

# 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

#### February 2026

#### MEET THE MAYOR & TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

The Harding Township Civic Association invites you to our annual "Meet the Mayor & Township Committee" event. This is your opportunity to engage directly with your elected officials in an informal, open-forum setting.

Join Mayor Timothy Jones and the members of the Township Committee to discuss the issues that matter most to our community.

- \* When: Tuesday, February 24, 2026
- \* Time: 7:00 PM
- \* Where: Kirby Hall (21 Blue Mill Road, New Vernon)

#### What's on the Agenda?

While the floor is yours to ask anything related to Harding, we will be highlighting updates on Affordable Housing. This is a critical time to get the facts on how the Township is managing its state-mandated obligations while preserving our community's unique character.

*"An informed community is a stronger community. Bring your questions, concerns, and ideas—we want to hear from you."*

No registration is required. We look forward to seeing you there!

## **TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

The public portion of the meeting started with discussion items:

**Sand Spring Road Crosswalk Sign:** This was a continued discussion concerning the installation of crosswalk signage and lights on the South side of the municipal building on Sand Spring Road. There have been occasions when cars will need stop for pedestrians crossing over the road to continue walking on the path. Further information was requested concerning traffic data; further details of the sign and lighting will be forthcoming.

**Kitchell Road Street Light Request:** A Kitchell Road resident is requesting street lighting near his home after multiple vehicular incidents have occurred at a bend in the road located in front of the property. Mr. Platt spoke about keeping lighting to a minimum and other Committee Members expressed agreement for the request.

The homeowner is requesting the TC reach out to Morris Township to request a light for the area.

**Glen Alpin:** Mayor Jones gave a date of January 21st for a public meeting with the Conditional Developer Landmark Hospitality. The proposed plans are on the Township website [www.hardingnj.org](http://www.hardingnj.org) . Neighbors for Tomorrow in Harding expressed concern that questions surrounding financials and transparency should be answered. Mayor Jones elaborated that he feels there has been transparency. Concerned residents continue to ask for as much transparency as possible during this process.

One resident gave a detailed request that a Feasibility Study be done with an independent firm for comparison against the developer's financials.

**New Vernon Village Redevelopment –** The 2003 New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan will be updated. Prior archived records were damaged. An update is needed and there will be a review by The Planning Board along with public meetings.

Residents expressed concern about a redevelopment zone designation providing the ability for the TC to make decisions without other boards and commissions and skirting around

zoning regulations. Mr. Yates stated that more control would be available through this designation.

TC 26-063 Historic Preservation Commission Appointments – Shelby Gasek appointed as a regular member and Megan Falduto appointed as an Alternate #1

TC 26-064 Resolution to Award Maintenance Contract to DeBlock Environmental for backup services for the Harding Township Sewage Collection System.

TC 26-065 Bill Lists – Vouchers approved by the Finance Chairman will be paid subject to the certification of the availability of funds by the Chief Financial Officer.

TC26-066 Resignation of a finance department staff member

TC26-067 Appointment of part time Finance/Tax Clerk

TC26-068 Resolution authorizing the Harding Township Redevelopment Standing Committee to Review the New Vernon Village Redevelopment Plan

TC26-069 Resolution authorizing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether certain properties qualify for designation as an Area in Need of Redevelopment Pursuant to N.J.S.A40A:12A-1 Et Seq.

TC26-070 Resolution to waive ACH fees for online payments through December 31, 2026

TC 26-071 Transfer of Funds \$26,500 from General Admin-Other Expenses to Liability Other Expenses = \$25,000 and Telephone-Other Expenses \$1,500 due to surplus

Ordinances for First Reading: Further consideration for a second reading of both ordinances will be at the next meeting February 9, 2026, at 7pm

#01-2026 Ordinance amending Chapter 225 Section 139, “AHO-2 Affordable Housing Overlay 2 Zone” to change certain requirements within the AHO-2 Zone

#02-2026 Ordinance approving street names in conjunction with housing development located at Block 23.02 Lot 5

## **Landmark’s Architect’s Plan for Glen Alpin “Blows Away”**

At a special meeting of the Township Committee, architect Studio Hillier showed preliminary plans for Landmark Hospitality’s redevelopment of the Glen Alpin mansion and property. Landmark Hospitality, the restaurant and event business of Frank Cretella, has built or renovated over 20 unique properties and now has a vision for Glen Alpin here in Harding.

