

# Harding Township Civic Association

## THUMBNAIL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIC AFFAIRS

JUNE 2012

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENT

#### HARDING TOWNSHIP CIVIC ASSOCIATION

At the Memorial Day festivities , the Harding “Citizen of the Year” was volunteer **Judie Ward**. Mrs. Ward, who has been active as a member of the Downtown Development Committee and the Harding Open Space Trust, and was also cited for her efforts in support of the township's Kemmerer Library.

The Essay winners were also announced, and they read their winning essays: This year's essay topic was: What is Jockey Hollow and why is it important? Students considered the historic, recreational, or environmental aspects. The winner in the 1-2 grade category was **Mary Flynn** who is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The 3-4 grade category winner was **Sofia Kasparik** who is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The 5-6 grade category winner was **Joe Cusano** who is in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The 7-8 grade category winner was **Ryan Kidd** who is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The essays are available on the Civic Assn website.

#### Kemmerer Library – June

**Borrow a Kindle:** Are you traveling this summer, or are you curious about the new e-readers? The Library now offers pre-loaded Kindles on loan for Harding residents. The devices come with a wide selection of best-sellers, classic fiction, non-fiction and more. For more information about the program, please see our website or contact the Library.

**“Travel Through Italy’s History” Lecture Series.** The Library is accepting registrations for our upcoming lecture series on the history and lore of Italy. Through photos and stories, historian Alex Lang will take the audience on an exciting journey through Rome, Sicily, Venice and the Crusades. Four lectures: **Thursdays at 10:30 am, June 21 & 28, July 12 and 19.** Suggested donation for the series \$25.

**Evening Book Group, Wednesday, July 25th and August 29th at 7:30 pm.** July's selection is *The House at Riverton* by Kate Morgon. August's selection is *Honolulu* by Alan Brenner. Join us for an engaging discussion. No registration necessary.

**Children's Programs: Baby Play Group: Thursdays, 10:30 am.** Moms and babies, 4 months-12 months of age, meet to play/chat and sing songs. **Toddler Time: Tuesdays, 10:00 am** for children ages 1-4. Listen to stories, sing songs and make a theme-related craft. **Drop In Crafts, Wednesdays, 3pm** for ages pre-K and up. Do a fun project and enjoy cookies and lemonade.

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**Summer Reading Program:** Dream big this summer: Read! The Library's popular summer reading program kicks off on **Saturday, June 16, 12 noon**, with a visit from **Mountainside Petting Zoo**. Cuddle with a cute bunny and have your photo taken – just in time for a great gift for Dad. Children ages pre-K to 8, who have signed up for the program, are eligible for prizes and incentives.

Activities and events include:

**Sunset Read, Thursdays, July 12<sup>th</sup> and August 9<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m.** Bring a blanket and your teddy bear and enjoy a fun camp side read with Miss Jen.

**Movie Nights for Tweens and Teens.** Great books on film. **Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m.:** *The Lightning Thief*. **Thursday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 p.m.:** *The Hunger Games*. Popcorn and soda included! For children in grade 4 and up. **Teen Kindles:** Several of the Library's new Kindles have been reserved especially for teens and are pre-loaded with lots of young adult literature – and required school summer reading. Great for summer vacation!

**Library Summer Hours:** The Library will be open Monday through Friday, 10am-5pm, and Saturdays 10am-2pm during July and August.

**Library Meeting Rooms** are available to Harding residents, nonprofit organizations and businesses for a nominal fee. If you would like to reserve space, you may view our Meeting Room Policy and rates on our website at [www.hardinglibrary.org](http://www.hardinglibrary.org).

**Library Displays:** If you have a collection of art or memorabilia that you would like to display in the Library, please contact Lotte Newlin at 973-267-2665. The Library extends a heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and blood donors who made our first ever blood drive a resounding success. 32 Harding residents donated enough blood to help almost 100 patients. Thank you also to Turpin Realtors for their invaluable help in make the drive possible.

**Harding Township Municipal Offices Summer Hours Schedule:** Please note that, effective June 25<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, the Harding Township Municipal Offices will be open 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. on Friday.

### **HTRA SUMMER DAY CAMP – 2012 ENROLLMENT still open**

The Harding Twp. Recreation Association's Summer Day Camp program runs from Monday July 2 through Friday July 27. (closed on Wednesday July 4<sup>th</sup>). Campers can enroll for as many weeks as they wish. Camp hours are from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. For more information and enrollment forms visit our website at [www.hardingtownshipdaycamp.com](http://www.hardingtownshipdaycamp.com), email us at [promano59@comcast.net](mailto:promano59@comcast.net) or call us at 973-326-1775.

