

# Harding Township Civic Association

Keeping Harding Informed Since 1973

[www.HardingCivic.org](http://www.HardingCivic.org)

February 2014

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### Kemmerer Library

**2014 Winter Operating Hours:**

**Monday-Friday: 10-5. Saturday: 10-1. Sunday: 12-3.**

### Children's Programs:

**Storytime: Tuesdays, 10:30 am.** Children aged 1-4 listen to stories, sing songs and do a craft.

**Wednesdays, 11 am: Pre-K Play Group and Lunch Bunch.** Games, play and bring your lunch.

**Baby Play Group: Thursdays, 10:30 am.** Moms and babies, 6 months-12 months of age, meet to play/chat and sing songs.

### Children's Special Events:

**Children's Book Clubs: 6-7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Next meeting Tuesday, February 10, 5:30 p.m.** If you enjoy reading and love to chat about what you have read, this book club is for you! We'll talk, do a craft, have a nice snack – and have lots of fun. This month's selection is Wonder by RJ Palacio. Copies are available at the Library.

**Wednesday, February 12, 4:00 p.m.: Valentine's Day Party.** Ages 4 and up. Stories, games and crafts.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Valentine Haiku Competition for Children.** Write a poem in honor of Valentine's Day & win a giant teddy bear. Stop by the Library to pick up your submission form. Deadline: Wednesday, February 12. Winner announced February 14.

### Adult Programs:

**Gray Power – 50 Shades of Taking Charge. Thursday, 11 a.m. February 20:** Harding Township Police: Avoiding scams. This workshop was rescheduled from December. Light lunch will be served. *Registration required, please.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Book Club Lovers' Fest: Sunday, February 9, 4-5:30 p.m.** Book club members and anyone interested are cordially invited to join us for our second

inspirational event especially for book clubs. Exchange ideas, meet potential members. Refreshments will be served. *Registration required, please.*

**iPhone Workshops for Beginners: Tuesdays, February 11 and 25.** Caitlin Trought, expert on everything Apple, leads the workshops. Basics, apps, organizing information, syncing content, and more will be covered. \$5 suggested donation per meeting. *Membership limited to 15, so register soon.*

**Yarn Circle Knitting Club, every Wednesday, 1-2 pm. December 11.** Join us for conversation, inspiration and instruction by the fireplace. Fun for beginners and experienced knitters alike.

**Mat Yoga: Mondays at 10:30 am.** MJ Turnbull's classes are good for both body and soul. All are welcome. A donation of \$10 per session is suggested.

**Evening Book Group, Wednesday, February 26, 7:30 pm.** This month's selection is The Silent Wife by A.S.A. Harrison. Come for a good discussion. All are welcome.

**Mah Jongg Club, Thursdays, 12-2 pm.** Social play. All are welcome.

#### **TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

#### **Meet the Mayor, event sponsored by Harding Township Civic Association**

**Date: February 4, 2014**

**Where: Town Hall**

**Time: 7:30PM**

#### **Township Committee – Annual Re-organization Meeting**

All Committee members present

On January 6<sup>th</sup> the Harding Township Committee had its annual re-organization meeting where they choose a chair person (aka "Mayor"). Nicolas Platt, recently elected to serve another 3 year term was unanimously chosen as mayor.

Platt delivered a short speech that called the mission of the Township Committee "simple" to provide essential services at a reasonable cost and avoid the financial problems faced by municipalities across the state and nation. He thanked retiring mayor, Lou Lanzerotti who remains on the Committee, for "setting a wonderful example to follow". The new mayor cited many of the people and organizations, both volunteer and professional, which help make Harding what it is. In closing Platt said, "We need to be less anxious. We all want the best for Harding. If we work

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

Environmental Commission (1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday)	7:30 PM
Seniors (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday) Christ the King Church	11:00 AM
Planning Board (4 <sup>th</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM
Historical Preservation Committee (1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM
Board of Health (2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM
Board of Education (1st & 3rd Monday)	7:30 PM
Board of Adjustment (3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday)	7:30 PM
Township Committee (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday)	7:30 PM
Harding Open Space (2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday)	7:30 PM
Harding TWP Civic Association (2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday)	7:30 PM

together in that spirit, this town will flourish as it always has." The several standing committee assignments were also announced as were the liaisons to the various boards, committees and commissions. These will be published in the March Thumbnail.

