

June/July 2006

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

**SPECIAL ISSUE** **Special information article on the Harding Township 2006 Budget** See article starting at p. 12.

**Announcement about New Proposed Township Ordinance 16-06** amending RR and R1 zones permissible building area and bulk size. *A public hearing* is scheduled for the Township Committee meeting on **September 20 at 8 PM** in order to permit the public to evaluate, consider and comment on the impact of the ordinance. The Township Committee is expressly reaching out to engage the public before the final vote. ***This ordinance will also be discussed at the July 24 Planning Board meeting, 7:30 pm..*** See the report on the Ordinance, under Township Committee notes below, p. 10.

**The Memorial Day Celebration held on May 29** was a success, thanks to the enthusiasm and participation of all, helped by the beautiful weather. Anita Cole was recognized as "Citizen of the Year", cited for her dedication and time she has spent taking the Harding Township library from a lending agreement between neighbors to a vision for a new library. Schoolchildren read the winning essays: winners were: 2nd grader Charlotte Link; 4th grader Zachary Evans; 6th Grader William Saulnier, and 7th Grader Bobby Yutko. The memorial wreath was placed by Winifred Conger Stark, a WWII veteran living on Fox Hunt Road.

### **Special article on the Harding Township Police Department**

See inside article starting at page 4.

**Primary Election** results: first the first time in memory, there was a disputed Republican primary race for Township Committee. The incumbent, Mary Prendergast was defeated; winners were Edward Ward and Marshall Bartlett. Turn out was higher than normal, estimated at about 23% of the electorate. The November election will pit the two Republicans against a Democratic candidate, Michael Meade, for two seats on the Township Committee. Issues in the primary were debated by the candidates in a well attended meeting hosted by the Republican Club at the Presbyterian Church. *A Special Report on this meeting and the issues raised is posted on the Civic Association website: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.*

### **School Age Sports Programs**

**Harding-Madison Ice Hockey 2006-2007 Season Sign-up.** If you didn't make the

walk-in registration, sign-ups and mail-in registration will continue until July 15, 2006. Visit the web site at <http://eteamz.active.com/hmihahockey/index.cfm?> for forms and mail-in registration instructions. If you have questions or would like additional information, you may also contact the Registrar, Peter Collier by sending him email at [pcollier@sprintmail.com](mailto:pcollier@sprintmail.com), or Patrick Burke at [patandlisa1@aol.com](mailto:patandlisa1@aol.com).

### **Madison/Harding Recreation Soccer Registration**

Registration for the fall, 2006 **Madison/Harding Recreation Soccer Program** for both the grades K-2 Program and the grades 3-8 program has taken place. For more information concerning the soccer program, visit the web site at [www.harding-soccer.com](http://www.harding-soccer.com).

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

**Thermometer Exchange Program.** Through October, residents may bring mercury containing fever thermometers to the Health Department on the second floor of the Municipal Building on Blue Mill Road between 9:00 AM and 3:30 PM and receive a free non-mercury fever thermometer. Elemental mercury is a toxic substance; however, when safely encased in glass thermometers it is not a threat. However, broken glass thermometers can release mercury. For more information contact the Health Dept. at 973 267 8000 x125.

**Lyme Disease and Tick Borne Diseases** lecture to be presented by Dr. Dorothy Zufall, Health Educator for Hanover, Harding and Morris Township, on **August 2, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Whippanong Library located in the Hanover Township Municipal Building on Jefferson Road in Whippany.

### **From YOUR First Aid Squad (NVFAS)**

As we have been doing for over 30 years, the First Aid Squad stands ready to respond to 911 calls 24/7, 365 days a year. But we need YOU now to become a member if we are to maintain our services at the level you expect. We also have room for one or two qualified junior members, age 16 and entering the 11<sup>th</sup> grade this fall. Call Squad Vice President Kate Crowley (973-656-0488) or Squad President John Thomas (973-267-9424). *The life you save may be your own!*

### **THE LIBRARY**

The children's **Summer Reading Program**, *Claws Paws, Scales and Tales*, has started. If you haven't joined, go to the Harding Library to get your reading logs, and have some fun! Also, check the website at [www.hardinglibrary.org](http://www.hardinglibrary.org), the perfect source for up-to-the-minute Library information.

### **Harding Open Space Trust (HOST)**

Harding Township has many conservation easements on properties, and the Harding Open Space Trust Committee is developing a stewardship monitoring process which will work with landowners on reviews of their property's conservation easements. Conservation easements, whether they protect streams, wetlands, steep slopes, bridle paths or streetscapes, ultimately benefit citizens throughout Harding Township. A conservation easement establishes a legal obligation for property owners to restrict the use of that part of their land. If you have a conservation easement on your property, and have any questions about the evolving stewardship process, please contact HOST Chair Sally Dudley at 973-698-6990 or [shdud@verizon.net](mailto:shdud@verizon.net).

### **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Black Bear Nuisance and Damage Prevention** The following information is provided on how to deal with black bears, (excerpted from NJ Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife information). Prevention is the best method for controlling black bear damage. Keep garbage, pet feeding and bird feeding away from wildlife. Black bears should never be fed or approached. If a bear comes into your yard, make the bear aware of your presence. Do not feed the bear! Make sure the bear has an escape route. Yell, bang pots and pans or use an air horn to scare the bear away. Aggressive and non-yielding bears should be reported to the Harding Police Department at (973) 455 0500. Bear sightings should be reported to the Fish, Game and Wildlife Division's Wildlife Research Unit at (908) 735 8793.

