

September 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Special News about New Proposed Township Ordinance 16-06 This ordinance relates to restrictions on the permissible building area on residential lots. Both the Township Committee and the Planning Board are taking more time to consider this very important matter. No public hearings are scheduled in the next month. ***A summary of this ordinance as proposed is in the Planning Board minutes, below.*** Note also: the planning Board meeting of September 25 has been canceled; the next planning board meeting is October 23.

Special News update: Glen Alpin Status, see Township Comm report below

A special "Meet the Candidates night" will be held October 17th 7:30 PM at Town (Kirby) Hall, sponsored by the Harding Township Civic Association. Come see and hear Marshall Bartlett (R), Mike Meade (D), and Ned Ward(R), the 3 candidates for 2 Township Committee seats in the general election November 7.

Annual Fire Department Auction Saturday, September 30th

The New Vernon Volunteer Fire Department will hold their 54rd Annual Auction on **Saturday, September 30th** at the Firehouse on Village Road at 9:00 AM sharp, rain or shine.

Harding Open Space Trust (HOST) Harding Open Space Trust Fund, First Annual meeting and public forum **Monday, October 16, 2006 at 7:30 pm**; Kirby municipal building. Learn more about open space and your tax dollars! Presentations by Green Acres and Morris County Open Space Trust. Agenda includes time for public comment and questions. If you have any questions about HOST, please contact Chair Sally Dudley at 973-698-6990 or shdud@verizon.net.

NEW VERNON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT Soup Contest

It's time once again for the Auxiliary-sponsored "Home-made Soup Contest"

Date: **Sunday, October 22**
Time: 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Place: Fire House, Village Road
Cost: \$5.00 for soup, bread, coffee

Homemade desserts and soda will be available for sale. Vote for your favorite soup. Prizes will be awarded. If you would like to enter a soup in the contest, admission is free, please call Pat O'Reilly (973 301-2151) or Connie Cherrillo (973 539-9383).

THE LIBRARY

Storytime...Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m., small conference room, Municipal Building, for pre-schoolers and their parents or caregivers. Each session features a selection of age-appropriate books and a craft for the children to take home. No sign-up required; all are welcome. **September 26:** *The Dancing Tiger and Other Wild Stories*

Evening Book Group will meet on **Wednesday, September 27 at 7:30 p.m.** in the small conference room of the Municipal Building to determine the selections for the coming season. All participants are encouraged to bring suggestions. The discussion book for the opening session is Edith Hahn-Beer's *The Nazi Officer's Wife*, the moving story of a young Jewish woman's survival of the Holocaust. Copies of this title can be obtained at the Library.

4th and 5th Grade Book Club will begin in late October and run through April 2007. This is a fun way to foster a love of reading and to help students accomplish their school's annual reading goal. Please call if you are interested in participating: 973-267-8000 ext 132.

On October 5: the Library will close at noon so that we can honor our faithful Volunteers at a Library Luncheon.

The annual **Jazz Concert benefit** sponsored by Friends of the Library will be held **Sunday September 24th, 2006, 3:30 and 4:30 pm** on the lawn at Kirby Hall. The one-hour children's concert will begin at 3:30 PM; Eric Mintel Jazz quartet will begin to play at 4:30 PM. Registration forms have been mailed; or call library at 973 267 8000, ext 2 to pre-register. Refreshments will be served. Contributions at \$15 per person and \$30 for families, or patron at \$50. (Rain venue is Church of Christ the King across the street.)

October 11: *Boutiques, Brunch, and Bunches of Flowers*, featuring Jerry Rose at the Fairmont Country Club, sponsored by the New Vernon Garden Club to benefit the new Library's landscaping. Boutique shopping 10 am; brunch served at 11:30 am. Tickets \$80. For further info call Nancy McClelland at 973-285-1790.

HARDING TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RADON AWARENESS. The Harding Township Health Department has pamphlets available on radon and its risks. The NJDEP will provide a list of certified companies that have testing services or do-it-yourself test kits, call at 800-648-0394 or www.njradon.org.

FLU CLINICS The Health Department expects to receive its full allotment of flu vaccine. A delivery date has not been established but residents can receive updated information by calling our Flu Clinic Hotline at 973-267-8000 ext. 190.

