



Chatham Township Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 2 Fall 2003

Milestones

100 Years Ago

In June of 1903, Miss Anna Moore received her high school diploma as the sole member of Chatham High school. Grammar school graduation was the educational milestone throughout the nation at this time.

At the Crossing of the Fishawack

75 Years Ago

The Chatham Township Fire Department will be the scene of a big time. Various events will include a prize shoot in the afternoon and in the evening another of the splendid dances will be held with

music by the Sunnybrook Orchestra. Elaborate preparations have been made to accommodate a big crowd and their boast which has never been refuted is that no guest has ever gone away dissatisfied.

Chatham Press—10/13/1928

50 Years Ago

Police Chief Rustem Bey, submitted his monthly report indicating that five complaints had been received, four dog complaints, two automobile accidents, one on Southern Boulevard one on Loantaka Way. One Chatham Emergency Squad call and one plane crashed in the town during the past month, with the pilot being fatally injured.

Chatham Courier 10/8/1953

25 Years Ago

A noise control ordinance is passed. The use of home power tools or snow blowers in residential areas must be limited to between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. during the week. Garbage collection is prohibited on Sundays and limited to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. other days. If a resident wants to yell, shout, hoot, whistle or sing on public streets or within a residential area, he better not do it between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. or else it's a violation. Penalties for violations is a fine of no more than \$200 for offense.

Chatham Courier 7/6/1978

Message from Mayor John De Meo

Fall is upon us and much is happening in the Township. School is back in session. Fall recreation programs are kicking into high gear and our capital improvement projects are progressing. I also want to urge your support for local community services such as the Senior Center, Emergency Squad, and Fire Departments as they conduct their annual fund-raising efforts.

- The expansion and renovation of the Joint Library of the Chathams is nearing completion and promises to be a much-needed improvement to our community.
- The final phase of the Mountainside/River Road paving and drainage project is underway and will soon be completed.
- Designs are being developed with the Borough of Chatham for the construction of Woodland Park. This project represents the most significant joint project with our friends in the Borough since the creation of the Joint Library.
- The Skateboard Park will soon be finished offering our young people a first-rate, safe facility to enjoy their sport.
- The Patriot Media cable TV system upgrade is nearing completion. Soon residents will be enjoying improved picture quality, additional channel choices, and, for the first time, high-speed two-way internet access.
- Township Committee will soon be considering ordinances that will significantly expand deer bow-hunting within the Township to all licensed NJ hunters; require snow and ice removal from sidewalks following a snow event; and modify the rules for the removal of trees from private property.
- In a continuing effort to communicate our efforts to residents, we will significantly expand the content of our website (www.chathamtownship.org) to include the minutes of the Township Committee meetings and all of our boards. In addition, we will post any proposed ordinances when they are introduced before possible final passage. You can sign up on the website to be automatically notified whenever there is an update.

I urge you to let us know your thoughts on these initiatives. Township Committee meets the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. We would love to see you there!

Land Development in Chatham Township

Chatham Township has been growing lately. New homes are being built, and a number of multi-family and non-residential projects have been approved or are already under construction. Have you ever wondered how development is reviewed and approved in the Township, and who is involved?

Chatham Township manages development through the land use control authority delegated to local communities by the New Jersey legislature. While there is some flexibility, our town officials must adhere to the state's Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) as they make decisions on how land is to be used. In the Township, ordinances based on the MLUL are enacted by the Township Committee and applied by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment, whose members are local citizens appointed by the Township Committee.

The basis for our land development is the Township's Master Plan. After taking into account the physical character of the town and other considerations such as open space, storm water management, and protecting the environment, our Master Plan indicates what land uses (e.g., single family homes, townhouses, business, offices) would be appropriate in different portions of the Township. The next step is for the elected officials to pass a zoning ordinance based on the Master Plan. In 2000 the Township Committee revised the zoning ordinance for each of these uses and enacted changes to zoning regulations that development projects must meet. These regulations include set-backs, lot coverage, storm water management, grading, landscaping, etc.