### **Summer Scam Season – Be Aware !**

The Harding Township Police Department reports that some home repair scams have been operating in our community. Early summer is the season when roof, driveway, window and chimney repair offers are made to unsuspecting residents, especially the elderly. Please be alert to unsolicited mailings or visits from people offering to fix your "property's problems". These uninvited companies may be scam operations featuring poor quality materials and workmanship. Please remember that all such home repair people are required to have a Harding Township permit certifying their legitimacy and authority to operate here. If you believe that you have been contacted by a company that is unwanted and without a permit, please call the HTPD immediately (973 455 0500). To learn more about the Harding Township Police Department services, please logon at [www.hardingnj.org](http://www.hardingnj.org), then click on 'Police Department'. Try it!

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**

*A special report by the Harding Township Civic Association. In this article we*

feature some interesting facts about the HTPD.... "just the numbers":

**1936** Year in which the Police Department started operation in Harding with one officer

**973 455 0500** HTPD non-emergency phone number

**911** Emergency phone number for police and fire

**\$1,567,000** Operating \$ budget for HTPD for 2006; salaries, benefits and expenses

- 16 Number of current employees in the HTPD, including Chief Kevin Gaffney, Lt. Mike Meade, five sergeants, eight patrol officers and an administrator
- 250 Average number of motor vehicle stops per month
- 2 Number of jail holding cells in Harding Town Hall
- 10 Average number of court appearances by officers per month
- 120 Typical number of traffic radar operations per month
- 8 Average number monthly arrests related to illegal drugs
- 30 Average number of school zone safety checks per month
- 1 Awards for "Best Detective" in 2003 and special recognition in 2004 and 2005– Detective Daniel Nunn, awarded by the Morris County Detective Association
- 24/7 Active, normal police coverage in Harding every day, every week
- 40 Average number false security alarms each month
- 350 Average number property checks monthly
- 8 Number motor vehicles operated for patrolling/ official business
- 7 Typical monthly gun applications, licenses and finger printings

The HTPD suggests that you register your name and address with the Police Department to help assure timely and accurate emergency responses by both the Police and Fire Departments. Because of normal inflow and outflow of Township residents as well as recent renumbering of street addresses, this important information is not always up to date. Please notify the HTPD of your name and address information by fax (973 425 1135) or by calling (973 455 0500). Please let the police know where you are so they can find you in case of emergency.

## **TOWNSHIP NEWS**

### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT MEETING, May 18, 2006 and June 15, 2006**

Pending Applications:

1. Application #BOA – 06-06 Thomas and Elizabeth **Fitzgerald**, 53 Primrose Trail, Block 40, Lot 1; Zone R-4, "C" Variance.

Applicant is seeking a variance for building area. This will be a one story

home, which requires a larger foot-print. Because of damage caused by fire, there will be a considerable amount of demolition. If it becomes necessary to remove the entire structure, applicant will have to re-apply for a variance. Coverage with the proposed plan will be 17.1%. There are no limitations on impervious coverage in the R-4 zone.

Changes to the original plan: the garage was pulled back and attached to the house. The garage variance will not be needed because it is not in front of the house. However, the height of the garage is an issue. Because of the grade of the property, the garage will appear to be higher than the house. The Historical Preservation Association requested that the applicant consider something other than vinyl for the siding. Application approved.

New Applications:

2. Application #BOA 11-06 – Joseph and Frances **Forgione**, 18 Long Hill Road, Block 50, Lot 8.01; Zone RR, “C” and “D” Variances.

This is a 2 part application: The first is a request for a D-3 Variance to build an apartment over the garage to accommodate a couple to help with the family. Both the Board of Adjustment and the Board of Health would have to approve the plan for the apartment. Applicant has asked for a “completeness waiver” so that if the Board of Health approved the plan, then they can build the apartment. The property is 4.06 acres and therefore falls short of the required 5 acres necessary to build an accessory structure. There has only been one application approved in the past for this type of variance. Application with-drawn. The second part of the request is a variance for steps (C variance). Variance for the steps approved.

3. Application #BOA 09-06 – Mary Jane **Turnbull**; 9 Douglas Road, Block 9; Lot 25; Zone R-1. “C” Variance.

Applicant would like to move the front entrance of the house because of snow and ice that melts on the roof and then freezes to the front steps because of the northern orientation. Applicant would also like to add to the front of the house, where the land is level. Currently, the house is non-conforming for front and side set-backs. There is a child’s play house located in the rear of the property. Since it is of insignificant size, it is not an issue. Application approved.

4. Application #BOA 10-06 – Garret M. **Kramer**, 51 Fox Hunt Road, Block 51.01, Lot 11, Zone R-R; Temporary “C” and “D” Variance. Applicant is constructing a new house in front of the old house. Fox Hunt Road is actually a series of easements that run across the front of the properties. Therefore, the 150 foot set-back is measured from the right of way, not the center of the road. (Currently, when a road is built for a new development, a lot is designated for the road and the road is owned by the

people in the development.) The new house will not be any closer to the road than the other homes on the street. Impervious coverage during construction will be 10.9%. After the new home is built and the old home is removed, the coverage will be 7.9%. Application approved.

