

December 2004

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

HTRA-Madison/Harding Little League Baseball & Softball Registration-Saturdays, January 8th & 15th, 9:00 am- 12:00 noon Tuesday, January 11th, 7:00 pm- 9:00 pm at the Madison Community House Gym, 25 Cook Avenue, Madison. You must bring a birth certificate and proof of Harding residence. All players 8 & up must be present to be fitted for uniforms at registration. HTRA will continue to have T-Ball in Harding. Registration will be in March. Any questions please call Brian McCabe @ 973-425-9399.

If you are interested in playing **Girls Lacrosse** 3-8th grade this season please send to harding_girls_lacrosse@yahoo.com : Name, address, phone number, birth date, current grade, school and e-mail address. This includes all that played last year.

CAROL SINGING: The entire community is invited to gather for Christmas Carol singing on **Sunday, December 19, 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.

The New Vernon Volunteer First Aid Squad is extending an open invitation for you to consider joining the Squad. In the coming year, we are faced with the loss of several long-time members and juniors who are off to college. We need to begin training their replacements if we are to maintain our tradition of always being there when you need us. One of the most essential volunteer organizations in the Township, the Squad is made up of diverse members of the community: from high school students to retirees, from busy professionals to stay-at-home parents. Few of us had any medical training before we signed on, but we share a commitment to serve one 12-hour "on-call" shift per week. This is not a lot of time, but the payoff is huge! The training is exceptional, and it could well turn out to save your life, the life of a loved one, or that of a neighbor.

You can help by becoming an EMT or First Responder. Encourage a friend to join with you. Please call Geoff Dobson, President, NVVFAS at 973-326-1996. He would be delighted to welcome you aboard and to introduce you to our team of dedicated volunteers. Join a vital organization and learn a life-long, life-saving skill. You'll be glad you did!

Harding Township Historical Society

The Annual Meeting of HTHS will take place at the New Vernon Firehouse on **Thursday, January 13** featuring archeologist, educator and author John T. Kraft who will speak about "Lenape Lifeways: The Life of New Jersey's Native Peoples from 12,000 Years Ago to the Present." Following a brief business meeting and light refreshments at 7:30, Mr. Kraft will begin his talk which examines Lenape legends, art and religious beliefs, and discusses the basic philosophy and lifestyle of Native Americans leading to

the inevitable clash of cultures that ensued. Seating is limited to 100 and reservations are suggested. Call (973) 292-3661. Admission is free to HTHS members; non-members will be charged \$5.00 per person.

The Harding Twp Police Department will provide free firearm safety kits to local residents. Please stop by the police department and pick up as many safety locks as you need. Chief Kevin Gaffney says, " We encourage residents to pick up a Project Child Safe kit so they can securely store their firearm. Each kit contains a cable style gunlock. The lock fits most types of handguns, rifles, and shotguns. The goal is to prevent a child or any un-authorized person from accessing a firearm in your home".

The Police have a new program, "Child Safety Seat Rewards". When a child is observed properly secured in a child safety seat, a policeman will award a "summons" entitling the child to a free double scoop ice cream cone at the Minutemen Restaurant, Rt 202. The Police hope that through positive reinforcement they will increase child safety seat usage. This program is sponsored by the PBA Local 340 and the Minuteman Restaurant. The law in NJ requires children under the age of 8 and weighing less than 80 pounds to be secured in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat. Any questions, please contact the Police department at 973 455 0500.

THE LIBRARY

New Telephone Extension for the Library: 132. You can reach us at 973-267-8000 ext. 132.

Children's Storytime: *Journeys*: Tuesday, December 7; repeated on Wednesday, December 15. *Moon Musings*: Tuesday, January 4, 2005. *Mitten Yarns*: Wednesday, January 12. Programs are at 10:30 a.m. Led by storyteller Lynn Hughes.

Book Club for students in grades 4-6 will meet at the Library on Thursday, December 2 at 4:30 p.m. Please call the Library at 973-267-8000 ext. 132 to register.

Adult Evening Book Discussion Group...meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Call Librarian Lotte Newlin (973-267-8000 ext. 132) for more information.

