

# Harding Township Civic Association

## THUMBNAIL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIC AFFAIRS

“Keeping Harding Informed Since 1949”

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

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING Events January 2025**

#### **DRONES OVER MORRIS COUNTY – “WE KNOW NOTHING”**

Please see the Harding PD website for official updates.

Below is an update Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia issued following her meeting with the NJ State Police

#### **Assemblywoman Dawn Fantasia**

I just left the New Jersey State Police HQ following the briefing of New Jersey State Legislators relating to the unexplained drone sightings in New Jersey.

Might I add - **Governor Phil Murphy** was not present, but a large representation from both sides of the aisle were present. My notes are organized following my take below on the situation.

1. We know nothing. PERIOD. To state that there is no known or credible threat is incredibly misleading, and I informed all officials of that sentiment.
2. State authorities, including the NJSP, are shackled with what they are able to do. Any interception or takedown of any UAS is under the strict jurisdiction of the federal government.
3. At this point, I believe military intervention is the only path forward. There will be no answers in the absence of proactivity.

4. The US Coast Guard seems to be the most likely to intervene based upon our briefing, but even that component was shrouded in mystery.

### **Here is my summary of the briefing :**

Overview of the Issue:

First Sightings: Reported on 11/18, with sightings occurring every night since then, from dusk until 11 PM (6–7 hours).

Frequency: Reports range from 4 to 180 sightings per night.

Description:

Large drones (up to 6 ft in diameter).

Operate in a coordinated manner.

Lights are turned off, making them difficult to detect.

Appear to avoid detection by traditional methods (e.g., helicopters, radio frequencies).

Not identified as hobbyist drones or related to DHS.

### **Investigation and Response**

1. Agencies Involved:

FBI: Designated as the lead agency for investigations.

New Jersey State Police (NJSP): Coordinates with the FBI on follow-ups.

Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP): Provides training and situational awareness.

U.S. Coast Guard: Involved in determining steps under their jurisdiction (details not disclosed).

2. Federal Involvement:

FAA: Made night flights legal in 2023, but require operators to maintain line of sight, which is not being observed in these cases.

Lack of Federal Legislation: Existing bills on drone regulation remain stalled in Congress.

3. Detection Challenges:

NJSP deployed helicopters over Raritan Bay but could not detect drones, even with infrared cameras.

Current radio frequencies do not pick up drone signals.

Col. Callahan expressed concerns about potential danger, leading to a halt in helicopter deployments.

#### 4. Training and Preparedness:

In-person Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Training starts in Monmouth County in January and will expand statewide.

A UAS Dashboard is being developed for tracking and managing drone sightings.

### **Key Concerns**

**Unknown Origins:** Authorities do not know where these drones take off or land.

**Capabilities:** Drones maintain flight for extended periods (6–7 hours) and over distances of 15 miles, raising questions about their technology and intent.

**Airspace Regulation:**

Most sightings are in unrestricted airspace, but their behavior is unusual and potentially nefarious.

Unlike manned aircraft, these drones appear to operate without lights and evade detection.

**Public Safety:**

Possible threats remain unconfirmed, but the lack of detection capability is a significant concern.

See Something, Say Something campaigns encourage the public to report sightings to local law enforcement and the FBI.

### **Statements from Officials:**

Laurie Doran (Director of OHSP):

There is no known or credible threat at this time. (I DISAGREE)

Urges continued reporting to law enforcement.

**Colonel Pat Callahan (NJSP):**

Suspended helicopter flights to investigate drones over safety concerns.  
Emphasized the rapid pace of technological development in drones.

Brent Cotton (DHS Counterterrorism): Highlighted challenges in threat prevention and the need for improved technology and protocols.

**Next Steps**

1. Enhanced Surveillance: Use of infrared cameras and additional Coast Guard resources.

To clarify, there is new infrared technology being developed. This is why in the first part of the notes it states that current infrared technology is not effective in detecting these drones, but the hope is to employ new technology as it is rapidly emerging at present.

2. Legislation and Policy: Advocate for advancing federal drone legislation stalled in Congress.

3. Public Engagement: Encourage reporting via the See Something, Say Something initiative.

**HARDING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – DECEMBER 2024

No New News on Glen Alpin

Approved a resolution so the state and county can proceed with the replacement of the Baileys Mill Road bridge over 287.

Passed the zoning ordinance to make some minor changes to the overlay zone along 202 that was created under court order for affordable housing.

There was no new news or commentary on Glen Alpin.

## **ANNUAL MENORAH LIGHTING**

December 26, Thursday, at 6PM,

Memorial Park, across from the New Vernon Volunteer Fire Department

## **HARDING TOWNSHIP SENIORS:**

Meet at church of Christ the King

2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at 11am

Programs followed by lunch

All are welcome

### January programs

January 9: Join us to play trivia; win a prize!