5. Application #BOA 13-06 – Alberto and Yolanda **Mendez**, 16 Pleasant Plains Road, Block 52, Lot 2:04; Zone R-1. Temporary “C” and “D” Variances. A new house will be built behind the old house. When the new house is completed, the old house will be removed. The new house will be conforming. Application approved.

6. Application #BOA 04-06 – William **Spina**, 42 Kitchell Road, Block 1, Lot 6, R-1; “C” Variances. Property already has a variance for a detached garage. Two new variances are being requested – one for the front and side-yard set-backs and another for an accessory building set-back. This property is actually in 3 different towns. The Board will only approve structures that are in Harding. The new coverage will be 16.93% and building area goes up to 6.29%. Property is located in the miscellaneous site Historical area. The Historical Association felt that the new design was in keeping with the Historical design. This home was built in the 1890’s. The deck that was added by a prior owner is not in keeping with the rest of the house. The deck will be removed. Applicant was asked about removing a portion of the pavement around the carriage house. The new coverage will be 16.5%. Application approved.

7. Request for Extension of Time – BOA #22/23-04, **Tecnicarts**, Inc. (Formerly Premier International Corp.), Request for 2-year extension of Time. Application was approved in 1995. Applicant is putting in a cistern, but because it is in the transition area, the DEP has to approve the application. Construction will begin as soon as the DEP approves the application. Application for extension of time approved.

### **June 15, 2006**

New Applications:

1. #12-06 – Klaus H. and Vita **Jepsen**, 35 Bailey’s Mill Road, Block 46, Lot 12-01, Zone RR – “C” Variance. This property was formerly owned by the McChesneys. Applicant wants to put a roof over the rear deck. Nothing else would be enclosed. There would also be steps added from the deck to the yard. Application approved.

2. #17-06 – Michelle **Bocchi**, 2 Glen Eagles Drive, Block 48, Lot 4.05, Zone R-1, “C” Variance. This is a non-conforming structure due to the irregularly shaped lot. Applicant wants to remove the deck and add a family room and laundry room. The

new rooms will be 4 feet closer to the side set-back and 7 feet closer to the rear set-back. The Board questioned the pre-fabricated shed in the back yard. Since it is on cinder blocks, and is not a permanent structure that pre-existed current ordinances, it was allowed. Application approved.

3. #19-06 – David and Jill **Goret**, 24 Sand Spring Road, Block 19, Lot 4.02, Zone R-R, “C” Variance. At issue are lot coverage, set-back and impervious coverage. Applicant would like to add a pergola, family room, and renovate a kitchen. The porch will be remodeled and will get a new roof. The house is currently 4,500 square feet, but is a low, sprawling structure. It is located on a flag lot and accessed by a shared driveway from Sand Spring Road. Current impervious coverage is 13.8%. With the changes, coverage will be 14.1%. Applicant will remove a patio and a walkway to reduce coverage. Application approved.

4. #18-06 – Thomas **Capito**, 45 Baileys Mill Road, Block 46, Lot 11.01, Zone R-1. “C” Variance. Applicant wants to add a deck and family room on a non-conforming lot. The new deck is 81.5 feet from the corner of the property. The rear set-back will go from 83.5 feet to 81.5 feet. Application approved.  
Request for Amended Variance Approval –

5. #23-05 – James and Laura **Bestys** – 11 Pleasantville Road, Block 17, Lot 32, Zone R-1. Applicant wants to live in the old house while the new home is being constructed. Building area will be over 4% during the construction period. A permanent CO will be issued when the old home is removed. The new barn will be relocated so that more of the structure is in the building envelope. Application approved.

### **Board of Education/School News**

#### **School Cistern (From the Township Committee report)**

Dr. Lanzerotti discussed a preliminary proposal to make changes in the design plan of the 40,000-gallon School cistern in order to substantially lower the construction cost estimate. The design changes, which involve moving the cistern to the back of the school in the parking lot, will allow construction during the school year. A special Township Committee session may be necessary to review bids and approve related contracts in a timely manner.

The reorganization of the Board on May 8, following school district elections, resulted in the election of Evelyn Douglas, Spring Valley Rd as President and Angelo Santoro, Meyersville Rd, Vice-President. The actual composition of the Board did not change, as the two merely switched places. Goals of the Board continue to include giving children a good education while being considerate of local taxpayer concern

and support. Current budget for 2006-2007 is just under \$8 million. The school website is : <http://www.hardingtwp.k12.nj.us>.

### **Harding Township Historic Preservation Comm, May 2006**

#### **Demolition Requests**

**Jonathan Shackleton, 236 Blue Mill Road** – Contributing structure in the Silver Lake Historic District. This is a non-contributing property with a residence built after 1945 so the demo delay provisions of ordinances do not apply. Certificate of appropriateness is granted; however, because this property is in the Silver Lake district, streetscape is a concern. The commission will review and comment as building plans submitted to the Construction office.

**John Wilkerson 33 Sand Spring Road** – Contributing Property in the Silver Lake Historic District – Demolition Delay Recommended ending not later than February 5, 2007. Part of a recent subdivision, this lot contains a residence and two accessory structures; demolition of all these structures is requested. The buildings are a colonial revival house built around 1940 and a one story frame garage/shed and a greenhouse which is also characteristic of Harding's agricultural heritage. Further, the streetscape is enhanced by a numerous large trees that follow the existing driveway to the residence and elsewhere on the property. This rural streetscape is especially characteristic of the Silver Lake Historic District.