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**NEW VERNON PRESBYTERIAN NURSERY SCHOOL** now registering 2½, 3 and 4 year old classes for the 2012-2013 School Year. For more information, and to schedule a visit, please contact director, Laurie Ptalis, at 973-326-9839, or check the website at [nvpns.org](http://nvpns.org).

**TOWNSHIP ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT.** At the recent primary election, for the Township Committee, Republican Edward "Ned" Ward received 327 votes from Republican voters, while Nanette DiTosto received 369. Republican Alf Newlin is seeking to retain the unexpired term he is now serving, and received 392 votes. There were no Democrats who filed. The Republican trio, however, will face three independent candidates in November. They are Judy Malloy, Mike Meade and Brian McCarthy. The Harding Township Civic Assn will sponsor a "Meet the Candidates" night on October 24, 7PM – 10 PM at the Harding Township School, Lees Hill RD, moderated by the League of Women Voters. An agenda will be available in the October Thumbnail.

### **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. Please come and let your voice be heard. The fall quarterly meeting is **September 19 at 8:30 AM** in the Guidance Office of Harding Township School.

Effective January 1, 2012, Harding Alliance will no longer accept state grant funding, and will rely on the generosity of local residents and private foundations. Please help us pursue our mission by identifying foundations with common goals. We have also identified a volunteer leadership position for a motivated resident: Development Officer to help Harding Alliance retain its independence, and to assist in its mission of substance abuse awareness. This is a unique opportunity for leadership development through skill-building and networking, while helping the community.

Please contact Judy Malloy, Chairperson, at [Chairperson@HardingAlliance.org](mailto:Chairperson@HardingAlliance.org) if you have any questions. Mayor Bartlett, Chief Gaffney, Garry Annibal HT Health Department and Dr. Petersen (Principal, HTS) can also be contacted for further information on this vital volunteer position. Please register for updates to our website and our blog at [www.HardingAlliance.org](http://www.HardingAlliance.org).

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### **TOWNSHIP NEWS:**

#### **TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE, Township Committee Meeting – May 30, 2012**

All TC members were in attendance.

**Progress on Glen Alpin** – Mayor Bartlett announced that the Township is “working very very hard to lease Glen Alpin”, the historic house at the corner of Rt 202 and Tempe Wick Road. He said the process is “arduous” but that they hope to have a formal proposal later this year. The process is complicated because of all the financing entities involved in the original purchase – county and state historical societies, Green Acres, etc, as well as HT’s own bond counsel.

**Kemmerer Library Makes Its Debut Presentation.** Lotte Newlin, the executive director of the Library made the first ever presentation to the TC – “State of the Library” – on the activities of the Library. The TC and community was thanked repeatedly for its support of the Library which was built with private donations, carries no debt or mortgage and is building an endowment to help fund the operating budget. Newlin outlined the extensive slate of programs and activities - - from speakers, to children’s’ reading groups, yoga, bridge, college selection advise – for patrons of all ages.

**Department of Public Works Makes Its Annual Presentation.** The DPW made its annual presentation to activity of its 4 divisions – Road, Buildings & Grounds, Recycling and Vehicle Maintenance – and 5 man crew. Last year the DPW outsourced the maintenance of the parks and this year also contracted out maintenance of the grounds at Town Hall and The Farm at Harding. Maintenance division is responsible for 14 pieces of large equipment, 9 police cars and 10 small equipments. Preventive maintenance schedule attempts to have to the large equipment last 15-20 years or one million miles.

**Gatehouse Property Mgmt Plan.** The Gatehouse is a property owned 70% by HT and 30% by the Harding Land Trust. It is located at the corner of Harter Road and James Street. The HLT is responsible for the maintenance of the property but until now has not presented a plan because the building was not occupied until 2007. The plan includes mowing grass, plowing snow, replacing the front porch and repaving the driveway. The cost of the maintenance plan will be born by the Harding Open Space Trust fund, a pool of money whose source is property taxes.

