

# MAYOR MINUTES



## Dear Fellow Residents of Harrison Township.

It appears that our friendly ground hog may have been wrong with his prediction this year based on the recent weather. Like most of you, I am excited to transition to the spring flowers and outdoor activities. With that in mind I want to share some news regarding future plans to make our community more connected, literally.

### **A COMMUNITY CONNECTED — LET'S WALK TOGETHER**

The lack of sidewalks and connectivity within our town has long been a concern expressed to the committee and we heard you. This prompted us to create a Sidewalk Program list several years ago. This list identifies the existing areas in town that require sidewalks to connect to a destination (*i.e. Main St, Shop Rite center, etc.*).

As Harrison Township experienced rapid growth in the 1990's thru the mid-2000's, it was not a common practice for Planning Board approvals to require developers to include "off-site" sidewalks for interconnectivity. We changed that philosophy several years ago and now we seek to include "off-site" sidewalk improvements (*paid by the developer*) in any approval process to ensure the desired connectivity throughout town.

The past oversights are a bit more difficult to address with our current tax dollars considering the cost of these improvements and the fact that we provide our local municipal services on a very lean annual budget. So where will the money come from? Our policy to negotiate with current developers seeking approvals to build in Harrison Township to install sidewalks "off-site" will be noticed soon. One such project will commence this year. The developer involved with the Mullica West Apartment renovations will install sidewalks from that complex to Main St (*along Woodstown Rd*) and then south down Main St to connect to the Shop Rite center. They will also install sidewalks from the Mullica Hill Pond to connect to Main St, as well as build a retaining wall to reinforce the hill on the west side of the pond. This is a \$750,000 infrastructure improvement for our community. All paid for by the developer.

## **PEDAL ACROSS TOWN OR GLOUCESTER COUNTY**

In addition to the sidewalk project, we have been working on and developing a master Bike & Pedestrian Path. In 2013, we planned out that path to coincide with the larger County Bike & Pedestrian Path. You can [view the plan here](#).

I am happy to report that the initial stages of the path will be funded in the County's 2017 Budget. That's correct, the County will fund this project. The path will include a launching point on Main St off of the deck from the upper parking lot of the Old Mill. A bridge will cross over Mill Road to connect to the existing old train trellis (*this will be refurbished*) and drop down to a path through the municipally owned property in the woods, go under the Bypass and emerge onto Walters Road and connect to the William Wilt Sports Complex.

This is the initial phase of the project. Eventually, the path will connect to the Heritage Vineyards, extend through Richwood and connect to existing paths in Glassboro and ultimately Washington Township. This is another longtime-coming and exciting project that will be done in phases. That initial phase will commence this year with County funding for the design and engineering of the first phase.

As a community that shares so many common goals and values, these planned improvements further illustrate our focus on continuing to improve our quality of life. It all takes time, but the plans are in motion to bring you and your families an even better Harrison Township in the future.



Together For Harrison Township,

**Lou Manzo**  
Your Mayor

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Harrison Township Municipal Building  
114 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062

Phone (856) 478-4111 | Fax (856) 478-2498