Schedule of Events

Check Morristown (www.townofmorristown.org) and Morris Township (www.morriswp.com) websites for upcoming municipal meeting schedules.

SUMMER FUN:

Music Without Borders (presented by the Arts Council of the Morris Area and the Mayo Performing Arts Center) – 4 free lunchtime concerts of world music on the Green, noon-1:30pm

June 22: Chia’s Dance Party (Colombian music)

July 6: Chalgiya (Balkan music)

July 20: Music of China Trio

August 3: India; Music of the north, bells of the south (music and dance of India)

June 26: Giralda 2011 Music &Arts Festival featuring concert by the NJSO, children’s arts activities, children’s book readings, an art show & sale and prizes for most inventive picnics. Held at Giralda Farms Corporate Park, Rt. 124 and Dodge Drive, Madison. Visit www.morrisarts.org for tickets and more information (presented by the Arts Council).

July 24: Beetlemania: “a family concert with a little bit of science.”

Spend a day learning about garden beetles (at interactive science stations) and enjoy a performance by a topflight British Invasion/Beatles band, The Robert Murdock Band (who opened for Ringo Starr). Felelinghausen Arboretum, 353 E. Hanover Ave., Morristown, from 1-5pm (concert at 4pm). Visit www.ArboretumFriends.org for tickets and more information. (presented by the Arts Council of the Morris Area and the Morris County Park Commission/Friends of Felelinghausen Arboretum).

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Burnham Park Birthday! Celebrating a Century!

Morristown and Morris Township residents, neighbors and friends, celebrated the centennial spring of Frederick and Catharine Burnham’s generous gift of Burnham Park to Morristown on May 21st!

100 years ago, in 1911, when Morristown’s population was about 12,000, Frederick and Catharine Burnham had the foresight to set aside this piece of land for the benefit of all residents. As Frederick said in his April 1, 1911 letter to the Mayor Pierson:

“Mrs. Burnham and myself have been discussing the plan of giving a piece of ground, fitted for the purpose, to the Town of Morristown, for a public park. Our idea has been that this ground should be used not as a playground for the... continued on page 2
benefit of noisy ball games or such other games as are attended by noise and uproar, but rather as a place where tired families can, during the spring, summer and autumn days, obtain that refreshment which is only obtainable apart from the noise and confusion of a crowd.”

He further articulates his vision for the future park:

“Such a piece of ground available for walks, resting places, with cool spring water, ponds and streams, should also have fine trees under whose wide spreading branches mothers could take their children to find rest and enjoyment.”

Our celebration day dawned cerulean blue, in glorious contrast with the full week of torrential rains which preceded it: we could not have asked for a better day!

Where to begin to describe the activities Burnham Park neighbors and friends enjoyed?

What about the children’s boat regatta, where youngsters assembled, then launched boats made from kits, lovingly and ably instructed and watched over by Jen Carcich, BPA’s membership chair and founder of Moms and Tots; or Sonya Williams and her Mom putting on the gloves, digging and guiding the children in planting a children’s garden! The garden plants, donated by the Morris County Park Commission and the Sieberts, were chosen by the Morris County Park Commission’s naturalist Douglas Voroliff and President of the Alexander Hamilton Neighborhood Association, who guided the planting and installed a deer fence to protect the newly created garden. And who could forget the joy of children racing around balancing those eggs on their spoons while touching their noses or hopping in sacks across the finish line… all games devised and supervised by BPA Trustee Imre Bajusz. Festive blue and white balloons (courtesy of BPA Trustee Debbie Bruen) lent a festive atmosphere to the gazebo which featured lunch sandwiches along with the most delectable desserts handmade by Moms & Tots parents.

Then there was a wonderful hands-on art workshop led by NYC artist Isabelle Garabani who, with great skill and much laughter, taught children of all ages how to transform plastic bags into works of art! This workshop was brought to us by BPA members Paul and Megan Rabinowitz who head the nonprofit organization, Arts By The People!

And lovers of farms, animals and history and anyone curious about how people lived and worked 100 years ago were greeted by “Calvin,” the 21 year old Belgian draft horse, led by farmer Rob Kibbe, assisted by Mike Alesandra. Accompanying them and providing historical narrative, bedecked in bowler straw hat and period dress, was Mark Texel, Director of Historic Sites for the Morris County Park Commission!