Landmark/Cretella was introduced to Harding at a May 2025 TC meeting at which Mr. Cretella reviewed his portfolio of properties (Summit Albion, Ryland Inn, etc.), his experience with historical projects, and his general plan for Glen Alpin. Now Cretella and his architects, showed a more detailed view.

The drawings and renditions were praised by the TC and the public in attendance. The Glen Alpin mansion is the centerpiece. It has a banquet hall to the right (as you approach) and a chapel on the left. Behind, shielded by large trees, is a one-story building with 24 guest suites. No structure will be taller than the Gothic Revival mansion itself. The white stucco will be stripped down to the original puddingstone. The Georgia mansion will have guest suites on the second and third floors. The historic glass and steel conservancy will be restored and used as a party staging area.

Access is only from Rt202 and there is parking for 65 cars. Guest will be limited to 200.

Importantly, the NJ State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) has already seen these plans and has no objections. SHPO, in Trenton, is the only entity outside of Harding has the power to raise objections.

The public was overwhelmingly favorable towards the plans. Most concerns were around traffic at the intersection which is notoriously busy at rush hours during the week. But this project, called the Glen Alpin event Center, will be only a four day a week venue – Thursday to Sunday – and not likely a rush hour contributor to traffic. A couple members of the public wanted more information about the business plan (forecasts, profit and loss projections) but it was pointed out that the Township has no risk in the venture – it is not putting up money or is it in partnership with Landmark. Further Landmark is uniquely qualified to assess the riskiness of a business venture like this in NJ.

We expect the architect’s work will be available on the Township’s website soon.

The next step is to formally name Landmark as the redeveloper which could happen as soon as the February meeting of the TC. Then will come a period of negotiation between Landmark and Harding over the fine points of the project. The Harding Planning Board and the State Historical Preservation Office will also need review and give final approval.

Glen Alpin, a pre-Civil War structure, is moving smartly toward a creative repurposing from its current derelict state. Successful execution will take the mansion and site off the Township's books and into the hands of an entity that can make something special with it.

## **HARDING PLANNING BOARD**

### **Planning Board Notes for December 15, 2025**

The Board's new Planner, Michael Sullivan, gave a presentation regarding amendments to the June 12, 2025, Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. These amendments were described as minor and did not constitute an overhaul of the plan. These items included modification of the density for 1103-1105 Mt. Kemble, increasing the density to 1200 Mt. Kemble to allow for another unit, the addition of a project at 1300 Mt. Kemble that will allow for 24 affordable units, and the execution of a developer's agreement for the development of 56 Kitchell Road.

At the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Clew informed the Board of Township Committee Resolution #25-185 which authorizes the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether certain properties qualify for designation as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to NJSA 40A:12A-1 et seq., and to make recommendations to the Committee. This was tabled for discussion at the January 2026 meeting.

## **QUARTERLY VETERANS ROUND-TABLE**

### **SUPPORTING OUR VETERAN'S COMMUNITY**

Harding Township invites all veterans, active service members, their families, and all community members interested in supporting our veterans to attend our Quarterly Veterans Roundtable, held as part of New Jersey's *We Value Our Veterans Community* initiative on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, at the Harding Township Municipal Offices. This meeting provides an open forum to connect with municipal leaders and veteran service representatives, learn about available local, county, state, and federal resources, and share ideas on how our community can better support those who have served. Your participation helps ensure that

Harding continues to recognize and serve our veterans. Contact Rita Chipperson at (201) 919-8098 or [rchipperson@hardingnj.org](mailto:rchipperson@hardingnj.org) with any questions.