The Commission asked the applicant to consider the following suggestions to preserve the rural streetscape.

- Consider preservation and rehabilitation of the existing greenhouse.
- Consider plans for a multi-level dwelling that does not reach maximum height and reduces building mass visible from the street.
- Consider ways to integrate the new structures seamlessly into the existing streetscape.

The Commission would like to review construction plans as soon as they are available. If proposed plans preserve the rural streetscape, the Commission will provide relief for the 9-month delay.

The applicant is reminded that, per ordinance section 105-128 of the Land Use ordinances, notice of proposed demolition shall be posted on the premises of the building in a location that is clearly readable from the street both until the demolition process is complete.

#### **Environmental Commission, May 1, 2006**

**Clean-Up Day:** This year's clean-up day was very successful. About 100 people participated, representing a 100% increase over last year. 15 yards of trash were collected (approximately 5-6 tons). Consideration is being given to holding another clean-up day later in the year.



### **Matters Before the Planning Board**

**Costanzo**– Jenks Rd. Proposal to tear down an existing dwelling, to be replaced by two new houses. No variances are needed, but concern was expressed regarding storm water run-off. The lot has a detention basin, and a homeowner's association was supposed to be responsible for its maintenance. However, such an association was never formed, and the basin has not been properly maintained. Currently the Township does not have a mechanism for monitoring compliance with such requirements. Going forward, state regulations require storm water management plans to be developed for new subdivisions, with periodic reporting. This will enable more effective monitoring, but likely will require a new computer system.

**Fitzgerald, Block 40, Lot 1** – An extension is planned. This lot is subject to R4 zoning, and a C variance is being sought. The existing structure exceeds allowable building area coverage, and the garage is on the front of the house, which would be nonconforming today. Adjustments have been made to the plans to reduce the building area by attaching the garage, but it is still located on the front of the house. Concerns were expressed regarding storm water run-off. There is a potential for high-velocity run-off into Mount Kemble Lake, and for other lots to be adversely affected. There is no room for a detention basin. The structure currently a single storey and the Environmental Commission suggested that if the variance is allowed, deed restrictions should be considered to limit future structures on this lot to one storey.

**Planning Board**, report on May 22 and June 26 meetings.

The **Costanzo** request for subdivision into 2 lots on Jenks rd was granted, subject to conditions regarding maintenance of the drainage basin to be reconstructed on the property.

**Lancor/Meyersville** road was granted subdivision.

The **Wilkerson** subdivision attorney appeared at the June planning Board to request amendment of the conditions of the grant, which had required a rebuilt septic field on the existing house property before any building permit be granted on the other newly created lots. The Applicants' request was granted, that the order of building be approved at the discretion of the Board of Health. The background of this issue is that there had been testimony during the subdivision hearing that the septic field for the existing house (demolition permit has now been applied for), was in "poor condition", and would need to be rebuilt. The Planning Board had thought it best for public health purposes to require the defective septic be fixed before the new lots started the building process.

**Mayfield Conservation Partners** (properties at the corner of Spring Valley Road

and Blue Mill Rd) hearing continued. Residents will recognize that this corner, controlled by a blinker light has an offset intersection, with the driveway entrance to the Mayfield properties coming out into Spring Valley road just after the stop sign. There are already 4 houses on 4 lots using the driveway. Mayfield proposes to tear down the house on Lot 23 and construct a larger house. As part of the project, relocation of the driveway (moving its egress onto Spring Valley slightly to the East) necessitated appearance before the Planning Board to request variances to adjust lot lines and lot coverages of the 4 lots. One of the properties, lot 2, will have a separate driveway constructed directly onto Blue Mill Road, rather than through the common drive. The back lots, 29 and 30 will remain "flag lots" The application was approved.

### **Township Committee.**

On **May 3**, the Township committee passed Resolution 06-127 to increase the Open Space Tax by 5c from \$0.04 per \$100 assessed property value to \$0.045 per \$100.

**At the meeting on June 7, Ordinance 16-06** was introduced amending the zoning for the RR and R-1 zones. A public hearing is scheduled for the second Township Committee meeting Sept 20. The mayor was concerned that the public had sufficient time to consider the ordinance before the final vote.

The amendments contained in the draft ordinance were forwarded to the Township Committee in January by the Planning Board. The following summarizes the proposed amendments:

- Increase the minimum developable area within new lots from the current 10,000 sq feet to 25,000 sq feet.
- Limit the maximum building area (footprint) as follows:
  - For lots up to 5 acres, the lesser of 3% or a maximum of 3,920 sq ft if the front setback is <150 ft; or the lesser of 4% or a maximum of 5,227 sq ft if the front setback is 150 ft or more or a flag lot if 150 ft setback to any road;
  - For lots exceeding 5 acres, the above sq footage plus an additional 2% per acre for each acre >5 but <10 if front setback is 150 ft or flag lot with 150 ft setback to any road, plus an additional 1% per acre of each acre over 10 if the front setback is at least 150 feet.
- Restricting the maximum lot coverage from the current 10% of the total lot area to 10% of the first three acres plus 1,500 sq ft per acre for larger lots.

- Change the maximum allowable graded area of a lot from the current 80% of the total lot area, to 80% for the first 3 acres plus 10,000 sq ft per acre for larger lots.

