

APRIL

Wantage Township Newsletter

2008

Mayor: Parker Space Committeewoman: Clara Nuss
Deputy Mayor: Bill DeBoer Administrator: Jim Doherty

DID YOU FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DOG LICENSE ?

If your dog has been spayed or neutered, the dog license fee is \$10.00, plus late fees. If your dog has not been spayed or neutered, the fee is \$14.00, plus late fees. Late Fees of \$2 per month, per dog, apply if you have not renewed your dog license before 02/01/08. Please Make Checks payable to Wantage Township. If your dog has been spayed or neutered, include this proof with your application. You Must Also Include Proof of Rabies Vaccination. If your dog's rabies shot expires before November 1, 2008, you must get your dog a new rabies shot before you can apply for your 2008 dog license. **You may obtain your dog license either by mail or in person** at the Wantage Township Municipal Building, 888 State Highway Route 23, Wantage, NJ. If you have any questions, call us at 973-875-7192.

ANNUAL BULKY WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAM

The 2008 Spring Clean Up of bulky waste for residences in Wantage Township will take place during the first two full weeks in June. Property Owners who purchase a Bulky Waste Sticker from the Wantage Town Hall will be permitted to place up to 500 pounds of bulky items for collection at curbside. Items must be placed at curbside on the evening prior to the week's collection for your area of town. Materials may include household appliances (commonly referred to as white goods), couches, tables, chairs, mattresses, bedsprings, etc. No household garbage, recyclable material, clothing, building materials, brush/leaves/grass, hazardous materials or tires will be collected. A Bulky Waste Sticker may be obtained from the Wantage Township Tax Collector's office, at a cost of \$30, for each household in Wantage. Proof of residency may be required at the time of purchase. If you are not sure which week to place your bulky waste out for collection, call us at 973-875-7192 and we will let you know. Collection will take place no earlier than 7:00 a.m., and no later than 4:00 p.m. on any given day. **Tickets go on sale as of Thursday, May 1, 2008.**

If you live on a street located to the east of State Highway Route 23, the collection of bulky waste will take place from Monday, June 2— Saturday, June 7.

If you live on a street located to the west of State Highway Route 23, the collection of bulky waste will take place during the week of Monday, June 9— Saturday, June 14.

WANTAGE TOWNSHIP CLEAN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

In return for organizing a roadside litter pickup in Wantage Township, your group can earn money! Gloves, litterbags and safety vests will be provided. The participants in your organization will be developing civic pride in performing a valuable community service. This hands-on experience will help them understand the negative impact of litter on our environment. Choose a date and time for your litter pick up; Allow 1-2 hours for your clean up. Call Ken Karnas at 973-875-5316 for suggestions, and to obtain safety vests, gloves, and bags. Every participant must wear a safety vest and gloves.



ROADSIDE CLEANUPS
EARN MONEY FOR YOUR GROUP
875-5316 (EVENINGS)

The Public Hearing on the 2008 Wantage Municipal Budget is scheduled for 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 24, 2008 at the Wantage Town Hall, 888 Route 23.

Wantage Taxpayers paid 15.9 cents in taxes for every \$100 of assessed value in local taxes last year. This year, for the local portion of the tax bill, Wantage Taxpayers will pay 19.0 cents in taxes for every \$100 of assessed value. For a property assessed at 300,000, local taxes will rise by \$93.00 in 2008. With the Referendum on Local Open Space Tax in Wantage having passed, 2008 will be the second year that a separate tax line item will be seen on your tax bills for local open space preservation funds. In 2008, one half cent for every \$100 of assessed valuation will be collected for use in the preservation of the remaining open space of Wantage Township. A property owner assessed at \$300,000 will contribute \$15.00 for local open space preservation in 2008.

NO ONE LIKES TAXES

You do not like paying taxes. Neither do we. But in the State of New Jersey, collecting taxes is the only way to satisfy the State Government's requirements, while also meeting public needs. If a local government is doing its job right, then the local tax burden should be as low as it can be, while still meeting all of the community's public service needs.

Question #1: How does the average Taxpayer in Wantage compare to the Average Taxpayer in New Jersey?