The type of development application determines how simple or comprehensive the requirements are. Construction of or an addition to single family residences is normally handled by the Construction Office

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without the need for approval from town boards. An application for a minor subdivision, is much simpler than for a major subdivision. Applications for construction of offices, businesses, or multi-family housing, called site plans, can be simple or complicated depending on their size and location. The Planning Board, with the assistance of professional engineers, planners, and legal counsel, reviews and acts on applications for minor and major subdivisions as well as site plans.

Applications for variances from the approved zoning laws are reviewed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Such applications include requests to build a use not allowed in a particular zone. For example, if an applicant wanted to build a professional office in a residential zone, a use variance would be required. Review is quasi-legal and the applicant has to prove that there will be no negative impact to the intent of the zoning law. More commonly, variances involve applications from local homeowners for development on lots that cannot meet the requirements of the land use ordinances. In these instances, the applicant must prove that a hardship exists and that the benefits of granting a variance outweigh the detriments.

The state MLUL sets strict time limits on how long boards can take to make a decision on an application. The time limit applies once an application is determined to be complete by the boards' engineers. Completeness is based on a checklist approved by the Township Committee which details the submission requirements. Many times, applications are held up because they are not complete or there is not enough detail to help the board make an informed decision.

Once complete, an application is scheduled for a public hearing by the appropriate board. In order to notify the public, applicants must send certified letters to nearby property owners as well as publish a notice in local newspapers. During these hearings, members of the public are permitted to ask questions, and at the conclusion of the hearing, make comments or statements.

Public participation in this process is important. Come to town hall and read Chatham Township's land use laws and Master Plan. If you have ideas about changes you would like to see, come to the Township Committee meetings on either the 2nd or the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. If you want to know what development is being proposed, read the public notices section of the *Daily Record* or *The Chatham Courier*, or view the agendas for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment at the Township's web site at www.chathamtownship.org. Attend the Planning Board meetings (held the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7:30 p.m.) or the Zoning Board of Adjustment meetings on the 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m.) and let the members of the boards know what you think about applications to develop Chatham Township.

Open Space Update



The Chatham Township Open Space Committee (CTOSC) was formed in 1997 for the purpose of preserving open space in the Township to be enjoyed by the town residents for either passive or active recreation.

Primarily a rural agricultural town, Chatham Township remained such until the mass development that began in the 1960's. Vast areas of open spaces quickly disappeared during the ensuing twenty years of intensive residential development. By the 1980's, developers were beginning to target properties that had always been considered too environmentally sensitive for development, typically involving steep slopes and areas adjacent to the Great Swamp Preserve. The last shreds of Chatham Township's rural roots were quickly disappearing from the inventory of open space as well as from the collective memories of the residents.

The CTOSC prepared an Open Space Plan which was approved as an element in the Township's Master Plan. In addition to preserving environmentally sensitive lands as open space, the plan includes the creation of a town-wide greenway (Heritage Greenway), a greenbelt surrounding the Township's commercial district (Hickory Greenbelt), and the formation of a hiking and bikeway system connecting the various recreation sites scattered throughout the town.

The establishment of the Open Space Plan resulted in the Township receiving a \$2.5M grant from the State Green Acres program for the acquisition of land that supports the goals of the Plan. Additional funds used in the acquisition of land are the Township's Open Space Trust Fund and through grant requests to Morris County's Open Space Trust Fund.

Since 1997, the CTOSC has preserved over 100 acres along the greenway and greenbelt. The establishment of the municipal open space trust fund in 1997 has permitted the Township to actively seek appropriate properties for purchase. These trust fund monies are used together with the county and state funding sources, which greatly maximizes the effectiveness of the municipal dollar.

