

The Milltown Observer



Focused on Local Issues, Your Concerns

Issue #2 - June 2017

COUNCIL CORNER



Randy Farkas

As we approach another election season, it is imperative that you, the residents of Milltown, become familiar with the issues facing our community. Financial, environmental, and health concerns are examples of important

issues that Councilman Ligotti and I deal with on a daily basis. Your Democratic elected officials have never lost sight of the fact that we were elected to serve all of the residents, not just the residents who we believe will vote for us. Our guiding principles will always be to represent the residents and taxpayers of Milltown in a fair manner, to listen to your opinions, and take action on any issue with the best interests of our town in mind. We will always be transparent in our motives and accountable for our actions, two traits that may seem rare among elected officials.

As a resident of Milltown, you deserve to have your voice heard. Whatever the topic or issue, you have the right to express your opinion to the members of the governing body. I encourage everyone to attend Council meetings and be heard; there is no stronger tenet in our democracy. If you can't attend meetings in person, write a letter or call the Councilperson in charge of the committee associated with your matter of concern. A list of all Council members and their committee assignments can be found on our Borough website.

Finally, when all is said and done, you have the power to decide who will represent you and our Borough on Election Day. If you

don't understand an issue, feel free to ask us for an explanation. Councilman Ligotti and I are here to help you not only understand the problems that face our community, but we are here to solve them.

PRESSING ISSUE

Milltown Water and Sewer Rates to Increase

To keep up with the rising market costs of water and sewer demands, Councilman Richard Revolinsky referred to the need for an unprecedented double digit (10%) increase in both water and sewer rates "a necessary evil." Residential users, schools, and churches will pay \$227.23 per year in quarterly installments for sewer costs. The users pay, in addition to the minimum rate, an additional \$3.16 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed. All other users, such as commercial and industrial users, will also pay \$227.23 per year in quarterly installments. These users pay in addition to the minimum rate, an additional \$3.16 per 1,000 gallons for the first 50,000 gallons of water consumed and \$4.42 per 1,000 gallons of water consumed for any amount in excess of 50,000 gallons. For water costs, the minimum quarterly amount of water consumption charges is \$47.14 for a maximum usage of 7,500 gallons. The rate is \$8.55 per 1,000 gallons for the first 20,000 gallons. If consumption exceeds 7,500 gallons in a quarter, the rate is \$10.58 per 1,000 gallons for any amount in excess of 20,000 gallons.

Revolinsky described the reason for the increase as two-fold, saying despite increased costs associated with the operation of our water and sewer systems and infrastructure improvements, rates have not risen since 2010. But noted the impetus for considering any increase at this time was unforeseen sewer disposal bills amounting to approximately \$166,000. Revolinsky believes that to bring

the budget back in line, a 10 percent increase is necessary. Councilman Randy Farkas instead suggested a one-time assessment to restore the funds drawn from surplus (see next page for Municipal Government 101 for an explanation of utility surplus).

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT

Milltown Recreation has something for everyone – youth, adult, and senior activities are thoughtfully organized by Milltown Recreation. There are sport programs for kids and adults, as well as a wide variety of fitness programs – from aerobics to Zumba – and everything in between. Did you know that Milltown Recreation also organizes day trips and travel programs? Learn more about this borough department at the Milltown website.

Councilman Randy Farkas is the council liaison to the Milltown Recreation Committee. Randy can be reached at rfarkas@milltown-boro.com to address questions or concerns, and to receive feedback and suggestions to improve Milltown's Parks and Recreation.

MDO MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



Bill Olesinski is a lifelong Milltown resident, born and raised, and a product of Milltown schools. A resident of the Mill since 2000, Bill has served as the 7th District Committeeman for several years and is the Milltown

Democratic Organization's current treasurer. In addition to "typical" treasurer duties, Bill works closely with the candidates to ensure compliance with election laws. He is also active with the county Democratic organization, serving on two subcommittees.

Bill holds a B.A., M.A.T., and M.Ed. in mathematics, mathematics education, and educational administration and supervision, respectively. At the end of this school year, Bill will retire from his job as a math teacher in the Woodbridge school system. There, in addition to teaching, Bill served as the advisor to the Cricket Club.

As a teacher, Bill's summers have been available to pursue a personal passion for international travel. Bill is fluent in German and travels to Germany every summer.

When Bill talks to residents in his district, he hears a lot of concerns about the pending demolition of the Susan Hutton factory and the future plans at the site, which include relocating the borough's Public Works Department. Bill co-hosts an annual "Meet the Candidates" at the Mill so residents can share their unique perspectives with future council members.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WHAT IS A UTILITY SURPLUS?

What is the purpose of a surplus held by our electric and water/sewer utilities? Our water and sewer rates were recently increased by 10% each, in part, residents were told, to restore money spent out of the utility surplus. There is no standard amount that is kept in surplus by municipally run utilities (there are only 9 such utilities in the state). Not enough money in the surplus when an emergency takes place means a sudden extreme rate increase would be necessary to pay for the expense. But an excessively large surplus is money that you could be spending on your own home improvements, vacations with family, or the like. With such a large increase in the Milltown water and sewer rates, it is justified that residents want to know more about exactly how the money will be used. What projects? How will those projects improve the lives of residents?

