

Harding Township Civic Association

THUMBNAIL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIC AFFAIRS

JANUARY 2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

FROM THE HARDING TOWNSHIP CIVIC ASSOCIATION:

The open meeting to “**Meet the Mayor**” will occur on Tuesday February 7th, 2012 at Town Hall at 7:30 pm. Please see the Civic Association website, www.hardingcivic.org, for further information as the date approaches.

The Township Committee has rescheduled their Reorganization Meeting to Friday, January 13, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. This date change has required some Township Boards & Commissions to reschedule their reorganization meetings to after the 13th. Also, the Township Committee decided to change their meeting schedule for 2012; public meetings will be held the first Monday and executive session meetings the second Monday of each month, both at 7:30 p.m.

FROM THE HARDING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE: A CALL TO SERVE HARDING:

The Township Committee welcomes citizens willing to serve on the Boards, Commissions, and Committees that support the governance of Harding. If you are excited by the possibility of contributing your time and talents to your town, we need to hear from you. Service opportunities (and their meeting times -- usually monthly) are listed on both the Township web site (www.hardingnj.org) and on the Harding Township Civic Association website (www.hardingcivic.org). If you have children who enjoy hockey or ice skating, or are members of the Harding Huskies, consider signing up for the **Citizens Parks Advisory Committee**. And if the natural beauty and architectural history of Harding are your passion, you should know that the **Board of Adjustment, Environmental Commission, Open Space Trust Committee, Shade Tree Advisory Committee, Historic Preservation Commission** and the **Wildlife Management Committee** are especially in need of **volunteers**. Interested citizens should send a resume to Cindy Phillips, Administrative Assistant, at cphillips@hardingnj.org.

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HANOVER AND HARDING NURSE NAMED PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE OF THE YEAR

The New Jersey Association of Public Health Nurse Administrators has named Patricia Russomano the Public Health Nurse of the Year. Mrs. Russomano, a Cedar Knolls resident, works for the Hanover Township Health Department and is assigned as the part-time public health nurse for the Harding Township Health Department under an inter-local service agreement. Mrs. Russomano is also assigned as the school nurse for Our Lady of Mercy RC School in Whippany and the summer camp nurse for the Hanover Recreation Department. In addition to these demanding assignments, she is a role model and wonderful example of public health nursing. Public health nurses serve multiple populations. Pat is comfortable working with both the senior population and meeting the needs of children in the community. She works with the local municipal alliances against substance abuse, has developed and implemented skin cancer awareness and prevention programs for the Hanover Township summer recreation camp program and is very involved with providing health education for the Harding Township Seniors.

FROM CHIEF OF POLICE KEVIN GAFFNEY

There is a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), part of the emergency management process. This is the local participation in our nation and states' official emergency structure which includes FEMA, NJ OEM, and Morris County OEM. The LEPC Mission to assist in the coordination of township resources to respond to an emergency, whether man-made or natural. The LEPC will look to: eliminate or reduce the risk of a disaster by preparation and planning. It will also provide a response to direct and control to address immediate and short term effects of a disaster. The goal is to restore the township to its normal state. Members of the LEPC are:

Heston Allocco, Joe Attencio, Craig Curtiss, Kevin Doherty, Regina Egea, Richard Graber, Jim Halsey, Diane Hinds, Elaine McHale, Ann Morgan, Nic Platt, Peter Saulnier, and Kevin Gaffney.

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FROM THE HARDING LAND TRUST

Conserving the places you love is reason enough to support open space in Harding, but much more is at stake... Preserving our natural areas yields us the resources – the stream corridors, critical soils, wetlands, and upland forests – by which we maintain the quality of our lives. Harding residents especially rely on these resources to maintain the clean and plentiful drinking water flowing from our taps. These lands also provide us with opportunities for recreation and rejuvenation, areas of respite from traffic, crowding and congestion – which is so important in our stressful lives.

Last year we were able to set in motion one of the Township's largest open space preservation efforts in recent years – Primrose Farms. This project continues to advance towards an anticipated spring closing, thanks to a recent grant from Morris County in the amount of \$2,880,000 to Harding Land Trust.