EYEGLOSS COLLECTION The Health Department will again be sponsoring an eyeglass collection this fall. The eyeglasses will go to the Lions Club for distribution to those in need. All types of eyeglasses and sunglasses, prescription and non-prescription, including reading glasses will be accepted. The eyeglasses may be dropped off during our flu clinics or brought to the Health Department located in the Municipal Building on Blue Mill road. For more information call 973-267-8000 ext 148.

RABIES CLINIC, SATURDAY, November 4, 2006 from 9 to 11 AM

The Harding Township Department of Health, in cooperation with the New Jersey State Department of Health, will again offer a free Rabies Vaccine Inoculation for cats and dogs at the New Vernon Volunteer Firehouse, at the corner of Village Road and Millbrook Road. Dogs whose rabies vaccination expires before October 31, 2007 must be vaccinated before a license can be issued for 2007.

NEW CUB SCOUTS WANTED. New Tiger Cubs (boys) entering 1st grade or age 7 in September 2006. What do Tiger cubs do? Contact your Cub Scout chair, Jane Williams at 973 644 2445 or Jane.Williams@att.net.

TOWNSHIP NEWS

Township Committee, July 19, 2006: Present: Dr. Lanzerotti, Mr. Murray, Mrs. Prendergast; Absent: Mr. Dinsmore, Mrs. Farrell

Potential Open Space Purchase of the Eggert Property

The Township Committee heard a presentation by the Trust for Public Land ("TPL") and the Harding Land Trust concerning a potential open spaces purchase of the Eggert property. Owned by Mrs. Eggert, a long-time Harding resident, the 7-acre property is adjacent to the east side of Jockey Hollow park. A 'flag lot', the entrance is off Rt. 202 north of the intersection with Tempe Wick and Glen Alpin. The property is wooded.

The TPL/Harding Land Trust have an 8-month option to purchase the property for \$825,000 and wanted the Township to support a planed grant

application to Morris County for funding. The purchase price would be funded by Morris County (\$400,000), TPL (\$50,000), Harding Land Trust (\$50,000), and the NJ State Green Acres Planning Incentive (\$162,500) and Harding Township (\$162,500). There is a house and in-ground fuel tanks on the property, all of which will be demolished and removed. The cost of the removal (not yet determined) will be shared equally between the seller and the purchaser(s). An appraisal has not yet been done on the property.

According to the presentation, the property will be a good open space purchase for the Township, can be used to link Patriot's Path to Route 202, and is important to protect run-off from Primrose Brook. Looking at the map however, there already is an existing right of way from the Park to Route 202, so it is not clear how the property will be useful to Patriot's Path. The property is steeply uphill from Route 202 and does not slope towards nor is close to Primrose Brook, so it is not evident how the property is connected with Primrose Brook runoff. Since it is in a heavily wooded area and located on a flag lot with a long driveway, the property cannot be seen from the road.

The Township approved resolution 06-172 which confirmed the Township's support of the application to Morris County for the purchase grant.

Bayne Park Resident Geese Elimination

During the June 21st Township meeting, there was a report, recommendation, and lengthy debate regarding the population control of Canada Geese in Bayne Park. Previous population control efforts have involved restrictions on feeding and programs to impede reproduction, primarily by nest destruction and egg addling.

The Wildlife Committee believed that the past efforts were not sufficient, as there is still a population of 13-15 geese residing in the park. The Wildlife Committee asserted that the Geese droppings spoil the use of the park for Harding residents. They believe there should be no resident (non-migratory) Geese permitted in Bayne Park. The Committee Chair stressed that this "small problem should be taken care of before it becomes a big problem." The Wildlife Committee investigated several alternatives including:

1. A proposal from a goose control firm, the "Goose Police", who use Border Collies to 'patrol' nesting grounds preventing nesting. The Goose Police submitted a proposal for Bayne Park totaling \$9,680 for a 9-week dog patrol involving an undisclosed number of dogs. (The estimated *dog-day* cost could not be determined, as the number of dogs to be provided was not disclosed.)

