

Harding Township Civic Association

THUMBNAIL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIC AFFAIRS

“Keeping Harding Informed Since 1949”

www.HardingCivic.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2021

GLEN ALPIN DISPOSAL/DIVERSION CLEARED ANOTHER HURDLE

Trenton gave Harding Township “final approval of its pre-application” for Harding’s disposal/diversion plan for the Glen Alpin (GA) property. This brings the resolution of the future of Glen Alpin a bit closer. The approval of the pre-application was not a foregone conclusion as Harding is attempting to execute an unprecedented transaction that the powers in Trenton have resisted even though it is allowed by statute and Harding has followed the letter of the law. Most diversions are for a “sliver” of a property that is needed for a public utility like a pipeline or electric transmission line. Harding’s GA plan is unique because there is an entire parcel with an historic structure. In addition, the county and the State were funding parties. So there are lots of “cooks in the kitchen.” Still, the Harding team led by TC members Dev Modi and Tim Jones persist.

Next Step in Glen Alpin Disposal/Diversion is Public Hearing on January 28.

We are reprinting the text of Harding’s announcement of the hearing in full...

On Thursday evening, January 28, 2021 at 7:30 PM, four public hearings will be held related to the Glen Alpin property located at 685 Mount Kemble Avenue.

The Glen Alpin property is a total of 9.58 acres. The proposal is to dispose of 3.52 acres and divert 0.63 acres of the property. “Dispose” means outright fee simple sale, while “divert” means to transfer an easement (less than fee simple). The area being disposed and diverted is the mansion and the area surrounding the mansion including an access easement to Mount Kemble Avenue. The disposal area will be conveyed to a private entity in fee, and the diversion area will be used for access and utility easements to serve the redevelopment of the disposal area. The Township shall continue to own the front of the property and will also provide a

public access/trail easement to the Morris County Park Commission that will enable a future trail connection to Jockey Hollow Historic Park.

Also being addressed on this same evening will be the Harding Land Trust's ownership interest in the Glen Alpin property. The Trust owns 14% of the property and will exchange that interest to the Township for full ownership interest in the Gate House property, located at 110 Harter Road.

In order to gain permission from the NJ State House Commission for this disposal/diversion, replacement lands are required to be purchased at a rate of four times the acreage of the area being disposed/diverted. As compensation for the 4.15 acres proposed for diversion/disposal, Harding Township intends to or has already acquired the following replacement properties within Harding Township: Block 8, Lot 5.01 (known as the Culbertson property) and Block 46, Lot 13.03 (known as the NJDOT property). These lands total 18 acres and are contiguous to existing preserved open space parcels.

The application to Green Acres and related documents will be posted at <http://www.hardingnj.org/> under the Quick Links tab entitled "Glen Alpin Disposal/Diversion Application - Green Acres" and will also be available at the Harding Township Library and Municipal Building. If you are interested in making public comment but are unable to attend that evening, instructions are posted on the website on how to provide written comment if you are unable to attend the meeting on January 28th.

DEV MODI HONORED FOR "EXEMPLARY SERVICE" TO HARDING

Township Committee Person Dev Modi Honored for "Exemplary Service" to Harding

At its December 14 meeting, the Township Committee passed a resolution recognizing Devanshu L. Modi (Dev) for his exemplary service to the Township. Modi served two terms, beginning in 2015. The formal resolution commending Modi cites his "foresight, leadership, and fiscal responsibility," his "innumerable hours" spearheading the Glen Alpin Committee, membership on the Joint Court, Planning Board and six standing committees of the TC. The resolution stated that "Dev will always be remembered for his kindness, camaraderie and fairness when dealing with residents, businesses and the Township's workforce."

Other TC members added further salutary comments as did township attorney Mark

Roselli (“Dev made my work easier”) and township administrator Robert Falzarano who “put Dev in the ‘great’ category” of elected officials he has worked with over his long career in municipal government.

Dev has agreed to be appointed to a special position to continue to work on the Glen Alpin Disposal/Diversion. The formal appointment will be made at the January re-org meeting but it appears that Harding will continue to benefit from Dev’s nearly irreplaceable knowledge and dedication to this project.

Harding is fortunate to have had people of skill and integrity over the years, who like Dev Modi, give a huge amount of their time and talent for the good of the Township. We owe them immense gratitude.

MENORAH IN MEMORIAL PARK..

After some back and forth between the Harding Township Committee and Rabbi Shalom Lubin (Chabad of Southeast Morris County), the Township Committee passed a formal resolution at a special meeting that permitted the erection and lighting of a menorah in Memorial Park across from NV fire house. So on December 14, a crowd of 25-50 persons attended a ceremony where the menorah was lit - with words, song, and some food.