One of the implications of the proposed ordinance as presently drafted, is that the setbacks would be measured from “any” road near the property, as opposed to the current “front road” or “corner property frontage” interpretations now applied. Planning Board discussion at the June 26 meeting was concerned with the implications of changing the land use statutes: and whether the implications for future were thoroughly considered. The Planning Board will discuss this issue at its July 24 meeting again.

### **Ordinance 12-06 passed for a New Construction Fee**

The Township Committee held a public hearing June 21 on Ordinance 12-06, which imposes a Township tax on new construction or land improvements. At this part of the meeting, very few members of the public, if any, were present and no one asked any questions. The ordinance passed unanimously. Development fee tax revenue will be used to offset the Township’s Affordable Housing related costs and will be held in a designated interest-bearing trust fund until disbursed for this purpose.

Ordinance 12-06 allows the Township to charge a development fee from any person or company making improvements to property where a construction permit is required. The development fee equals the applicable fee rate multiplied by the increase in value due to the improvement(s). The value is the “equalized assessed value”, the value assigned to the construction improvements as determined by the Municipal Tax Assessor. The fee rate is 1% for residential development and 2% for non-residential development. Development fees are charged on the related improvements and not on the value of the land. For example, if a home owner added improvements to his or her property resulting in \$150,000 of additional assessed value, the development fee due the Township (in addition to higher taxes) would be \$1,500.

Additions, alternations, or improvements related to residences are exempt from the development fee if the increased assessed value is less than \$100,000, and provided the increase to the area of the dwelling is less than 50%. Houses of worship, public buildings (belonging to the Township, Fire Department, School, Library, etc.) are exempt. The Township Committee said that the intention of Ordinance 12-06, was primarily to tax “tear-down” construction by developers, and exemptions were intentionally included so that Harding residents constructing basic additions or improvements would not be subject to the tax. The Thumbnail notes, however, that the \$100,000 limit amount will not be adjusted for inflation.

Considering today's construction costs, it also would seem that construction improvements might easily exceed \$100,000 in increased value for even small additions or basic land improvements.

### **2006 Harding Municipal Budget**

At the May 17 Township Meeting, the Township Committee unanimously approved the 60 plus page 2006 Harding Municipal Budget. The Budget details Harding's planned appropriations (spending) and revenues (income from taxes, fees, grants, etc.) and was reviewed and certified by Harding's Chief Financial Officer, Himanshu Shah, and its accountant, Suplee, Clooney, & Co.

The Thumbnail has prepared a summary of the 2006 Budget for our readers' review. Why would you care about the Municipal Budget? If you are interested whether or not your taxes are going to increase (if so, by how much), how your taxes compare against other municipalities, how much the Township spends annually, what the spending is for, how much revenue is raised from taxes, how much Township debt is outstanding, or what the Township's financial priorities are – then read on. During the Township Committee meeting, Mayor Murray conducted an informative slide presentation covering some key points of the Budget. We have included copies of the Mayor's slides, Slides 1 through 6, in our summary<sup>1</sup>.

### **Tax Rates**

New Jersey is one of 37 states that collect property taxes at both the municipal and state level. In 2004, New Jersey municipalities collected over \$18 billion in property taxes, or about \$2,099 per person, which is the highest in the nation. As any Harding property owner may know by examining his or her tax bill, the 2005 Harding ordinary property tax rates are as follows:

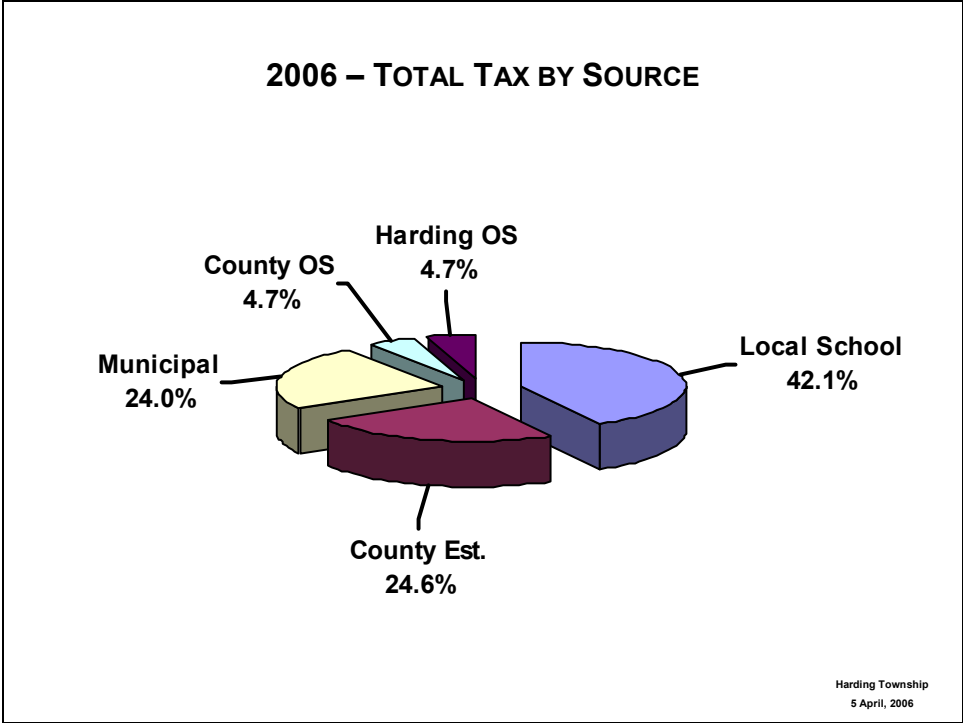
<b>Tax</b>	<b>2005 Rate</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Municipal	0.221%	23.8%
County	0.232%	24.9%
School	0.383%	41.2%
Open Space/County	0.053%	5.7%

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<sup>1</sup> The original color slides are reproduced in black and white and reformatted to fit in the Thumbnail.