2. A continuation of the prior prevention activities.
3. An application to the Fish and Wildlife Service for the capture and destruction of the geese, which would be performed by Committee volunteers.

The Wildlife Committee requested permission to proceed with Option 3, which would occur in the next few weeks while the Bayne Park geese are molting and are not able to fly. According to the Committee, Option 1 is not cost effective, and Option 2 has not been effective (only two nests were found last year). The Township Committee heard residents speaking for and against the proposal. The proponents of the proposal (mostly members of the Wildlife Committee) argued that there are thousands of wild geese elsewhere in Harding, but the resident geese ruined the use of the park for residents; preventative methods were not sufficient; and that it was necessary to act now to avoid a larger population problem in the future. The opponents argued that it was not necessary to kill these few number of geese (and preventative methods are available); droppings are an inconvenience not a health hazard; having 13-15 geese was not a problem for residents; and that eliminating a few wild geese from the park is not consistent with the "rural nature of Harding". After hearing from the public, The Township Committee unanimously approved the Wildlife Committee's request to eliminate the geese.

During the July 19th Township meeting, Roberta Shields, a Harding resident who previously spoke against the geese elimination, asked the Township Committee when and how the Geese had been killed. According to the Township Committee, 14 Geese were rounded up with Steel mesh fences on July 2nd or 3rd. After being captured, they were decapitated by the Wildlife Committee volunteers. Further debate about this issue was held including questions as to how many Harding residents actually complained about the geese and whether this was ever documented. A member of the public suggested that the Wildlife Committee meetings be open to the public, which apparently they are not. The Township Committee received a letter from Len Soucy, president of the New Jersey Raptor Trust, which spoke against the roundup on biological and ethical grounds.

Ordinances & Resolutions

The Township committee approved several resolutions including the authorization of deer hunting on certain public lands, filling positions on the Board of Health (Dr. Naviro and Dr. Cervone), awarding contracts for the cistern(s) construction.

September 6, 2006, Present: Dr. Lanzerotti, Mr. Murray, Mrs. Prendergast, Mr. Dinsmore, Mrs. Farrell

New Municipal Fire Cisterns

On September 20th, an ordinance to authorize a Municipal Bond offering to fund construction of fire cisterns for the school and for the DPW (to be located behind the recycling center). The cisterns are scheduled to be installed sometime in November.

State Wide Security Policy for Courts

Gail McKane discussed the implementation of a security plan for the municipal court. The State requires each court to adopt a formal security plan. Ms. McKane has been working with Robert Schaul, the Municipal Judge, and the Police Chief. So far the required procedural changes have been modest, however there may be a need for additional police attendance and the installation of a metal detector at the court.

Affordable Housing

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the Affordable Housing project was held September 12th. Seventeen families have qualified for the 24 affordable housing units. It will not be difficult to reach 100% occupancy.

Township Hall Renovation

The replacement of the Town Hall windows is scheduled to start shortly.

Ordinances & Resolutions

The Township introduced Ordinance 19-06, which, for fire safety and emergency access reasons, prohibits street side parking on several Harding roads.

Resolutions

The Township Committee considered the following resolutions:

- Miscellaneous resolutions approving storm-water management for the Valgenti and Mayfield subdivisions; township employee matters. (Passed)
- Resolutions regarding Glen Alpin (see the section on Glen Alpin below).
- After discussing insurance premium and liability issues, the Township Committee approved a waiver of the liability insurance requirement for use of the Town Hall by the Civic Association to hold a 'Meet the Candidates Night' to be scheduled sometime in October. The Township appears to have an insurance coverage problem related to accommodating community events held at the Town Hall that may be sponsored by third party organizations that do not have their own liability insurance coverage. This presents an obstacle for the use of Town Hall by Harding's local volunteer/not-for-profit organizations (such as the Civic Association).

- The township approved a \$2,250 increase to the original \$15,000 Geographical Information Service (“GIS”) budget. According to the GIS website (www.gis.com) GIS “is a collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information”. GIS is used extensively by the Township to support Master Plan development, planning board, open spaces, etc. activities.