Answer: The Department of Community Affairs calculated the average property tax bill in New Jersey for 2007 at \$6,796. In Wantage Township, the average property tax bill in 2007 was \$5,846. In 2007, the Average Wantage Township Taxpayer paid \$950 less than the average Taxpayer in the State of New Jersey.

Question #2: Out of that \$5,846, how much money went to Wantage Township Local Government?

Answer: In 2007, 70% of your tax payment was paid to the Sussex Wantage School System and the High Point Regional High School System for the education of our youth. Another 20% went to the County of Sussex to pay for the costs of County Government, the County Library, the County Health Department, and the County Open Space program. For every tax dollar you paid, Wantage Township government received 10 cents. This means Wantage Township received about \$585 from the average property owner to run local government. The rest of your tax money goes to the schools and the county.

Question #3: Aren't Local Taxes in Wantage Township very high compared to other towns?

Answer: No. Wantage has the 3rd lowest local tax burden for any municipality in Sussex County that has a local tax rate.

Question #4: Why doesn't the Town cut spending to control taxes?

Answer: We do. In 2007, the town spent less money than it did in 2006. In 2008, the town will be spending less money on salaries, and on operating expenses, than it did in 2007. Additionally, the following departments have had their spending budgets cut this year: Administration and Finance Departments; Tax Departments; Land Use Board; Construction Department; Aid to Fire Departments; Animal Control; Recreation programs; Capital Improvements. This year's local tax increase comes from needing additional money to handle a severe winter storm season, increased debt obligations from prior years, and reduced fees being received because of the down-turned economy. Any more cuts in these areas would reduce full time service to the residents, and create the potential for emergency situations that could wind up costing the taxpayers more money next year rather than less money this year. As it stands, the level of cuts which have already been authorized has prompted the Township Administrator to warn that local government closures may be needed before the end of the calendar year in order to stay within the budget being presented. When the budget reaches that level, further cuts will not produce taxpayer benefit.

Question #5: Is there anything else that contributes to the tax increase?

Answer: Yes, unfortunately, the delinquent taxpayers of Wantage Township make it necessary for the rest of us, who pay our taxes on time, to pay more in taxes. New Jersey State Budget Law requires that 100% of taxes be collected, so those of us who do pay our taxes have to make up for those who do not! The increased number of Delinquent taxpayers in 2007 account for \$15 of the \$93.00 increase this year, earning them membership into the Wantage Township Hall of Shame. If people pay their taxes on time, every one's taxes will go down!

Question #6: What do I Get for My Tax Dollars?

Answer: No town can promise that every member of the public will receive direct benefits from payment of taxes, because taxes are not a user fee. We all have to pay taxes for the cost of education in society whether we have children in the school system or not. By the same arrangements, we are called upon to pay for a wide variety of public services that we, personally and individually, may never need to use. At best, your town government can offer you the opportunity to "get something" for your tax dollars, by choosing to be an active participant in the community:

Hopefully, you and your loved ones will never need their services, but your tax dollars provide Wantage with a fully trained and equipped volunteer Fire Department and volunteer First Aid Squad, ready to serve you in case you ever do need them. You can maximize your personal return on the payment of your taxes by joining the Fire Department or First Aid Squad, and helping us provide life saving service to our neighbors.

Your tax dollars pay for the maintenance and upkeep of two beautiful local parks, which provide opportunities for sports enthusiasts and participants in youth sports programs including baseball, softball, football, soccer, basketball, joggers, hikers, and skateboarders. You can maximize your personal return on the payment of taxes by coming out to our parks and rooting for the team of your choice, or walking along the walking paths to get exercise, or offering your services as a coach for one of our youth sport teams. Thousands of residents and taxpayers do so – join us!

You get over 125 miles of public roads maintained on a regular basis, by the payment of salaries, benefits, vehicles, and equipment for a full service public works department, and the materials needed to repair the roads and respond to winter storm situations. Indeed, in the past eight years, your governing body has been able to maintain the current ten year road improvement program of 2000 - 2009, while at the same time removing a 40% backlog from the previous ten year plan of 1990 – 1999. Maximize your personal return on taxes by contacting the Clean Communities Coordinator and arranging a Clean Up Crew along a public road or along the end of a cul-de-sac, and you can receive payment through a State Grant for helping to beautify our Town!

