



September 2011: Morris Township News Update

IMPORTANT -- PLEASE NOTE:

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Dear Neighbors,

Summer is over, and all of us are refocused on the beginning of the school year and local activities, issues, and concerns. I am pleased to present this latest installment of my newsletter to the residents of Morris Township. Thanks to everyone who has expressed appreciation of my efforts to report on what is happening around town from a government perspective.

Please sit back, read and consider. I welcome your comments.

Grayzel Announces Candidacy

I am pleased to inform you that I am running for Township Committee in the general election of November 8th. Mike Kandybowicz and I are running as a team to restore balance to the Township Committee composition, because balance improves the quality of local government and is in EVERYONE'S self interest. It makes local government more accountable, representative and responsive.

You can read the press announcement here: http://jeffgrayzel.com/pdf/news_091811.pdf



**JEFF GRAYZEL
&
MIKE KANDYBOWICZ**

**Morris Township Committee
2011 Democratic Candidates**

Please take a look at our website for more information about the campaign and my running mate, Mike Kandybowicz: <http://www.morristwpcandidates.com/>

Election Day is November 8 so please mark your calendar.

Township Committee Meeting on Sept. 21

The Township Committee opened its meeting last week with ten-year 9/11 anniversary presentations to the many Morris Township volunteers and professionals who directly supported the rescue efforts in New York City at and near the scene on that tragic day of 9/11/01. We are

fortunate to be home to such professional, dedicated, selfless, and courageous people as our Minutemen, OEM, Police and Fire personnel. Many of these people are volunteer citizens who do this in their spare time, and we all owe them our gratitude for the work they do in our community.

Seven ordinances were up for public hearing and final consideration for adoption. The first ordinance to establish Development Fees to be collected from Developers to cover some of the Township's affordable housing expenses was tabled for further discussion at the October meeting.



The second ordinance dealt with an amendment of a previously-passed bond ordinance in the amount of \$2,287,911 for various sewer improvements.

The next ordinance related to the leasing of parking spaces in the township-owned parking lot on Speedwell Avenue. It enabled a local merchant to rent space for customer parking.

The next 4 ordinances approved the contracts we have with 4 of the unions that represent Township employees, and covered the years 2010-2013. Generally speaking, workers took a 0% increase in 2010 and were given a 2% increase for each of the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. For details, request copies of the contracts from the Township Administrator.

The last ordinance set forth an attendance policy for all of our boards and committees. We had no such policy in place previously. The policy appears to be pretty lenient in my opinion, but it is a start.

Although the published agenda had just 6 resolutions listed as being up for adoption, *the agenda at the meeting had several more.* I continue to be concerned that the public has too little lead time on agenda issues. Not only are agenda's made public too close to the meeting date, but they are often incomplete when posted.

Included in the approved resolutions was an emergency appropriation to pay for Hurricane-related damage incurred to municipal property and infrastructure. You will see helpful information about claims for personal property damage below in this letter and on the Township web site.

As usual, during the public commentary portion of the meeting, I stood to ask questions of the Committee. I asked for the estimated cost to the Township for emergency response and infrastructure damage from the hurricane. (Answer \$500,000 for response alone -- and counting). I asked for an explanation of the emergency appropriations and how it would be paid for (It will be done over 5 years from the "surplus" and will be excluded from the new mandatory caps on spending). I asked how much longer we will continue to pay for the mounting legal fees to a single lawyer who is negotiating a settlement on a lawsuit from a landfill the Township use 20+ years ago (I was told they are looking into it).

The Township Committee meeting scheduled for October 5th has been cancelled. The next Township Committee meeting will be on Wednesday October 19th at 8:00pm at our municipal building.

Aftermath of Hurricane Irene

Irene wreaked havoc and devastation in our town. Many of us, including myself, were out of power for a week (the most anyone was out was for nine days!). Many of us -- including myself -- had water in their basements. It was a very long week for many of us, and the lack of communication about when the power would come back on was extremely frustrating, and communications to residents about the situation was limited.

If you have suffered damage, I encourage you to register with FEMA -- even if you don't think

you're eligible. Do it now because claims cannot be filed on damage discovered at a later date. FEMA has made the process very simple via the website: www.disasterassistance.gov Alternatively you can call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 800-462-7585 to file over the phone.



Clean-up costs for the Township have been significant, and there is damage to infrastructure as well (roads, bridges, buildings, etc) that will need to be repaired. The State of NJ is offering some small assistance, but everyone is banking on the federal FEMA program to reimburse up to 75% of the costs. However, there unfortunately are members in Congress who do not want to see the Federal Government spend beyond its means, which I believe means that Congress will not want to give us all the money we need to pay for our storm-related expenses. All this will do is push the expenditure down to the local level. It will have to be paid for somehow and somewhere.

Lastly, I would like to thank the many dedicated personnel in our community for their response efforts to the storm. All of the people on our Minutemen and OEM squads are volunteers and many of our fire department personnel are as well. These volunteer citizens do this in their spare time, and they were out in force during and after the storm. All our residents owe them our gratitude for their work in our community almost every day, including an incredible number of hours contributed during the Irene storm. Thank you!

