



Newsletter #15 ~ October, 2008

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October 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. For those of you that read my lengthy report last month, you will be pleased to see that this month's issue is significantly shorter!! 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 1 e-mail per month and do not use their address for any other purposes.

This edition covers the Township Committee meeting of 10/15/08 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.

[October 15 Township Committee Meeting...](#)

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

http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_10-15-08.pdf

[Ordinances for Final Consideration](#)

The meeting started with "Ordinances – Public Hearing, Final Consideration, and Adoption." This pertains to ordinances introduced at a prior Township Committee meeting. There was only one such ordinance from September 17 meeting.

Ordinance, #33-08, amends our existing "Vehicles and Traffic" ordinance to add a no-parking zone along Bishop Court and sections of Canfield Road between the hours of 8am-6pm. This is in response to commuters parking their cars on these streets all day long while commuting from the Convent Station train station.

A copy of this ordinance may be obtained from our Township Clerk by calling 973-326-7430.

[Ordinances for Introduction...](#)

There were three ordinances for introduction at this meeting that were listed on the agenda and one that was introduced after the Township Committee came out of closed session. The exact title of each ordinance can be found by viewing the agenda:

http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_10-15-08.pdf

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 meeting it was suggested by Mr. Goldberg and agreed by the Committee that the \$150,000 fee listed in the ordinance should actually 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.

The fifth ordinance, #38-08, was not on the published agenda. It was introduced after returning from closed session. It allows the municipality to settle a property tax dispute with the owners of the "Governor Morris" Westin hotel. The agreement would call for a reduction in the assessed value of the property and thus a smaller property tax payment by the hotel to the municipality.

This concludes the "ordinances for introduction." This ordinance will be publicly debated at the October 15 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.

Resolutions...

Several Resolutions were then passed. The title of each of these resolutions can be viewed on the agenda: http://morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_10-15-08.pdf

These were routine and without controversy. I did make the following remarks related to the Memoriam for Mrs. Blekicky and Mr. Barratt:

I send my condolences out to the family of Katharine Blekicky. This past week I had the honor of meeting the family after her passing. She was the wife of a former Morris Township Mayor Blekicky. This family has given many years of service to our municipality, and I wish to recognize them for both their commitment and their accomplishments.

This past week I was honored to witness the formal firefighter funeral service performed by the Township firefighters during the wake for Sam Barratt. The number of firefighters that participated was so great they literally could all not fit into the room at Doyle's funeral home. It was quite touching. I wanted the public to know that Mr. Barratt was a volunteer fireman at the Fairchild firehouse for just short of 50 years. I am told that over the years he took many of the new volunteer firefighters under his wing. Morris Township owes much gratitude to him and his family for all the years of volunteer service he gave to our community. He will be missed by many, and tonight's resolution in his honor is well deserved.

Copies of all resolutions passed may be obtained from our Township Clerk.

Report of Bid Receipts...

Next on the agenda was a report on bids received for projects that had been posted for public bidding. The bids received were read aloud and a recommendation was made on which bid to accept for each individual project.

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

Public Commentary...

Every Committee meeting has a "public commentary" portion during which any member of the public can make a statement concerning anything related to Township matters, or ask the Township Committee anything they wish.



- The first person to speak was a representative of the Morristown Neighborhood House. He came to thank the Township for passing the resolution that allowed the police department to donate a used van (that would have otherwise been sold at public auction for \$100) to his organization. He told us that this would be a big help for this organization in their caring for the 1,500 children it serves every day at its facility.
- The second person was a resident who asked several questions:
 - 1) Asked for Brigade Hill Road water line update. How is the "informal" survey going? Mr. Watson indicated letters just went out to affected residents to seek their input.
 - 2) Asked about nature of a contract for Information Technology consulting with a particular vendor and how one would obtain copy of contract for review.
 - 3) Inquired as to the status of televising Committee meetings. Previously he was told that it was in sub-committee for review. He was told that the sub-committee had no further discussion on the matter.
 - 4) Asked about the results from county study on traffic impact of Jets facility for which the township contributed \$17,000. He was told that the study has not yet been received, but it was expected shortly.
 - 5) He said he read in the newspaper that Parsippany pulled their request for consideration in the NJ state Red Light traffic camera program. He wondered if the Township was reconsidering its application. He asked what the next step would be. Mr. Grayzel told him that the state had not yet selected any municipalities to participate, and that, if we were to be accepted, the next step would be to get quotes from the various vendors to see what the cost/benefits would be. Only at this point would we decide if we would participate in the program.
 - 6) Asked if the Board of Adjustment ever sent a report to the Township Committee indicating action that might be needed by then in order to act on parking regulations on Pitney Place.
 - 7) He complained that tonight's meeting agenda was not available to the public on the website until day before meeting. He said the Monday holiday was known in advance and the situation could be controlled. He asked them to do so in future and requested being put on distribution list for all meeting agendas.
 - 8) He inquired about the Tear Down ordinance introduced about two .years ago He asked where it stood. He was told that the Planning Board had ceased working on it.
 - 9) He asked for status report on the outcome of lights demo held in Morris Plains for the benefit of the Harding Twp. committee, and asked that if in the future the Comm. could take into account significant religious holidays when scheduling these events. Mr. Watson reviewed for him the recent events that took place including two separate lighting tests as well as a balloon test. The balloon test was done in order to determine if anybody would be able to see the top of the light poles on the Harding fields, and notably no one was able to see the floating balloons.