It is a requirement of New Jersey State Law that your local government must have a Tax Assessment Office, a Tax Collection Office, a Town Clerk Office, a Finance Office, a Construction Office, a Fire Prevention Office, and a Court System, as well as other mandatory positions. These departments serve the public on a full time basis in Wantage, and we, as taxpayers, are obligated by New Jersey law to pay for the costs of these departments. And in Wantage Township, the costs of providing these services are equal to – and in many cases much less expensive than – the costs found in other comparable towns. Maximize your personal return on taxes by telephoning us and making us work for you, whenever you need public service – Need a street sign replaced? Need a Stop Sign? Do you want a “Caution – Children Playing” sign? Did our snow plow damage your mailbox? Need a pothole filled? Call us, and help us to help you.

Question #7: Isn't it true that we get less service in Wantage than other towns receive?

Answer: Not really. All New Jersey towns use tax dollars to provide for a wide variety of required services. Many of these services may be things you, personally, never see or use. For example, we certainly hope that you will never need to be involved in the Wantage Township court system, but the State of New Jersey requires us all to pay for that court system. As another example, individual taxpayers may not “see” any benefit from having to pay for a Township Engineer, but the services of a licensed engineer become necessary countless times throughout the year for a public corporation to do business properly and legally. The following list represents the areas where our local tax dollars are spent. This is a common list, and most of these services will be found in towns throughout the State of New Jersey:

Municipal Administrator/Manager, Municipal Clerk Office, Local Elections Administration, Handling Requests for Public Records, Finance Office, Records Management, Tax Collection Office, Tax Assessor Office, Payroll Administration, Accounts Receivable/Payable, Clean Communities Program, Recycling Coordinator, Municipal Court System, Municipal Engineer, Municipal Attorney, Land Use Board (Planning/Zoning Board), Construction Office, Building Subcode, Electric Subcode, Plumbing Subcode, Zoning Officer, Constable, Recreation Commission, Fire Prevention Bureau, Animal Control, Bingo/Raffle Licensing, Food Handlers Licensing, Kennel Licensing, Birth/Death/Marriage licensing, Dog Licensing, Emergency Management Coordinator, Volunteer Fire Dept, Volunteer First Aid Squad, Auditor, Board of Health, Public Works - Buildings & Grounds, Public Works – Roads, Public Works – Parks, Open Space Committee, Liquor License Administration, Notary Public service, annual bulky waste garbage collection program, municipal website, municipal calendar, municipal newsletters.

To the extent that is allowable under the law, wherever possible, we reduce the costs of providing these services through collection of fees by those who directly use the services. The “balance” becomes part of the local tax burden.

Some municipalities in Sussex County provide for the following Services. Wantage Township does not provide these services: Public Works - Water Dept (we have no water system), Public Works - Sewer Dept (we have no sewer system), Cat Licensing, Environmental Commission (currently inactive in Wantage), Economic Development Committee (currently inactive in Wantage), Shade Tree Commission, Municipal Street lighting (common in compact Boroughs, not very common in widespread Townships), Local Police Department (traditionally, very strong sentiments have been expressed against establishing this service in Wantage), Municipal Garbage Collection, Local Historian/Historical Society.

If there are any other services that you see being offered in Sussex County towns but not in Wantage Township, please bring them to our attention so they may be given due consideration.

WANTAGE TOWNSHIP RECREATION COMMISSION UPDATE

The Wantage Township Recreation Commission and Veterans Memorial Committee are asking for your support in the construction and dedication of a memorial to honor our Veterans. It will be located in the newly renamed Veterans Memorial Fields (previously the "Lott Road" Fields). Donations can be made through the Township Recreation Commission. For more information or to volunteer please contact: jim@wantagewp-nj.org. Thank you!

The Wantage Township Recreation Commission will once again be hosting the Little Miss Wantage, Little Mister Wantage, and Miss Wantage Contests. The winner of the Miss Wantage contest will represent Wantage Township at the "Queen of the Fair" Pageant during the New Jersey State Fair. Look for further details to come on www.wantagewp.com

Calling All Talented Residents! The 2008 Talent Show needs you! The winners will be eligible to compete at the annual Sussex County Talent Show to be held at the New Jersey State Fair. Watch for further announcements on www.wantagewp.com

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