Residents of the township can offer properties through outright donation or by means of a bargain sale. A bargain sale is for a price less than the appraised fair market value of a property. A bargain sale makes the landowner eligible for a charitable contribution tax deduction for the difference between the sale amount and the appraised fair market value. Likewise the outright donation of property qualifies for a charitable tax donation. A growing option for landowners who wish to continue owning their land is the use of the conservation easement. Its purpose is to protect the natural, scenic or historical values of the property. Conservation easements grant oversight of the property to another party (a private nonprofit conservation organization or a government agency) while the seller or donor continues to own the land. The landowner retains title to the property and continues to use it subject only to certain specific restrictions. In some instances, a conservation easement may apply to just a portion of the owner's property. The owner retains the right to sell, lease or bequeath the property. The easement is granted in perpetuity and will apply to all future landowners. Granting an easement enables most landowners to reduce their property taxes and be eligible for a charitable contribution for tax purposes. Chatham Township has received conservation easements over the course of time, some have been donated, others purchased.

The preservation of land is of value to the town in many ways. Open space improves the value of all land in the town by providing improved recreation and visually pleasing vistas. Also, taking land from possible development, there is a cost avoidance to residents. With new housing, and the resulting additional children attending schools, taxes collected do not cover the full cost of education, local and county taxes. This results in the rest of the community picking up the shortfall. An expensive proposition compared to preserving the land.

The Open Space Committee normally meets on the 4th Monday of the month. Should you like additional information, please contact Town Hall and a member of the committee will call you.

Committees, Boards, Commissions

Monthly Schedules

All meetings are at Township Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road unless otherwise noted.

Township Committee

2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Planning Board

1st & 3rd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Board of Adjustment

3rd Thursday and 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Board of Health

2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Environmental Commission

1st Tuesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m.

Recreation Committee

2nd Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. The meetings alternate between the Township and Borough.

Open Space Committee

4th Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Colony Pool Committee

4th Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. at Colony Pool Clubhouse

Tree Protection Committee

3rd Monday of each month at 9:15 a.m.

Board of Education

2nd & 4th Monday of the month at 8:00 p.m. in the Band Room at the Middle School, 480 Main Street.

Library Trustees

4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Library

The Historical Society of the Township of Chatham

The Township Historical Society was formed on June 6, 1975 with the objective of increasing the knowledge, awareness, enjoyment and preservation of Township history. The Society, which has about 135 members, is open to anyone with an interest in history. We operate a museum in the Red Brick Schoolhouse which is open to visitors the first Sunday of each month from 2 to 4 p.m.



Monthly meetings are held from September through June, usually on Sunday afternoons. Meetings may be in the Red Brick Schoolhouse or take us to points of historical interest throughout the State. In addition we meet annually with the Chatham Borough Historical Society. Meetings this year included a visit to Washington Crossing State Parks in N. J. and PA., a visit to the Schuyler-Hamilton House Museum in Morristown, a speaker on Thomas Nast at our annual meeting at Fairmount Country Club, and presentations of war time reminiscences by Township residents. Meetings being planned for the upcoming year include a guided tour of Trenton and a special program on the history and development of the Township school system. Membership cost only a yearly fee of \$7.50 for an individual or \$10.00 for a family. Come and join in on the fun! For more information please contact Don Engesser, President, at 973-635-7156

Calendar of Upcoming Events

September 21—Lyrica Chamber Music Concert. Presbyterian Church, Southern Blvd., 3:00 p.m. Admission \$20. Regular— \$15 (Sr)

September 28— Historical Society Trip to Trenton for Historic Tour. Call 973-635-7156

Chatham Art League will present “Lust for Life”, a video biography of Vincent Van Gogh at the Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road at 3 p.m. For information call 973-635-0845.

October 19—Lyrica Chamber Music Concert. Presbyterian Church, Southern Blvd., 3:00 p.m. Admission \$20 Regular— \$15 (Sr)

October 26—Historical Society Open House—Red Brick Schoolhouse, Southern Blvd., 2:00 pm.

November 2—Chatham Township Art League will host the reception for the annual Woman’s Club Community Art Show of the Chathams at Chatham Township Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road at 2 p.m. Call 973-635-0845 for more information.

November 16— Historical Society—Guest speaker will be Ivan Smith from Cooper Mill. for more information call 973-635-7156.

December 7—Christmas Tree Lighting. Green Village Firehouse. Call 973-377-7073 for more information.