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:

- I was honored to be able to participate in the annual Firefighter Inspection night this past Friday. It is an opportunity for the Township Committee members to review the firefighters in their formal dress and to inspect the equipment. The men looked great and I appreciate so many of them participating in the event.
- On tonight's agenda you saw that we appropriated additional monies to the Burnham Road improvement project. We hope that this project will commence shortly. I think this will be a nice upgrade for the Fairchild neighborhood. A similar project was completed last year for a portion of Springbrook Road and it came out very nicely.
- At prior meetings we had members of Sherman Avenue here to complain about speeding on their street. I want them to know that their voices were heard and in case they have not noticed that the police department has stepped up enforcement in the area.
- I mentioned that Rick Watson and I met the Morris County open space commission for a field visit of the Delbarton property. I will let Rick provide more details on this in his own remarks. The public should note that the formal application to sub-divide the Delbarton property for the purpose of preserving the open space parcel will be heard before the Planning board at their upcoming meeting.
- The community should take note that during leaf season the DPW suspends the curbside pick-up of large-items. Residents may still drop off metal items at the DPW yard during this period.

Other Commentary from Township Committee members...

Ron Goldberg made the following comments:

- Stated that he had attended the "Call to Service" seminar organized by the Citizens Campaign and hosted by Monmouth University. "I've brought home to Morris twp some ideas and tools to build, strengthen and enrich our volunteer efforts and our sense of community. I will share what I've learned."
- Public should note that on Oct 21 at 7:30 at Alfred Vail School is the League of Women Voters Morris Twp. Candidate's night.
- Last Friday was Fire Inspection Night. Committeemen Grayzel, Rosenbush and I were honored to review the troops. I, frankly, envy our volunteer and professional firemen. They get to be part of a great tradition and rich history and also have friendship and camaraderie built around the important service they provide.
- Happy new year to our Jewish community which started the year 5769 on Sept 29. Happy and Healthy!
- He attended the Morris Green Table Trails Visioning Workshop last week. It was moderated by The Land Conservancy of New Jersey (formerly The Morris Land Conservancy) and he enjoyed the guidance and resources of Morris County Planning Dept. Its purpose was to connect municipalities trail and conservation organizations and also their trails and trail visions. It encouraged participants through

available GIS resources to make their abstract visions concrete and accessible and to gain overview or big picture. Morris Twp. Special Project Coordinator Tom Kenny was also present and expects to ensure our trails plan gets on the GIS once approved as part of our Master Plan.

Scott Rosenbush made the following comment:

- Stated that he too attended the Fire Department's inspection night, and noted that there was a moment of silence for those firefighters who passed away this past year. (Editor's note: none of these men were injured fighting a fire, but rather passed away from natural causes)
- Congratulated Bob Nace on the preservation of the open space parcel at Delbarton

Rick Watson made the following comments:

- Noted that in the monthly report from the library that Morristown's monthly payments were not being received on a timely basis. He stated that Morris Township pays its share of the library expenses on time every month. He asked our administrator to look into why Morristown was making late payments.
- He also congratulated Bob Nace on the preservation of the open space parcel at Delbarton.

Mayor Nace was absent from the meeting so there were no Mayoral comments.

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.

After returning from closed session we passed an ordinance to allow us to settle a property tax dispute with the owners of the Westin hotel. The agreement would call for a reduction in the assessed value of the property and thus a smaller property tax payment by the hotel to the municipality.

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 held a regular meeting on September 22. The agenda for this meeting can be found online at the township website: http://morristwp.com/agendas/boa_09-22-08.pdf

There were no major agenda items at this meeting so please read the agenda for a listing of the minor items.

The **Board of Adjustment** also held a regular meeting on October 27. The agenda for this

meeting can be found online at the township website:
http://morristwp.com/agendas/boa_10-27-08.pdf

There were no major development on the agenda, but there were several homeowners asking for small variances on various house projects. See the agenda above for more details.

The next regular **Board of Adjustment** meeting will take place on November 24. The meeting agenda will be available on the township website several days before the meeting.