Holiday Closings: Friday, December 24; Saturday, December 25; Friday, December 31; Saturday, January 1, 2005. **Happy New Year!**

Be sure to check the donated books cart for your holiday shopping!

TOWNSHIP NEWS

Township Committee, November 3

Building Lot Size Boosted to 5 Acres, Rural Residential Zoning Ordinance

The Mayor began with a brief history of the Ordinance 22-04, which would create five new five-acre rural residential zones in the Township. The Ordinance was introduced at the October 6th Township Committee meeting. The Mayor noted that there had been 13 open meeting at which the public could have voiced their views.

Ms Farrell added that the Township Committee has requested that the Planning Board consider future amendments to the Ordinance to further the goals of the Master Plan (such as allowing “cluster buildings”).

Susan Kimball, Township Planner, then summarized the criteria that were used in creating the boundaries of the five zones stressing the objective nature of the exercise, without regard to its impact on any particular landowners. The criteria she used to create the zones included the following:

1. Existing five acre development separated by only one smaller lot
2. Preserve large lots and contribute to rural streetscape
3. Keep boundaries uniform and use property lines and streets where possible, but allow for exceptions if it furthered the larger goal
4. Each zone should be a minimum of 40 acres with no single lot zones.

Several members of the public then spoke in favor of and against the Ordinance or to ask questions. Ms Kimball clarified that lot size averaging was allowed by the Ordinance as long as it furthered the overall goal of the Ordinance. Fran Frigario suggested an appeal process for “hardship” cases such as where a parent wanted to subdivide to create a lot for a home for a child. Ms. Kimball said that a landowner could always go to the Board of Adjustment for relief from the five-acre minimum lot size and lots of six acres could have an accessory building.

Edgar Anderson asked for a “show and tell” session with the Planning Board to get into the specifics of lot size averaging. An attorney representing a Sheepfield Farm homeowner argued that her client’s property should be excluded from the five acre zoning because it was part of a neighborhood of predominately three and four acre properties. Ms. Kimball said that a property’s location in a neighborhood was not a criterion that was used.

Hal Scaff repeated his position from previous meetings that rural preservation should be based on agricultural needs and since there was not much agriculture left in Harding, the Ordinance was not needed. Mr Scaff later asked about the Harding Ordinance’s ability to withstand possible legal challenge especially relative to the Bedminster rezoning. The Committee and Ms Kimball noted that Bedminster rezoning was sustained in court and that Harding had done a more thorough job utilizing objective criteria consistent with the Master Plan where Bedminster had simply created a single ten acre zone.

Before the vote, Mayor Murray noted that Ordinance 22-04 was only a piece of a network of regulations that included septic and setback requirements and density restrictions designed to protect the environment. **The Ordinance was adopted into law unanimously.**

The following report has been provided to the Civic Association by Sally Dudley, Chair, Harding Township Open Space Committee.

Historic Background of Harding's Open Space

Open space preservation in Harding has a long and interesting history. Decades before open space became an area of widespread interest, farsighted residents made donations of land and/or money to preserve land for public use in Harding. One donor observed as he conveyed land to Harding Township in the 1930's "I was attracted to this neighborhood because of its rural beauty, the fine type of people . . . There is no other similar unspoiled countryside so near New York."

Thanks to the wisdom and foresight of the people who have lived and worked here over the last 75 years, Harding has two significant large preserved federal open space areas and a local park in the center of town. These three preserved open spaces cover more than 4,800 acres in Harding Township alone – more than one third of our total area – and are at the heart of our special and unique character.

The first preservation was **Jockey Hollow** on Tempe Wick Road. In 1929, development threatened to cut this land into dozens of building sites. By 1933, in the midst of the Depression, local people were able to get legislation through Congress establishing the nation's first national historical park. And Lloyd W. Smith, an active Washington Association member donated 1,000 acres he had purchased for \$250,000 (about \$3.5 million in today's dollars). Today, Jockey Hollow covers nearly 1,350 acres in Harding Township.

