The Burnham Park Association: Celebrating 60 years of stewardship, serving our neighbors, our parks and our trees

Burnham Park, An Appreciation on our 60th Anniversary!

Since 2008 marks the 60th Anniversary of The Burnham Park Association, we thought we would share this lovely article, posted online at AMERICAN TOWNS: Morristown

"from:Morristown Realtor category: Real Estate posted: October 20th, 2008

Burnham Park is one of Morristown’s/Morris Township’s best-

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kept secrets, and one you should check out. Physically located in Morristown, the Park occupies a long “finger” of property pushing out from Morristown proper into the territory of Morris Township. A gift from the Burnham family, this lovely English-style park has two beautiful ponds ... both stocked with trout in the spring ... plus walking and jogging paths, baseball fields, a basketball diamond and imaginative children’s play areas. An amazing local group, the Burnham Park Association, maintains this great resource in concert with the Town of Morristown, and annually plants new trees and shrubs to enhance the park and preserve the watersheds.

I have for many years lived directly across Mendham Road from the park, and enjoy stepping out onto my front porch first thing every morning with my steaming cup of coffee, and again every evening with a glass of wine, to take in the long peaceful vistas down into the main pond, towards the little island in the center. At this autumn time of year it is truly magical, with the red and gold and russet and siena colors of the trees across the way reflected in the lucid pond, and our own resident swans gliding peacefully by on the still waters.

Stop by any day of the week for a lunchtime stroll or picnic, or on weekends for fishing, walking your dog, jogging, and baseball games with your kids. It’s a wonderful place and a magical step back in time to small-town America at its best!”

Our Thanks to the anonymous realtor for giving voice to the feelings we all share.

### Tired of the Burnham Park Slalom?

New traffic committee is on the case: In response to the downhill speeding and unsafe conditions, particularly at the “bowl” intersection of East Lake Blvd., West Lake Blvd., Ferndale/Fairmount Aves. and Burnham Parkway, the Burnham Park Association formed a Traffic Consulting Committee (Imre Bajusz, Jen Carcich, Sue Mellen, Paul Rabinowitz and Lynn Siebert) and drafted specific recommendations (including stop and yield signs in particular places) to address the situation. These were then sent to both the Morris Township Committee and Police Chief Timothy Quinn. In his letter of October 27, Chief Quinn indicated that the police department’s Traffic Safety Bureau “will collect data of volume, speed and accident history” and then look at ways to make the roadways safer “through education, enforcement and engineering.” Working in conjunction with the Morris Township Engineering Department to address our concerns and recommendations, the police dept. will contact us to address our concerns once they have completed their analysis. Kudos to Chief Quinn for responding so promptly. We look forward to working with him on this matter.

### Another ELECTION???

If you’re still hungry for election excitement once the Presidential Election is over, give some thought to voting in the BPA’s annual election of its trustees. We are attaching a ballot at the end of this newsletter for you to tear off and mail in (send to Mary Ann Gazal at 34 Dorothy Drive, Morristown, NJ 07960). If you want to vote in person, feel free to attend our next meeting (November 18th, 7:30pm at 27 West Lake Blvd.). We welcome new members to the board...you can nominate your friends, neighbors or yourself if you are a resident of the area and have an interest in our work. Feel free to contact any of our officers if you have questions about our Burnham Park Association, called an “amazing organization” by a local realtor.
Regional Land Use

UPDATES:

SCORE:
Preservation 1;
Development 0/
Deal saves Abbey’s CCRC land from development

Things are moving rapidly along to finalize all aspects of the deal brokered by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) which reached an agreement to purchase 188 acres of land from the Order of St. Benedict, which owns and manages Delbarton School and St. Mary’s Abbey. The $13,750,000 price will be met by funding from the Morris County Park Commission, the Township of Morris, Open Space Trust Fund, the Great Swamp Watershed Association, the Trust for Public Land, Morris County Municipal Utilities Commission and the state Department of Environmental Protection’s Green Acres program. Stewardship of this land will fall to the Morris County Park Commission which will annex all but approximately 10 acres to adjoining Lewis Morris Park, increasing that park’s preservation area to just over 2,000 acres. The Morris Township planning board is handling the final details of the subdivision and transfer and will be responsible for the approximately 10 acre portion purchased through its open space funds.

