

Grayzel Remarks
Township Committee Meeting
1/18/2012

I am happy to be back up on this dais serving the residents of Morris Twp. I look forward to an active an productive year.

All of the Township Committee members have started budgeting sessions on their respective standing committees. I had my first budgeting session for the sanitary sewer committee this past Monday and will be working on budgets for my other standing committees in the coming weeks.

The Washington Valley Community Association has purchased and installed a second interpretive panel in a series dedicated to this section of Morris Township. Washington Valley is a nationally registered historic district. The first one is located in front of the historic one-room schoolhouse. The new panel is located at the Whippany River entrance to Patriots' Path on Washington Valley Road and discusses some history about the Rockaway Valley Railroad, also known affectionately as the "Rockabye railroad". The railroad was built in 1888 by railroad promoter John Melick and a group of Somerset County farmers and businessmen. They built the Rockaway Valley Railroad to capitalize on a new potentially profitable crop just being introduced into Somerset County: peaches. Unfortunately, blight wiped out much of the peach crop several years later and the railroad could not survive economically. Of note, the railroad terminated just outside Morristown at Speedwell Lake just behind our Butterworth Sewer Plant. If you visit this new interpretive sign on Washington Valley Road you will be able to see the entire route of the railroad along with other interesting facts. Susan Young who is President of the Community association deserves much of the credit for putting this sign together and working with the park commission to get it installed along Patriots Path.

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has transferred 6.5 acres of property to the Morris County Parks Commission, which will eventually be a park of Patriots' Path. The property is off Parsippany Road, south of Route 10. It includes about 1,400 feet of frontage along the Whippany River. The parcel is entirely in Hanover Township, but runs close to Morris Township, and will extend from the existing pathway leading to the Frelinghuysen Arboretum.

This is a good segue into my comments on the Morris Township Trails and Pathways Plan. I have been a member of the Trails Committee for the past several years. For over a year now I have been requesting that the Township Planning Board formally review the plans and begin the process of readying them for incorporation into our Township master plan. Mr. Mancuso and Mr. Rosenbush are both members of the planning board and I request that both of you take this message back to the Chairman of the planning board and try to get this project moved forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank both Jim Lent of the Morris Newsbee and Jane Primerano of the Morris Township PATCH website for their continued news coverage of our town. Their reporting is invaluable in keeping our residents informed. Keeping these local news services in business is in all our best interests. I urge all of our residents to read these two publications on a regular basis to help keep themselves informed.