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JEFF GRAYZEL



Promoting Open Government in Morris Township

Email News

May 2018: Morris Township News Update

Hello Neighbors,

I am writing to follow up on my email from two weeks ago to let you know the results of two important Township Committee meetings. If you want the background then please read my prior email here:

<http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Morris-Township-News-from-Jeff-Grayzel.html?soid=1130594729218&aid=MD9g2InjjBI>

After a two-year hiatus to attend to my health after two shoulder surgeries I am once again pleased to provide you with news of our community. Please take a moment to sit back, read, and consider the following information to stay informed about our municipality. As always, I welcome your comments. When you are finished reading, please pass this on to your neighbors and friends. There are many other under-informed residents who could use this information. I would your feedback and questions, so please write me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com

Township Committee Meetings of May 16, 2018

All agendas for every municipal committee and board meeting can be found in the agenda center on the Township website:

<http://morristwp.org/AgendaCenter>



At the May 16 meeting the Township Committee approved the

2018 municipal budget. You can view the budget presentation made at the meeting here: <http://www.morristwp.com/DocumentCenter/View/4905/BUDGET-SLIDE-PRESENTATION-2018>

The detailed budget can be found on the Township website here: <http://www.morristwp.com/404/Municipal-BudgetsAudits>

The May 16 meeting also had three important ordinances up for final consideration and adoption:

- **Ordinance 14-18:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS, MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, RECOMMENDING THE ADOPTION OF THE MOUNT KEMBLE AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN REGARDING THE PROPERTY IDENTIFIED ON THE TOWNSHIP'S TAX MAPS AS BLOCK 5506, LOT 25 (95 MOUNT KEMBLE AVENUE) AND BLOCK 5605, LOTS 5, 6, 7, AND 8 (102, 106, AND 108 MOUNT KEMBLE AVENUE) PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 ET SEQ.
- **Comment from Jeff:** *This ordinance states that the multiple parcels that make up the Mount Kemble property are either "an area in need of redevelopment" or "an area in need of rehabilitation". Basically, the municipality is claiming this area is blighted even though it has a functioning rehab center operating there. Having this designation in place then allows for the Township to have a broad brush to rezone the lands to their desires.*
- **Ordinance 15-18:** AMENDING CHAPTER 95, ZONING OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS-RE: AMENDING CHAPTER 95, ARTICLE II, SECTION 5 ENTITLED "DESIGNATION OF ZONES," AND AMENDING CHAPTER 95, ARTICLE II, SECTION 6, ZONING MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS TO INCLUDE SAID ZONES.
- **Comment from Jeff:** *This ordinance lays out four different affordable housing zones for various parcels in the municipality. The four zones all allow for dense development, ranging from 7.5 units per acre up to an extremely dense 12-unit per acre (TH12) zone. The new "TH12" zone would be the densest zone by far that we have in Morris Township. Personally, I am outraged that such a dense development would even be considered for our community.*
- **Ordinance 16-18:** AMENDING CHAPTER 95, ZONING OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MORRIS-ADDING TO CHAPTER 95, ARTICLE XII ENTITLED "AFFORDABLE HOUSING," AND REPEALING CHAPTER 102, ARTICLE IV, ENTITLED "MUNICIPAL HOUSING LIAISON.
- **Comment from Jeff:** *The title of this ordinance is misleading, as it really has to do with affordable housing obligations. As background, every municipality in the state of NJ has a constitutional obligation to provide with the bounds of the municipality a fair share of affordable housing for low-income and moderate-income households. This ordinance lays out the definitions of an affordable housing unit along with the obligations and responsibilities of being an owner/renter of such a unit.*

Each municipality in the State of NJ is in the process of or has reached a final settlement with the NJ State Council On Affordable Housing (COAH). Our municipality has reached a settlement and now must provide additional affordable housing units within the community to meet our updated obligations. This is why the Mount Kemble property has become a "hot button" issue as the Township is trying to cram as many low-income and moderate-income units onto this site as possible, and this is why the proposed density is so high.