Letters

Dr. Lanzerotti handed out a letter related to the current statewide debate on the need for property tax reform. Public schools are mostly funded by local property taxes. In Harding, 41.4% of total property taxes (about \$7.5 million out of the total \$18 million tax raised in 2005) go to the public (Harding Township) school. The letter specifically focused on the impact of proposed changes regarding the implementation of a statewide, equalized school property tax rate. A statewide, equalized school property tax would set a school property tax rate at the State (instead of the current municipal) level, the proceeds of which would be managed and distributed by the State. According to the letter, such a scheme could increase Harding’s current school property tax by 200% (from \$7+ million to \$22+ million). Dr. Lanzerotti suggested that any interested/concerned citizens should contact their State legislators concerning this issue. Harding’s representatives (District 21) are Senator Thomas Kean, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, and Assemblyman Eric Munoz.

Glen Alpin Project Status

The Roof renovation/restoration project is underway and is expected to be completed at the end of 2007. The contract is with Northeast Roof Maintenance, Inc.

The Township considered two resolutions concerning the Glen Alpin project: One, allowing a short extension to the completion deadline for the roof, was approved by the Township. The second resolution would authorize acceptance of a \$200,000 matching grant from Morris County Historic Preservation Fund. The grant proceeds would be applied to costs of installing a new HVAC system and fire suppression system at Glen Alpin. The Township Committee tabled the resolution pending hearing a report later in the session from the Glen Alpin Watchdog Committee (“GAWDC”).

Glen Alpin Watch Dog Committee

The GAWDC is a citizen’s group, formed at the beginning of the summer at the suggestion of the Mayor and Dr. Lanzerotti, to conduct a detailed study of

the Glen Alpin project's finances, to help the Township review and monitor the finances associated with the Glen Alpin property renovation. Gail McKane, Township Administrator, worked with the GAWDC to supply the group with all of the township source documents necessary for the analysis. The committee members are Steve Balog, Hesna Pfeiffer, Evelyne Desbrow, Leon Desbrow, Judie Ward, and Tim O'Conner.

The GAWDC presented their report during the "Hearing Persons Present", one of the last parts of the session. The GAWDC was represented by Evelyne Desbrow, Leon Desbrow, Hesna Pfeiffer, and Steve Balog, who led the presentation.

The presentation consisted of a PowerPoint slide presentation summarizing the conclusions of the report. The report was not provided to the Township Committee before the meeting.

The GAWDC's main conclusions are:

- There have and will likely continue to be significant cost increases over the forecast cost of completion for all phases
- The Township's approach of spending before first raising the necessary funds is not fiscally sound as it relies on interim debt financing with no assurances that the necessary funds will be raised to pay off the debt.
- The fund raising plan is not realistic primarily because it relies on the receipt of substantial funds from foundations. According to the GAWDC, foundations typically will not make funds to repay debt.
- The operating revenue plan (based on using Glen Alpin for events and not-for-profit space rental) is not realistic. There are many challenges not addressed in the plan associated with the planned use such as the provision of required parking, mitigation of noise from Rt. 287, liquor licensing, insurance, etc.
- The Glen Alpin project will not be revenue neutral and is likely to require taxpayer funding.

The GAWDC made three primary recommendations:

- 1) The Township should change its "spend first then raise funds" policy to a "raise funds first then spend" policy.
- 2) The Township should immediately stop all spending on Glen Alpin project with the possible exception of continuing with roof renovation.
- 3) The Township should divest itself of the property to an appropriate public or private entity.

After the presentation and at the Mayor's direction, discussion was limited to the GAWDC answering questions about the report from the Township

Committee and members of the public.

Mary Prendergast noted that the public should be aware that GAWDC was a private citizen's group and not an official committee of the Township. Not all Township Committee members had input to its creation and selection of members. Mrs. Prendergast further noted, that while she did not have the prior opportunity to review the report in detail, she did not agree with its conclusions and thought the report included exaggerations and misrepresentations that should be corrected.

Mayor Murray then stated that over the next two weeks, the Glen Alpin Steering Committee and the Glen Alpin Conservancy should meet to study and consider the financial issues identified by the report. If possible, representatives from the GAWDC should participate. After this, the groups should report back to the Township Committee with recommendations regarding the future of the project and property. The Mayor plans to hold a second 'town meeting' in October to discuss options for Glen Alpin and to answer further questions from the public.