Some Harding residents had originally requested the Rabbi’s help in getting Township permission for the menorah.

The ceremony was live streamed by the Harding Police Dept and a still image of the ceremony is on the Civic Association’s Facebook page.

...But Christmas/Holiday Tree Not Decorated in Bayne Park.

Residents will note that the fir tree in Bayne Park (corner of Blue Mill and Sand Spring) has not been decorated with colored lights as it had been for decades. A sharp-eyed observer will also note the absence of wreaths and Christmas tree in Kirby Hall.

Thumbnail asked Mayor Yates why and received this response:

We decided that there would be no tree or wreaths at Kirby hall this year. In years past there was a tree in the rotunda and wreaths on the front and back doors. We also decided the tree in Bayne Park that has always had colored lights would not be

decorated this year. The legal issues raised by Chabad involving both the establishment clause and first amendment claims came late in the year and we did not want to do anything that would put the town at risk of litigation. So we decided the best course of action would be to do no decorating and spend time next year to develop a policy that will, we hope, satisfy everyone and keep the threat of litigation at bay. It's never a good idea to develop policy in the heat of threats.

It appears that the menorah request caused the TC to think more deeply about the Township's historical practice of Christmas/holiday decorations and concluded that they needed time to gather expert advice regarding (a) what decorations are religious in nature and (b) can the Township, a governmental entity as opposed to a private organization, decorate a tree and place wreaths on public property and not run afoul of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution.

To be clear, the Rabbi has informed us that the Chabad made it known to the TC that it had no issues with the tree and wreath decorations and would not have litigated if the Township decorated as in the past. He also said he is unaware of any towns in New Jersey that had to remove decorations due to any type of litigation.

SLOW DOWN

Sand Spring Road - SLOW DOWN!!!

The speed limit on the entire length of Sand Spring Road is now 25 MPH, cut from 35 MPH. The resolution enacting the new speed limit was voted in unanimously and without discussion at the December Township Committee meeting which followed extensive at prior regular meetings.

HELP FOR HARDING

Help for Harding started in March 2020 in the midst of the COVID pandemic to assist senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions with errands and check-ins. Our volunteers are excited to keep our services going! Please contact Elizabeth Sovolos at helpforharding@gmail.com or 862-246-7648 if you need help with:

- Local errands (grocery, pharmacy, hardware store, post office)
- Welfare check-ins
- Driving to/from medical appointments
- Online shopping or appointments
- Questions about things going on in town
- Small favors around the house

Our team of nearly 100 volunteers and counting is eager to help - we look forward to hearing from you!

HARDING BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board of Education meeting highlights: December 7th, 2020

This meeting was held in person at the HTS Media Lab and also by teleconference (because of Covid).

Dr. Matthew Spelker, the superintendent, gave a Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying report. There was one investigation, but harassment/intimidation was not found. Harding/Madison articulation is to happen on December 17th. The middle school and elementary school conferences were conducted virtually and were a success. Committee meetings were rescheduled for December 16th. Health and safety guidelines continue to be followed successfully (daily temperature checks, masks, social distancing and questionnaires, etc.).

Mr. Richard Bruno reported that the next Madison Board of Education meeting will be next Tuesday (December 15th).

Mr. Richard Bruno mentioned that the school nurse's report seems to show that there's dramatically less illness in the school this year. The health of the community seems to have been improved, perhaps driven by some of the Covid-related health measures.

A large number of policies and regulations were approved. Most of these policies and regulations were mandated by the State. These included policies on attendance, immunization, health and physical education, and also mandated revisions to the restart and recovery plan.

Financial reports, budget transfers, and social work services agreement were approved by the BOE. Two teachers were given a leave of absence, as part of the BOE approved agenda resolutions.

The Board was informed that Madison Junior School's STEAM teacher, Jason Erdreich, was selected by Mazda as one of "50 Heroes." He has made more than 12,000 pieces of PPE with his home 3D printer, and he was very helpful to HTS in designing HTS' new STEAM & Media center.

Finally, Mr. Davor Gjivoje thanked the administration, teachers, students, and families for keeping the school and community safe. He emphasized that following all of the health & safety guidelines is absolutely critical, now more than ever.