Open Space/Harding	0.041%	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.930%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Annual tax due is calculated by applying the rate to the assessed value of the property. Slide 1 also shows the distribution by tax type although its calculations differ somewhat from our own.



**Slide 1**

In 2005, assessed property values in Harding totaled \$1.95 billion (down \$170 million from the prior year) and taxes received from all sources totaled \$18.1 million. There is \$279 million of tax-exempt property in Harding, \$230 million of which is public land. Total assessed property value for all of Morris County is \$62.0 billion, and for New Jersey, over \$666 billion.

**Harding Vs. Other Municipalities**

How does Harding tax rates compare against other municipalities? Of all the 39

municipalities in Morris County, Harding's tax rate is the lowest (at 4.09%, Victory Gardens is this highest)<sup>2</sup>. As the following table shows, however, when calculated on a per capita basis, Harding has a higher tax than some neighboring municipalities and more than double the State average (note Victory Gardens is much lower).

Municipality	Rate	Rank (low to high)	Total Assessed Property Value	Annual Tax	Pop. ('04 est.)	Tax per capita
Harding	<b>0.93%</b>	1	\$1,951,482,871	\$18,148,791	3,292	<b>\$5,513</b>
Chatham Township	1.32%	3	\$2,733,271,100	\$36,079,179	10,162	\$3,550
Chatham Borough	1.39%	4	\$2,029,387,500	\$28,208,486	8,428	\$3,347
Mendham	1.40%	5	\$2,114,823,400	\$29,607,528	5,625	\$5,264
Madison Borough	2.06%	11	\$2,089,587,600	\$43,045,505	16,005	\$2,690
Morris	2.06%	22	\$3,831,652,350	\$78,932,038	21,412	\$3,686
Morristown	2.12%	13	\$2,225,308,082	\$47,176,531	18,842	\$2,504
Chester Township	3.11%	26	\$981,376,242	\$30,520,801	7,765	\$3,931
Victory Gardens	<b>4.09%</b>	39	\$39,746,000	\$1,625,611	1,533	<b>\$1,060</b>

### **2006 Tax Increases**






As Slide 2 shows, all Harding property tax rates except the County Open Spaces tax have been increased for 2006. The increases and 2006 rates are:

Tax	2006 Increase	2006 Rate	% of Total	% Increase over 2005
Municipal	0.0100%	0.231%	23.9%	4.5%
County (Estimated)	0.0050%	0.237%	24.6%	2.2%
School	0.0162%	0.399%	41.4%	4.2%
Open Space/County		0.053%	5.5%	0.0%
Open Space/Harding	0.0040%	0.045%	4.7%	9.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0352%</b>	<b>0.965%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

In total, property taxes increased by 3.8%, slightly more than inflation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of Morris county property tax rates see <http://www.gti.net/mocolib1/realty.html#abstract>

<sup>3</sup> Inflation for 2005 was 3.6% as measured by the Consumer Price Index, Northeastern Region.

<b>TAX INCREASE PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION</b>					
	Increase	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Local School	\$0.0162	\$ 81	\$ 162	\$ 324	\$ 487
County Est.	\$0.0050	\$ 25	\$ 50	\$ 100	\$ 150
Municipal	\$0.0100	\$ 50	\$ 100	\$ 200	\$ 300
County OS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Harding OS	\$0.0040	\$ 20	\$ 40	\$ 80	\$ 120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0.0352</b>	<b>\$ 176</b>	<b>\$ 352</b>	<b>\$ 704</b>	<b>\$ 1,057</b>
					
<b>TOTAL TAX RATE – 2005 = \$0.928</b>					
<b>2006 = \$0.963 E</b>					
<small>Harding Township 5 April, 2006</small>					

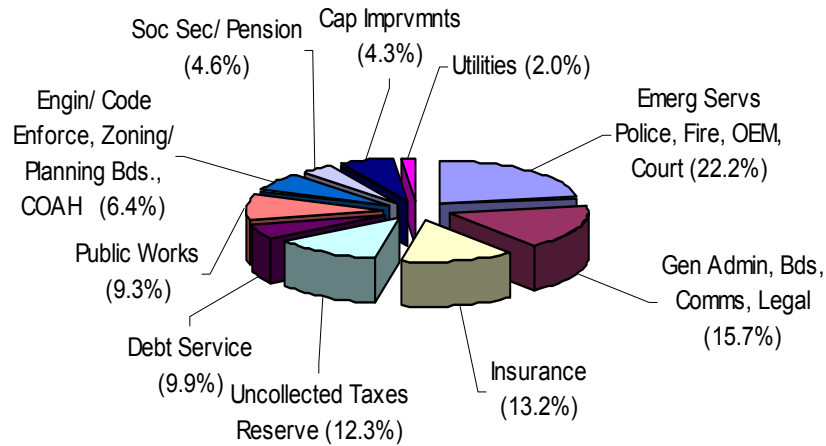
**Slide 2**

**Spending**

Total municipal spending for 2006 is projected to be \$8,063,617, a 5% nominal increase over 2005's \$7,677,305.64 actual appropriation. Adjusted for inflation, the increase falls to 1.4%.