December 16- Equipment Fund Raffle Drawing. Green Village Firehouse
1st prize \$4,000, 2nd prize \$2,000, 3rd, 4th and 5th \$1,000 each. See more information in box below

Green Village Fire Department Equipment Fund Raffle Tickets

Only 200 tickets for sale at \$100 each. Tickets can be purchased at :
Gourmet Deli in Shop Rite Shopping Center, Green Village Deli, and
Green Village Sunoco.

Due to the holiday season some of the meeting dates may change. Please call Town Hall for information at 973-635-4600

Did you know?

You can stop those irritating telemarketers. Call 1-888-382-1222 to have your phone number put on a “DO NOT CALL” list. Calls will be blocked 3 months after registering.



Chatham Township was incorporated in 1806 and included the areas that are now the Borough of Chatham, Madison and Florham Park. These areas were connected by turnpikes and toll roads originally built by private corporations to transport their goods to market. Tolls varied, generally whatever the traffic would bear. An average fee was one cent a mile for a four horse team and one-half a cent for each additional horse. Local residents built “The Shunpike” to avoid paying tolls on the Morris Turnpike which went from Elizabeth to Morristown. The Shunpike is still in place and so named in Chatham Township as well as a section in Summit.

Do You Know Where Your Taxes Go?

The municipality of Chatham Township only receives 19 cents of each property tax dollar you pay to provide all the municipal services that you receive. The remainder goes to the county (17 cents), the schools (63 cents) and the Open Space Fund (1 cent).

The current rate is 2.978 for each 100 dollars of assessed value.

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	
Local	0.448	0.418	19%
Open Space	0.020	0.020	1%
County	0.43	0.427	17%
School	<u>1.48</u>	<u>1.435</u>	<u>63%</u>
	2.378	2.300	100%

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Power Line Brush & Tree Clearing

The Township of Chatham Tree Protection Committee would like to inform residents that PSE&G will be clearing its electric transmission rights-of-way in the Township in early September.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on August 18, the Committee met with representatives of PSE&G regarding vegetation clearing under the power lines. It was learned that several years of neglect in vegetation management activities had resulted in multiple power outages directly related to trees, brush or vines coming in contact with high voltage transmission lines. It is also necessary to clear the rights-of-way to maintain unobstructed access for maintenance, repairs and surveillance. The power lines can sag 15 feet in hot weather, and arc 30 feet from this point to vegetation.

It is PSE&G's policy to make every effort to visit bordering property owners to explain the process and answer questions. The first step is usually hand or mechanical cutting or pruning the large trees and dense brush. Trees that resprout after cutting are chemically treated

with an EPA registered growth retardant. Easement property owners who wish to replace trees are encouraged by PSE&G to use low growing species of maple, dogwood, cherry or hawthorn.

Senior Services

Senior services of the Chathams, Inc. translates into a healthful elderly lifestyle that includes physical, social, educational and recreational experiences. It can make the difference between a sedentary and lonely existence and a life filled with friendships and interests. The Center has a variety of activities to interest everyone. Call and have your name put on the mailing list to receive the monthly events calendar. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:15 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is located on the lower level of the Chatham Township Municipal Building, 58 Meyersville Road. For more information about the Center and its calendar of programs please call is 973-635-4565 or 973-635-4556.

The Senior Bus operates Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. For bus reservations call 973-635-8747 one day in advance of your trip.

Recreation Registration

Winter registrations begin in early October for the following:
basketball, travel basketball, wrestling (Chatham Wrestling Club) and baseball clinics.

Winter vacation programs for baseball, softball and pitching clinics will be announced later in the season.

When the weather turns frigid and the ponds are frozen over, come to Nash Field to enjoy ice skating. Open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Ski Club for 7th and 8th graders sign ups are in October, on a first come, first served basis.

Some of the registration forms can be downloaded from the website www.chathamtownship.org or call 973-635-3201 or 973-635-7066 for more information.

Volunteer for the Chatham Emergency Squad

For more information call 973-377-1131 or visit our website www.chathamemergencysquad.org