January 23: Broadway singer Ronnie Rapp Rofe  
she has appeared in Broadway shows

## **HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**

**Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 2, 2025, 2PM**

The Harding Township Historical Society cordially invites you to our annual meeting and event at the historic Tunis Ellicks house, on Sunday, February 2, 2025, at 2PM.

Our speaker will be Eric Olsen, Park Ranger and Historian from the Morristown National Park. His presentation will focus on how the American Revolution impacted the local civilian populations with special emphasis on the Wick family. As many of you know, the Wick Family lived and farmed on the property that is now known as Jockey Hollow National Historic Park. It should prove to be an interesting afternoon for all ages. Mr. Olsen is a very engaging speaker. We look forward to seeing you at this event.

Free Admission, all ages invited. Any questions, please contact  
hthspresident@gmail.com.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW VERNON:**

***Amahl and The Night Visitors, Sunday, January 12, 3 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon:***

Written for children, but also capturing adults' hearts, this English language opera tells the story of Amahl, a poor disabled shepherd boy, whose home shelters the Three Kings as they follow the star of Bethlehem in their search for the Christ Child. This performance will stage selections from the opera. Adults and children over 5 are encouraged to attend. Adult tickets are \$20 each, children and youth are free.

The Jerry Vezza Trio, Sunday, February 2 at 5 p.m. in a jazz club venue at the First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon. Jerry, also known as Madison's "Piano Man," has performed in the NY area (including at Madison's Shanghai Jazz), Los Angeles, and Europe. He will be joined for this special evening by Hal Slapin on bass and

John Vourtsis on drums. Reservations are recommended and can be made at [ccskeew@gmail.com](mailto:ccskeew@gmail.com) . Tickets are \$20 each.

**NEW VERNON GARDEN CLUB**

Sally Quinn

Permanently Potted Plants

My husband and I used to live in a pretty snazzy house. Of course, it was almost derelict when we bought it, but it cleaned up well, as they say. It was an Italian Renaissance Revival, a style which was popular for about two minutes because they were so expensive to build. The front entrance had a wide apron, and it really screamed for two of those potted trees you see in pictures of beautiful Italian houses. Unfortunately, in the early 1990's, when we were rehabbing it, there wasn't much in the way of outdoor pots that would stand up to the rigors of upstate NY winters. Luckily, non-ceramic pots which mimicked the real thing were just beginning to be

offered in high-end garden catalogs. We bought two, which nearly broke our annual budget in one shot. Again luckily, these are now available at a much more reasonable cost. They are basically upscale foam, pretty heavy, well insulated and very effectively real looking! I planted *chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Aurea' in them. They look sort of like a chartreuse fern that doesn't die in the winter. Those shrubs lasted on that porch for about seven years before I planted them out in the yard and put new, smaller ones in the pots. Fast forward, they now live in our enclosed back garden here, where it is substantially warmer, and I have only had to replace the original shrubs once in 15 years. In New Vernon, I am able to use concrete pots on the also-wide front porch! The original arborvitae shrubs I put in them 15 years ago are still there. Of course, I didn't know about deer loving them, so they were nibbled almost down to the trunks before I wrapped chicken wire around them in the shape I wanted, and they filled back in. Rudolph has not come around since! The really cool thing about shrubs and trees in pots is that they almost totally adapt to the space we have plopped them in and, except for some little bit of pruning, stay happy there for much longer than I would have anticipated. Here, you can use almost any pot outside year-round without much worry, except for unglazed terra cotta. I would use ceramic or cement over earthenware, and the new faux stone (foam) over both, as long as you spend a little bit for the better-looking ones. I would also plant one of the newer dwarf shrubs readily available now. Then you might not even have to look at your Felcos! It is fun to play with scale and location in the garden (and on your porch!) and this is especially true in the winter, when the landscape can be two-dimensional. Try a permanent pot or two this year!

## **KEMMERER LIBRARY**

### **Kemmerer Library Harding Township**

#### **Children's Programs - register at [hardinglibrary.org](http://hardinglibrary.org)**

Registration is required for all programs except the Toddler Dance Party and Stay and Play. For children's programs, please register each child separately. **Parents and/or caregivers are responsible for supervising their children at all times. Space can be limited for some programs - please let us know if your plans have changed to accommodate children from waiting lists.**

#### **Toddler Dance Party** - Every Tuesday at 10:15 a.m.

Join us every Tuesday to Shake your Sillies out!

#### **Stay & Play/Storytime with Grandpa Ralph & Miss Kathy** - Thursdays at 10:15 a.m.

Caregivers/Parents can socialize young children through play in our Children's Room. Grandpa Ralph & Miss Kathy will sing and read a story.