How is the \$8 plus million spent? Slide 3 shows the planned allocation. Approximately \$3 million of the budget goes to pay municipal employee wages -not including benefits. The Police department wages account for about \$1.45 million of this. Insurance premiums, most of which are for employee health insurance, accounts for another \$900,000. \$250,000 is budgeted for the Capital Improvement Fund. \$100,000 is allocated to pay for improvements to the Town Hall. Approximately \$1 million is reserved against uncollected taxes. Debt service is projected to be nearly \$800,000.

### 2006 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS

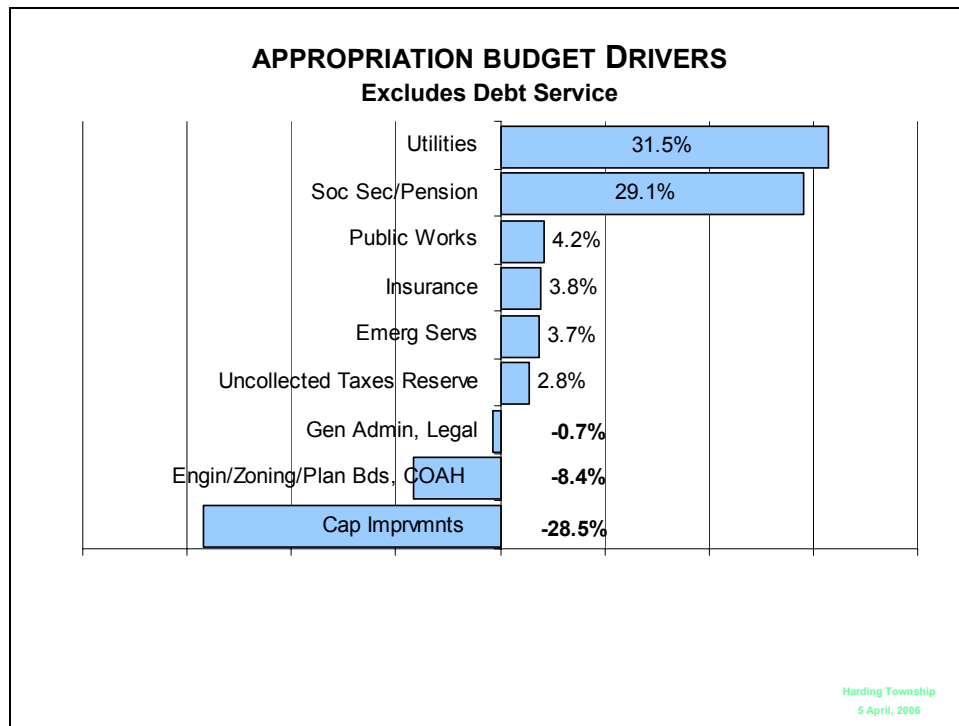


Harding Township  
5 April, 2006

### Slide 3

Slide 4 shows which categories increased or decreased from the prior year:





**Slide 4**

**Tax and General Revenue**

Only \$4.5 million out of the \$8+ million required comes from property taxes. The remainder, \$3.55 million, comes from general revenues, which include an anticipated surplus<sup>4</sup> (\$1.86 million, same as budgeted in 2005), miscellaneous revenues (\$1.5 million), and receipts from delinquent taxes (\$180,000). Miscellaneous revenues are from a variety of sources including court fines (\$180,000), interest income on investments (\$115,000), UCC related fees (\$220,000), open space debt issuance (\$284,000), permits (\$50,000) and State aid (\$558,800, primarily comprised of a \$489,000 payment from the Energy Receipts Tax, a property relief program that taxes utilities with proceeds going to municipalities hosting utility infrastructure).

