

**December 2002**

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**IMPORTANT PUBLIC MEETING, January 13, 2003 at 8:00 pm**

A public hearing regarding **the proposed redevelopment area in the New Vernon village** to be held at a special **Planning Board meeting** on January 13, 2003 at 8:00 pm at the municipal building. A map and information about the proposed redevelopment area will be available in the office of the Town Clerk prior to the hearing (on or about December 26). **SEE INSIDE STORY REGARDING REDEVELOPMENT FOR MORE DETAILS, including an unofficial map** and more specific discussion of the process involved.

**CAROL SINGING:** The entire community is invited to gather for Christmas Carol singing on Sunday, December 22, at 5 PM to 6 PM at the lighted tree in Bayne Park. Songbooks will be available for everyone. Please dress warmly and bring a flashlight.

**WATER RESTRICTIONS REMAIN IN EFFECT**

The Harding Township Committee has determined the need to keep the current restrictions on water use in place. Ground water levels are at or near all time lows and Harding depends exclusively on ground water for its water supply. Recent rains have helped fill ponds and lakes and streambeds are no longer dry, however New Jersey remains in a drought emergency and some state restrictions are still in effect. Rainfall amounts in October and November have been above average, but there is still a precipitation deficit of almost 10 inches since July 2001, the date many consider to be the beginning of the current drought. Surface water levels respond more quickly to rainfall, but it will take some time to replenish the ground water supply.

The state Department of Environmental Protection, citing an increase in rainfall, cooler temperatures and the positive effects of mandatory and voluntary conservation lifted the water limitations in three of the six drought regions in the state. The restrictions were lifted in the northern and central part of the state because these areas generally get their water supply from reservoirs or rivers. Restrictions remain in effect for the southern and coastal parts of the state that use mostly groundwater. Although Harding is in the Northeast Region, its residents rely exclusively on ground water so the Township Committee feels it is important to keep the restrictions as a way of stressing the need to conserve water. According to Township Administrator Richard Wiedmann, "At this time of the year the prohibitions regarding lawn watering and car washing will have

minimal effect, but by retaining the restrictions we are sending a message emphasizing the gravity of the situation."

In summary, Harding limits watering of lawns and gardens; washing of vehicles, pavements or other surfaces is not permitted. A full copy of the restrictions is available at the Harding Municipal Building on Blue Mill Road in New Vernon. Questions may be directed to the Harding Health Department at 973 455-7296. More information on the status of water supplies and New Jersey's drought policy is available at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection website [njdrought.org](http://njdrought.org) or by calling 1-800-448-7379

### **THE LIBRARY**

**Book Clubs the Easy Way...**Is your adult book club looking for selection ideas? The Library has free copies of a three-page list of quality fiction suggestions. If your club chooses a title on the list, we will be happy to provide one copy of a discussion guide free of charge to your group's leader. See Lynn Hughes at the desk.

The Library sponsors an adult book club that meets on the third Monday of the month at 3:30 p.m. Upcoming titles include *The Optimist's Daughter* by Eudora Welty and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Contact Helen Twomey at 973-292-4728 for more information.

**When you need a library card**, please come to the Library in person and have your New Jersey driver's license and proof of residence with you. (This could be a utility bill—something with your name and address.) We look forward to meeting you and to telling you about the many advantages of the M.A.I.N. library consortium of which Harding is a member.

To keep in touch with Library programs and services, please visit us at the <http://www.hardingcivic.org> Website. Select "Directory," then scroll down to "Township Library." On the first Library information page is a hyperlink to HTL's web pages.

Come to the Library and enjoy our collection of holiday books. There are new videos, too!