A few years later, Howard Bayne, a 25-year resident, gave the township 14 acres on the corner of Glen Alpin and Blue Mill Roads for a local park, ultimately named in his honor. The donor's goals for **Bayne Park** included preserving "the present picturesque approach to New Vernon, [and] the pond as a reservoir for fire protection," and providing "a place where trees, flowers and shrubs may be cultivated and maintained."

The third and largest site is the **Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**. It covers the southern third of Harding. In 1959, the Port Authority proposed to build a jetport covering 10,000 acres in and around Great Swamp. It would have destroyed significant portions of New Vernon, Green Village, Meyersville, Bernardsville and Basking Ridge. Thanks to extraordinary work done by Congressman Peter Frelinghuysen, (who still lives in Harding Township and whose son Rodney now represents our area in Congress) and Marcellus Hartley Dodge, those interested in saving Great Swamp were able to raise more than \$1 million (nearly \$6 million in today's dollars) in less than three years. They used the funds to purchase the minimum 3,000 acres required to establish a National Wildlife Refuge. Today the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge covers 7,600 acres, with 3,500 acres in Harding. Last year, Harding was able to support the US Fish & Wildlife Service's preservation efforts by adding 64 acres of pristine habitat to the Refuge on Long Hill Road. Virtually all of the Great Swamp land in Harding east of Long Hill Road is part of one of the first designated National Wilderness Areas.

The Harding Open Space Committee is working hard to preserve additional land

to help insure the health and integrity of our water and air, our unique historic and rural character and to maintain the special resources at Jockey Hollow, Bayne Park and the Great Swamp. Now more than ever we need the help of Harding's citizens to support our efforts to protect our environment and the rural character we so highly value. Your tax dollars are the backbone of our preservation efforts. But, numerous individuals have also gone even further to make property available at favored sale prices while others have simple created open space easements on their property to maintain their control while still advancing the causes for preservation.

For further information, please contact Sally Dudley at shdud@verizon.net, or 973-698-6990.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

October 21, 2004 Meeting

Resolution: Application #23-02 First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon. Mr. North, whose property is adjacent to the Church, raised concerns about the modified application. He would like to make sure that the parking lot and buffer are completed before Phase I is started. Currently, the Church has cleared a portion of land next to his house in anticipation of doing construction. Since this area is not attractive and since Mr. North is trying to sell his house, he would like to make sure that the buffer area is completed as soon as possible. The Board of Adjustment put a stipulation in the resolution saying that the parking lot and buffer must be done before Phase II is started and that a C.O. would not be issued unless the buffer was complete.

Pending Applications: #8-04 - Charles W. and Shirley M. Roy - 67 Youngs Road, Block 47, Lot 14.02, Zone R-1. Request for 1-month adjournment

#13-04 - Michael and Nancy McManus, 197 Village Road, Block 10, Lot 16, Zone R-1 "C" Variance. A site inspection was completed. The driveway will be moved so that the impervious coverage will remain at 10.6%. The pool was taken out of the plan. Streetscape and trees will not be affected by the driveway changes. The architecture will be consistent with the other properties in that area. The stockade fence is too close to the road, but since it was put up prior to the current law, it can remain. However, if the fence ever has to be replaced in the future, its placement would have to be approved by the Board. Application approved subject to the observations on the fence.

New Applications:

#14-04 - William I. Blanchard, 21 Glen Alpin Road, Block 49, Lot 12.01, Zone R-1 "C" Variance. Lot size is 6 acres. Setback from Glen Alpin is inadequate. Mr. Blanchard grew up on the property and has owned it since 1990. The center part of the house dates back to 1865. In the 60's, Mr. Blanchard's parents put two additions on the house. Mr. Blanchard would like to add a mudroom to the house and move a wall in the kitchen so that it will accommodate a table. He would also like to remove the barn that is closest to the house and replace it with a barn that will be wide enough and tall enough to be used as a garage. The new barn will look like the existing barn (as much as possible).

The historical society representative commented on the proposed changes. There were no objections. Application approved.