PLANNING BOARD

Planning Board Notes for November 23, 2020

The Planning Board approved a resolution to codify remote meeting procedures based on guidance from the State. Of particular importance is that the public may participate and offer its input. Mike Flanagan then gave the Board of Adjustment's annual report to the Board. He said that the number of applications was lower than the year before. While most of these related to typical residential issues, the "big" application remains the cell tower application from Verizon who is taking its time pursuing the application. The Board then approved the resolution for the Master Plan Reexamination Report which was adopted at the last meeting. Next, the Board continued its review of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Town's Planner walked the Board through comments that had been submitted. A public hearing of the final document will be held at the December meeting. The Board then considered ordinances covering several issues that had been discussed over the past several months. These included final ordinances for (1) EV charging stations, (2) HVAC and generator pads, and (3) deck setbacks for the Harding Green community. Ordinances in first draft form included (1) removing FAR requirements in residential zones, and (2) bulk variances for 150-foot setback. Issues in ongoing review include (1) placement of play sets, (2) temporary use variance while living in a house during construction, and (3) gutters. It is expected that recommendations on these final three will be sent to the Township Committee after the December meeting. The final discussion item for the evening concerned permitted uses in the B-2 zone. The Town Planner had submitted a memo which dealt with various definitions concerning use. For example, the B-2 zone currently permits "retail services" which is somewhat restrictive. Better terms for more types of use would be "retail sales" (relating to goods for sale for use off premises) and "personal services" (which would include beauty shops and nail salons, but no body art). Other uses discussed included repair shops and brew pubs. It was agreed that a recommendation covering various uses and pros and cons would be sent to the Township Committee with the input of the Town Zoning Official, George Byrnes, after the December meeting.

HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Happy New Year from the Harding Township Historical Society! The Historical Society

is looking forward to the New Year. This past November, we submitted to the Township Committee a report that we commissioned from an architectural firm on the condition of the Tunis Ellicks House. This report assessed the condition of the House and we are waiting to hear back from the Township as to our next steps. We are hoping to partner with the Town, our members and the community to get this work done. The Tunis Ellicks house went through a major transformation in the late 1970's. Since that time we have maintained the building, replacing the roof, fixing downspouts, new locks, some repairs on the windows, painting the house inside and out. repairing the HVAC systems etc. .. It has now come to a point as with any old house, that we need more than these types of repairs, our foundation is old and needs shoring up, the fireplace is dilapidated and numerous other items. The report we gave the Township Committee outlined all of the items that need to be done ranking them from short term to long term. We hope to fill you in on the progress of this work, as the year goes on. We hope to do some work in 2021 to get ready for Harding Township's Centennial celebration. The Tunis Ellicks House is a gem in the center of our town surround by two lovely gardens maintained by the New Vernon Garden Club. We will keep you posted.

It is difficult to gauge when we might be able to open the house to the public again. We have plans in the works for a new exhibit showcasing our collection of Native American artifacts. We also are looking forward to opening our doors in May for the Pathways of History tour. We are also working on some Zoom lectures that may be of interest. For other information on the Historical Society check out our website at Harding Township Historical Society.org and we are on Facebook.

HARDING TOWNSHIP RECREATION ASSOCIATION

We wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday and new year!

Please keep checking our website www.HTRA.info for updates as we anticipate Spring sports registration to open soon!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our next *Sunday Speaker Series* on **January 10** features popular scholar and Drew professor emeritus, Dr. Douglas Simon, who will discuss *The Changing Nature of War*. "We are living in the time of a global paradigm shift," he declares, "and are now in the dawning of the digital age." With each paradigm shift, there are profound impacts on the way we interact as human beings. This presentation will focus on the

changing nature of war. Are our motivations for war changing? How will the battlefields of war change? Please join us for this stimulating talk either on the Church website or Facebook page, accessible on both.

We wish to express our deep appreciation to all those who came out to support our Drive-Through event collecting food for the Interfaith Food Pantry and donations for Deirdre's House. Over 100 people attended, collected a tremendous amount of food for the Pantry, and raised more than \$1,200 for Deirdre's House. This year, the Church provided more than \$50,000 in financial support to community partners. This is in addition to donations of toiletries, food, gift cards, and more made possible by the generosity of our members and friends in the community. Thank you for your caring support!

KEMMERER LIBRARY

Operating Hours: Monday - Friday, 10am - 2pm
 Thursday, 10am - 5pm
Saturday, 10am -12pm

The Library continues to be open to visitors but please be aware of some restrictions:

- You are required to wear a face mask and to sanitize your hands on entering
- Restrooms are not available for use
- Meeting rooms are not available
- Working, studying and tutoring are not permitted
- Computers are not available
- Seating and coffee service are not available
- Children must be accompanied by an adult

We do appreciate your cooperation and look forward to welcoming you soon!

Curbside pickup of library materials remains available if you prefer. Item requests can be made directly on the MAIN catalog on our website (www.hardinglibrary.org) or you may contact us with requests by phone (973 267 2665) or email to desk@hardinglibrary.org. We are also happy to make selections for you!