#### **Read to an Animal with Creature Comfort** - Monday, January 6th

Appointments at 4:00, 4:15, 4:30 and 4:45 p.m.

Your child may read to an animal individually or you may participate as a family. Reading to an animal can help foster confidence in young readers.

#### **Olaf's Escape Room** - Saturday, January 11th at 1:30 p.m.

Miss Samantha Innella is back once again to lead young readers as they look for Olaf who is lost in the library!

#### **Pokemon Card Trading/Lego Building** - Monday, January 13th at 4:00 p.m.

Please join us to be creative with our Legos or trade your extra Pokémon cards.



**Children's Author Visit with Jerry Pallota** - Tuesday, January 14th at 4:30 p.m.

This is an exciting visit with the author of the "Who Would Win?" series.

**Great Swamp Reptile Program** - Wednesday, January 22nd at 4:00 p.m.

The Great Swamp Outdoor Education Center will be bringing reptiles that live in our area for children to learn about habitats and behaviors.

**Crafternoon** - Monday, January 27th at 4:00 p.m.

Please join us as we paint a winter wooden craft!

**Adult Programs - register at [hardinglibrary.org](http://hardinglibrary.org)**

Note: Programs are not recorded unless specified.

**Yoga** - Mondays and Thursdays at 10:15a.m. Suggested donation \$10.

**Book Club** - Open to all at 1:30p.m. (in person)

January 7th at 1:30p.m. - First Ladies by Marie Benedict

January 21st at 1:30p.m. - Cemetery of Untold Stories by Julia Alvarez

**Christmas Tree Pickup and Disposal** - January 7th - 12th

Join us in making a difference! Friends of Kemmerer Library are once again offering a wonderful town service that also serves as a fundraiser to continue providing the programs and resources our community loves. Sign up now to have your tree picked up after the holidays and chipped into eco-friendly mulch.

**Candle Painting** - Wednesday, January 22nd at 1:00p.m. (in person)

Unleash Your Artistic Talent! This candle painting program allows you to transform plain taper candles into colorful masterpieces; Whether you are an experienced artist or a beginner, this program offers a distinctive candle fun activity that brings out your artistic side!

**Nazi-Looted Art: Klimt and Schiele - Painters of Vienna's Golden Age -**

Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:00p.m. (on zoom)

This talk will discuss the important relationship Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, art stars of Vienna's Golden Age, had with their many Jewish patrons. We will see some amazing paintings and learn the tragic stories of what happened to these works and to their enlightened, forward-thinking collectors during the Nazi era and beyond. Janet Mandel

**Lanzerotti Lecture featuring Sarit Catz** - Date TBD (in person)

The Lanzerotti Lecture was instituted in 2016 and recognizes Sarit Catz, a Harding Township resident, who has excelled in her profession. Ms. Catz is an SVP at ATHOS Media Strategies. She is also Director of the Media Response Team at the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting & Analysis (CAMERA), a media watchdog, where she monitors media bias against Israel. *To be held at Kirby Municipal Building*

**Virtual Author Visits** - archived recordings are available on the library website

***The Magic of Found Family: In Conversation with Author TJ Klune***

Wednesday, January 15th at 7:00p.m.

***The Age of Magical Overthinking and Notes on Modern Irrationality with Bestselling Author Amanda Montell*** - Thursday, January 23rd at 2:00p.m.

***An Inside Look at Working with a Literary Agent: A Conversation with Seth Fishman***

Tuesday, January 28th at 1:00 PM

## **FRIENDS OF KEMMERER LIBRARY**

FRIENDS OF KEMMERER LIBRARY. 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Tree Pickup Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Please remove all decorations, and leave tree at the curb. \$35 for trees up to 8 feet, additional \$15 for trees over 8 feet. Register at [Hardinglibrary.org](http://Hardinglibrary.org)

4th Annual Mini-Golf Event featuring a new course! January 31<sup>st</sup>, 7pm -10pm with wine & Hors d'oeuvre, \$40 per person, February 1<sup>st</sup>, Family Day 10am - 2pm, \$10 per person or \$40 per family with goody bags for children. Go to [hardinglibrary.org](http://hardinglibrary.org) for tickets.

## **NEIGHBORS FOR HARDING TOMMORROW**

It is important for residents to stay informed about Housing and other Development projects underway in Harding Township.

As expected, the 2nd Reading of Ordinance #27-2024 proceeded at the December Township Committee (TC) meeting regarding an overlay zone that includes 14 properties along the southern part of Route 202, beginning at our border with Bernards Township just above the Passaic River, and continuing northward for over half a mile. This overlay zone was originally part of the Township's comprehensive affordable housing plan, approved by the court in 2020, and was deemed by our Planning Board to be consistent with Harding Township's Master Plan. As of today, there have been no Applicants to develop Affordable Housing units in this overlay zone.