#15-02 - Lynn Davila, 19 Peachcroft Road, Block 32, Lot 1.22, zone R-1, "C" Variance. Current house is non-conforming due to setback shortage. Applicant would like to add a screened-in porch and pool in the back of the house. Also, an 18-foot addition will be made to the family room, with a terrace and small balcony off of the master bedroom. The pool will have a 4-foot walk around it and will be enclosed. If this work is done, the septic system will have to be altered. Application approved.

#16-04 - Douglas D and Martha T. Coy, 10 Fawn Hill Drive, Block 48, Lot 8.11, Zone R-1 "C" Variance. Applicant wants to increase the height of the existing deer fence from 7 feet to 8 feet. Current height is not enough to keep the deer out. The Board of Adjustment felt that this is a matter for the Planning Board. The matter will be carried so that the applicant can present this issue to the Planning Board.

#17-04 - Brian Hamilton, 66 Long Hill Road, Block 51, Lot 33, Zone R-1, "C" Variance. Property is $\frac{3}{4}$ acres. A one-story ranch house is currently on the property. Because of the size of the property, there are several variances that will be needed. Also, property is in a wetland-restricted area (transition area and wet lands). Applicant will remove most of the existing house and replace with a new house. Also, current house is built on a slab - the new house will have a basement. The footprint will have to be used, otherwise DEP land use restrictions will apply. Applicant will verify that DEP will prohibit moving the house from present location. Site inspection scheduled for Nov. 6th at 9:00 A.M.

November 18, 2004 Meeting

Not on Agenda:

Douglas Nelson - Variance approved October 25, 2003. Coverage of 14.97% approved. Applicant was allowed to shift the driveway as long as the coverage was not changed. Applicant was able to reduce coverage by changing driveway. Board accepted the current plan as being the accepted plan.

Peter Dorne wanted to amend his approved variance to add a second floor and a fireplace to his barn. The variance for changes to his barn was passed in February, 2004. The Board of Adjustment was asked if they could vote informally on these changes. The Board ruled that even though the coverage doesn't change, the bulk of the building would change. Therefore, if Mr. Dorne wants to make these changes, he will have to file an amended application and re-submit it to the Board. Mr. Dorne also asked about making changes to the variance for the "henhouse" on his property on Lee's Hill Road. He wants to change one of the doors to a sliding glass door and add a chimney and fireplace. The Board had no problem with these changes.

Chris Allyn from the Environmental Commission also addressed the Board of Adjustment. He noted that many of the variances being considered are for additions in impervious coverage. He made three recommendations. 1.) He urged the Board to follow the 10% limit, citing studies that water quality dropped off after 10% coverage had

been reached. 2.) He would like to see the Board recommend actions to mitigate coverage overage. One suggestion would be to use porous pavers. 3.) He would like to see the Board re-allocate coverage of driveways on flag lots so that all property owners share in the coverage even though it is not on their property.

Pending Applications:

Application #8-04 - Charles W. and Shirley M. Roy, 67 Youngs Road, Block 47, Lot 14.02, Zone RR; "C" Variance. The Roys were represented by Porzio and Bromberg. The Roys removed 385.264 feet of pool decking. There remains 105.95 feet of decking which the Roy's feel is necessary to maintain a consistent perimeter around the pool. The Roys will install trees around the generator so that when it exercises itself, the noise will be muffled. There was also an issue about a wall with a canvass roof that was being considered as a "structure". Since the wall was less than 7 feet tall and since the roof was canvass and was no longer connected to the wall, it could not be considered to be a structure. Application approved

Application #17-04 - Brian Hamilton, 66 Long Hill Road, Block 51, Lot 33, Zone R-1, "C" Variance. The DEP. regulations allow a "building in transition area" to be replaced, as long as it is in the same footprint. This lot is under-sized and is not wide enough. Mr. Hamilton will reduce the coverage from 13.4% to 11.4%. Application approved.

Application #16-04 - Douglas D. and Martha T. Coy, 10 Fawn Hill Drive, Block 48, Lot 8.11, Zone R-1; "C" Variance. Application is on hold until the Planning Board can review it.