THANKS BOY SCOUT TROOP 33!



In our last issue, we learned about an Eagle Scout Project to construct a Butterfly Garden in the grass field of the Middlesex County open space property behind the Ice Cream Depot. The Butterfly Garden will be round, approximately 40' in diameter. Based on work with the Rutgers Co-

operative Extension to select the correct plant types and location placement, the Garden will have native species of plants such as switch grass, Shasta daisy, and butterfly weed. There will also be herbs including lavender, Russian sage, and chives.

Another Eagle Scout Project has been approved to construct a pressure treated wood guard rail to prevent vehicles from pulling onto the grass of the open space property containing the Butterfly Garden. This guard rail will be 40' in length. The posts will be 6"x6" and the rails will be 2"x10".

Both Scouts are actively working with residents and businesses to raise funds to purchase construction and plant materials. Any residents who would like to donate can do so through their Scout Leaders: <https://milltown33.mytroop.us/aboutus>.

In our next issue, learn about future potential projects to clean and revitalize the recently acquired Schwendemann property, joint efforts of the Scouts, Borough, and Environmental Commission.

MILL POND - CLOSED FOR FISHING

In October 2016, following a PCB toxic oil spill into the Mill Pond, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife issued an emergency closure of an iconic Milltown fishing location. Our recent windy weather has blown the signage away, but at press time, the closure was still in effect. We bring this to your attention because fishermen have been seen casting their lines over the Main Street bridge. It's very hard to resist, but please be safe and observe this fishing ban until the waterway has been deemed safe once again.

TRIVIA NIGHT

In a fun-filled evening, six Milltown residents were victorious over more than 20 other teams at the Middlesex County Democratic Organization's Trivia Night. Our team consisted of former councilman Joe Pietanza, committeewoman Barbara Pietanza, committeeman Jim Lloyd, committeeman Bill Olesinski, and council candidates Trina Jenson Mehr and Phil Zambrana.

There was stiff competition from the team of Young Democrats, but ultimately, the Milltown team prevailed, improving upon last year's third place finish.

It was so much fun that the team wants to organize a Milltown version of Trivia Night in the fall. Watch for details in our next issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN RAISES FUNDS FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER



Since entering the New Jersey State Assembly in 2014, Joe Danielsen has always placed his constituents first and Party politics last. The Assemblyman gives one hundred percent daily in effort with zero percent for excuses. Living by the values taught to him early in life by his mother, a public school teacher, he always makes sure to give back to society through public service. These values have stayed with him as a longtime volunteer firefighter, and the area's top fundraiser for St. Baldrick's Childhood Cancer Research over the last decade. As a policy maker, Assemblyman Danielsen's core issues remain – reducing property taxes while increasing school funding, improving veterans' quality of life, protecting our seniors' services and enhancing women's rights and pay. Finally, he continues to work on those local issues, which are critical to our quality of life. Joe Danielsen has always been there for us. Now on Primary Day, June 6th, we need to be there for him and vote Column B. I hope we can count on your support.



Milltown Trivia Team



Tuesday, June 6, 2017 polls open 6 am - 8 pm

DISTRICT COMMITTEE PEOPLE

District 1

Randy Farkas & Marie Macor

District 2

John Cornacchio & Barbara Cornacchio

District 3

David Renda & Monika Gaspich Renda

District 4

James Lloyd & Diane Rivera

District 5

Gary Walters & Barbara Pietanza

District 6

Richard Ryan & Margaret O'Donnell

District 7

William Olesinski & Bea O'Donnell

District 8

Joseph Cruz & Mary Cruz

District 9

Peter Vignuolo & Joy Ligotti



L-R Milltown Council Candidates Trina Jensen Mehr and Phil Zambrana, Middlesex County Surrogate Kevin Hoagland, Middlesex County Freeholders Shanti Narra and Leslie Koppel

A registered voter currently not affiliated with a political party may declare their party affiliation up to and including Primary Election day.

To receive your ballot by mail, the application must be received by the County Clerk 7 days prior to the election.

A registered voter currently affiliated with a political party who wishes to change their party affiliation must file a Political Party Affiliation Declaration Form 55 days before a Primary Election.

A voter may also apply in person to the County Clerk until 3:00 p.m., the day before the election.

And Important Information about Vote by Mail:

The County Clerk cannot accept faxed or emailed copies of an Application for Vote by Mail Ballot, unless you are a Military or Overseas Voter, since an original signature is required.

A voter may vote by mail by completing the Application for Vote by Mail Ballot (listed below) and returning the application to their County Clerk.

