, Governor-elect Chris Christie faced his first ethics decision earlier this week. Thanks to an oversight, the law banning big contributions from state contractors **does not apply to fund-raising for the inaugural celebration**. That means that companies seeking favor from the new administration would have a chance to do so by writing a big check. However, Mr. Christie has decided to plug that loophole himself. He'll voluntarily follow the rule the Legislature forgot to include, which is that contractors can't give more than \$300. I commend Governor-elect Christie on this decision.

Other Commentary from Township Committee members...

The following combines commentary at both the October and November meetings:

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- I attended the fire department inspection night. I continue to be impressed by the professionalism of our volunteers.
- I attended a "green table" breakfast hosted by the Morris County Parks Commission and moderated by the Land Conservancy of New Jersey. It focused on the upcoming open space ballot issue.
- DPW has started leaf collection. Many residents are leaving their leaves in the street in contradiction of stormwater management guidelines. Leaves exacerbate flooding problems and can clog the inlets to our storm drains.

Ray Snyder made the following comments:

- I have met with several of the residents of Indianhead Road and believe we can solve the situation there. I propose a reduced speed limit along Mendham Road of 40 miles per hour.
- I attended the Veterans Day ceremony. Thanks to all our servicemen and women – past and present.

Dan Caffrey made the following comments:

- I have been working with the FAA regarding the cell tower off Whippany Road with the red stripes on it. I believe we will have an agreement to paint over the red portion of the pole below the tree line.
- Watch where you put your leaves. Please keep them out of the street.
- Don't let the line for flu shots scare you. The line moves very quickly and our staff is doing a good job to get people in and out quickly.
- I attended the Veterans Day ceremony. In light of the recent incident at Fort Hood this day has new meaning.
- I fully support a reduction in speed limit and increased enforcement along Mendham Road.

Scott Rosenbush made the following comments:

- Let’s not forget our veterans and those that have served us.
- I made a presentation to the county open space committee regarding the parcel for preservation on Indianhead Road.
- Many of you have seen these temporary storage containers called “Pods”. We need to look at ordinances in other towns to see how they control the used of them. We have a specific situation which is driving us to examine this.
- Recognized Linda Ommaggio, President of the Minute Men, and thanked her for her volunteer work.
- Fees for dumping our trash are going up 4% starting January 1st. We need to try to offset this increase.
- I support a reduced speed limit along Mendham Road and suggest we pass a resolution asking the Freeholders to reduce the speed limit to 35 miles per hour.

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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** was to have held its regular meetings on October 26 and November 23. Both of these agendas can he found here:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/boa_agenda_10-26-09.pdf

and

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/boa_agenda_11-23-09.pdf

The next **Board of Adjustment** held meeting will be held on December 14, and the agenda will be published online a few days before the meeting.

The **Planning Board** held a regular meeting on October 19 and November 2nd. Both of these agendas can he found here:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_agenda_10-19-09.pdf

and

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_agenda_11-02-09.pdf

No major applications were heard at either of these meetings. At the Nov. 2 meeting the Planning Board did have a lengthy discussion of possible changes to our tree ordinance to make it harder for landowners to cut down trees on their property. This was just the first of several discussions that will take place before any final proposals are even considered. These discussions will continue at future planning board meetings TBD.

The **Planning Board** also held a regular meeting this past week on Monday December 7th. The agenda can now be found here:

http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_agenda_12-07-09.pdf

The first item on the agenda was an interesting one: there was an application to build a formal “tea room” by refurbishing an existing small building on Old Turnpike Road.

The second item was the continuing hearing for the subdivision of one lot into three on Shadyside Street, which has been before the planning board for many months already. The applicant was again modified their plans yet again, and now have two lots that conform with our land use regulations. The third lot still requires several variances. This subdivision would also require the creation of a new street that would have a 15 percent grade, which is very steep, that would need to be supported by retaining walls. This street would be dedicated to the Township for future maintenance. There is a citizen group mounting a protest to this development and they have hired their own lawyer and planning consultant who will be making their own arguments at the next hearing, now scheduled for Monday February 2nd.

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...

- **H1N1 Flu vaccine:** The next clinic scheduled in Morris Twp will take place on Monday December 14 from 3 to 5 pm. Please note the time change from the prior notice put out by the Township. The clinic will be for children and students 6 months – 24 years, pregnant woman and people with a documented chronic health condition up to 64 years. Check the Township website for more details and for forms to fill out. Call the Twp health department for more info. The clinics will be held at the Morris Township Municipal Building, 50 Woodland Avenue
- **Christmas tree sale at the Hillside fire house:** This annual sale benefits the Hillside Hose company. Come get a great tree and support the community at the same time. The fire house is located on Western Avenue (just up the street from the County courthouse)
- **Harter Road Bridge update:** The latest information from the NJDOT indicates that the bridge will finally be reopened on December 18. The unexpected delays were apparently caused by unexpected, but required, lead paint removal.
- **Low cost medicine for flu is available:** People suffering from flu who do not have prescription drug coverage or cannot afford the medications can now get assistance from the Morris County Office of Health Management. Please call 973-631-5484 for more information.
- **The Parks & Recreation Department published their winter activities and program guide.** An online version can be viewed here:
http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/Morris_Winter_Brochure_2009.pdf
- **Deer Culling program underway:** A list of properties where deer culling will take place this Fall/Winter has been posted on the Township website. Dates and times have not yet been scheduled. http://morristwp.com/agendas/DEER_CULLING_2009.pdf
- **Health Tip for the back-to-school season:** The H1N1 flu virus (a.k.a. "swine flue") is still circulating. The #1 thing anyone can do to prevent infection is simple hand-washing. Please encourage your kids to wash their hands several times a day at school, and most certainly when they walk into the house at the end of the school day.
- **H1N1 vaccine tip:** anyone born prior to 1958 does not need to get vaccinated. This group has an immunity based on a flu they were exposed to earlier in their lifetimes.
- **Expanded plastics recycling in Morris Township:** Many residents are still not aware that 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...

The final Township Committee meeting of the year (and my final one as

The next Township Committee meeting of the year (and my final one as well) will take place on Wednesday, December 16th. The draft agenda will be available shortly online at <http://morristwp.com/>

This will be my final meeting as a Committeeman, so please come join me in saying farewell.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this newsletter and all my previous newsletters. 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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**NEXT
TOWNSHIP
MEETING:
Wednesday
Dec. 16th**