New Applications:

Application #20-04 - Brent and Leslie Wentz- 36 Miller Road, Block 13, Lot 5, Zone R-1; "C" Variance. The house on this property was abandoned when the Wentzes purchased the property. They are currently living in the house and would like to build a barn style garage that would have room for storage. The height of the barn was questioned by the Board. Also, Leon Desbrook, a neighbor, had a problem with the location of the barn. A site inspection was planned for December 4th at 9:00 A.M. At that time, Mr. Wentz and the Board will try to find an acceptable location for the barn.

Application #13-04 - Gloria Glatt, 55 Red Gate Road, Block 6, Lot 2.01, Zone RR; "C" Variance. - Application adjourned.

Application #18-04 - Christopher and Jana O'Connor, 150 Village Road, Block 14, Lot 4.06, Zone R-1, "C" Variance. Issue is impervious coverage. There is a 500-foot driveway from Village Road to access property, that is shared by other properties. Applicant wants to install a pool and patio. With the proposed changes, coverage would be 25,513 sq. feet, or 13.34%. Driveway uses up 4.13% of coverage. A site inspection was scheduled.

HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OCTOBER:

Howarth, Block 15, Lot 21.05, 85 Pleasantville Road. The HPC gave informal comments to the applicant regarding proposed streetscape façade. Suggestions included reconsideration of garage dormers and roofline to reduce mass and comments about proposed use of cultured stone on the front façade.

Blanchard, Block 49, Lot 12.01, 21 Glen Alpin Road. The applicant proposed to preserve the appearance of this farm homestead, which is a prominent part of the streetscape along Glen Alpin Road. The expansion of the residence and construction of a new, larger barn to replace the existing barn preserve the proportions and massing of the existing structures. Materials and scale are appropriate.

Gale residence, Block 1, Lot 8.01, 48 Kitchell Road -The Commission exempted the plans for the spa from review, because it is behind the house and not visible from the street.

Kirby Residence, Block 4, Lot 14, 604 Van Beuren Road. This home, in the Silver Lake Historic District, and is formerly the Seth Thomas Estate and a key contributing property in Harding. Applicants plan to renovate the existing structure. Because the work is to the interior and the windows will be replaced but not changed, the commission exempted this application from a HPC hearing.

Dorne/deHuff residence, Block 19, Lot 2,14 Sand Spring Lane. The applicant came before the Commission to review plans to raise the roofline of the proposed new barn by 4'. The commission previously commented because the property is part of an area recently determined by residents and SHPO (the NJ State Historic Preservation Organization) to be eligible for historic status. Because this property is non-contributing the commission will offer no additional comment.

Dorne, Block 47, lot 10.01, 106 Lee's Hill & Young's Road. In response to Commission recommendations, Mr. Dorne presented revised plans for the renovation of the cottage. They reduce the street-facing windows and show the addition of a shed type roofline over the kitchen area. Members further requested that he consider simplifying the design of the cupolas.

Dicksons Mill Bridge renovations. The Commission is making recommendations to Morris County engineers regarding bridge replacement and will provide comment to SHPO about this project.

NOVEMBER:

Dapkus, Block 56, lot 14, 7 Woodland Road. While this is a contributing property, it is not located within a Historic District. The request for a permit to demolish two outbuildings on this property (both in a state of severe disrepair) was approved without comment. The applicant was advised to try to maintain other contributing structures on the property in order to prevent further deterioration.

Huff, Block 31, lot 1, 563 Tempe Wick Road. The current home copies, on the same footprint, the original home on this property that was built around 1900. A three-phase plan to expand this contributing structure in the Tempe Wick Historic District was presented by Mr. John McFadden. The Commission, asked for specific comment on

phase 1, which expands the home on the farthest side from the road, agreed that it was consistent in proportion, height, scale and materials with the existing house. The commission offered preliminary comments on phases 2 and 3 due to streetscape concerns. These included a request that plans for a new front porch and additional of an attached garage and storage shed be simplified to be consistent with current rhythm, proportion, height, and materials.

Kirby, Block 4, lot 14, 604 Van Beuren Road. (Key-contributing property - Silver Lake Historic District). A permit has been requested to re-roof, replacing asphalt shingles with cedar shingles. An exemption from a commission hearing was approved.