MDO SCHOLARSHIPS

Rebecca Cornacchio is a lifelong resident of Milltown. Aside from being a senior getting ready to graduate from Spotswood High School, she also works part-time in a Pulmonary Office assisting the nurses as a medical technician/EMT and caring for patients. Rebecca volunteers in Milltown as an active member of the Milltown Rescue Squad. Rebecca is pursuing a career in nursing, and will begin her studies at Middlesex County College to embark on her journey toward becoming a nurse. Rebecca's family is extremely proud of her.

the girls' varsity soccer and girls' varsity basketball teams. Lizzie will enroll in the Honors College at Rutgers University in the fall. She plans to study forensic chemistry and hopes someday to work for the FBI.

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Vignuolo is senior at Spotswood High School and a resident of Milltown. She is a member of the National Honor Society, as well as a captain of both

Gabrielle Pietanza is an 18 year old Milltown resident graduating from Spotswood High School in June. She has been involved in many activities including the Milltown Municipal Alliance, Hugh O'Brien Leadership Program, and is a Captain of the Spotswood High School varsity Softball Team. Gabrielle will be furthering her education at Seton Hall University where she has been accepted in to a prestigious 5 year Master's Program with a concentration in Economics and Business.



L-R Milltown Council Candidate Phil Zambrana, Spotswood High School Seniors and MDO Award Recipients Rebecca Cornacchio, Lizzie Vignuolo, and Gabrielle Pietanza, Milltown Council Candidate Trina Mehr.

PUBLISHING INFO

The Milltown Observer is published and paid for by the Milltown Democratic Organization

Editor-in-chief Margaret O'Donnell

Writers Joe Cruz, Joe Pietanza, Peter Vignuolo

Address 40 Washington Ave, #34
Milltown NJ 08850

Website www.milltowndemocrats.org

"The Milltown Democratic Organization awards scholarships to deserving Milltown residents graduating from high school each year. This year's winners are all Spotswood High School seniors who are active in leadership roles in their school and civic endeavors. Congratulations Rebecca Cornacchio, Lizzie Vignuolo, and Gabrielle Pietanza! Good luck at college in the fall!"



Milltown Democratic Organization
40 Washington Ave #34
Milltown, NJ 08850

Important Dates

★ *Vote* ★ **June 6**

June 12, 2017
Borough Council meeting

July 10, 2017
Borough Council meeting

Borough Council meetings are always the second Monday, with exceptions for holidays. People who have liked our Facebook page will receive Meeting Reminders, as well as Alerts about last-minute special meetings. MDO encourages residents to attend borough council meetings!

COUNCIL CANDIDATES



Trina Jensen Mehr
- Trina Jensen Mehr was born and raised in Milltown. She attended Milltown public schools and Rutgers Preparatory School. Trina graduated

from Smith College with a degree in Economics and received her Master's Degree in Business Administration from Tulane University. She married and started her family in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. She returned to Milltown in 1998, moving into her childhood home. Trina and her husband Paul became involved in local sports and school activities while raising their 3 children, Peter, 24, Jack, 21 and Grace, 19. Trina co-founded and served for 8 years as a trustee of the Milltown Education Foundation. She volunteered in the schools each year and organized numerous events. She has served on the Milltown Board of Education for 4 years and is currently the Vice President. Trina is employed by Bristol-Myers Squibb as an Information Associate. Her work involves developing business processes and compliance systems in a highly regulated industry.

Raising her family has been Trina's number one priority, particularly after the death of her husband in 2006. Trina believes that living in a small town like Milltown benefitted her family

during that difficult time because so many friends and neighbors were there to offer help and support. She looks forward to continuing to serve the community that provided her and her family with so many wonderful memories. She also hopes that her father would be proud that his daughter is contributing to the town he loved so much. Walt Jensen was born in Milltown in 1910 and remained a resident of the town until his death in 1994. He and his father, Christian Jensen, owned Jensen's Hardware on South Main Street. They both were very involved in many local organizations.



Felipe "Phil" Zambrana
- Phil Zambrana, Jr. has lived in Milltown for the past 12 years with his wife Andrea and their two daughters, Kayla, 20 and Mia, 16. Phil was

born and raised in Queens, New York and graduated from Baruch College with a degree in Finance.

With a desire to become more involved in his community, Phil served as a weekend Recreation Coordinator for youth soccer and basketball events. He also developed an interest in the local education system that eventually led him to attend school board meetings and run for a seat on the board. Phil

served as a member of the Milltown Board of Education from 2011-2016; during the last 3 years of his term he served as Chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee and as the liaison to the Spotswood Board of Education.

Phil is currently employed as a Business Manager with the Human Genetics Institute for Rutgers University, which is located on Busch Campus. Until early 2017, Phil was employed as a Research Contract/Grant Specialist with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for the University serving a diverse portfolio of departments within the Rutgers Biological Health Sciences (RBHS) group, as well as the Center for Alcohol Studies (CAS) group. Prior to that, Phil was the Assistant Business Manager for the Rutgers University School of Social Work.

Prior to joining Rutgers University, Phil spent 10 years working at several start-up companies in New York in the media (About.com), college sports (CSTV), and Sirius Satellite Radio (LIME Radio) spaces, where he was the financial steward for those operations.

In his spare time, Phil is an ardent sports enthusiast who enjoys following all of the tri state area sports teams. He also relishes spending time with family and friends.