

Harding Township Civic Association

THUMBNAIL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIC AFFAIRS

January 2009
Happy New Year!

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Civic Association News

The annual meeting of the Harding Township Civic Association will be held **Monday February 9**, at 7:00 PM, in the Township Kirby Hall. A brief business meeting, (including election of the nominees for the Board of trustees: current candidates: Elizabeth Cutler Bissell, Barbara Brennen, Jake Hayes, Jennifer Flanagan and Scott Shipley) will be followed by “**An Evening with the Mayor**”, **Dr. Lou Lanzerotti, starting at 7:30 pm**. There will be an opportunity to meet other Township Committee members. Please come and bring your questions.

HARDING TWP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Annual Meeting will be held **Tuesday January 20, 2009**, at 7:30 PM, in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church, New Vernon. The program is "An Evening with Abigail Adams" as presented by the American Historical Theatre of Philadelphia with actress and historian Kim Hanley in the starring role. Her talk is a personal, intriguing look at the politics and mores of this amazing 18th century woman who was far ahead of her time in every way. Admission is free for HTHS members and \$5 at the door for non-members. No reservations are required.

THE LIBRARY

Storytime: Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m. For one- to three-year-olds. **January 20:** *Fun with Pizza and Pasta*; **January 27:** *The Snow Man*; **Feb. 3:** *The Mitten*; **Feb. 10:** *Valentine's Day*; **Feb. 17:** *Dinosaur Fun*; **Feb. 24:** *Fairy Tales*.

Special Events for Children: *Fairy Tale Forest* on Sunday, **January 25** from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the court room. *Valentine's Day Party* on **February 14** at 10:30 a.m. for children in grades K-2.

Call the Library with questions: 973-267-8000 ext. 132.

Grant Writer Wanted...seeking help with creating and submitting grant

proposals for the new library. Please share your expertise with this Harding non-profit. Contact desk@hardinglibrary.org or call the Library.

Evening Book Group: Wednesday evening, **January 28** to discuss *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer, a beautifully executed epistolary novel about friendship and art set in World War II Guernsey.

Introducing Amanda Gildersleeve

Amanda Gildersleeve has been appointed Deputy Clerk/ Registrar of Harding Township effective September 22. Her office is on the upper floor of the Kirby Hall building and she is likely to be the first contact for many residents having business at Town Hall. Her duties are prescribed by Township ordinances and include:

- keeping records, resolutions, ordinances and minutes of the meetings of the Township Committee
- assures that all ordinances and notices of the Township are properly advertised
- manage the correspondence of the Township and Township Committee
- issue all licenses, make related reports and account for all fees received
- a myriad of other duties prescribed by our laws

She is, as well, Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics and receptionist at the Township offices. Outside of work, Amanda teaches horseback riding, volunteers as a leader of a 4H horse club and serves her church on the Board of Elders. Finally, she is currently very busy planning her upcoming wedding! Welcome Amanda!

TOWNSHIP NEWS

Harding Township Committee Organizational Meeting – January 7, 2009

Attendees – Bartlett, Lanzerotti, Egea, Rybka, Ward

The Oath of Office as a Harding Township Committee Member was taken by Louis J. Lanzerotti and Regina M. Egea.

There were nominations for the positions of both Chairman (Mayor) and Vice Chairman of the Harding Township Committee for 2009. Mr. Lanzerotti was elected and sworn in as Chairman. Mr. Ward was elected and sworn in as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Lanzerotti then made several remarks regarding the upcoming year – both the opportunities and challenges that face the Committee and residents of Harding Township. A written synopsis of these remarks can be found on the town's website.

Mr. Lanzerotti welcomed Ms Egea as the newest Township Committee member. He also thanked John Murray who retired from the Committee last month for his nine years of service and notable accomplishments while serving the town.

Mr. Ward, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Rybka and Ms Egea all spoke briefly about the priorities of 2009. Most consistently mentioned were the challenge of managing the year's budget during these economic times, Glen Alpin, COAH/Highlands Act, Open Space and the proposed Mount Kemble athletic fields.

David Selecky was sworn in as Harding Township's newest Police Officer.

Various standard resolutions regarding the Township's administration, board/committee appointments and financial operations were approved. Mayor Lanzerotti announced that starting in February the Township Committee is going to try to hold only one meeting per month. The regularly scheduled meeting will be the third Wednesday of the month. If additional meetings are necessary they will be scheduled as needed.

Mt. Kemble Fields – it was noted that a discussion of the items that will be included in the Memorandum of Agreement will take place at the next TC meeting on January 21st. A preliminary list of the issues can be obtained from the Township office. The public is encouraged to review this list and make additional recommendations.