2012 promises to bring several other very important open space properties within our reach. Although the economy is still sluggish, open space activity has been thriving. Harding Land Trust and the Harding Open Space Trust Committee rely on having resources available to take advantage of these opportunities when they arise. Unfortunately, there is no second-chance when it comes to land conservation. Thank you for your support in 2011 and your continued support in the New Year.

NEW VERNON PRESBYTERIAN NURSERY SCHOOL is now accepting enrollment for January Admission to the 2½ year old class. This is a nondenominational program that offers a warm and nurturing environment that helps your child prepare for kindergarten, and support for busy parents with optional early morning drop-off, Stay 'N Play until 3pm, Summer Camp and enrichment programs. Also accepting enrollment for our 2½, 3 and 4 year old classes for the 2012-2013 school year. The school is located in the Fellowship Building of the Presbyterian Church on Village Rd. at Lee's Hill Rd. Please call our Director, Laurie Ptalis at 973-326-9839 for a tour and visit our website at www.nvpns.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

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HARDING ALLIANCE AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE Our mission is to provide education and resources to promote healthy decision-making and to avoid substance abuse and risky behaviors. Harding Alliance members are concerned citizens, police, health and school professionals. Harding Alliance has identified **two volunteer leadership positions** to fill. **Vice Chairperson:** To represent township parents in identifying community needs for substance abuse awareness, and coordination of programming at HTS, and throughout Harding Township. Consensus building skills are helpful for working with various groups in town, including Township Administration, Public Safety, Kemmerer Library, Harding Seniors, and Harding Township School. **Development Officer:** To help Harding Alliance retain its independence, and to assist in its mission of substance abuse awareness, through identifying and developing fundraising opportunities in town. For more information: Judy Malloy, Chairperson, at Judymotown@gmail.com. The [website](https://sites.google.com/site/hardingalliance/) is <https://sites.google.com/site/hardingalliance/>; the blog is <http://hardingalliance.blogspot.com/>.

TOWNSHIP NEWS:

Township Committee Meeting, December 22, 2011

Preliminary 2012 Budget Discussion

At the 12/22/11 Township Committee (TC) Meeting, the Finance Committee discussed how the 2012 budget was shaping up. Recall that the Township budget discussed here relates only to about 25% of your total property tax burden. The other 75% goes to fund the school (about half) and support the county (about a quarter).

The proverbial bottom line of the presentation is that without a tax increase or further expense reductions, the township is facing a \$277K budget gap. By law, the budget has to be balanced (ie. it cannot deficit spend like the Federal government). So to close the gap the TC will need to raise property taxes about 5%, cut expenses by \$277K (about 3% of an \$8.77 million budget) or do a combination of raising taxes

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and cutting expenses. Future TC meetings in January and February will wrestle with this tradeoff while drilling deeper into various department budgets (Police, Admin, Construction, Health, etc). There will be a special additional TC meeting in late January (exact date TBD) that will focus on the budget. Citizens who wish to weigh in on this should attend that meeting and the one in February to let their voice be heard.

For citizens who would like to see the slides from the presentation, they are available on both the Civic Association (www.hardingcivic.org) and the Harding Township websites.

This report will build up the budget as it was presented – starting with non-property tax revenues, moving on the expenses and finally the trade off between property tax increase and cost cutting.

Regarding revenues, the preliminary forecast is that revenues (ex-property taxes) will decline by about \$289K from \$3.35 MM to 3.06MM. This is due to expected decreases in (a) surplus (\$160K), (b) municipal court revenues (\$95K) from reduced traffic fines, (c) interest income (\$30K), and permit fees (\$4K). In 2012 as in recent past years, fees from construction activities are expected to continue at a low level. And the forecast is for a loss of grants from Fish & Wildlife Commission.

On the expense side, total expenses are preliminarily pegged to decline by a hair (about \$12K or 1/10th of 1%) to about \$8.774. The biggest expense line items are compensation relates (salaries, benefits, pension and insurance - \$4.88 mm, 55.6%), Other Expenses (\$1.36mm, or 15.5%), Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (\$0.91mm, or 10.4%), and Debt Service (0.79mm or 9%).

However, underneath that nearly unchanged total of expenses, there is more action -- \$147K reduction in Pension expense resulting from Governor Christie's reform initiatives; \$72K in savings from combining our municipal court with Madison's; and \$12K reduction in engineering expense.