Dorne, Block 47, lot 10.01, 106 Lee's Hill Road. (Contributing property – Logansville Historic District). A permit has been requested to replace the damaged roof on the primary residence, with new cedar shingles. This is being done to stop further damage to the interior of the old home. A hearing exemption was approved.

Bozhardt, Block 6, lot 7, Blue Mill Road, 1 Great Oaks Drive (Contributing property, Silver Lake Historic District). The applicant has applied to the Planning Board for minor sub-division. This property is within the newly designated rural districts, so subdivision plans will be revised. The commission recommended review of previous Adjustment and Planning Board decisions to determine if conditions for further subdivision were placed on the approvals related to this property.

The following applications were reviewed without comment.

Glatt, Block 6, lot 2.01, 55 Red Gate Road. (Non-contributing Home, Silver Lake Historic District). The applicant has applied for a variance for construction of a port-cochere, an enclosed pool and a three-car garage. There are no streetscape issues as the home is not visible from the road.

O'Connor, Block 14, lot 4.06, 150 Village Road. This home is not in a historic district. This is an application to the Board of Adjustment.

Wentz, Block 13, lot 5, 36 Miller Road. This is an application to the Board of Adjustment. This home is not in a historic, originally a contributing structure made non-contributing with previous renovations. The commission reviewed plans to construct a two-story garage on the property and voiced concerns for the streetscape, and the size and mass of the proposed garage.

Healy, Block 5, lots 4.01 & 4.02, 555 Van Beuren Road, Crestley Drive. (Contributing Property, Silver Lake Historic District). The property owners are requesting Planning Board approval for a lot line change, which creates a minor sub-division.

Please note that the following homes have demolition action pending:

Randazzo – 12 Millbrook Road (Contributing property, New Vernon Village District). Demolition delay ends May 2005. Owner plans to replace existing home with new construction.

Cusano – 77 Glen Alpin Road (Contributing property, New Vernon Village District). Demolition delay ended. Anticipated timing for demolition – when property sold.

Billings – 547 Tempewick Road (Contributing property, Tempewick District). Demolition

delay ended. Anticipated timing for demolition – when property sold.
King – 106 Lee’s Hill Road (Contributing property – Logansville District).
Architect/developer to build new home incorporating existing residence. Plans approved
by HPC.

Planning Board, Nov 22, 2004

As the township minimum-zoning ordinance has been increased to 5 from 3 acres, the applications for two proposed pending subdivisions has been affected. One is “The Ridge at Sand Spring”, recent owner, Mrs. Kay Lyall, Sand Spring Rd; another is Mueller, Sheepfield Farms Dr, Bl 47, lot 32, end of road. Both applications were continued to the December meeting, presumably with some changes. In other matters, the Lancor (former owner, Bruce McShane) subdivision at Cherry Lane was approved.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

The records of the school board meeting are found at Board Notes, on the school’s official website: www.hardingtp.k12.nj.us.

Meeting 11/08/2004:

Lacrosse Program: Dr. Pallozzi and Ms. Holly Shooman discussed the issue of starting a lacrosse program. This past spring a survey was taken to determine which sports would be of interest and the response was more in favor of having lacrosse than baseball or softball as a spring sport. Ms. Shooman explored the possibilities of what it would take to get this program off the ground. Budgeted expenses for softball/baseball can be applied to the lacrosse program, but given the start-up costs an additional \$5,000 would be needed. The BOE is expecting a recommendation from Dr. Pallozzi and will be addressed at the next board meeting.