A letter from several residents who live near the proposed complex was read and distributed to the Committee. A new resolution was proposed that would eliminate the night lighting making the fields consistent with others in Harding and Morris Townships. The residents noted that they support the use of the property for multi-purpose athletics as long as it excludes artificial turf, a public address system, bleachers, concessions stands and lighting.

Township Committee Meeting of December 17, 2008

Attending: All

New Police Officer to be Hired. Resolution passed to hire a new police officer to replace one of two that retired during the year. This brings total officers to 13, not including the Chief and a Lieutenant. There is no intent to replace the other retiree.

Mt Kemble Recreation Complex - The Continuing Saga. Now that the TC has approved the rezoning of the property by a 3-2 vote, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that precisely lays out the terms of usage needs to be drafted, vetted by the public and agreed upon with Morris Township (MT). So a procedure for drafting the MoU with MT was worked out. The MoU will be

discussed in public during TC meetings over the next month or more.

- A preliminary list of items that might be included in the MoU was distributed:
- a. Fields – two fields of 100 yds plus goals; natural turf only.
 - b. Jurisdiction for planning, construction and future changes – HT only.
 - c. Noise – no public address system, permanent or portable.
 - d. Intensity of Use – no bleachers; regional playoffs but no championship games; no professional sports; no amusements, carnivals, rides, circus, etc.; Otherwise consistent with MT Rec practices.
 - e. Harding Access – Six 2 hour blocks per month.
 - f. Safety/Security – MT provides all coverage.
 - g. Lighting – Harding engineer recommends & approves; field lights off by 9:00pm; exit lights off by 9:30pm; six stanchions, 6 lights per stanchion; max 75 ft high.
 - h. Environmental – prepare impact stmt and stormwater mgmt plan with Great Swamp Watershed Assoc; no extension of water or sewer utilities.
 - i. Hours of operation – 8am to 9pm daily; 10am to 9pm Sunday
 - j. No Concession Stand.
 - k. Restrooms – constructed with septic system.
 - l. Annexation – No, HT to change zoning from residential to Public Land.
 - m. Traffic – MT responsible for control; no use of Harding roads.
 - n. Additional Condition – Complete and file deed restriction on adjoining property.

The public will have a chance to comment on these elements at future TC meeting(s). The MoU will not be addressed at the next TC meeting (Jan 7). But it will likely be addressed at the second meeting in January (if there is one) or at meeting(s) in February.

Property Taxes -- Harding vs Other Towns in Morris County. Retiring TC member John Murray, distributed an analysis that showed that HT property tax rate of \$1.036 per thousand dollar of assessed value is the lowest in Morris County. Recall that the property tax rate for 2008 actually dropped from 1.040 to 1.036, a wonderful anomaly in state where property taxes are sky rocketing (ex Hoboken up 47%). TC member Ned Ward, pointed out that tax rates are “meaningless” without normalizing for the assessment methodology – ie. how close to market value the municipality has assessed the properties. It was not clear from the chatter at what level HT assessments are, but 70-80% of market was mentioned though without confidence.

Split Lot Zoning – Let the Sleeping Dog Lie. The HT Board of Adjustment (BoA) asked the TC to consider clarifying the zoning status of over 100 properties that fall in two zones. The properties are generally in the Millbrook Road, New Vernon and Green Village areas. When a property

owner applies for a variance, the split zones make it difficult for the BoA to decide which zone regime applies. John Murray and certain township personal looked at the problem with BoA members and concluded that to resolve rezone these properties ex ante would be too complex, costly and politically difficult. So they jointly decided that the BoA would continue to handle these issues on an ad hoc basis.

Library – The Observer Tribune Kicks up a Tempest...Again. For the second time *The Observer Tribune* has written an article that **incorrectly** says that HT purchased the Glen Alpin property with the expectation that it would be used for the library, but that the Library Group scotched the idea leaving HT hung up with an expensive “albatross”. To set the record straight, citizen Judie Ward recited the history of the Library’s brief evaluation of GA that made it clear that the Library Group turned down the property because of its unsuitability **before** GA was purchased. As well she expressed her displeasure that according to the quotes used in the article it appears that at least one of our TC members is contributing to the misimpression and asked that he help set the newspaper straight. John Murray said he was even more frustrated than Ms Ward and that he has tried to correct the reporting including a call to the reporter that very morning after he saw the story.

Board of Adjustment, November 20, 2008

Resolutions – Approved

Peter and Ellie Eppie, 566 Tempe Wick Road, Block 34, Lot 8, Zone RR, “C” and “D” Variances

Pending Application

Matthias and Mary Katherine Sheeleigh, 8 Sycamore Farm Road, Block 21, Lot 5
Request for a one year extension granted.

