

Town of Morristown Updates From Mayor Timothy P. Dougherty

Contact the Mayor directly by email at mayor@townofmorristown.org

Hospital Tax Appeals Settled



I'm happy to share with you that the Town of Morristown and Atlantic Health System, the parent of Morristown Medical Center (MMC), have settled a nearly decade long series of property tax appeals. It has been the Town's contention that certain portions of MMC should no longer be exempt from property taxes. The accord follows a landmark decision issued by the New Jersey Tax Court in June 2015 and finalized by the parties in November 2015. Taxable portions of MMC will now include: (1) all space leased to and/or used exclusively by private physicians or private physician groups; (2) privately operated restaurants or cafes; (3) all gift shops; and (4) the Visitor's Garage, also known as the East Garage.

Under the terms of the agreement MMC will pay the Town \$15.5 million, including \$5.5 million of penalties and interest. Payments will be in annual installments over the next 10 years. In addition, beginning this year and through year 2025, an additional 24 percent of the hospital property will be taxed at an assessed value of \$40 million, which represents annual tax payments of \$1.05 million. That makes a total of 40 percent of the hospital property as taxable.



Highlights:

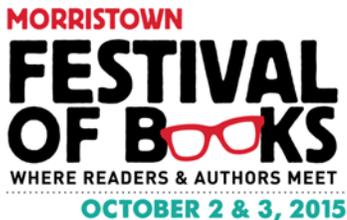
- Hospital Tax Appeals Settled
- Morristown Festival of Books
- Epstein's – Dehart Lofts
- Upcoming Events
- Things to Remember

This agreement benefits Morristown greatly. Taxpayers gain by having the hospital share a greater burden of the cost of providing municipal services. The 10 year commitment provides a guaranteed revenue stream that allows the Town to undertake future planning with confidence. It should be said that both sides recognized the value in avoiding further litigation. And, both sides recognized the value of working together for the betterment of the community.

As for use of the funds, the Administration is working with the Town Council to determine how best to utilize the increased revenue. We believe a portion of the funds will be used towards operating expenses and holding down future tax rate increases. We anticipate that some of the settlement will be used towards fiscal management including our funding emergency trust funds. We also foresee that a portion of the increased revenue stream will be used to invest in the Town's infrastructure, including parks and traffic improvements. Lastly, some large planning initiatives, like a thorough traffic study, will assist in our economic development efforts, as well as ensure that we maintain the quality of life that defines Morristown.

In closing, I fully believe that Morristown Medical Center and the Town are interdependent. I believe this historic settlement to be a win-win for the community and for the hospital, and will ensure a deeper ongoing relationship.

Morristown Festival of Books



The Morristown Festival of Books, held on October 2-3, was a smashing success and true community event. This second year of the Festival drew large, enthusiastic crowds of readers to hear a diverse group of authors speak about their latest fiction and nonfiction publications.

The Festival's overall mission is to celebrate "the power of the written word to challenge, transport, and transform us." 25 plus authors including Gail Sheehy, journalist and author of the 1976 influential bestseller "Passages," spoke on a wide range of subjects from "George Washington" to "Days of Rage." And as in the first year, the Morristown and Township Library hosted a popular young adult author panel. This year's authors were Kendall Kulper, Susane Colasanti, and Sarah Darer Littman.

Linda Hellstrom, the Festival's founder, says that, "the Book Festival has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams that we all had when we began working on the idea two years ago. Morristown and its beautiful and historic library, Mayo Performing Arts Center, and central business district churches served as the venues for the book discussions, and all 'bent over backwards' to be welcoming." Hellstrom urges all book lovers to save the dates for this year's Festival that will take place on September 30 and October 1.

The Festival of Books is great for Morristown, shows the town at its best, and brings people from all over New Jersey to the place we call home. Thanks to all the many people who worked very hard to make this event come off so seemingly effortless.

Epstein's – Dehart Lofts



In September 2015, the Planning Board granted site plan approval to the Dehart Loft project and marked the end of a decade long effort known as the Epstein's redevelopment. This last phase of the Epstein's project was the subject of much scrutiny when the redeveloper proposed to increase the height of the building from five stories to seven, with a dramatic increase in density. We heard your voices and it was made clear that proposal would not proceed. Since then, the Administration worked collaboratively with the redeveloper to maintain the approved height and identify other improvements. The results speak for themselves, which I think represents the next generation in architectural design.

Upcoming Town Events



Annual Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 19th at 10am at Lidgerwood Park

For ages: 3 & under, 4-6 years old & 7-10 years old

Take a photo with the Easter Bunny, hunt for eggs and take home some candy!

Annual Fishing Contest Saturday, April 9, 2016 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. at Burnham Park Pond

Bring your rod and reel! *Bait will be provided.* Refreshments provided. Prizes to be awarded in each age group 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-14 for: First Catch, Longest Fish, and Heaviest Fish.





Clean Communities Annual Spring Clean Up! April 23, 2016 from 9:00am to Noon

Join Clean Communities for a Town Wide Clean-Up. Arrive at Town Hall, 200 South Street on April 23rd at 9am to receive work assignments and help keep Morristown beautiful! For more information, please email k-margiotta@townofmorristown.org or call 973-644-4363.

Clean Communities Document Shred Event, May 7, 2016 from 9:00am to Noon

For \$4.00 per bag or box, shred your confidential and sensitive documents safely and securely. Please bring paper in either paper bags or cardboard boxes weighing no more than 10lbs. Shredding is limited to confidential and sensitive materials only. Please recycle all other paper. No binders or magazines. Proceeds are used for the Morristown Kiwanis High School Scholarship Fund. For more information, please email k-margiotta@townofmorristown.org or call 973-644-4363.



Meet Me in Morristown (Last Thursdays of May through August)

This event is organized through the collaboration of the Morristown Partnership and Morris Arts. The monthly events are designed to encourage people to come to the Morristown downtown area to shop and dine, while being entertained by local artists and musicians. For more information, please visit www.morristown-nj.org.

Morristown Animal Control to offer Free Rabies Clinic (Saturday, June 18, 2016 from 11am-1pm) at Town Hall Parking Lot, 200 South Street.

This clinic offers dogs and cats who have never been vaccinated a 1 year vaccination and all others a 3 year vaccination. Microchipping at the cost of \$25 per animal will also be available. Call 973-796-1975 for more information.



**RABIES CLINIC
for
Dogs and Cats**

Things to Remember

Free Lead Screenings

The Morristown Health Division will be offering Free Lead Screenings for children 6 – 18 months. Please call 973-796-1975 for more information on the event and to register.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

The Town of Morristown Recycling Center would like to remind residents that all Hazardous Waste must be dropped off at the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (MCMUA). Information regarding what types of Hazardous Waste can be dropped off, the MCMUA location and to arrange an appointment please call (973) 829-8006 or visit www.MCMUA.com. The Town of Morristown Recycling Center does take Metal, Electronics, Corrugated Cardboard, Mixed Paper, Household Plastics (#1-7), Glass Bottles and Cans. Clothing and Book donations are also accepted. Please visit the Recycling Center webpage on the Town of Morristown website www.townofmorristown.org for additional information.

Recreation

Morristown Recreation offers Fall Sports, Youth Programs and Adult Programs. Visit www.townofmorristown.org for more information on all our wonderful programs.

Town Council Meetings

Second and fourth Tuesday of each month, beginning at 7:30pm at the Morristown Town Hall 1st Floor Council Meeting Room. Please visit the town website to view the complete calendar for town meetings and events.

Your Feedback Is Welcome

Send questions, comments and/or suggestions for future issues to mayor@townofmorristown.org.