The **Planning Board** held two regular meetings in October. The first was on Oct. 4, and this agenda can be viewed here: http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_10-06-08.pdf

The second meeting was on Oct. 20, and this agenda can be viewed here:
http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_10-20-08.pdf

The first on the October 6 agenda was the continuation of a hearing for the Auto dealership at 170 Madison Avenue, which was formerly the BMW dealership and now will be the MINI-Cooper dealership. They requested to add on to the existing structure to house a new customer service area, and also proposed to add parking lot space to increase the impervious coverage on this lot from 73% to 88%. The applicant had finished giving testimony at the last meeting, but there were still outstanding questions from the Board and the public to be answered at this meeting. Once concession they made was to create an additional section of "green" space near the front of the parcel where two trees can be planted. The board approved this application 8-1 with my vote being the only dissenting vote. I disapproved of this lot being "paved over" without more vegetation being placed towards the front of the property facing Madison Avenue.

The second item on the agenda was an application from Villa Walsh School for a new soccer field to be built adjacent to their existing soccer field. The new soccer field will be artificial turf, and a representative of the turf company came to give the Board some facts related to the safety of artificial turf. Of note, the replacement trees (for trees they will cut down) they will be replanting on site are of a higher quality (ornamental, deciduous) than what is required under the tree ordinance, and the Board was appreciative of this fact. This application was approved by a vote of 9-0.

The last item was for 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.

Of note, 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) was postponed until the October 20 meeting, and was then subsequently postponed until the November 3 meeting.

The October 20 meeting was to have two agenda items, but both were postponed until later dates. The Planning Board spent a few minutes reviewing some miscellaneous items and adjourned the meeting just 40 minutes after it started. Of note, the application by Atlantic Health Systems at 475 South Street was postponed until the December 1 meeting date.

The next **Planning Board** meeting will take place on November 3. The meeting agendas will be available on the township website a couple of days before each meeting, and the agenda for Nov. 6 can already be found online: http://morristwp.com/agendas/plbd_11-03-08.pdf

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.

Closing Comment for YOUR consideration...



In addition to the contentious race for US President, there is also a very close race for two elected seats on the Morris Township Committee, the governing



body of our municipality. There has been a lot of negative campaigning this year, which I personally dislike very much. Candidates should focus on what they could do for our town instead of just bashing their opponents. So if you hear something negative, please do not automatically accept it as true. Feel free to send me an e-mail (or just reply to this one) with your comments or questions and I will provide you what I think is the true and factual information about any statements that are made -- including the false claims circulating around about me as well. Say NO to negative campaigning!

In the next few days I will be coming out with my endorsement for the election. If any of you would like to know sooner please feel free to write back to me.

Other items of interest...

- **Walk-in voting now available for November 4 election:**

You do not need to wait until Election Day to vote. Any registered Morris County voter may vote early, in person by absentee ballot at the Elections Office, first floor, County Administration Bldg., Court St. in Morristown. 973 285 6180. This "Walk -in voting" is being conducted from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays through Thursday, Oct. 30. There will also be extended voting hours from 8:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 31; from 8 a.m. until noon on Saturday, Nov. 1; and from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 3.



New Jersey's "No Excuses" absentee ballot permits any voter to cast an absentee ballot in any election without having to give a reason. "Allowing any voter to vote by absentee ballot for any reason is a voting option we have here in New Jersey," the County Clerk said. "Now, there is absolutely no reason for a person not to vote. And by extending our hours in the County Clerk's office, we have made it even more convenient for an individual to exercise his or her right to vote in this important presidential election."

- **Leaf collection has started. This service runs from October 14 to December 13. We cannot predict a specific collection day for your street. 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.

- * **Do not place piles on pavement or less 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.



- **BUG-OUT AT PARK COMMISSION'S NATURE FEST FOR KIDS**

Looking for something your children can do when they are off from school for teachers' convention Thursday, Nov. 6? Let them explore at Kids Nature Fest. During this annual event at the Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center in Chatham Township, education, exploration, and entertainment unite to create a memorable day of insect and arachnid-related hands-on activities, hikes through the park, crafts, games, and much more. Children in grades 1 to 4 have so much fun that they do not even realize they are learning. Youngsters are invited to get up-close and personal with live creepy crawlies, courtesy of Snakes-N-Scales and Turtles Tales. Those who begin the day looking at bugs as "yucky, icky, and gross," may go home with a newfound appreciation and fascination for these interesting creatures. Drop-off and sign-in is 9 a.m. and pick-up is 4 p.m. Kids should dress for the weather and bring their own lunch. Light snacks and juice are provided. To register or for more information, please call the Great Swamp OEC at 973-635-6629.

- **Due to the success of our two prior events, the Department of Public Works has started an 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 your 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 Nov. 12th. Note that the meeting is scheduled early in the month due to the annual NJ state municipal convention in the middle of the month. Please try to attend this first post-election meeting. Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and your questions require the Township Committee to be responsive to our citizens.

The Next Meeting: November 12th

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

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