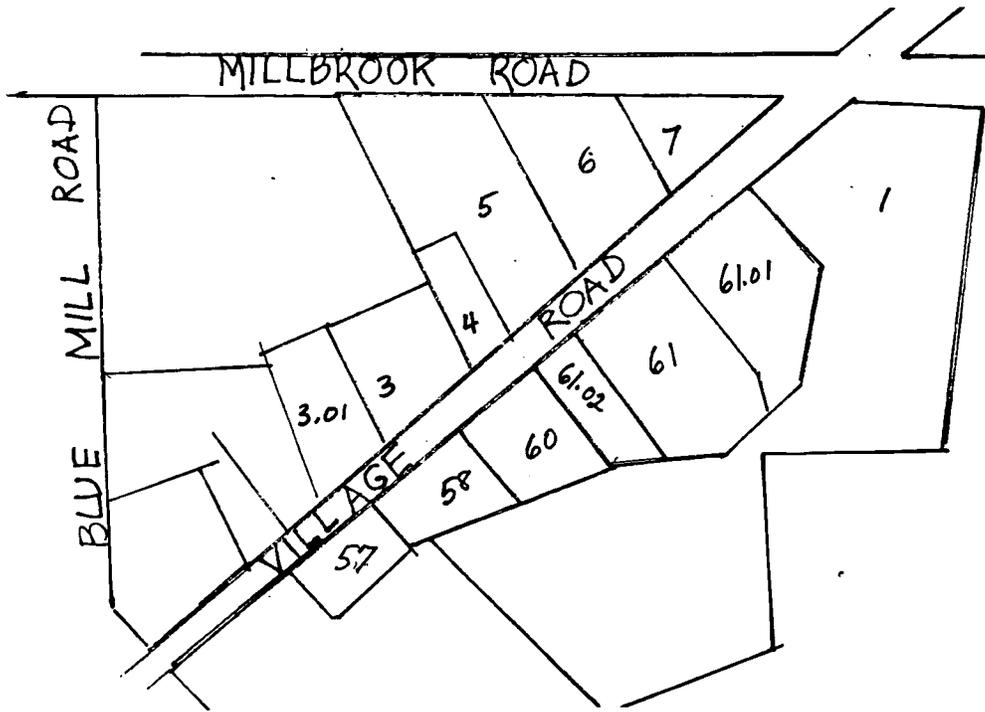
<p><b><i>Art in Bloom</i> returns on Friday, May 9, 2003.</b></p>
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### **TOWNSHIP NEWS**

**Township Committee and Planning Board: the Redevelopment Zone**

As reported previously, the Township Committee together with the Planning Board is considering a “Redevelopment Zone” in part of the “village of New Vernon” section of the Township. ***The map below is not official***, but is reproduced from a handout at the Planning Board for the convenience of residents, and indicates the possible area for the zone. As many as 13 lots, which are Block 18, lots 3, 3.01, 4, 5, 6, and 7; and Block 17, lots 57, 58, 60, 61.02, 61, 61.01 and 1 along Village and Millbrook Roads are presently involved (these are also the B1 business zone in the Village), were discussed as being included in the Planning Board meeting on November 25. ***It is important for residents to know that the exact boundaries of the proposed zone, or even whether such a zone should be designated for redevelopment, is the subject for discussion at the Special Planning Board Meeting on January 13 at 8 PM.*** Should a redevelopment zone be adopted at the Planning Board on January 13, then the affected residents will be officially noticed and an official meeting will be schedule. Proposed properties on the north side of Village Road include the Deli on the corner (Lot 7); Lots 4, 5, and 6 which are various businesses in town, including realtor offices and a bank. Lot 3 is a residential structure now occupied by rental tenants also called the “Academy. On the south side of Village Road, the properties include Township owned land on which is the Tunis-Ellicks House and the Dept of Public Works building (“1”); private residential properties, and the commercial garage property, the presently vacant Ortmans Garage .

The original impetus for the redevelopment effort in town was the fact that the Post Office moved away from the center of the village. It is temporarily sited in two trailers on the Municipal property on Blue Mill Rd. This, together with the near-simultaneous vacancy of Ortmans’ garage as well as the need for a bigger Library, prompted the establishment of a temporary committee last year. (The township library currently is located in the municipal building.) The “village study committee” included Township Committee members, counsel, the township planner, and others, and discussed what if any pro-active steps could be taken by the Township to revitalize the village center.