However, these savings are almost totally consumed by increases in health insurance (\$70K or 9-10.5% increase); Police Salaries (\$63K as per the PBA contract now in its fourth and final year); Non-police salaries (\$38K – a 2% increase),

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reserve for uncollected taxes (\$28K) and miscellaneous operating expenses (\$20K). The budget for legal services is pegged at \$115K, flat with the 2011 level, but almost double what it was a couple years ago due to an entanglement with a litigious resident over land use ordinances.

Netting the \$289K of lower revenues with the \$12K of lower expenses get \$277K – this is the amount that must be raised through higher taxes or eliminated via cost cutting to create a balanced budget. A table at the end of the presentation showed tax increases between 2% and 5%. Interestingly a 0% or 1% tax increase was not included in the range of possible tax increases. The table showed that a 5% tax increase would close the gap and raise the entire \$277K and not require any budget cuts. At the other end a 2% tax increase would raise \$109K and require the TC and administration to find \$168K more of expense reductions.

As the final figures come in for 2011, especially uncollected taxes, it is expected that the budget gap may close to \$100K or perhaps a bit less.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION, December 6, 2011

The meeting of the Harding Township Environmental Commission (EC) was called to order at 7:35 P.M. by Karl Meister, Chairman. Members present: Richard Clew, Justine Kovacs, Karl Meister (chair), John Murray, Nicolas Platt, Hugh Symonds; Members absent with excuse

Diane Hinds, Lou Lanzerotti, James Morgan, Peter Saulnier. John Murray was welcomed as a new member of the Environmental Commission.

LIAISON REPORTS

Planning Board (PB) – K. Meister read a report submitted by P. Saulnier concerning the PB meeting held on November 14, 2011. The GHK/Fawn Hill application was presented and the feasibility of an additional driveway cut is under

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review. There is no PB meeting scheduled this month as the GHK/Fawn Hill applicant could not meet in December.

The PB was skeptical regarding the EC's potential feasibility study to place utility wires underground. At the Emergency Management Committee meeting held in November 2011, it was suggested that members of that committee work with representatives from JCP&L to improve the reliability of power supply and to insure that JCP&L is meeting its legal and ethical responsibilities to provide reliable power. N. Platt reported on the EC's recommendations to the TC regarding emergency generators. The recommendations were well received and the emergency generator ordinance will be subordinate to the Township's noise ordinance.

N. Platt reported on the EC's recommendations to the Downtown New Vernon Redevelopment Plan Committee. The proposal was amended to include advertising on umbrellas.

Board of Adjustment (BOA) – H. Symonds reported that the BOA met on November 17, 2011 and has been updated on the activities of the EC. H. Symonds stated that there was a presentation by the sponsors of the cell tower requesting a 150-foot, tree type tower. The sponsors stated that there would be no risk from petro-chemical spills as there would be no emergency generators or fuel pumps at the site. The sponsors further represented that the structure's base will be a gravel pad with minimal impact on impervious surfaces. J. Kovacs commented that there needs to be an awareness of the requirements of T-Mobile's potential renters and how those agreements pertain to enclosures and back-up generators. She also stated that a balloon test is scheduled for December 9, 2011 at 9 am. The Seventh Day Adventist Church site is currently being considered for the construction of the T-Mobile cell tower. K. Meister will contact P. Rosenbach, Vice Chairman of the BOA, regarding the proposed cell tower height as well as the possibility of considering alternate sites.

H. Symonds reported that the Lohuis application for set back variance was denied.

H. Symonds reported that the generator application for Jenks Court was approved. There was a discussion regarding noise concerns. H. Symonds suggested that the

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noise requirements should fall within the parameters of the daytime noise ordinance and stated that he would prepare a statement on the subject for the next meeting.

J. Kovacs stated that there is a special meeting of the BOA scheduled for December 15, 2011 at 7:30 pm at the Municipal Building regarding the Hurstmont property.

(Editor's note: "Hurstmont" is an estate of about 19 acres, recently purchased by a local developer. It is located on Rt 202 north of the Township-owned Glen Alpin property and Tempe Wick Rd. There are buildings on the property in decrepit condition. The agenda for the Board of Adjustment in December seeks variances for density. This application will presumably be followed by a formal application to the Planning Board for subdivision and site plan. This property is in the 5-acre zoning district.)