HOT OFF THE PRESS:
Highlands Regional Master Plan Reconciles with Affordable Housing:

As of October 31st, the Highlands Council approved an agreement with the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to spell out the responsibilities of both agencies in balancing the requirement to preserve land and water resources while still providing affordable housing. For details on the Memorandum of Agreement on this matter as well as other, related information, check out http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/implementation/plan/.

The two agencies finalized their agreement under the looming mandate of Governor Corzine’s Executive Order 114 (issued in September) which affirmed the primacy of preserving land and water resources over affordable housing.

A critical source of water for much of the state of NJ, the Highlands includes the (more restricted) “Preservation Area” and the (less restricted) “Planning Area”. Municipalities in the Planning Area (including Morris Township) would gain significant benefits if they “opt in” to the Highlands Regional Master Plan – and change their zoning to conform with the regional master plan. Included among the benefits are certain legal immunities from builders’ lawsuits and, with this new agreement, the likely reduction of COAH obligations in such towns. Conversely, communities that choose NOT to opt in and “conform” to the Highlands Regional Master Plan could well see their COAH housing obligations (and required new development) rise significantly.

The new agreement allows taking into account what land is suitable for develop-
In these tight times, there are few bargains as substantial as First Night® Morris where, for little more than the costs of a movie, you can take your whole family to hear and see world class performers LIVE in 25 venues in and around the center of Morristown. This fabulous evening will feature music for every taste (from popular - jazz, folk, roots, Klezmer, jug band, Native American flute music, blues, funk, rock ‘n roll, reggae, hip hop; classical - orchestral, choral, chamber and solo performances to world music from Africa, Haiti, Brazil, Spain, Japan, Eastern Europe and the Middle East). There will be theatre, comedy, magic, juggling, storytelling, poetry, dance (flamenco, Japanese, Colonial American, Haitian), two visual art exhibits, 2 sets of fireworks, face painting, balloon artistry and some truly unique experiences such as hearing the Gravikord (an electrified kora-like instrument), trying your hand at the theremin (that instrument which makes those spooky sounds in horror movies), or participating in an African drumming circle. Starting December 1, admission buttons go on sale (advance prices: $18 per button, 4 packs at $60; at the gate, all buttons are $20 each) at locations throughout Morris County. Check www.firstnightmorris.com and watch the Star Ledger and its website for more details on the program as they become available. Artistic programming is provided by the Arts Council of the Morris Area.
or incomplete. Although it should be a simple matter to alter or abandon a LOI based on erroneous information, this apparently has not been the case.

The pattern cited below reflects many instances cited by the NJ Highlands Coalition.

A wetlands permit is granted by the DEP for disturbance of intermediate value wetlands to facilitate a development but it is based on incorrect or faulty LOI. Later, endangered species are identified on site. However, since the developer has an approved permit (albeit predicated on old or incorrect information), the DEP allows them to “rely” on that permit! The DEP even sometimes extends the permit for several years, despite the acquisition of corrective information and the clear language on every LOI that it can be changed when new information requires it. Even more outrageous, the DEP may recognize the presence of threatened or endangered species, upgrade the wetlands classification, but still allow the development to proceed! And all the developer need do to trigger “reliance” is show he has spent money by, say, hiring a planner. In Harding, the DEP acknowledged presence of endangered or threatened species and amended the LOI’s wetlands classification, but still allow the development to proceed! And all the developer need do to trigger “reliance” is show he has spent money by, say, hiring a planner.

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The Highlands Coalition in its August 11, 2008 letter to the DEP and in testimony suggested the following:

1. Extend the 15 day comment period to allow sufficient time for public input.
2. Improve practices and procedures to insure a more accurate issuance of LOI’s
3. Adopt a formal mechanism to alter or abandon LOI when new correct information is submitted, applicable to LOI’s and extensions
4. Implement a process whereby citizens may request applicants to provide current information about the entire site that is the subject of LOI request, and require the DEP to respond.
5. Put safeguards in place to allow the public to hire independent consultants to access sites with sufficient notification to applicant.
6. Apply “reliance policy” rule changes to all DEP’s Land Use Regulatory programs, not only the Freshwater Wetlands Act.

We would urge the DEP to fully adopt the Highlands Coalition recommendations.

Delbarton Fields Proposal Amended

As we reported in spring/summer newsletter (see “Field of Dreams”), the Delbarton fields, field house and concomitant Sugarloaf Road widening was memorialized in May. This was done despite our written and verbal objections that: no public input was permitted for the widening and no notice was given to adjacent property owners; the public’s right to speak and comment at a public meeting were severely curtailed; no archaeological survey was conducted despite Morris Township’s Historic Commission’s urging that one be done; no visibility balloon test was conducted to determine visibility of retaining walls from National Park trails, and National Park Service was not consulted regarding the fields’ impact on the Jockey Hollow portion of Morristown National Historical Park.

