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New access to volunteer boards in Morris Township

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MORRIS TWP. — Township residents who wish to serve on volunteer boards will have to follow a modified procedure that proponents said announces the availability of openings on such boards to a wider audience.

Township Committeeman Jeffery Grayzel, who is seeking a new term in November, said Friday the change, embodied in an ordinance passed unanimously by the township committee on Oct. 21, changes the process by which such openings are made public.

Before the ordinance was passed, Grayzel said, anyone interested in an open seat on a volunteer board pretty much had to know that the position was open, and often only those residents in the mayor's political party or close circle were made aware of the openings.

Now, he said, such openings will be clearly posted on the township's website www.morristwp.com, where an application can be downloaded.

The change will formalize what Grayzel said was a fairly informal process.

Mayor Scott Rosenbush agreed the new ordinance will formalize the application process, but said the old process worked well enough to ensure that a list of applicants for board or committee openings was available for consideration.

He disagreed that under the old system openings were announced only to specific residents. Instead, he said, the availability of the resident to serve and the nature of the board was a factor in who was selected for an open seat.

It is important that a person being selected for the planning or zoning board, for example, understands that attendance is vital because of the nature of the work, and because applicants have paid to file documents for review, Rosenbush said.

Rosenbush, a township committeeman chosen this year by the committee to serve as mayor, is also seeking re-election in November.

In Morris Township, the mayor alone makes appointments to such entities as the planning board, recreation board, health board or beautification committee. Rosenbush said under the new ordinance that will not change. He said volunteer board or committee openings are already posted on the township's website, but that the new ordinance will generate a central place to view them.

Grayzel said the new procedure should help reach a larger audience and perhaps draw residents with specific interests to the board or committee openings. He said that under the new process it might be possible to get an architect to seek a seat on the beautification committee, he said.