## **HARDING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Harding Township Historical Society and the Kemmerer Library, on February 9, 2026, invite all members of the community to the opening lecture in celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> of the United States of America: Revolutionary Roots! Joel Farkas, a noted lecturer on the history of the American Revolution, will speak to us about; “George Washington, New Jersey and the Revolution”. We will meet at 7pm at the Kemmerer (Harding Township Library).

It is also the Harding Township Historical Society’s Annual meeting. We will have a short meeting and introduce our new web-based system that will allow our community to explore Harding’s history online.

We also invite you to the library to see our Exhibit of homes that Washington passed in Harding on his way to Morristown. It is an interesting look at Harding; come in and see what houses you recognize! The exhibit is available during the library’s regular hours.

This is the beginning of our celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup>, more interesting events to come in the coming months! Stay tuned!

## **THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW VERNON**

The First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon invites members of the community, regardless of faith orientation, to attend a performance of John Rutter’s “Requiem” on Sunday, February 22 at 3 p.m. in its sanctuary. The Church’s choir will be accompanied by a small orchestra for this contemplative remembrance of the dead. All are welcome. The admission fee of \$20 (students are free) helps support the Church’s music ministry. A reception will follow.

## **NEW VERNON GARDEN CLUB**

Collab Lab, Sally Quinn for the New Vernon Garden Club

I'm finding it very heartening that various groups in New Vernon are actually networking to create efficiency and synergy in our programs and interests. The library and historical society, together, produced the video of Harding students and New Vernon seniors discussing our town, then and now, and are teaming up again to curate displays, from the historical society's archives, in the library. The library and the New Vernon Garden Club are going to team up to promote a native seed library and information related to them. Over twenty varieties of native plant seeds are currently in the "seed library" at Kemmerer and patrons are invited to take up to six packets of seeds per visit. Know, however, that most native wildflower seeds need something called "cold stratification" in January and February to germinate in the spring. To cold stratify, mix seeds with damp (not wet!) sand or vermiculite and place in a plastic bag in the fridge for several weeks. Keep checking for seedlings. When they appear, plant in pots or outside, depending on the weather when they "pop". Presoaking seeds for 12-24 hours before bagging often helps, and some even need to be scraped with a nailfile first! Google your seeds for that specific information. I think this would be such a cool project to do with kids (thereby enlarging the network to include our schools!). We will keep you posted on possible coaches!

## **KEMMERER LIBRARY HARDING TOWNSHIP**

**Kemmerer Library Harding Township - register at [hardinglibrary.org](http://hardinglibrary.org).**

Registration is **required** for all programs except for Stay and Play/Storytime.

**Stay & Play - Tuesdays** at 10:15a.m. (in person)

This informal play session provides a relaxed environment where children can engage in "free play" utilizing various toys, puzzles, and sensory activities around the children's room. Please clean up the toys when finished. No registration is required.

**Winter Storytime - Tuesdays** at 11:00a.m. (in person)

Join us for a winter themed Storytime every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. during Stay & Play. Each week we'll explore a different winter book.

**Move with Me Dance - Thursdays** at 10:15a.m. (in person)

These classes are a special partnership with the Madison Area YMCA School of Performing Arts. Professional dancer Jennifer Gregory will lead this parent or caregiver/child class. The dance class allows the toddler and partner to experience the joy of creative movement together! **Registration is required!**

**Valentine Cookie Decorating** - Wednesday, February 11th beginning at 3:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m.

Stop in during this open house to decorate a treat for your valentine.

**Poke'mon Club** - Monday, February 9th at 4:00 p.m.

Please join us to learn about Poke'mon with the chance to trade extra cards.

**Page Turners** - Monday, February 23rd at 4:00 p.m.

Children (ages 7-12) will learn how to mentor and help younger children (ages 3-6) develop reading skills during this fun program devised by Miss Samantha Innella, as she works on her Gold Award for the Northern New Jersey Council of Girl Scouts. This month's theme is nutrition.