Finally, the Township Committee considered a resolution to suspend all Glen Alpin related spending (other than that approved for the roof) temporarily until the next Township Committee meeting. The resolution passed three to two. Mayor Murray, Dr. Lanzerotti, Mr. Dinsmore voted in favor, and Mrs. Prendergast and Mrs. Farrell voted against the resolution.

A complete copy of the presentation and report, are posted on the Harding *Civic Association website*: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE announces that the 2006/2007 Hunting Season extends from September 9, 2006 through February 17, 2007. Hunting with firearms will take place in November and December. Bow hunting is permitted throughout the season.

The 2005/2006 deer harvest in Harding was 337. The number includes 94 deer taken in the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. These figures compare to 779 and 135 respectively for the 1999/2000 hunting season. Deer/Motor Vehicle Accidents during the same time decreased from 116 in 1999 to 52 in 2005. The season was again concluded without any hunting accidents.

The decline in the deer harvest over the last six seasons is indicative of a reduction in the excessive deer population. This is confirmed by the decline in motor vehicle accidents. Progress is being made in bringing the deer population to levels considered healthy for the environment. Wildlife experts assume that an acceptable level is 15 – 20 deer per sq. mile. This compares to an estimate of 45 – 50 at present and means that the problem of the excessive deer population is still not resolved.

Hunting on Township Property

As in prior years, the township has agreed to open the following properties to hunting or driving of deer as indicated:

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Block 46 Lot 4.01 | Bailey's Mill and Young's Road | driving |
| Block 35.01 Lot 18 | Rt. 202/287 & Glen Alpin Road: | bow |
| Block 8 Lot 9.01 | Margetts Field | bow hunting |
| Block 2 Lot 18 | Waterman property | bow hunting |
| Block 23 Lot 1 | Gatehouse property | bow hunting |

Call the Police Department for more information, 973 455 0500.

Planning Board, July 24, 2006

There were citizen comments at this meeting regarding proposed ordinance 16-06, **which as proposed**, would have

- Increased the minimum developable (unconstrained) area within new lots from the current 10,000 square feet (the 100' x 100' building box) to 25,000 square feet.
- Limited the maximum building area (building footprint) as follows:

Lots up to 5 acres

- the lesser of 3% or a maximum of 3,920 sq. ft. if the front setback <150 ft.
- the lesser of 4% or a maximum of 5,227 sq. ft. if the front setback is 150 ft. or a flag lot if 150 ft. setback to any road.

Lots exceeding 5 acres

- Above square footage plus
- An additional 2% per acre for each acre >5 but <10 acres if the front setback is 150 feet or flag lot w/ 150 ft. setback to any road.
- An additional 1% per acre for each acre over 10 if front setback 150 feet.

- Restricted the maximum lot coverage from the current 10% of the total lot area to 10% for the first three acres and 1,500 sq. ft. per acre for larger lots.
- The maximum allowable graded area of a lot from the current 80% of the total lot area to 80% for the first three acres plus 10,000 sq. ft. per acre for larger lots.

As part of the change to the allowable building area (footprint) the Planning Board recommended that for a flag lot to qualify for the enhanced building area of 4%, its "flag staff" should be at least 150 ft. in length. However, it was thought more consistent with the intent of the ordinance to simply require a 150 foot setback from any road, for any lot to qualify for the enhanced building area.

Accordingly, the draft ordinance included a requirement that for any lot, including a flag lot, to utilize the 4% building area, all structures must be set back 150 feet from any road, whether or not the road abuts the lot.

Review of this ordinance has been temporarily suspended; The Township Committee will announce at a future date when it will be revived.

**Board of Adjustment meeting, Board of Education/School News
Historic Preservation Comm, Environmental Commission, No reports**

Civic Association News and Announcements

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE DEADLINES FOR THE next 2 issues OF THE THUMBNAIL are October 6 and November 8 respectively. *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***, 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 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 9-12 AM. Please do NOT leave recyclable materials if the center is closed.

DATES TO REMEMBER, meetings as noted.

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