But this wonderful Centennial celebration could not have taken place if not for the time and work of our neighbors and friends in the Burnham Park Association and the Morristown DPW. As with any successful effort, many hours were devoted to brainstorming, planning, then doing what needed to be done!

Weeks before the ceremonies, the Morristown DPW mowed and weeded, then dug holes for the 4 trees (two Swamp White Oaks, one Pin Oak and one Red Maple) which Burnham Park
Association volunteers planted on April 30 at BPA’s annual Arbor Day planting and clean-up. These young oaks, close to a grove of old White Oaks, will be there to replace them in time.

Many thanks to DPW Supervisor Charles Jones and his crew for working with BPA vice-president Joe Attamante to site, dig, and care for the trees after they’re planted. This year that meant purchasing filling and replenishing “gators” (10 gallon pencil point perforated water sacks) and attaching them to the trees during the dry week (can you believe it?) preceding the deluge!

Descendants of the Burnham Family (Alison and Pamela Mitchell, Ann Lyons and Stephen Carter) came from Old Lyme, CT, Brooklyn, NY and Lambertville/Hopewell areas of NJ to attend and reaffirm their family’s support for our work. They also dedicated the two new swamp oak trees BPA planted: one in memory of David L. Carter, who died last year and who had been a wonderful supporter of the BPA, and one in appreciation of the Burnham Family for their gift of the park.

Frederick and Catharine Burnham’s great granddaughter, Alison Mitchell, said of them: “Rather than build great houses, they chose instead to donate this land for everyone to enjoy.” These were remarkable and inspiring individuals…They also established the Industrial School for Boys in Canaan, NY that has grown from serving a few boys to providing services for 3000 NY State children on their 2,000 acre campus. Now known as the Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth, the flourishing center also celebrated an anniversary on May 21—its 125th!

We Burnham Park neighbors and all Morristown and Township, along with countless young people in New York State continue to be blessed and inspired by their vision and generosity!

The Morris NewsBee also ran a front page feature story on the centennial in their May 26 print edition, and the Daily Record had a photo spread in their Morris This Week pullout on 6/15/11. Visit our website, www.burnhampark.org to see additional photos.

To read more about the Burnham Park Centennial and see some great photos of the event, see: http://morristowngreen.com/2011/05/27/video-founders-celebrate-centennial-of-burnham-park-in-morristown/; http://morristown.patch.com/articles/residents-ancestors-honor-burnham-park-on-beautiful-day; www.facebook.com/MorrisNewsBee

L-R: Artist Isabelle Garbani demonstrates plastic bag “yarn”; Calvin snacks on hay with Farmer Rob (Kibbe); the Park Commission’s Mark Texel in period costume with naturalist Douglas Vorolieff.

MOM AND TOT EVENTS:
Do you have children? Babies, toddlers, preschoolers, school age children and their families are all members of Morristown Moms & Tots & More! We hold numerous weekly events both during the day and the evening so working parents are welcome to join. Don’t miss out on dinner playdates— it saves you from cooking once a week.

Our group holds Mom’s Night Out, Dad’s Night Out, CPR class in the fall and even has an adult kickball team. We have tickets to the Somerset Patriot’s game on father’s day with an "all you can eat" picnic included! Go to www.bigtent.com and search for us using zip code 07960- fill out the online application, and Jen Carcich will call you to explain everything. Enjoy your families!
It has come to our attention that commercial signs are currently displayed on the fences of the two Little League ballfields in Burnham Park. Such signs violate the Burnham Park deed, decades of correspondence between the Burnham Family (reaffirming their opposition to commercial signage) and the Town of Morristown’s own Parks Ordinance, which states:

11-4.22 Advertising.
No person shall post, exhibit or otherwise display any signs, posters or other advertising material in any park, except where authorized in connection with the issuance of permits for special events under Section 11-6. This section shall not apply to bulletin boards erected or maintained by the Town or any of its departments or agencies. (1980 Code § 146-29)

In view of these, Dr. Lynn Siebert, President of the Burnham Park Association, wrote to Morristown’s Mayor Dougherty and Town Council members on May 3, 2011, requesting prompt removal of the signs.