This ordinance (#27-2024) is an update to further facilitate the development of properties in this overlay zone by:

- 1) Permitting exclusively residential projects; currently, the Overlay Zone requires any AH development to have both retail and residential components. As Affordable Housing (AH) has evolved in NJ, especially since the Pandemic, the requirement to build commercial/retail space is of less interest to developers.

2) The updated ordinance also introduces residential development standards for aspects such as lighting, decks/patios, internal sidewalks, waste disposal, generators, and subsurface wastewater treatment systems. In prior AH applications (such as the KRE Affordable Housing (AH) project on the northern border of Harding along Rt 202), the Planning Board and Township Committee concluded, rather than having details worked out one-by-one for each project at the Planning Board, standardizing these components (lighting, decks/patios etc.) would reduce the burden on all parties and achieve approval in a more-timely manner.

3) Distinguishing heights and streetscape requirements for properties on the East versus West side of Rte. 202 in the overlay zone. Specifically, the EAST side slopes down toward Rte.287 and some properties already have berms and mature trees shielding the street view. The WEST slopes up and many have retaining walls in place. As a result, while all are restricted to no more than 3 stories, the height limit will be raised to 44ft. on the East side but the West will be 37.5 ft.

4) Density limits were virtually unchanged with the three (3) larger lots on the EAST side being limited to now 8.2 units per acre (N.B. if the AH units are for sale, then 20% must be AH; notably if the units are to be rentals, the requirement for AH drops to 15% but the density allowed increases to 10 per acre.) The remaining smaller lots on both the east and west side in the zone are limited to 6 or 8 units per acre.

5) As previously communicated, the total opportunity in this entire overlay zone is to construct up to 500 units, with up to 85 being AH units.

Separately, there was no information shared on *Glen Alpin* at the TC Meeting consistent with Mayor Jones' statement at November's TC meeting that he did not expect a substantive update in December.

## NEXT TC MEETING

The next regular Township Committee meeting will be **WEDNESDAY January 22nd** at 7PM. At that meeting, the Township Committee will consider a Resolution regarding the next i.e. FOURTH ROUND of Affordable Housing obligation from the state.

In late October, the state of NJ assigned Harding Township a *future obligation to provide 83 new* affordable housing units during the 2025-2035 fourth round period. Under the terms of the affordable housing legislation signed in March 2024, municipalities must either construct the units themselves or implement zoning that allows developers to build market-rate units alongside affordable units, typically in a 5:1 ratio.

*The full report from the state of NJ showing each municipality's obligations can be accessed here. [https://nj.gov/dca/dlps/pdf/FourthRoundCalculation\\_Methodology.pdf](https://nj.gov/dca/dlps/pdf/FourthRoundCalculation_Methodology.pdf)*

The TC is in active conversation now with the state regarding the accuracy of their calculations which will be reflected in the Resolution in January. Municipalities, including Harding, have until the end of June to prepare and adopt a new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

Interested residents in Harding Township are invited to join *Neighbors for Tomorrow in Harding* to stay abreast of development in our town. Contact: [neighbors4harding@gmail.com](mailto:neighbors4harding@gmail.com)

# **HARDING TOWNSHIP CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

Thumbnail & Website News and Announcements

If you have a submission for the **February 2025** Thumbnail, please send it via email to the editor: [hardingcivicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:hardingcivicassociation@gmail.com) by Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. MS Word is the preferred format, Times New Roman size 13, thank you. Current and past issues of the Thumbnail, as well as the Directory are available on our website: [www.HardingCivic.org](http://www.HardingCivic.org). **“Please consider supporting the Harding Township Civic Association with a gift via this QR Code.”**



Harding Township Civic A...  
@Hardingcivic



## **HARDING TOWNSHIP RECYCLING**

2025 Recycling Schedule:

JAN 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>

Hours of Operation:

Wednesday: 7am-Noon, Saturdays: 9am-Noon

Every Wednesday, seniors (residents 60+) will have full assistance available to them from 7am-9am. All residents are welcome for all hours that Recycling is open. Social distancing must be always observed. Recycling Questions: Please contact Tracy Toribio at Harding Department: 973-267-2448, Mon-Fri 8am-3pm.

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 bottles to conserve space. Please remember no plastic or paper bags.

Commingled Mixed Fiber: 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: Computers, monitors, laptops, and televisions cannot be put in 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 8am-3p]

**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  
Harding Open Space  
Harding TWP Civic Association

**Meetings as noted**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday  
4<sup>th</sup> Monday  
1<sup>st</sup> Thursday  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

**Time**

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

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