BOE Follow-up on Facility Planning Committee Recommendations:

The BOE discussed the FPC’s findings and recommendations presented by chairperson David Weil at its Oct. 25th meeting (refer to November Thumbnail or Observer-Tribune Nov. 4th edition for presentation write-up). Angelo Santoro, BOE president, opened the floor to other board members for comment. Evelyn Douglas started by extending her appreciation for their effort, but reiterated the original mission of this group was to review facility projects, prioritize findings and recommend a plan of action. It was not this group’s job to audit or review prior projects which were done under the supervision of another board. This group was formed to invite the community to help maximize expertise and make recommendations, but ultimately it is the BOE’s responsibility to oversee the spending of funds. However, Ms. Douglas invited an FPC member to join the Buildings & Grounds Committee which reviews in greater detail facility projects before action is taken. Jim Novotny commented that the group went on a fact-finding mission focusing on areas that went wrong instead of moving forward in a positive direction. He expressed his disappointment with the field reports and the lack of

constructive comments. Ms. Regina Egea commented on channeling expertise and energy into specific projects rather than viewing things holistically.

Mr. Dan Gallagher, a member of the FPC, indicated that the members of this group were citizens interested in volunteering their collective talents to help the Harding School. Mr. Gallagher stated that the FPB was handed a bunch of projects without much direction. During the review of these various projects, it was discovered that a lot of things had not been done properly. Mr. Gallagher expressed concern over the number of bad decisions made by the School Administration along the way and the fact that these mistakes ended up being the problem of all Harding taxpayers.

Mr. Santoro expressed his appreciation to the FPC and recognized that there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise within the community and it was the desire of the BOE to find a way to tap into it by involving the community via these committees. Santoro explained that the BOE members are not educational experts, but assess the viability and reasonableness of the recommendations of the School Administration. He further emphasized that the BOE is not prepared to create a joint decision making function with the FPC and cannot turn over its role as decision makers. Mr. Santoro asked David Weil, chairperson of the FPC for any comments. Mr. Weil agreed to respond after receiving Mr. Santoro's written response and convening a meeting of the FPC. Jerry O'Loughlin, member of the FPC and president of the HTRA, asked the BOE what is the next step with respect to the fields. Mr. Santoro responded that there is no next step at this time. Mr. Santoro did indicate that the BOE would like the FPC to start focusing on a 5 year long range facility plan.

November 16, 2004 meeting:

S-1701 Update: S-1701 is a New Jersey State law which was passed at the end of June of this year intended to reduce spending on education. The law will have a significant impact on Harding Township's School District. The law requires a reduction of surplus and the use of those funds for short term property tax relief, reduces the overall budget cap, imposes administrative spending limits, places restrictions on second ballot finance questions in school elections and requires STATE approval of certain line item transfers within a local school district budget.

S-1701 places unnecessary and difficult restrictions on administrative spending, altering both the administrative spending cap and the definition of "administrative spending". This cap will result in the loss of the position of Principal at our school by next year and several other service and program cuts if the law is not amended or repealed. In addition, the Board of Education is concerned that the law will eventually require Harding Township to merge with another school district.

The PTO Board, along with the Educational Foundation and the Vision Council, has drafted a letter to residents to explain the new legislation and its immediate impacts. Harding has the lowest property taxes in our area and it is not likely that our property taxes would remain low were we to merge with another school district. Dee Klikier announced that the Board of Education has commissioned a study on the possibility of

combining school districts, which will have concrete details by January. She added that the last such study conducted in the late 90's showed an increase of property taxes by 20% were Harding to merge with another district.

The law is written to discourage small school districts. Our administrative costs per student are higher than State mandate. However, if Harding were to dissolve its district and combine with Madison for instance, our taxes would likely rise, and property values might be adversely affected. In addition, the residents would lose local control over the school. The PTO voted on a decision to fund a mailing to 1500 Harding Township residents to encourage the campaign to amend this law. Ms. Klikier discussed the "ripple effect" of this kind of legislation. Her concern is that the school will lose students due to the uncertainty of this situation. Jane Williams stated that publicity is the key to galvanizing the community to campaign against this law.

While only \$400,000 or 6% of our budget comes from the State, this law attempts to govern Harding's entire budget expenditure. In further discussion, Senator Tom Kean was identified as the legislator most likely to effect a change. PTO members discussed additional approaches, such as coordinating efforts with other school districts and directly meeting with legislators. Letters to the editor of the Star Ledger newspaper and other local newspapers would also be helpful. This law imposes State control over a previously locally controlled school system. Our district would lose both autonomy and curriculum development. For further information, go to www.HardingPTO.com.