**Township Committee Meeting - January 13, 2014**

All five committee persons in attendance

The regular January meeting was very light in content and very short in duration. The main piece of business was the annual awarding of contracts for professional services:

1. Township Attorney – (Mark Roselli) \$155/hr with \$65,000 retainer
2. Special Tax Counsel – (Fred Semrau) \$140/hr; property tax appeals
3. Special Labor Counsel – (Jim Prusinowski) \$143/hr, up 2.1%; labor work
4. Special Counsel – (Chris Falcon) \$165/hr; Huff suit related matters
5. Special Counsel – (Peter Henry) \$185/hr; \$210/hr
6. Engineer – (Apgar Associates) \$153/hr (rate up 2.7%)
7. Risk Manager – (Hurley Insurance) 6% of premium
8. Professional Planner – (William Drew) \$130/hr, \$5/hr less than prior
9. Bond Counsel – (Steven Rogut) function of issue size; \$400/bond ordinance
10. Tree Conservation Officer – (John Linson) \$90/hr (up 5.9%)
11. GIS/IT Consultant – (Chris Allyn) \$75/hr (\$19,500)

Except as noted above all services are at rates flat with 2013.

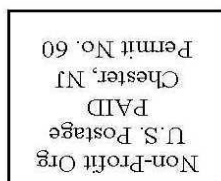
Although not on listed on the Consent Agenda, Harding Township also contracts for insurance brokerage services (Ralph Valenti - \$20,000, down from \$22,500) and audit services (Suplee Clooney - \$26,375 versus \$26,500 in 2013).

No contractor is allowed charge Harding Township for mileage for travel to Kirby Hall.

One non-professional service was awarded as well – solid waste disposal at DPW facility and The Farm. Cost for this three year contract is unchanged.

**Fate of the Old Tennis Courts IN PLAY**

The decision regarding the fate of the town tennis courts (next to Kirby Hall parking lot) is again in play. Built in the 1980's, these hard surface courts are in disrepair – one is not playable and the other is dangerous as well.



Impacting the decision is the recent granting of permission by the Harding Township School to allow residents to play on the two newly constructed courts behind the school. These can be used during daylight AND when school is not in session or school activities are not underway. Presently, these courts can be used on a first come, first served basis and with no time limit.

The choices for the old tennis courts are four fold:

1. Do Nothing -- (except remove the second net). Cost \$0
2. Restore – Cost was estimated at \$50,000 about 3 years ago. If the base layers under the courts were problematic then it could cost an additional \$20,000.
3. Demolish – remove fence and courts and return to meadow. Cost \$9-11K
4. Demolish and Put to Another Unspecified Use.

**The Township Committee wants input from the public!  
To assist in this, the Civic Association will conduct a survey via email  
(Survey Monkey) – watch for it!**

#### **HARDING TOWNSHIP NEWS:**

##### **Cell Tower Hosting**

Property owners in Harding's B-2 zone who potentially have an interest in hosting a cell tower and want further information should contact Gail McKane, the Harding Township Administrator at [GMcKane@HARDINGNJ.ORG](mailto:GMcKane@HARDINGNJ.ORG). Ms. McKane will ensure that any contact request is forwarded to the appropriate contact. Harding's B-2 Zone extends along Route 202 on both sides of the highway (with an intervening area zoned OB on the eastern side) from Bernard's Township northward; on the western side of Route 202, it extends nearly to the Tempe Wick | Glen Alpine Road intersection.

##### **Remarks made by Nicolas W. Platt: Mayor of Harding Township January 6, 2014**

Good evening.

I want to thank my colleagues for entrusting me with this seat and Dr. Lanzerotti for setting a wonderful example to follow.

Our mission here is simple. Over 90 years ago a group of individuals with incredible foresight decided to go their own way. They seceded from Passaic Township and established their own charter and with it this amazing town.

#### **NEW VERNON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT:**

It's almost time once again, for the Auxiliary - sponsored "**Home-made Soup/Chili Contest**".

What: "**CHILI | SOUP COOK-OFF**"

Where: **Fire House, Village Road**

When: **Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup>**

Time: **5:00PM - 6:00PM**

For \$7.00 you can sample many different chilis and soups with fresh baked bread and coffee included. Homemade desserts and soda will be available for sale. Vote for your favorites! Prizes will be awarded. **If you would like to enter a chili or soup in the contest, please call Connie Cherrillo (973-539-9383) or Pat O'Reilly (201-919-2183) to let us know you will be entering a pot of chili or soup. Admission is free.**

#### **AROUND TOWN:**

##### **First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon**

What: **Spring Concert with Min Kwon & Friend's**, Min is a world renown concert pianist and Harding resident.