Approximately three weeks later, Morristown Attorney Vijant Pawar responded to our letter and said that Town officials will meet with Little League officials in mid-June to discuss the matter. BPA has also requested that the Town institute an orientation process for Little League so that when Little League applies for its permit to use the Burnham fields, they understand and agree to abide by the restrictions stipulated by the Deed and ordinance. This would avoid recurrence of this same issue in years to come.

At the Centennial celebration, the Burnham Family reaffirmed its opposition to such commercial signs and its strong support of BPA’s efforts. We will keep everyone posted once we hear from the Town attorney.
Morris Township Residents seek Better Land Use Planning, form CBPMT

BPA invited organizers of Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township (CBPMT) to submit the following column to keep our residents informed and up-to-date on land use issues facing all of us.

Background: Our organization “Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township” was created this past winter in response to the Planning Board’s reaction during informal hearings of Honeywell International’s proposed development on its 147-acre campus (101 Columbia Turnpike). Honeywell’s proposal for a General Development Plan (GDP) - to build 893,000 sq ft of office space, a 250-room hotel, 313 multi-story town homes and/or a continuing care retirement facility - is predicated on amending the Township’s Master Plan to include a mixed-use zoning. Mixed-use zones have, up till now, only been available in the Township through a variance.

Concerns:
We are concerned
1. that allowing mixed-use will set the stage for development in the Township that is out of character with its current residential character.
2. that the Planning Board is overstepping its mandate in facilitating the proposed changes to the Master Plan on behalf of a single (if very large and influential) constituent
3. that there has been no structured exploration of other uses to which this land could be put
4. that the proposal disregards numerous goals included in our current Master Plan.

Moreover, the developments proposed by Honeywell would dramatically increase the density of development in this area - with minimal setbacks and...
increased building heights - compared to the current OL 40 zoning requirements. These, in turn, will negatively impact traffic, our current peaceful residential area, and, frankly, our standard of living.

What’s happening at the Planning Board:
On May 2, 2011, the Morris Township Planning Board voted 6-3 to work towards a recommendation to the Township Committee to amend the Township Master Plan, thus moving Honeywell’s proposal forward. More information regarding the two proposals put forward by Honeywell can be found at www.honjcampus.com.

The Planning Board was unanimous in responding favorably to the concept of a multi-use zone. The dissenting 3 votes were solely due to concerns about the appropriateness of a hotel rather than concerns about inserting multi-use zoning within our largely residential area. The Planning Board directed the Technical Coordinating Committee (the TCC) to provide further technical guidance to Honeywell.

Currently, Honeywell is considering revisions to their proposal. Public meetings are expected to be held before the Planning Board votes on the proposed changes. If this were to happen, such timing raises questions about the public’s ability to participate – as an informed party - in the public comment process.

Honeywell has also stated at public hearings that they will sell a majority of the 147 acres not intended for their own use to various developers. If that plan is approved, Honeywell and these multiple developers will then request new and separate hearings on specific site plan development proposals.

Traffic/cumulative development impacts:
This proposed large scale, high density development will stress the already overtaxed intersection of Columbia Turnpike/Park Avenue and nearby intersections whose existing traffic volume already exceed what they were designed to manage. At least one other approved development, Florham Green off of Park Avenue, will further increase local traffic volumes. Neither Morris Township nor Florham Park has addressed the combined impacts that will result from the two projects - highlighting the unrealistic and superficial approach the Township undertakes in its planning.

What’s at risk? The quality of life, the character of our neighborhoods and the area’s housing values which may well decrease/decline as a result of this development.

In response, we have formed CBPMT – and begun a concerted effort to address these concerns not only for this proposal but, more broadly to address land use planning across the Township. Our all-volunteer, Township citizen organization has organized to stop this massive project. We have hired an attorney and are preparing to hire independent experts in order to defend our neighborhoods, our town and our Master Plan. We feel compelled to do this because our Planning Board is unwilling to do so. Please contact Citizens for Better Planning in Morris Township at c4bpm@gmail.com to see how you can make a tax-deductible contribution to our effort. If we stand together, we have a chance at effectively addressing our concerns and presenting a united vision for our Township.
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