**Citizen Want the Bare Facts Regarding the Bear Shooting.** On April 27<sup>th</sup> a black bear was reportedly shot and killed by a friend of the homeowner where the bear was roaming. Apparently, there was a prior bear incident at the same

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location in November of 2011. Roberta Shields, in a letter to the TC, has asked that certain “important questions” need to be answered. Since firearms and hunting is a highly regulated activity in NJ she says that this use of firearms should be investigated. Such issues as: Was the shooting authorized? If not, are their consequences to the shooter? Were instructions given to the homeowner in November by the Division of Fish and Wildlife? Were they followed? Has action been taken to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence?

The Wildlife Management Committee will take up the issue of bear management policies at its June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. However, Shields believes that and investigation of the issues around the shooting is a different topic that needs separate and serious investigation.

### **TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE ON THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

A large portion of the May 30 Township Committee meeting was devoted to updating the public on what the TC is doing as it gathers input and data as it approaches the contract negotiations with the PBA local this fall. Your reporter was impressed by the extent of the work being done by the Township on the topic as well as by the openness of the discussion.

Alf Newlin, the spokes person for the TC, said that community outreach activity consisted of over 25 meeting with various entities (fire departments, first aid squads, school, seniors) and about 15 individuals and families. And the TC has received and read many letters. In all the TC has done “quite a lot of listening” and still welcomes meetings with others. All comments will be kept confidential.

The TC is conducting a search for a professional to assist them with the upcoming PBA contract negotiations. Three interviews have been conducted so far. The TC gave 5 reason why an experienced professional is necessary – they need expertise to: (1) help them think about options for shift scheduling (currently the police work 4 days on with 12 hour shifts then are off for 4 days); (2) ensure benefits are fair an in-line with other towns; (3) develop win-win options; (4) stay inside the 2% state imposed budget cap; (5) account for pension reform initiatives.

The TC promised to get input from experts and that is happening. First, they have met with a /retired former HT detective to gain a better understanding of the detective function. Second, Mayor Bartlett met informally with other mayors and gathered insights about their departments and found that other towns are interested, at least preliminarily, in sharing the detective function. (Recall that HT’s detective is retiring soon, but is using accumulated vacation days between now and official retirement date. So HT does not have a dedicated

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full time detective. At the moment, detective duties are handled by the Chief who reports that there is “no compromise” in functionality.)

Further on the topic of expert input, the TC requested a report from the Chief on various topics including – staffing and shifts; scope of responsibilities (ex. Jockey Hollow, Great Swamp, I-287); crime rate statistics; community relations projects; school related services; shared services such as detective; cost efficiency in purchasing (ammunition, cars, radios); staffing options. The preliminary report was received and broadly shared with the public. The TC will ask for more data in a few of the areas and it appears that the most complex topic that is staffing. Several years of the HT police department went from 8 hour shifts to current 12 hour shifts. According to the Chief’s report this had implications for patrol sizes and response time. It also gives 100 hours of time off per year and affects the “unity of command”. This entire complex topic of staffing is one that will be examined in greater detail with the chief and the outside expert.

The timeline for this exercise is for the information gathering to extend into July. The next task is benchmarking analysis -- first cut is expected to be completed in Aug/Sept. PBA negotiations begin in October

The 2012 benchmarking will build on work done in 2009/10 and prior. Benchmarking is a decision making tool using in various disciplines to compare organizations. Results may be suggestive of areas for change or improvement of practices. As in the past, the study will include HT staffing and spending relative to its area, roads budget and population. In addition, this year two new parameters will be looked at – (1) the ratio of supervisory to non-supervisory personnel (to determine are we top-heavy or lacking n supervision) and (2) contracted salary and benefits (to determine are we overly generous or do we have a poor pay and benefit package).

Lastly, the TC wants to try to distill the financial information in to a “cost per officer” figure that included not just current salary and benefit cost but the net present value of post-retirement benefits (pension and healthcare).

The search for a patrolman to replace the officer who quit unexpectedly is in full swing. The department is looking for a trained or academy graduate. An ad has been placed in papers and to date 30 applications have been received. The Chief and HT administrator will interview the “best” candidates and forward the best 3 to the TC for a final decision. Background, psychological and physical checks will be completed on each. The three finalists are to be identified in the July/August timeframe.