**Revolutionary Roots: Kids Edition** - Saturday, February 28th at 11:00a.m. (in person)

History comes alive with Robert Skead, author of the American Revolutionary War Adventure series. These books bring the past to life. In this interactive session, participants will explore New Jersey's pivotal role in the Revolutionary War.

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

**The Fifth Annual Library Minigolf**

**Adult party - Friday, February 20th, 2026, 7p.m - 10p.m., \$40**

Join us for a night of mini golf to be played in the library among the stacks! Add some cocktails and hors d'oeuvres to the mix and it all adds up to a great night. Even better, it also benefits the library!

**Family event - Saturday, February 21st, 2026, 10a.m.-2p.m., \$10 pp or \$40 per family**

Join us for a family mini golf day to be played in the library among the stacks, with prizes for all participants!

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

**Book Club** - Open to all, meets in the Adult Reading Room (in person)

February 10th at 1:30p.m. - *The Guncle* by Stephen Rowley

February 24th at 1:30p.m. - *Bad Bad Girl* by Jen Gish

**ABCs of Candy** - Wednesday, February 4th at 7:00p.m. (on zoom)

This program explores the history of a variety of different candies.

**Revolutionary Roots** - Monday, February 9th at 7:00p.m. (in person)

Join us for the inaugural lecture of our "Revolutionary Roots" program! Following a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Harding Township mayor, former docent and tour guide for the National Park Service at Washington's Headquarters, Joel Farkas will give a lecture on "a revolutionary trifecta" George Washington, NJ, and the Revolutionary War.

**Sip and Dip** - Wednesday, February 11th, at 7:00p.m. (in person)

Come create some chocolate dipped pretzel rods- a great gift for Valentine's Day!

**Great Decisions Spring 2026** - Thursdays, beginning Feb. 12th at 7:00p.m. (in person)

Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. In this four-class program, participants will read the Great Decisions Briefing Book, watch the videos, and meet with members of the Harding community monthly to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today.

**Vermeer's Love Letters & the New Frick** - Thursday, Feb. 12th at 7:00p.m.(on zoom)

The Frick reopened and is hosting an exhibition on Vermeer's Love Letters. We will look at some of the renovated spaces and other important works by Vermeer.

**Mah Jongg Lessons** - Thursdays, beginning February 19th at 10:00a.m. (in person)

Join us for beginner friendly lessons and discover the joy of this classic tile game! When you sign up, you are committing to attend each lesson (6 weeks, ending on March 26th).

Harding Township patrons will receive priority.

**Forgotten Victory Train** - Wednesday, February 25th from 7-8:30p.m. (in person)  
Learn about the Revolutionary War battles that took place in our own backyards! This program from the Sons of the American Revolution and the Forgotten Victory Trail Association will discuss the last major engagements in NJ of the Revolutionary War.

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

**Swashbuckling Heroines and High Seas Adventures with Novelist Vanessa Riley**  
Thursday, February 5th, 7:00p.m.

**Mojos, Mermaids, Medicine and 400 Years of Black Women's Magic w/ Dr. Stewart**  
Thursday, February 12th, 2:00p.m.

**Smithson's Gamble: The History Behind the World's Largest Museum w/Tom Crouch**  
Tuesday, February 24th, 2:00pm

### **NEIGHBORS FOR TOMORROW IN HARDING (NFTH)**

**Neighbors for Tomorrow in Harding (NFTH)**--- It is important for residents to stay informed about Housing Development projects underway in Harding Township and the implications for our community way of life. The goal of NFTH is to communicate with residents and to advocate for transparency from our Township Committee as options are evaluated for development in our town.

#### **What Happened at the TC meeting on January 12 — and What Comes Next**

**1. Glen Alpin:** The Township confirmed that a public presentation by the Glen Alpin developer will likely take place on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 (evening). This will be the first major step in restarting the redevelopment process.

The developer's concept is largely similar to prior versions already on the township website (2021–2022 era): This includes restoration of the mansion, a 5,000 sq. ft. catering /event space added near the mansion and a separate building for guest suites.