The Ortman's garage property is one of critical importance to the proposed redevelopment effort. This property is potential "brownfields", having been the site of an automobile garage for many years; the exact degree of pollution is unknown, but it is generally agreed that any future use of the site might entail cleanup at some unknown, possibly large cost. This has served as a deterrent to the use of the property. There are other safety issues. The "Village" area is more densely built-up but properties are served by individual private water supplies and individual septic facilities. In contrast, other more highly built-up sections of town, including the Jenks Road area, Mt Kemble Lake, and Green Village generally have a public water source, rather than separate wells. In

addition, parking requirements for commercial uses require more paving, with consequent loss of space for septic and re-charge of wells.

Implied within these discussions was the concern that future development of the village, which is also a "Historic District", might be best served with some control by the Township government, rather than in the hope that potential corporate or absentee successor ownership to individual resident landowner would act in the Township's best interests as a whole. ***The following background on redevelopment might be helpful to residents.***

### **What is Redevelopment?**

In general, redevelopment is the rehabilitation or improvement of vacant land, or residential, commercial, industrial or public facilities, that are located in an area that meets one of the criteria established by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. [This law allows a municipal governing body to designate areas within its jurisdiction in need of "redevelopment" or "rehabilitation." N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and 14.](#) The criteria include areas where the buildings are dilapidated, detrimental to health or safety, substandard, obsolete or abandoned or where there is a lack of proper utilization of such facilities.

[Once a redevelopment area is designated,](#) the redevelopment of such an area is undertaken pursuant to a redevelopment plan adopted by the municipality. This plan provides the outline for the improvement of the redevelopment area.

Following plan adoption, and in order to further redevelopment, the municipality or redevelopment entity, may provide assistance to private for-profit and not-for-profit entities that is not otherwise permitted by law. These powers include such things as making loans, providing grants or negotiating payments in lieu of taxes with such entities. Redevelopment provides the framework for the joint effort by public bodies and private entities for the improvement of areas within their communities that are in need of redevelopment. [Municipalities engaged in redevelopment can chose a wide variety of procedures, from formal competitive processes to much more informal designation, based on negotiations, to implement the development.](#) The municipality can also select a redeveloper and enter into a redeveloper's agreement. N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6. The Redevelopment Law also grants eminent domain powers to acquire the lands necessary for completion of a redevelopment project to the municipal governing body. N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-8.

It is important to know that the redevelopment procedure affords a municipality extraordinary powers. *It is equally important for residents to remain informed and involved in this process, starting with the meeting on January 13.*

In other Planning Board matters, at the Nov 25 meeting, the Morris Co Park commission appeared to notify the Board (the County does not require zoning approval) about changes to be made in the Lewis Morris Park to the sanitary toilet facility located in the park above Sunrise Lake. This park is not generally known to be in Harding Township, as its main entrance is from Route 24 in Mendham, but the part of the park on which the present facilities are located is within the Township boundary.

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION, NOV 7**

The Harding Township Historic Preservation Commission meeting included members Chair, Dr. R. Cassie, G. Cassie, R.Christensen, T. dePoortere, M. Hanley, P. Hinkle, W. Montgomery and Secretary D.Gilette-Brown. Ms. Hanley was approved as a regular member. Two new Alternates are needed. Chairman Cassie encouraged all members to attend courses and conferences when available, especially the Drew University course in April 2003, "Applying Preservation on the Local Level."

#### Old Business:

Lot 3.01, Block 52-Pleasant Plains Road (Kurdzialak), A request for a Historic Easement and subdividing the six-acre lot into 1.5 and \$.5 acre lots. After discussion the Commission offered help in planning for restoration of the Cottage.

Lot 10.01, Block 47, Lee's Hill and Young's Roads, (Seneca), requested approval of plans to tear down an historic structure and build a new home on the property. He will return in December with site plans.

Report was made of a meeting with Township officials in preparation for a demolition ordinance to be discussed at the Township Committee.

#### New Business:

The New Vernon Presbyterian Church is planning to add two structures to the rear of the Fellowship Hall and an elevator to serve all three floors to contain classrooms and offices, and to install a new septic system, and enlarge and revise the parking area. The Commission felt the new plans were an improvement over the previous submission.

It was suggested that consideration of providing incentives for maintaining Historic Properties be made.