New Applications

Gregory and Cory Segal Pine, 36 Sheepfield Farms Drive, Block 47, Lot 3.01, Zone RR, “C” Variance

A building coverage variance is requested because the structure is over by 30 sq. ft. The plans were incorrect and a covering over the front door was larger than detailed. Also, a total lot coverage variance is needed because the impervious coverage limits have been exceeded. The applicant stated that they were not aware of the impervious limitations and it was an innocent and inadvertent mistake. They relied upon their contractor. The house is a new construction on a 3 acre lot and is completed. The Board granted the variance for the building coverage but denied the variance for the total lot coverage. The

applicant may choose how to reduce the impervious coverage by 10%. Public comment stated that contractors must know the Township's laws.

Tom and Kate Walden, 46 Meyersville Road, Block 56, Lot 11, "C" Variance

Two variances are requested: building area variance and front yard setback. The lot is curve shaped. House and garage are non-conforming. House is a historic contributing structure. Addition to home will add bedroom, family room, bath and expand kitchen. Recommended for approval. Board of Health and Planning Board approval are needed.

The Huff Family Limited Partnership, LP, 599 Tempe Wick Road, Block 31, Lot 1.03, "C" Variance

The house is currently a non-conforming existing structure. Two setback variances are needed one for a child's playhouse and another for solar energy collection panels. The lot is a flag lot and approx. 7.6 acres. The Board of Health has granted a waiver to allow the solar panels near the reserve septic area. There was extensive discussion as this was an application (solar panels) of first impression for the Board. A site inspection was scheduled for December 6, 2008, 11am with December 13, 2008, as an alternate date.

Board of Adjustment, December 18, 2008

Resolutions – Approved

Gregory and Cory Segal Pine, 36 Sheepfield Farms Drive, Block 47, Lot 3.01, Zone RR, "C" Variance

Tom and Kate Walden, 46 Meyersville Road, Block 56, Lot 11, "C" Variance

Pending Application

The Huff Family Limited Partnership, LP, 599 Tempe Wick Road, Block 31, Lot 1.03, "C" Variance

Two setback variances are needed one for a child's playhouse and another for solar energy collection panels. A site inspection was conducted. There was testimony that other locations for the solar panels were tested but they resulted in less capture of solar energy and the proposed location was the most optimum. After lengthy discussion regarding layout and design, a member of the Board suggested a compromise in which the solar panels would be setback 30 feet from the Northern border of the property and the playhouse would be setback 25 feet from the Western border of the property. In addition, the Board will require plantings on the northern and western sides of the panels, up to the height of the panels, to provide screening. This compromise resolution was recommended for approval.

PLANNING BOARD - December 15, 2008

In attendance: Thomas dePoortere, Virginia Moriarty, Robert Edgar, Marshall Bartlett, Isobel Olcott, John Murray, David Dietz, Peter Saulnier, Alf Newlin, Gary Hall, Susan Kimball, Paul Fox, Cindy Phillips. Absent: Carol Vellekamp. Isobel Olcott ran the meeting.

Correspondence-

Gary Hall sent a letter to the Planning Board members and the applicants advising them of a COAH restriction. He called it a "scarce resource restraint". Since Harding is in the Highlands planning area, the town is restrained from giving developers approvals until the COAH plan is approved. The concern is that the town does not approve building on land that could be used for affordable housing. Mr. Hall cautioned that any approvals given by the Planning Board this evening would be conditional on the COAH restriction being lifted once the State approves Harding's COAH plan.

Applications-

Application: PB-09-08, Applicant: Timothy Stevens, Block 56, Lot 17, 17 Woodland Road, Minor Subdivision with Variances, Action: Site Inspection. The applicant is requesting one variance on a side line setback for an existing dwelling. Inspection is set for Saturday, January 10, 2009, at 10 am. The backup date should weather prevent the January 10 inspection is January 17 at the same time.

Application PB-12-08, Applicant: The Cutler Partnership. LP, Block 4, Lots 10 & 4, Red Gate Road, Minor Subdivision with Variances, Action Consideration of Completeness Waivers. The applicant wants to reconfigure two existing lots. One of the current lots is a flag lot, the other is land locked. The applicant wants to create two flag lots. The plans presented were missing environmental, conservation, and bridle path easements. The applicant said there was no evidence of the bridle paths being used but was willing to put them on the plan. The Planning Board agreed to 5 waivers for completeness only: Letter of Interpretation (LOI), topographic elevation, wetlands transition marking until the LOI is received, conservation, and bridle path easements, and shared maintenance agreement on the lot flags.