JCP&L Public Hearing

This Tuesday September 27th from 4-7pm the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), which regulates utilities including our very own JCP&L, will hold a hearing in Morris County. They are soliciting public comment – from both local government officials as well as the general public -- regarding the state of preparedness and responsiveness of JCP&L and other electric distribution companies prior to, during, and after Hurricane Irene. This meeting is open to the public and will take place at the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy located at 500 West Hanover Avenue (on the westbound side of the road), which is at the northwest border of Morris Township.



I encourage you to communicate any complaints or concerns you may have. This can be done in person at the meeting on Sept. 27th, or by e-mail to: board.secretary@bpu.state.nj.us If you send an email, reference "Hurricane Irene" in the heading. Additional information may be obtained from the BPU website: <http://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/announcements/hurr.pdf>

Understanding the Recycling Schedule in Morris Township

Many of us in Morris Township have been confused by the schedule for curbside pick-up of recycling. For many months I drove around town and saw containers of cans/bottles or piles of newspapers sitting on curbs. This was because cans/bottles and paper/newspaper were picked up on alternating weeks – that is, if it was not yard waste pickup week. So, many people just put all their recyclables out and what was not scheduled to be picked up was left behind.



It has been quite confusing. There was one schedule at the beginning of the year. Another schedule implemented April 1, and now another schedule that went into affect August 15. On the township website there is a link "Important Recycling Information" in the center, Information column of the home page, however the information there is now dated.

Due to resident displeasure with not having a regular pick-up for recycling materials, a new schedule, which resembles the services of Jan 2010 was implemented during August. The latest schedule is as follows:

The first full week of any month is designated for yard waste pick-up (branches, twigs, grass clippings, etc.). Thus, there is no recycling pick-up for the week of October 3-7. Every other week all recyclables -- including cans/glass, paper, cardboard, newspaper, etc. -- will be picked up on your scheduled pick-up day.

Garbage pick-up still occurs every single week.

Update on Proposed Honeywell Development Project

The proposed redevelopment of the 147-acre Honeywell company office complex on Columbia Road is making its way through the approval process at the Planning Board.

The Morris Township Planning Board will publicly discuss with its Technical Coordinating Committee on Monday, October 3rd whether it is ready to direct the TCC to write a draft change to the Land Use Master Plan which would create a mixed use zone for Honeywell. This will be a "listening only" session for the public, but some very important information will be discussed.

A summary of the latest plan can be found in this PATCH article, which also provides some background:

<http://morris.patch.com/articles/honeywell-scales-back-redevelopment-plan>

Honeywell, which employs 1,200 people at the Columbia Turnpike site, filed a proposal with the Planning Board requesting a rezoning of the property from Office/Lab to "mixed use", to include a dense condo development.

Honeywell has put up a website that show the concept plans as well as all other documents they have presented at public meetings. This website is quite comprehensive and I encourage you to look through it if you have an interest: http://www51.honeywell.com/campus_redevelopment/

I would like to suggest that EVERYONE has an interest in this development, even if you live on the other side of town. You should understand what such development will do to cost of government and taxes, your real estate value, and the quality of life in your Township.

Morristown Festival on the Green

This Sunday October 2 is the annual Morristown festival on the Green. I will be standing in front of Booth #21 and would love for you to come by and say hello. Click here for the Festival schedule of events:

<http://morristown-nj.org/todo2.html?id=1190303011>

Things to See and Do: <http://morristown-nj.org/todo2.html?id=1190315357>



Other Items of Interest...

- The Morris Township Department of Parks and Recreation has released its Fall/Winter Rec Brochure. The Recreation department no longer prints and mails its recreation brochure. Click here to view it: http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/rec_brochure_fall_2011.pdf
Register online here: <https://register.communitypass.net/reg/login.cfm?a=%23%29%5E5%29%0A&li=&dec=0&ovr>
- The Morris Township Health Department will offer Seasonal Flu Clinics for Morris Township

residents on Sept. 28 (1-3pm) and October 3 (10am-12pm). The shots are available to those 60 years and older, those with chronic illness and pregnant women. For more details: <http://www.morristwp.com/notice-flushots.html>

- **FREE Kid's Mountain Bike Ride:** Marty's Reliable Cycle Shop is sponsoring a kids event on Sat, Oct 1st at 10am at Lewis Morris Park. Bring the kids for some fun on the trails. Bring your bike, helmet and parent. No bike? no problem, Marty will have some bikes for 'demo.' Recommended for ages 7+ please no training wheels More info: <http://martyreliable.com/>

Upcoming Committee Meeting...

The Township Committee meeting that had been scheduled for October 5th has been cancelled, so the next Township Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 19th at 8:00pm at our municipal building. Please try to attend one of our Township meetings to see how your local government operates. Your presence improves the quality of the proceedings, and your "in-person" questions require the Township Committee to be responsive to our citizens.

**The Next Meeting:
Wed.
Oct. 19th**

Contact Jeff...

I will continue to communicate with the public on a periodic basis. However, if you ever have a question or an issue you would like to discuss, feel free to contact me by e-mail. I will continue to respond to e-mails sent to Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com

Please feel free to forward this e-mail on to others. If you know someone who would like to subscribe to future issues, please have them contact me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com

Your neighbor,
Jeff

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