

The Milltown Observer



Focused on Local Issues, Your Concerns

Special Edition – Celebrating – 2017 Primary Results and July 4th

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 un-

derstand 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 as “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 sew-

er 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).

Additional utility rate increases are expected as a result of multi-million dollar expenses associated with the construction of the new Public Works Complex. Allocations were announced at the June 20, 2017 Special Council Meeting – 7% from the electric utility budget and 3% from the water/sewer utility. Taxes will also increase to pay for this new facility – an additional \$230 a year for the average Milltown home.

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 sub-committees.

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 retired 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). If Milltown did not keep enough money in the surplus, an extreme rate increase would be necessary to pay for expenses in the event of an emergency. 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 spent and how the spending will improve the lives of residents.

What's your preference Milltown? Do you support a temporary assessment to restore the surplus to previous levels, as recommended by Councilman Randy Farkas? Or the permanent rate increase approved at a recent council meeting that will dramatically enlarge the surplus? Tell us on Facebook!

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 and approximately 40' in diameter. Based on work with the Rutgers

Cooperative 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"x 6" 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.

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 Jensen 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.



Milltown Trivia Team

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

Milltown Day



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

**David Crabiell Memorial
Pancake Breakfast**

Congratulations Primary Winners!

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

4TH OF JULY

2107 ushered in one of the most beautiful days we've had for the parade and our many Milltown 4th of July activities. Visit our Facebook page to share your best July 4th memories in Milltown. And post your favorite Milltown 4th pictures while you're there.



left to right Middlesex County Freeholder Director Ron Rios, Freeholder Charles Tomaro, Surrogate Kevin Hoagland

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Important Dates

August 14, 2017 *Borough Council meeting*

Regularly scheduled Borough Council meetings are the second Monday, with exceptions made for holidays. 'Like' our Facebook page to receive Meeting Reminders, as well as Alerts about last minute special meetings. MDO encourages residents to attend borough council meetings!

COUNCIL CANDIDATES



Felipe "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

servicing 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.



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.