Report from The New Vernon Garden Club

The New Vernon Garden Club was recently recognized by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. for its continued horticultural and educational work in the community. At the Central Atlantic Region meeting held in Cambridge, MD in early November 2004, the local club received the first place award for "Civic Development or Improvement" for its work in Bayne Park. Its Publicity Press Book garnered the first place award for a large club. Also received was a Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation for participating in the 2003-2005 Central Atlantic Region Unified Project "The Greening of Historic Sites in Our Communities" -- this for its work in the Tunis-Ellicks Parlor Garden and the George Washington Bicentennial Triangle Park.

Earlier in the year, for its work in Bayne Park, the club received the Thomas Turner Cooke Memorial Award and trophy from the Garden Club of New Jersey, Inc. for outstanding achievement in the area of conservation. Other awards and honors received this year from the state include the Youth Honor Roll (for Junior Gardeners), a Certificate of Merit with a Gold Seal for an Excellent Yearbook, a Certificate of Merit for an Outstanding Publicity Press Book and a Certificate of Merit for Participation in the GCNJ's Standard Flower Show.

The officers of the New Vernon Garden Club for the 2004-2005 year are:

President	Mary Jane Turnbull
Vice-President	Barbara Ripp

Recording Secretary Susan Stahly
Corresponding Secretary Kathy Atencio
Treasurer Lynne Gorman
Assistant Treasurer Darcy Gross

Environmental Commission.

Harding Tree Conservation Commission. No reports this issue

Civic Association News, Appeal for Annual Dues, Annual Meeting

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 Monday February 7, at 7:30 PM**, in the Township Hall. Mayor John Murray will address the community on the "State of the Township". If you would like to participate more actively in the Civic Association, please let us know who you are. We welcome new members to the Executive Committee, which covers and reports on civic affairs. We meet monthly, and also make a commitment to cover a Township meeting, sometimes as infrequently as bimonthly, sometimes semi-monthly, take notes on the proceedings, then send in a write up to the Thumbnail. By covering and disseminating information on the workings of the Township government, you serve others who cannot attend meetings, but who are vitally interested. If you are interested, send an Email to the editor, hesnaj@aol.com, or write The Harding Township Civic Association, PO Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT TWO ISSUES OF THE THUMBNAIL ARE *January 5* and *January 28*, respectively. *Please note change in the January deadline.*) If you have any information to be included, please send to the editor, Hesna Pfeiffer. Most preferred format is by E-mail, **email hesnaj@aol.com**, as we don't have to re-type, but fax is also acceptable, to the editor's **fax, 973 540 8911**. You can send items early! Call the editor if you have any transmission questions, **973 538 0020**. *The Thumbnail is copyrighted and published by the Harding Township Civic Association, and is mailed to every home in Harding Township.* Current and past issues of Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are posted on our Website- check it out: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.

RECYCLING: Commingled recycling of plastics, aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles and jars, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard and household batteries at Municipal Garage every Wednesday, 7AM-Noon, (7AM to 9AM self service); and 1st and 3rd Saturdays 12/4, 12/18 from 9-12 AM. Residents are requested NOT to leave recyclable materials if the center is closed.

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

Municipal Court (1 st and 3 rd Tuesday)	6 PM	
Environmental Commission (1 st Tuesday)	7:30 PM	1/4, 2/8
Seniors (2 nd and 4 th Thursday at Pres Church)	11 AM.....	
Planning Board (4 th Monday)	7:30 PM....	12/20, 1/24
Hist Preservation Comm (1st Thursday)	8 PM	1/6, 2/3
Board of Health (2 nd Thursday)	8 PM	1/13, 2/10
Board of Education (2 nd and 4 th Monday)	7:30 PM....	
Board of Adjustment (3 rd Thursday)	7:30 PM....	12/16, 1/20, 2/17
Township Committee(1 st and 3 rd Wed)	8 PM.....	
Shade Tree (2 nd Monday)	3 PM	11/9
Harding Twp Civic Association	7:30 PM	1/3, 2/7