Application PB-10-08, Applicant: Primrose Partners, LLC, Block 46, Lots 6, 7.01, 8.03, & 10.04, Brook Drive South, Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision, Action: Set Site Inspection. There was an issue regarding the notifications sent to the residents surrounding the property. Some of the letters were not deliverable as addressed. This will be addressed outside the Planning Board meeting. The property is located at the end of Brook Drive South. It consists of 128 acres that are zoned RR residential. There is an existing driveway on the property, but there are no structures. The applicant seeks to create 15 conforming lots. No variances

were requested. Since this is a major subdivision, it is anticipated that the site inspection will take 2 hours. There will be two days available for site inspection. Each day's inspection will cover the entire property. Anyone wishing to attend only needs to attend one of the days. Site inspection was set for Friday, January 16, 2009 or Saturday January 17, 2009. Both will be held at 10am. The backup date should weather prevent the January 16 inspection is January 23 at 10am and should weather prevent the January 17 inspection the backup date is January 24 at 10am. Those planning to attend should meet at Barrett Field, off Brook Drive South by 10am.

Discussion-

Board of Adjustment Recommendation- Additions to Non-Conforming Structures. The Township Committee requested a clarification of the proposed ordinance in the case where the addition was in the back of the house, but still would not meet the setback requirement. The consensus was that this would require a variance. Only additions that conform to all zoning requirements would not require a variance. (Example, a house sits 20ft from the road and is 30 feet deep. The zoning calls for 100ft setback. Since, the addition would start 50ft from road, this would require a variance.)

Split Lot Zoning Update. There are a number of properties, in the Village Road and Millbrook Road area where the zoning line bisects the property creating a situation where one property is subject to two different zoning requirements. Members of the Planning Board met with the Board of Adjustment to try to determine if they could move the zoning line to rezone the properties into a single zone. After a very thorough study and analysis it was determined this could not be corrected by rezoning. No further action is planned.

BOARD OF EDUCATION: DECEMBER 15, 2008

On December 15, 2008, the Board of Education appointed **Norbert Gambuzza** to fill the unexpired term of Board member Regina Egea, who is stepping down from her post following her election to the Township Committee. The Board of Education publicly interviewed four candidates on December 1st and 8th. The Board provided each candidate with a series of questions in advance. At his or her interview, the candidate then had the opportunity to introduce him or herself and answer the Board's questions. Mr. Gambuzza will be sworn in at the Board's January 12th meeting and will fill Ms. Egea's unexpired term until April 2010.

At its December 15th meeting, the Board thanked Ms. Egea for her service to the Board of Education.

The Board also discussed the feasibility of running a late bus (6 p.m.)

from Madison High School. To do so, 25 students would need to sign up, and there would be a one-time cost of \$600 per student (regardless of the number of times/week the student used the bus). The Board will send a letter to Harding parents to gauge their interest.

Civic Association DEADLINES FOR THE next 2 issues OF THE THUMBNAIL are February 12 (note change of date) and March 6, respectively. Current and past issues of Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are also on our Website:

<http://www.hardingcivic.org>. Send questions or comments about Thumbnail to editor, ***email address: hesnaj@verizon.net***, or the Harding Township Civic Association, PO Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

Please send to the Directory Editor by email any information regarding changes to the Harding Township Directory to be published later this year. If you have responsibility for a listed service or organization, please take a moment to review and update your listing. The Directory Editor is **Bridget Berman, and her email is <brb2@mac.com>**. ***Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that your organization's listing is correct.***

TOWNSHIP RECYCLING

Commingled Recyclables: consists of all aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles, and only plastic bottles and containers with the Recycling symbol, and #1 or #2. Try to crush plastic bottle to conserve space. Please remember no plastic or paper bags.

Commingled Mixed Paper recycling; consists of all paper, cardboard, newspaper, office paper, magazines, and books. Please put loose or shredded paper in paper bag. Please flatten all boxes or fill with other paper products.

Other accepted items; Batteries; automotive (car) and household (rechargeable accepted); Computers and all related peripherals, i.e. printers and monitors; Automotive and light truck tires, (on or off rim) and Propane tanks (BBQ size only)

The Hours of operation are every Wednesday from 7AM. to noon (7– 9AM self service); and **Saturdays: 1/24, 2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/21, 9AM to noon.**

DATES TO REMEMBER, meetings as noted.

Municipal Court (1 st and 3 rd Tuesday)	3 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 Preservtion 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)	7:30 PM
Shade Tree (2 nd Monday)	3 PM
Harding Twp Civic Association (1 st Monday)	7:30 PM