Bulldozing and tree removal is well advanced (while new trees have been planted, they will require decades to attain the stature of those that were removed) with retaining walls in place. Work has not yet begun on widening of Sugarloaf Rd.

At the October 6, 2008 Planning Board meeting, Delbarton received approval to amend its field house plan, allowing a two story structure with different siding, a different roof (shingle instead of turf), lighting along the pedestrian path, and changes to retaining walls, safety screening and chain link fencing. The plans, described by one person as “incredibly ugly”, can be viewed at the office of Township Engineer.

Mr. Toad breathes more easily at Willow Hall: Friends win suit against developers

In a recent decision, the state Appellate Division struck down K&K Developers’ plans to build 20 townhouses on the Willow Hall property. A citizen group, the Friends of Historic Speedwell had sued the developer and the Town of Morristown’s Zoning Board of Adjustment, objecting to the zoning changes and citing a variety of factors, including steep slopes. At present, the property is back on the market for $3.8 million and the Passaic River Coalition, which has bid on the mansion itself, is hoping to raise the remaining money to buy the entire 6.5 acre site to use for its headquarters. Stay tuned for ongoing developments.

Water line to Jockey Hollow

Committeeman Scott Rosenbush, with support from Mayor Bob Nace, has advocated the extension of a water line up Jockey Hollow Rd. to provide hydrants
in the area. While we strongly support fire safety for all, we have concerns that the extension of infrastructure, as we have learned so painfully with regard to Washington Valley, opens the door to reclassifications of land use – with the likelihood of allowing for more development in the future. The presence or absence of infrastructure factors significantly in calculating COAH allocations, State Planning Area designations and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Delbarton might also contribute – something else which raises questions since, in the past, such contributions (during the sewer line extension in Washington Valley) led to unfair preferential treatment: Delbarton’s sewer line hookup fees of over $250,000 were “forgiven” by the Township while private residents received no such bonuses. No study has been done to assess whether a less expensive and, frankly, more widely useable alternative – ie. a tanker truck for the fire dept.- would provide the same level of protection. A veteran volunteer firefighter said that a tanker would offer the same protection as a water line and would be able to travel to all Township locations which might need it. Additionally, one has to ask why Rosenbush and Nace are only focusing on this one area and not the other areas in the township which also have no public water (or hydrants). The Township will not move forward with the plan unless its requirement that 2/3 of the neighbors provide written commitment to each pay the $10,455 over 15 years is met. Stay tuned…

BPA Elections

Each year at this time we vote for our Bd. of Trustees. Nominations are open to all BPA members – self nominations are welcome. New members/Trustees are encouraged. We invite you to submit your ballot (and/or nominations) by mail to our recording secretary, Mary Ann Gazal (34 Dorothy Drive) in advance of the November 18th meeting if you are unable to attend in person but wish to participate.

Need a new BPA T-shirt?

Thanks to Johnathan Darwell, efforts are underway to have a new supply of those wonderful BPA T-shirts and sweatshirts. We’ll keep you posted when they are available for purchase!

Fill in your name, address and telephone number on this stub. Make checks payable to the Burnham Park Association. Sent to our treasurer, Bill Claxton at 32 Dorothy Drive, Morristown, NJ 07960. Thanks to those neighbors who have supported BPA so generously.DUES PAID IN THE THE LAST 3 MONTHS OF 2008 GET CREDITED TO CALENDAR YEAR 2009
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Fax 973-889-0564

**QUALITY LAWN CARE**  
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Steve Smith  
973-292-1549  
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**Services**

**TUTORING**

Kids need some academic practice over the summer/vacations? Struggling in a certain subject? Certified general and special education pre-K - 8 teacher with 10+ years of teaching available for tutoring in your home. All subjects including study skills and organization techniques. Jen 451-9090

**SHERIFF**

EDWARD V. ROCHFORD  
Morris County Sheriff’s Office  
A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency  
PO Box 900, Morristown, NJ 07963-0900  
Day- 973-285-6600 Night- 285-2900  
Fax- 829-8155

**DOG WALKING**

Responsible Boy Scout will feed and/or walk your dog while you are away. Available most weekends and most of summer. Call Doug at 973-538-8652. Reasonable Rates.