As detailed in my prior newsletter the Township Committee previously held a special meeting on May 3, 2018 to introduce these three ordinances related to: (1) finalizing a low and moderate income housing plan to be in compliance with the NJ State Fair Share Housing statutes, and (2) zoning areas around town that would fall within this low-and-moderate-income housing plan. In addition to the low-and-moderate-income housing we already have in the Township, the plan outlines the following properties where more housing will be built:

- Honeywell (under construction)
- Former Colgate-Palmolive site (approvals in place)
- Former hospital on Mount Kemble Avenue (concept unveiled)
- New Punchbowl Road site under consideration

Of note, each of these sites are very dense developments that contain a combination of market-priced housing units in addition to a percentage of units set aside for low-and-moderate-income families. The element of these zoning changes that is most contentious is that only 10-20% of the overall development will be comprised of these Low and Moderate-income units. So in order to get enough low and moderate income units available the developments need to be much larger in overall size to reach the required numbers of low & moderate units that has been dictated by the State of NJ.

The Morris Township portion of the Mount Kemble site has a proposal to build 113 units on this portion of the property. The 27.5-acre property off Punch Bowl Road could see up to 216 units built, depending on available land and ability of the land to be built upon. Residents at both locations have expressed concern about traffic and harm to property values.

The May 16 meeting lasted until 1:00AM in the morning!

(I stayed until the bitter end). This meeting had many contentious moments between our residents and the Township Committee. Morristown's Mayor Tim Dougherty came to the meeting and stood up before the Committee to contest the plans at the Mount Kemble Avenue site. He too complained that it was too dense, and he also stated that over 60% of the parcel was in Morristown and they had not yet decided how to develop their portion of the parcel.



You can read a review of the May 16 meeting as reported by Morristown Green:
<https://morristowngreen.com/2018/05/17/long-days-journey-into-night-angry-crowd-jousts-with-morris-township-officials-over-affordable-housing-at-two-day-meeting/>

The Township Committee ended up passing two of the ordinances: one outlining our affordable housing plan as well as the zoning ordinance relating to the Mount Kemble Avenue parcel. However, it granted an extension of the public discussion on the zoning ordinance related to the Punchbowl Road parcel. Understandably, the Mount Kemble Avenue residents were outraged that they were not given a similar postponement – and the Township Committee voted to approve the dense zoning on the Mount Kemble Avenue parcel.

So another “Special Meeting” was held on May 24 to allow for continued public commentary on the new zoning ordinance for the parcel of land off Punchbowl Road (adjacent to the Liberty Green townhome community). Here is a review of the May 24 meeting as reported by the Morristown Green:

<https://morristowngreen.com/2018/05/25/video-long-morris-township-meeting-ends-with-housing-vote-and-altercation/>

At the May 24 meeting the Township Committee agreed to some suggested changes to the ordinance as presented by the Liberty Greens resident's attorney (yes, they hired an attorney to represent their interests) in order to tweak the ordinance to keep housing components away from the property border near Liberty Greens on Punch Bowl Road.

Lastly, it is also unfortunate that a distraught Morris Township resident was arrested at the meeting for disrupting the meeting and then resisting arrest outside the building. This is how the incident was reported by the Morristown Green:

<https://morristowngreen.com/2018/05/25/morris-township-police-charge-local-man-with-disrupting-meeting-assaulting-officers/>

The bottom line here is that these zoning ordinances were rushed through with minimal opportunity for public comment. Not even a concept plan for either the Mount Kemble Avenue parcel or the Punchbowl Road parcel has been shared with the public prior to the Township Committing itself voting on a rezoning of these two parcels. This is more than just putting the cart before the horse. It is an outright avoidance of public input as to how our community is being developed.

I look forward to hearing what our five Township Committee members have to say at the upcoming June 20th meeting about the newly enacted ordinances. I hope that each of the FIVE Township Committee members take the opportunity to explain their individual thinking on this particular matter at the upcoming meeting.

Sad News to Report

Former Morris Township resident and Morristown High School graduate Brian McNally passed away recently at the age of 30. I bring this to your attention because some of you in the community may know the family but have not heard the news, but also because we should all mourn the loss of this person who gave much to our country, our state and our community.

<https://morristowngreen.com/2018/05/29/greater-morristown-to-bid-farewell-to-brian-mcnally-state-trooper-and-afghanistan-vet-killed-in-car-crash/>

Brian McNally served our country in the Afghanistan war and upon his return he continued to serve us in the Marine reserves. The community should mourn this loss. May he rest in peace.