Where: **First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon**

When: **Sunday, April 6**

Time: **time to be announced**

Tickets will be sold and all proceeds will be donated to the church's Piano Fund.

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

**Civic Association:** If you have announcements for early April, send in to be included in the March issue, please.

**NEW DEADLINES FOR THUMBNAIL SUBMISSION:** the third Friday of each month.

**The DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT 3 ISSUES are:** March 21<sup>st</sup>, April 18<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>.

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 to: [HTCA@mail.com](mailto:HTCA@mail.com) OR [submissions@hardingcivic.org](mailto:submissions@hardingcivic.org) OR

Harding Township Civic Association

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The Civic Association website, [www.HardingCivic.org](http://www.HardingCivic.org), is updated frequently.

license to be issued, the dog's rabies immunity must be good through October 31, 2014. A copy of the 2014 Dog License Application can be found on the Harding Township website under the Health Department ([www.hardingnj.org](http://www.hardingnj.org)). Any questions, please call 973/267-8000, extension 1968.

## **HEALTH NEWS**

### **Harding Township Recreation Association**

The HTRA now has its own website: [www.htra.info](http://www.htra.info)

Registration for **girl's lacrosse and mini-laxers** is now open! Secure registration is available on the lacrosse page on our website. For questions, please contact Connie Kapp at [lacrosse@htra.info](mailto:lacrosse@htra.info)

HTRA is hosting a **cocktail reception on February 21st** at Kemmerer Library for all parents, come support HTRA goal of "Keeping Sports Fun for Everyone".

Please RSVP and send any questions to [RSVP@htra.info](mailto:RSVP@htra.info)

### **HTRA Summer Day Camp**

#### **2014 Enrollment is Now Open!**

The Harding Township Recreation Association is pleased to offer its **Summer Day Camp** program this year from Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> through Friday July 25<sup>th</sup> hours are from 9am to 3pm (Closed on Friday July 4<sup>th</sup>). Campers can enroll for as many weeks as they wish.

The Camp Director, LuAnn Romano after 35 years of service has handed the reins over to Harding Township School teacher, Jennifer Baldassari.

The HTRA Day Camp offers programs for children from 3-12 years of age. Located at the Harding Township School in New Vernon, the activities include Arts & Crafts, Swimming, Sports & Games, Computer Lab and other fun activities- including once again Tennis (subject to court completion). The Polliwog program is offered for 3 and 4 year olds and runs from 9 am – Noon, with the option to enroll for the full day program that runs until 3 pm. Science enrichment program is offered for an additional for grades 1-4.

Enroll early and take advantage of the early enrollment rates before it's too late!

For more information and enrollment forms visit [www.hardingtownshipdaycamp.com](http://www.hardingtownshipdaycamp.com)

Or email [hardingtowshipdaycamp@gmail.com](mailto:hardingtowshipdaycamp@gmail.com) with questions or suggestions.

In keeping their bold vision alive, tonight we will be announcing new committee chairs and members to our boards. One cannot overstate the importance of having the right people in these critical positions. Fortunately, Harding is rich in talent. One name, however, will not be appearing tonight. Jim Halsey, after a quarter century of hard work and wise counsel, has asked to retire from the Board of Health. We thank this unsung hero for his career of commitment.

In the next hour, this committee will be conducting the business of the town. You entrust us with your tax dollars. With them we pay for such benefits as a great school and a community-centric police department. We realize we are competing with other towns in and out of New Jersey to attract people to our community. It is our responsibility to encourage them to choose our town.

We cannot, however, overlook that we reside in a state with serious financial problems. New Jersey has over \$300 billion in debts and unfunded liabilities. Revenues are down, and costs keep rising. We are already the highest and most over-taxed state in the nation. Each day we read newspaper accounts of towns whose bad decisions and poor planning have placed them in dire situations. Everyone sitting up here tonight understands that we need to make tough decisions. Municipalities like ours across the United States are grappling with the same issues.