Citizen's Park Advisory Committee (CPAC) – J. Kovacs reported that the GSWA does not currently have any funds available to support the construction of a swale below Bayne Park Pond. J. Kovacs will follow-up with GSWA concerning the future availability of funds for this project.

Harding Open Space Trust (HOST) - No report.

Shade Tree – J. Kovacs reported on the Arboreal Management Practices seminar sponsored by the Garden Club, which was held on December 5, 2011. J. Kovacs will follow-up with the Garden Club concerning the formal actions to be taken as a result of the program.

Bridle Paths - No report.

PROJECTS

Easement Stewardship – J. Kovacs presented the findings of the Thebault easement site walk of November 19. A copy of the report has been included in the township file. J. Kovacs suggested that the Bridle Path Association follow-up with this easement to improve the viability of the existing trail. J. Murray will coordinate

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with the Bridle Path Association. J. Kovacs will draft a letter from the EC to the Thebaults, reporting the findings.

K. Meister reported on the publicity campaign for easement stewardship. A summary has been posted on the Civic Association website. J. Murray will further review the easements, develop a prioritization methodology, which is simpler than the one existing at present, and establish a plan of the resources necessary for monitoring the easements. He will also update the information on the easements for publication on the Civic Association website and develop a questionnaire suitable for presentation to property owners for reporting on the status of easements on their properties.

Lighting Ordinance – K. Meister submitted the EC's proposal to the Planning Board on December 5, 2011.

Deer Fencing – K. Meister submitted the EC's proposal to the Planning Board on December 6, 2011.

Street Lights/Energy Efficiency Analysis – H. Symonds reported that the Civic Association had undertaken a survey of residents on the subject, indicating that 68% of residents were in favor of eliminating streetlights, except for those located at intersections. He also presented a graphical analysis of the current number of streetlights and the proposed light reduction plan. H. Symonds will prepare a statement, detailing the plan and, after review with K. Meister, submit it to the TC. K. Meister will contact Steve Balog regarding publicity on the Civic Association website and will also speak with Gail McKane regarding the need to inform the residents whose properties may be affected by the street light reduction.

Clean-Up Day – R. Clew reported that the Spring Clean-Up Day is scheduled for April 21, 2012. He will coordinate the pick-up of trash with T. Toribio of DPW and will also reach out to other town organizations for assistance. N. Platt will request a stipend of \$200 to support the Clean-Up Day.

2012 Budget for the Environmental Commission – Mr. Murray agreed to develop a draft of a 2012 budget for the Commission, for review with Mr. Meister and eventual submission to the township administration and the TC.

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HARDING SCHOOL BOARD, BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

No reports this month

PLANNING BOARD , Planning Board December meeting cancelled.

Civic Association News and Announcements

Civic Association: The DEADLINES FOR THE next 2 issues OF THE THUMBNAIL are February 10 and March 9. Note change in Feb deadline. 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. The Civic Association website, www.hardingcivic.org, is updated frequently; we post events sent to our e-mail address: submissions@hardingcivic.org.

TOWNSHIP RECYCLING

The Hours of operation are every Wednesday from 7AM. to noon (7– 9AM self service); and every other Sat.: 9AM to noon: Jan 21, Feb 4, 18; Mar 3, 17, 31. **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); Automotive and light truck tires, (on or off rim) and Propane tanks (BBQ size only) **Computers, monitors, laptops and televisions. cannot** be put into household trash. However, they **can** be brought to the Harding Twp DPW recycling center at

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the regular hours of operation. Tracy Toribio of Harding Twp DPW will answer your recycling questions 973 267 2448, Mon- Fri 8:30 am to 3 pm.

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DATES TO REMEMBER, meetings as noted.

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)	7:30 PM
Board of Health (2 nd Thursday)	7:30 PM
Board of Education (1st and 3rd Monday)	7:30 PM
Board of Adjustment (3 rd Thursday)	7:30 PM
Township Committee(1 st Monday)	7:30 PM
Harding Open Space (2 nd Wed)	7:30 PM
Harding Twp Civic Association (3 rd Tues)	7:30 PM
Municipal Court- has merged with Madison NJ Court	