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(VIDEO) Rick Haan honored for 30 years of service to Morris Township

Jun 21, 2019



Former Morris Township Planning Board Chairman Rick Haan, left, was honored by Township Mayor Jeff Grayzel on Wednesday, June 19 for his 30 years of service to the community.

MORRIS TWP. – Former Planning Board Chairman Rick Haan was hailed as a “man who works behind-the-scenes to make the township a great place to live” by Mayor Jeff Grayzel, who honored the longtime zoning and Planning Board member as part of his monthly plan to recognize township residents who have made a difference.

An unveiling of a gift from Haan – a map of the township circa 1910 that he had owned – was also part of the ceremony.

Haan, who is moving out of the township, was honored for giving 30 years of service, having served on the Board of Adjustment from 1988 to 2016 and serving as board chairman from 1997 to 2003, as well as serving on the Planning Board from 2002 to 2019 and as chairman from 2004 to 2019.

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He stepped down from the board in the spring and was replaced as chairman by board member Franz Vintschger.

The proclamation honoring Haan noted “his experience, loyalty, knowledge, foresight and zeal” in helping the township “be a better place to work and live.”

The proclamation also read that “his absence will be a distinct loss to the residents for whom he worked so diligently” and that he “has won the deep respect of all who were fortunate enough to work with him.”

Haan thanked the mayor, noting, "Getting involved in the township it is something I did as a young person when I first moved here in my mid 30s."

"I saw the town was very well planned and I wanted to be part of that," he said. "I heard that it needed volunteers for the zoning board, the Planning Board. I sent a letter to the mayor and I was accepted."

"You know my style on the board and running a meeting," he said to the mayor. "It has always been very important to me that we treat everyone with respect – applicants, members of the public – and to run the meetings as efficiently as I can. I very much enjoyed it, it was a challenge but I also had a lot of fun as well."

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Two of the biggest issues Haan faced while head of the Planning Board were St. Mary's Abbeys plan to build a non-profit continuing care retirement facility that lasted about four years and met with heavy environmental protest. The3 plan was ultimately rejected by the state in 2006 and the land was later purchase for \$13.75 million raised by The Trust for Public Land to preserve the land as open space.

The second large-scale plan involved the Honeywell property on Park Avenue and Columbia Turnpike. After a two-year fight, the Planning Board ultimately moved forward a plan to the Township Committee, which, in 2014, approved more than 200 residential units on the property.

Those units are in various stages of completion, but Honeywell is long gone, having moved to Morris Plains in 2015 and which is now moving a large chunk of its operation to North Carolina.



Rick Haan honored for Morris Township service
Jun 21, 2019



Rick Haan honored in Morris Township
Jun 23, 2019