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP Board of Education**

The Harding Township Board of Education began the 2003-2004 budget planning process at its work session on November 11. Over the next several months, various aspects of the budget will be discussed and analyzed during each work session. In preparation for the March 24<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing and the April 15<sup>th</sup> School Board Election, the Board is hopeful that the public will attend and participate in the budget development process. The current schedule of dates and topics for discussion are:

Monday, December 9 Fixed costs – what are they and how can they be controlled?

Monday, January 13 Review of departmental requests – prioritizing needs

Monday, February 10 Discussion of the tentative budget – bringing the pieces together

Monday, March 10 Informal presentation of the proposed budget  
These meetings will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Media Center on the second floor of the Middle School Building on Lee's Hill Road, New Vernon.

The Finance Committee of the Harding Township Board of Education is also forming a budget advisory committee to foster greater public understanding of the needs of the school system and more public involvement in the budgeting process. This committee will first learn about the diverse needs of the school system, and will then provide its insights to the school administration and the Finance Committee as they establish priorities for the 2003-2004 school budget. Any Harding resident, who is interested in participating and can attend two or three evening meetings in January and February, is invited to contact the Business Office at 973-267-6398 x 114. The Board will determine the final list of members and name the committee at its meeting on December 16.

The Harding Township School has now added the weekly "Harding Huskies Happenings" to the information posted on its web site. Log onto [www.hardingtwp.k12.nj.us](http://www.hardingtwp.k12.nj.us) for information on school activities, board meetings, and PTO and Education Foundation updates.

The renovation of the school building is nearly completed, after a three-year capital project. Total renovation of the third floor was the last stage. All that remains to be completed are railings on the ramp leading into the middle school.

#### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT, November 21, 2002**

New #24-02, DaSilva, Jenks Rd, BI 25, lot 20, to construct single family dwelling, requesting variance for maximum building coverage of 11.7% (10% allowed).

Coverage exceed by 246ft<sup>2</sup>. Site inspection was set. It was noted that in Jenks Rd area, 15 out of 21 lots don't conform to maximum building coverage limitations.

New # 25-02, Lamonte, 26 Primrose Tr, BI 36, lot 8. Request to add full shed dormer, covered deck, and open deck. Building on site is already over coverage. 15% coverage allowed, 19.5% coverage requested. Application approved.

New # 26-02, McClelland, Millbrook Rd, BI 15, lot 27.04. Variance requested for impervious coverage, driveway issue, possibility to reduce area of driveway? Site inspection set.

New #23-02, First Presbyterian Church, Lees Hill Rd, BI 49, lot 1 seeking variances from set back requirements, and for additions to non-conforming structure. Applicants plan to enhance off-street parking, also improvements to buildings and grounds. Asking for an additional 33 parking stalls, setbacks would be 50' to side lot and 75' to rear (need 150' to comply). The impervious coverage permitted for this "split zone" property is 25%. Presently the site has 37% coverage, asking for an increase to 42.5%. The overall building coverage would go from 13.1% to 15.5%. The septic system would be rebuilt, so that the Manse and the Christian Ed Center would each have own septic. The architect, Patrick Burke testified that the changes to the Christian Ed building would be in the back, and not impact streetscape. An elevator tower, and improvements to the roof and electrical system are also planned.

New # 20-02, Verizon, Mt Kemble Ave, Rt 202, BI 36, lot 8. Building is existing non-conforming use. Requesting addition to rear of building, as well as parking for vehicles which service area. Use variance requested to outside storage of propane gas.

**SHADE TREE COMMITTEE**, no report this month

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION, MEETINGS OF 11/4 & 12/3/02**

- Well Survey – While there is still much data to be compiled, the Well Survey is moving along well. Two members of the Environmental Commission will be traveling to Trenton to search for additional data. About 30% of the data is compiled. Much more is hoped to be found in Trenton.
- Other water issues include the skating pond in Bayne Park, which will be filled by storm water runoff. With the recent rains and light snow, the

pond is full. However, the water table below surface is questionable, so the Township Committee has chosen to continue the water restrictions.