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### **Grievance Filed by the PBA Against the Township – Healthcare Cost Moving to Center Stage**

In February, in a step to save money, the TC decided to switch the healthcare plan for the active and retired PBA members from the “traditional” plan to a PPO and a “side fund” to reimburse the officer if costs are not covered by the PPO as before. Essentially HT would be self insuring these other costs. This switch would save HT \$80K annually, or \$60K for the balance of the PBA contract period which only goes to 12/31/12. Regular readers of Thumbnail, will realize that \$60k is significant in the context of the HT municipal budget. The police and retirees can continue to use doctors that are not in the PPO network and HT will reimburse them for the cost (and for the \$5 co-pay) so there is no economic impact on the covered individual. The only downside for the covered individual is a bit of quarterly paperwork. It appears that only one doctor used by all 12 of the active and retired officers is not in the PPO network. But again, that doctor can still be used – HT will reimburse directly.

Everything was in place and appeared to be operating smoothly. Recently however, the PBA filed a formal grievance about the change saying this was an illegal breach of the PBA contract. Working this out is expected to cost \$5K in legal fees alone.

The TC expressed disappointment that the grievance was filed and stated that other municipalities have made a similar change and that the Public Employment Relations Commission ruled favorably for the municipality.

One citizen expressed his “profound disappointment” that the PBA would take this stance. This individual was at the February meeting where the change was instituted and had expressed a strong hope that the PBA would see accept this painless change as HT worked hard to save money in these trying times. Another citizen took the opposite view and castigated the TC for changing the plan right before the township goes into contract negotiations and that the change would harden the union’s bargaining position.

The first individual took the floor again to say that “all taxpayers should be outraged and ashamed” at the PBA for taking this position.

In any case, it is clear that healthcare benefits will be a big topic in the local contract negotiations as it is statewide and nationally. It was stated that experts, who have looked at HT’s benefit package and its \$44K per year cost for a family, find it “amazing”.

### **PLANNING BOARD**

**HARDING SCHOOL , no reports this month**

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### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT, from the agenda, May 17, 2012**

Extension of Time Request: Application # BOA-04-11; Anthony and Evelyn Giacone; 17 Fawn Hill Drive, Block 48, Lot 8.15.

#### Review of Revised Plans

Discussion of Board of Adjustment Application #05-11 Linda Pinkus, revised engineering plan

#### Pending Applications

**Application # BOA-23-10;** T-Mobile Northeast LLC, New Cingular Wireless PC and Sectorsite, LLC (Applicants); NJ Conference 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists (Owner); 501 Tempe Wick Road, Block 33 Lot 9, Zone RR; Preliminary / Final Site Plan and "D" Variance

**Application # BOA-22-11:** Harding Holdings PM LLC; 679 Mt. Kemble Avenue, Block 27 Lot 2 Zone RR; Amended application requesting (d) variances for use (to permit 2 dwellings on 1 lot) and density (to allow total of 5 dwelling units on 19.6 acre parcel), subject to subsequent (bifurcated) application for site plan and subdivision approval and related (c) variances (procedural discussion only).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION,**

Monitoring of environmental easements started in June. There are nearly 400 easements that have been dedicated in one form or another to Harding Township. The Township Committee directed the Environmental commission to conduct site visits to compare the easement status with the conservation/protection standards contained in the easement language. The visits are being conducted by trained members and are for the sole purpose of documenting site conditions. Home owners have been notified, and were welcome to participate in the site visits if desired. The contact people for the effort were John Murray, project coordinator, [john@jimmurray.us](mailto:john@jimmurray.us); and Dorothy Hicks, Secretary, 973 267 8000, x1988.

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

***Civic Association: The DEADLINES FOR THE next 2 issues OF THE THUMBNAIL are June 9 and SEPTEMBER 7. The September issue will appear after Labor Day. Generally, the deadline for each issue is the first Friday of the month. The editor assembles the Thumbnail and sends off to the printer by that Sunday evening. Should you have announcements or reports to include, the Editor welcomes a "heads-up" by email. Current and past issues of Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are also on our Website: <http://www.hardingcivic.org>.***

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Send questions or comments about Thumbnail to editor, **email address:** [hesnaj@verizon.net](mailto:hesnaj@verizon.net), or the Harding Township Civic Association, PO Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976. The Civic Association website, [www.hardingcivic.org](http://www.hardingcivic.org), is updated frequently; we post events sent to our e-mail address: [submissions@hardingcivic.org](mailto: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: June 23, July 7, 21, Aug. 4, 18, Sept 1, 15. Note: the Sept 29 scheduled recycling has been moved to October 6 due to conflict with the Fireman’s Auction.**

**Commingled Recyclables:** consists of all aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles, and only plastic bottles and containers with the Recycling symbol, and #1, #2 #4, #5, and #7. 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 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.

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

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