We continue to accept returns of all materials to the outside book drop. All items are quarantined and sanitized before coming back into circulation.

Our eLibrary is always open! Please visit www.hardinglibrary.org and click E-LIBRARY to get started. You can access eBooks and eAudiobooks on cloudLibrary (shared between the MAIN libraries) as well as Libby (our Harding-exclusive collection).

The Library offers use of a Zoom account to Harding clubs and groups that need a virtual meeting space. Please contact us if interested.

To keep informed about what's new on our shelves and to receive program announcements, ask to have your name added to our email list.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS (all on Zoom)

Storytime with Miss Debbie, Tuesdays at 10:15 am

For little ones age 1-4 and their caregivers. Come meet our wonderful new librarian, Miss Debbie, for songs, stories and a craft on Zoom. Please register at www.hardinglibrary.org and stop-by the library the day before to pick-up a craft kit.

New! Coffee Time, Mondays 11, 18 and 25 at 9:00 am

Join friends, neighbors and other library patrons on Zoom for a chat over your morning coffee. A chance to socialize and catch-up on what's happening around town!

Adult Book Group, Tuesdays, January 12 and 26, 1:30 pm

All are welcome to join our lively book group to discuss 'This Tender Land' by Walter Kent Kruger (on January 12), and 'Homeland Elegies' by Ayah Aktar (on January 26). Copies of the chosen titles are available from the Library in a number of formats.

Junior Garden Club 'Winter Nature Projects', Thursday, January 21, 3:00 pm

Children in grades K-8 are invited to join volunteers from the New Vernon Garden Club (on Zoom) to create fun winter projects using materials from nature. Please register at www.hardinglibrary.org and pick up a kit-to-go from the library on January 20.

Bookworms, Sunday, January 31, 3:00 pm

Our book club for 10-12 year olds is reading 'The Capture' (Book 1 in the 'Guardians of Ga'Hoole' series). Please contact alison.maxwell@hardinglibrary.org if you are interested in joining us for a discussion and themed activities on Zoom.

Please check our website (www.hardinglibrary.org) for details of additional programs in January.

Kemmerer Library would like your BOOK DONATIONS!

Looking for a home for your unwanted books? We would love to receive your used book donations for resale. Please call or email us to arrange drop off, or even pick-up from around town. We are sorry but we cannot accept reference books or encyclopedias.

HARDING TOWNSHIP CIVIC ASSOCIATION:

Thumbnail & Website News and Announcements

If you have a submission for the **February 2021 Thumbnail** please email to: htca@mail.com by **Friday, January 15 , 2020**. MS Word is the preferred format, thank you!

Current and past issues of the Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are available on our Website: www.HardingCivic.org. Send questions or comments about *Thumbnail* to editor to: HTCA@mail.com or PO Box 72 New Vernon, NJ 07976

HARDING TOWNSHIP RECYCLING

2021 Recycling Schedule:

January 2nd , 16th , 30th

February 13th , 27th

March 13th , 27th

April 10th , 24th

Hours of Operation:

Mondays & Wednesdays: 7 am - Noon

Saturdays: 9 am - Noon

From 7am to 8am is senior (residents 60+) recycling only. Full assistance will be provided to seniors during this period.

From 8 am until noon, recycling for all residents. No assistance will be provided during these hours.

Social distancing must be observed at all times.

Commingled Recyclables: Consists of all aluminum and tin cans, glass bottles, all plastic bottles and containers with the Recycling symbol, and #1, 2, 4, 5 & 7. Try to crush plastic bottle to conserve space. Please remember no plastic or paper bags.

Commingled Mixed Fiber: 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), Propane tanks (BBQ size only) and fluorescent bulbs (tube and compact).

E-Waste items accepted: Computers, monitors, laptops and televisions cannot be put into household trash. However, all E-waste items including printers, copiers, fax machines and all computer peripherals can be brought to the Harding DPW recycling center at the regular hours of operation.

Recycling Questions: Please contact Tracy Toribio at Harding Department: 973 267 2448, Mon- Fri 8:30 am to 3 pm.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Environmental Commission
Seniors: Christ the King Church
Planning Board
Historical Preservation Committee
Board of Health
Board of Education
Board of Adjustment
Township Committee Executive
Township Committee Public
Harding Open Space
Harding TWP Civic Association

Meetings as noted

1st Wednesday
2nd & 4th Thursday
4th Monday
1st Thursday
2nd Thursday
1st & 3rd Monday
3rd Thursday
2nd Monday
2nd Monday
2nd Wednesday
2nd Tuesday

Time

7:30 PM
11:00AM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM
7:00 PM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM
7:30 PM

DATED MATERIAL

Harding Township Civic Association
P.O. Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976
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