- Natural Resource Inventory – the work is continuing and much attention is expected to be paid to conservation issues such as carrying capacity and several water issues.
- Model EIS-an environmental impact statement is required whenever there may be environmental concerns regarding an application before one of the town's boards. This model is being developed to streamline the process. The model is expected to be submitted to DEP, and subsequently presented to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and Township Committee for an eventual ordinance requiring anyone who must submit an environmental impact statement to use this model. This work is expected to be completed in the next few months.
- Work is being shared between the EC and the Great Swamp Watershed Association to study plant and animal life in Township waterways. This study will monitor the quality of stream water flowing through Harding.
- Fence Study – While there is still much data to be compiled, there have been 53 fences thus far noted on major roadways (Village Road, Long Hill Road, Blue Mill Road and Spring Valley Road). More data will need to be compiled and analyzed before any conclusions can be reached. The main area of concern is wildlife traffic, specifically deer, and their ability to cross roads and properties being impeded by fences. The Environmental Commission is preparing to compare data between the highest deer/vehicle accident areas and the proximity of fences.
- The Presbyterian Church application was discussed. Much emphasis was placed on the new plans for the parking lot and how the placement of the lot and the adjacent landscaping will hide the lot from being seen from the road.
- The Hurley Application was discussed. There appear to be exceptional wetlands on a portion of the property.
- GIS - The Environmental Commission has a computer program with data compiled from the state, the county and at the local level. It is based on digitized information provided by the county. The aerial flyover was done in 1999, and there is a tremendous amount of information available through this Global Imaging System. Items such as soil classification, geology, streams, lots, tax maps, waterways, the location of conservation easement and much, much more. This impressive system may be

eventually incorporated into board meetings (Planning, Adjustment and Township Committee) for visual evidence of whatever is being discussed.

### **Garden Club**

The New Vernon Garden Club will again be decorating Drumthwacket, the Governor's Mansion in Princeton. This year's theme is "Home for the Holidays". Justine Kovacs and Suzy Moran are coordinators. Drumthwacket is open to the public on Wednesdays before Christmas from 10:30 am to 5 PM December 18 and Sunday December 15, noon to 5 PM

### **Civic Association News** **Appeal for Annual Dues**

Thank you for your generous response to our appeal for annual dues, as well as your appreciative notes about our efforts to continue with high quality reporting of civic events. ***You help us achieve our goals by joining as a dues-paying member.***

The Civic Association Annual Meeting will be March 3, at 7:30 PM, in the Township Hall. The program is being planned, look for more details in the future, but the topic will involve Township water safety issues, and an update on the private well survey. The Environmental Commission will participate in the presentation.

### **Call for updates to the Harding Township Directory**

If you have responsibility for a listed service or organization, please take a moment to review and update your listing. Send it along to the Civic Association, either at the postal address -[**PO Box 72, New Vernon, 07976**]. Or faxed to Thumbnail editor at **973-605-1127**. **If you want an electronic copy of your organization's current listing in the directory in order to update, please send an EM requesting it to the editor, hesnaj@aol.com.** Please get updates to us as early as you can in 2003. Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that your organization's listing is correct.

**The deadlines for the next 2 issues of the Thumbnail are December 28 and January 30, 2002.** Call the editor if you have any transmission questions or ideas for articles, 973 540 8911. You should EM or fax articles (typewritten

preferred, please) to the Editor, Hesna Pfeiffer, **973 605 1127, email hesnaj@aol.com**. *The Thumbnail is copyrighted and published by the Harding Township Civic Association, and is mailed to every home in Harding Township.*  
**RECYCLING:** Commingled recycling of plastics, aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles and jars, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard and household batteries at Municipal Garage every Wed, AM-Noon; and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays from 9-12 AM, Dec 28 and Jan 4 and 18. Residents are requested NOT to leave recyclable materials if the center is closed.

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DATES TO REMEMBER, meetings at 8PM, unless as noted.

Municipal Court (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)	6 PM	
Environmental Commission (1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday)	7:30 PM	12/3, 1/7
Seniors (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday)	11 AM .....	
Planning Board (4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	8 PM .....	12/16, 1/13, 1/27
Hist Preservation Comm (1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday)	8 PM	1/2, 2/6
Board of Health (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	8 PM .....	12/12, 1/9
Board of Education (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM ..	
Board of Adjustment (3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM ..	12/19, 1/16
Township Committee (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed)	8 PM .....	12/26, 1/8, 1/15
Shade Tree (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday)	3 PM	1/13, 2/10