Fortunately, several private organizations help this town tremendously. One is the Harding Land Trust, now led by Tom Flynn, the new Executive Director, with Dave Shepperly who serves as its President. HLT is always hitting home runs in working with our HOST Committee, ably led by Tom MacCowatt with Loren Pfeiffer as Vice Chair. The Bridle Path Association, under the leadership of Jessica Jones oversees an amazing trail system that embraces our rural heritage. We have the Kemmerer library, a purely volunteer effort run by Lotte Newlin that benefits us all and draws us together as a town. We have the Historical Society headed by Chris Allyn to help put it all into perspective. If we know where we came from we might have a better idea of how to preserve and cherish this special place. And, of course, we have our Civic Association. We were all shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Hesna Pfeiffer, the long-time editor of the Thumbnail. We are heartened that this tremendous void is being filled by Steve Balog, who recently became its President and is attracting excellent writers to join him. Lastly, we have the New Vernon Fire Company and First Aid Squad that is the envy of every town, for all the right reasons.

We have a new police chief, Mark Giansanti, a long-time veteran of the department, who is doing a tremendous job. Tracy Toribio, our superintendent of Public Works,

continues to guide us in a common sense approach to keeping the town in good shape at a reasonable cost. Mark and Tracy attend every Township Committee Meeting, and we appreciate that. Lastly, there is Gail McKane, the Township Administrator, a lady of intelligence and stamina. These assets are valued by the town and helpful for her weekend marathon runs. Gail has a wonderful team behind her, and we continue to look forward to working with them. We certainly will miss Mr. Swenson.

I want to end this evening with a simple bit of advice (something we might hear from Judi Ward): we need to be less anxious. We all want the best for Harding. If we work together in that spirit, this town will flourish as it always has.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

No report this month

### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

No report this month

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Highlights - Board of Education Meeting – 7:30pm, Monday, January, 6, 2014

The first order of business was the “reorganization” whereby Dev Modi was elected President and John Flynn was elected as Vice President. After this formality, and the profuse thanking of outgoing President Kim Macaulay by each of the Board Members, the meeting was restarted and progressed as follows:

A presentation by Dr Gervis, middle school science teacher, focused on the Technology Student Association (TSA), an organization of 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Harding School. Dr. Gervis announced that registration for the Science Fair was complete. The Science Fair will be held on Friday, February 7 and features 34 projects with over 50 students participating. The TSA recently received 2<sup>nd</sup> place for their efforts building an efficient truss bridge. Of the more than 300 middle schools in New Jersey, we are 1 of 29 who have such a program. Student leaders of the organization briefly addressed the Board highlighting their endeavors. The program which started two years ago with 29 students will be expanded to include 14 students in the 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grades as a junior TSA. Dr. Gervis then talked about opportunities to learn computer coding by the students which will prepare them for the jobs of the future, besides being fun and interesting in its own right. It was also mentioned that on order is a 3-D printer which can fabricate any number of useful

items from a variety of materials. This will certainly inspire our students to be creative and productive.

Not much exciting happened until two questions in the minds of many Harding residents were raised, namely, the status of the Teacher’s contract and the budget forecast of the School district in light of the recent press articles speaking about possible reductions in the Morris County and Harding tax assessment.

As with all labor contracts, the details are kept from public view until a deal is brokered. The current teacher’s contract, which will expire in June of this year, will soon be negotiated and presented to the Board for approval as soon as an agreement is offered. There is presently no timetable, and if nothing is finalized by the June contract date, the existing one will stay in place until the issues are resolved. Once the Board approves the contract, it will be made public.

The tax, which accounts for over 50% of Harding’s property tax, will not be determined until the State decides how much assistance will be provided – a considerable impact. This will probably emerge in February where after the Board can formulate the numbers for Harding. Being good stewards and also in reasonably good shape going in, it is hoped that the Board may stay well below the 2% cap.

(Note: the purpose of this brief report is to help Harding residents connect with the School by highlighting significant items addressed by the Board. The “meeting minutes” are filed by the Board Secretary and placed on the Harding School website for all to view, generally about a month after the meeting date.)

### **PLANNING BOARD**

No report this month.

### **HARDING TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

#### **Health Screenings:**

The Health Department is holding their annual **Female Cancer Screening** on Thursday, March 27, 2014, from 9 am to 11 am at the Municipal Building. The screening includes an exam by a doctor, PAP test, blood pressure, and educational materials. An appointment is necessary. This clinic is for residents 18 years of age and older. To schedule an appointment for the above clinics, please call 973-267-8000, ext.1968. **Health Hot Line: 973/267-8000 ext 1962.**

#### **2014 Dog Licenses:**

If you reside in Harding Township and own a dog, age 7 months and older, your dog or dogs must be licensed every year by January 31, 2014. Harding Township gives their residents till February 28, 2014, to license their dogs. Starting on March 1, 2014, a late fee of \$10.00 **per dog** will be charged. By State law, in order for a