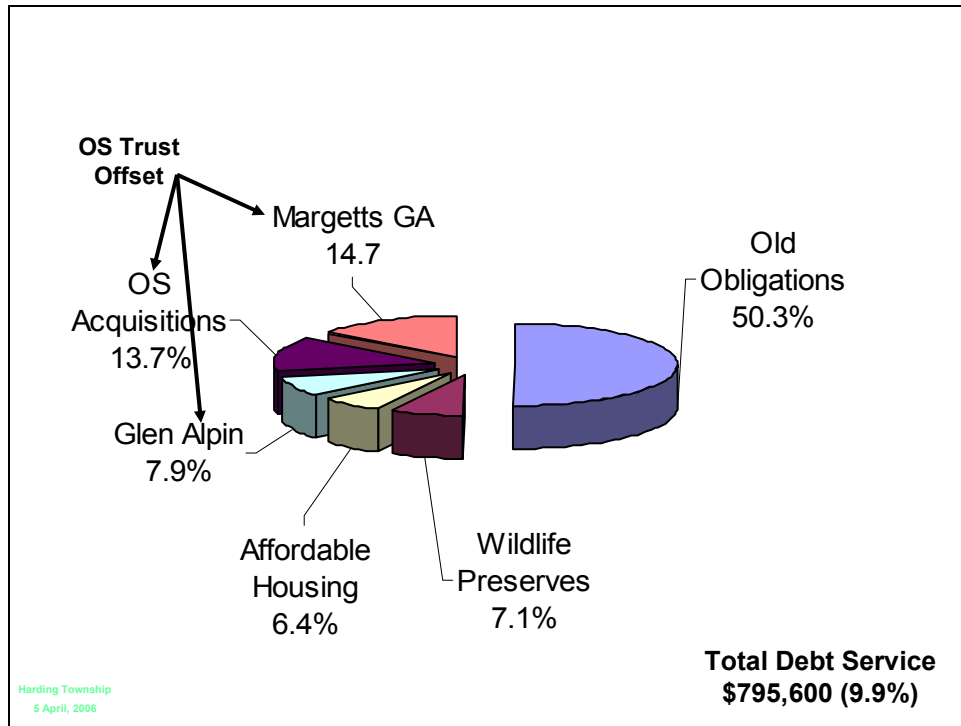
**Debt**

<sup>4</sup> As of December 31, 2005, the Township had approximately \$2.5 million in surplus funds.

According to the Township 2005 Annual Debt Statement, Township debt, issued and authorized, totaled \$10,622,858 (with \$8.5 million issued) as of 12/31/2005. The following summarizes what the debt is being used to fund:

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Outstandin g Debt Amount</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
General Improvements	\$3,353,000	32%
Open Space Land/Easement Acquisition	\$6,319,858	59%
Glen Alpin Renovation	\$950,000	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,622,858</b>	<b>100%</b>

In February 2006, the Township issued an additional \$5.9 million (also for Open Spaces) at a 4.5% rate, which would bring the total outstanding to over \$14 million, not including principal repayments if any. The Township's debt is rated "Aaa" (i.e. best quality) from Moody's, one of the main debt rating agencies. Debt service for 2006, which includes at least \$300,000 in principal repayment, will total about \$800,000 (compared to \$439,500 for 2005), or just about 10% of the total Municipal budget. Slide 5 shows the individual debt service components.



Slide 5

### Township Financial Priorities and Open Space Finances

The Township presentation outlined priorities related to spending, debt issuance, and financial controls. The annual Capital improvements Fund is \$200,000 and its growth objective 10%. The capital projects planning process is projecting up to 6 years out. The Township is attempting to avoid additional debt, except as necessary for Glen Alpin and Open Space initiatives. There is a conservative estimated reserve for uncollected taxes; there are complete expense reports monthly; insurance payments, remain significant.

Open Spaces and historic preservation is a chief priority of the Township Committee as they voted to raise the Harding Open Spaces tax rate by nearly 10%. In the budget message (part of the Budget documentation), the Township Committee states:

“In addition to the regular operating budget, the township committee is addressing the issues of open space and historic preservation in the context

of maintaining Harding's rural heritage and character." [Concerning the tax increase] "This additional revenue will allow the township to continue to move forward aggressively to preserve land in the township and maintain and restore recently acquired properties."

Since 1997, the date when the Open Space tax was passed by voter referendum, the program has collected over \$2.3 million in taxes. In 2005, Open Space tax revenues was \$781,156. In 2006, Open Space tax revenues are projected to be about \$878,000. Since many prior Open Space purchases have been previously funded by municipal debt, over \$280,000 of the collected amount will go to debt interest payments. The Township has budgeted 10%, or about \$90,000 annually, to go towards the Glen Alpin restoration.

A copy of the 2006 Budget may be obtained from the Township Clerk, Linda Peralta, whose office is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Municipal Building.

### **Save the dates!!!!**

**September 24<sup>th</sup>** 3:30pm. Harding Township Library Friends plans the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz on the Lawn** at the Kirby Municipal Building. This year's program will include a musical program at 3:30pm for children. The Jazz Quartet will play at 4:30 pm. The cost is \$15 a person and \$30 for families.

**October 11th.** The New Vernon Garden Club is planning a brunch/flower arranging demonstration, featuring Jerry Rose at the Fairmont Country Club. There will be boutiques for holiday shopping. All proceeds will be used for the landscaping around the new Library. For further info call Nancy McClelland at 973-285-1790.

### **Civic Association News and Announcements**

**EDITOR'S NOTE: THE DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE THUMBNAIL IS SEPTEMBER 1. After the June/July issue, the next issue is September, which will appear as early as possible after Labor Day. If you have announcements for the start of September, please keep to the pre-Labor Day deadline for inclusion.**

**Announcements should be complete and concise to help the editor.** Current and past issues of Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are posted on our Website- check it out: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>. If you have questions or comments about Thumbnail of the Civic Association, write the editor, **email address: [hesnaj@verizon.net](mailto:hesnaj@verizon.net)**, or the Harding Township Civic Association, PO Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

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

**DATES TO REMEMBER**, meetings as noted.

Municipal Court (1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)	4 PM
Municipal Court (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Friday)	11AM
Environmental Commission (1 <sup>st</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM
Seniors (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday)Chrst KingCh	11 AM
Planning Board (4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM
Hist Preservation Comm (1stThursday)	8 PM
Board of Health (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	8 PM
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
Township Committee(1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed)	8 PM
Shade Tree (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday)	3 PM
Harding Twp Civic Association	7:30 PM