Primary Election this Tuesday June 5...

There is an important Primary Election for both Republicans and Democrats this coming Tuesday June 5. Polls are open from 6:00am-8:00pm at your regular polling place.



As of the writing of this email I had personally not received my sample ballot, which I am very disappointed about! However, you can view the sample ballot for Morris Township here: <https://morriscountyclerk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Morris-Township.pdf>

Please help keep our democracy strong by exercising your right to vote.

ATTENTION Independent or “unaffiliated” voters:

If you are an Independent or “unaffiliated” (have not declared for a party yet) then you are allowed to vote this Tuesday too. You will need to select which party primary you would like to vote in (i.e you can vote in either the republican or democratic primary, but not both)



“Early Voting” is available for the June 5 Primary Election ...

The opportunity to obtain a mail-in absentee ballot is closing, as it must be obtained and then returned in less than a week. HOWEVER, “In-Person early voting” at the County Clerk’s office (on Court Street in Morristown) is still available through Monday June 4. You can cast your vote anytime during regular business hours for the County Clerk from 8:00am-4:30pm. In addition, there will be special hours on Saturday, June 2nd, from 8:00am to noon .

More information is available by calling the County Clerk directly at 973-285-6066 or can be found on the county website: <https://morriscountyclerk.org/>

My Campaign for Township Committee

As you can see from the meeting reviews above, OPEN GOVERNMENT in Morris Township is still sorely needed, and Open Government is something I am passionate about.



I am so excited to let you know that I am again running for Township Committee. After losing a very close election a few years ago (by just 15 votes out of about 8,000 voters) I took a couple of years off to nurse my health after two shoulder surgeries.

I am ready to complete what I started, which is open government with more participation from our residents . I look forward to working closely with surrounding communities such as when I helped Morris Township join the joint municipal court with Madison, Harding and the Chathams that saved our municipality a lot of money -- your tax dollars! And we still need to deal with speeding on our local streets and pedestrian safety because not enough has been done on that issue.

I have a fantastic running mate in Tara Olivo-Moore. We need more women in government and Tara is perfect for the job. She is smart and thinks through the issues. With so many teens getting involved in activism these days, it will be good to have a mom representing them. Tara is a nurse practitioner with advanced degrees in nursing. She will bring her perspective as a mother and healthcare professional to our Committee as well as a diagnostician's approach to problem solving.

Please read about Tara and details of our campaign on our website: www.JeffTara.com

For the first time ever in our town there is a contested Democratic Primary for Township Committee. If you are either a registered Democrat or an Independent/Unaffiliated voter then Tara & I ask for your support in the primary election on June 5.

Of note, Independent/Unaffiliated voters are allowed to vote in the primary election , but they need to select just one party primary (either Democrat or Republican) to participate in. So make sure you mark the June 5 Primary Election Day on your calendar.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to write to me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com

Yard Waste Collections

A yard-waste collection by the Department of Public Works has begun. Curbside pickup of grass clippings, leaves, plant waste, light brush and bundled sticks/limbs takes place on the scheduled Saturday dates listed below. The Township is broken up into two zones (see link below). This month's pick-ups was last Saturday, May 12th for Zone 1 and this Saturday, May 19th for Zone 2.



- ZONE 1 COLLECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR: June 9, July 14, Aug 11, & Sept 8
- ZONE 2 COLLECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR: June 16, July 21, Aug 18, & Sept 15

Find your zone here:

<http://www.morristwp.com/DocumentCenter/View/2416/Curbside-Containerized-Yardwaste-Collection-Zones->

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Public Works Office at 973-326-7398



Upcoming Committee Meeting...

The next regular meeting of the Township Committee will be on **Wednesday, June 20th at 7:00 pm** at our municipal building.

Contact Jeff...

I will continue to communicate with the public by e-newsletter on a periodic basis. However, if you ever have a question or an issue you would like to discuss, feel free to contact me by e-mail. I will respond to e-mails sent to Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com .

Please feel free to forward this e-mail news on to others. If you know someone who would like to subscribe to future issues, please have them contact me at Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com

I look forward to continuing my communications to and with the residents of Morris Township. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, ideas, or concerns.

I hope everyone is enjoying some spring weather after our elongated winter.

Your neighbor,
Jeff

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