The developer will explain the plan and answer questions. This is being framed as a kickoff, not a final approval.

## **2. What residents pushed for — and why**

Specifically, residents asked for clarity on:

- Number of events per year
- Hours of operation
- Size and type of events
- Parking and traffic management
- Financial arrangements (including any PILOT or tax abatements)
- Enforcement if promises are broken

The Township Committee acknowledged that these details matter — but said they usually come after a redeveloper is formally designated, when negotiations become more concrete.

The question of public transparency and contract negotiations — is now front and center.

## **3. Independent feasibility study**

A resident formally urged the Township to hire an independent, third-party feasibility firm to evaluate Glen Alpin and share the results publicly.

The argument for this study included the following points:

- The town becomes an economic partner if public land, tax breaks, or incentives are involved
- Developer projections are not independent — they are advocacy documents
- The town bears long-term risk (traffic, blight, infrastructure strain)
- A study strengthens the deal if it works — and protects the town if it doesn't. This was framed not as opposition, but as good governance:

#### **4. New Vernon Village redevelopment — what changed**

The Township also explained why it is updating the 2003 Village redevelopment plan.

They discovered the old plans were legally valid for 2003. However, records were poorly archived (some even lost to basement flooding). As a result, the plan must be updated to today's legal standards.

They emphasized the goals are not changing and the core purpose is to preserve the character of New Vernon Village. The revised plan will go through public hearings and a Planning Board review. A developer has shown interest in the corner lot (Village Road), with a bookstore + café concept.

Multiple residents expressed concern about something very important: If the entire village remains a redevelopment zone, could future Township Committees approve projects that would never pass under normal zoning?

Officials countered that redevelopment actually allows more control, including architectural and historic protections — but the concern about long-term governance and overreach was clearly on the table.

#### **5. What to watch for on January 21:**

This meeting made clear what the January 21 Glen Alpin presentation must answer: Residents should listen for:

- Exact number of events per year
- Maximum size of events
- Days and hours of operation
- How parking and traffic will be handled
- Whether tax abatements or public subsidies are being sought
- What is actually enforceable.

- Will the Township commit to an independent feasibility study?

## **Bottom line**

The January 12th meeting confirmed that Glen Alpin is moving forward — but it also showed that the public wants more than a glossy presentation.

The town is being asked to prove that the plan is financially sound, the impacts are honestly measured and what is promised will be written, enforceable and permanent.

Interested Harding Township residents 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 **March 2026** Thumbnail, please send it via email to the editor: [hardingcivicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:hardingcivicassociation@gmail.com) by **Friday, February 20th, 2026**. 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)

For decades, the HTCA has been dedicated to preserving the quality of life in Harding. We work to protect our town's pastoral beauty, provide non-partisan information on local issues, and bring neighbors together.

Your \$35 annual dues make it possible for the Civic Association continue to keep Harding informed, engaged, and connected. With your support, we can continue to offer the events, resources and communications that bring our community together, including this Thumbnail of Civic Affairs, the Memorial Day Parade, and Meet the Mayor / Township Committee / Candidates Nights.

Thank you sincerely for your continued civic-minded support. Additional donations are greatly appreciated.

Read the **THUMBNAIL** to stay engaged!

Ways to give: Use the venmo codes below or

Click donate at [hardingcivic.org](http://hardingcivic.org)

Mail a check to PO Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976



## **HARDING TOWNSHIP RECYCLING**

2026 Recycling Schedule:

FEB 7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>

MAR 7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>

APR 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. Tracy Toribio is no longer with HT. No replacement yet. Recycling Questions: Please contact Harding Department of Public Works at 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.

## **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**

	<b>Time</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	7:30 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	11:00AM
4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	7:00 PM
1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	7:30 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	7:30 PM
1st & 3rd Monday	7:00 PM
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	7:30 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	7:00 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	7:30 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	7:00 PM

## **DATED MATERIAL**

*Harding Township Civic Association*  
P.O. Box 72, New Vernon, NJ 07976  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

