



Morristown United for Healthy Living

September 25, 5:30pm- 7:30pm, St. Margaret's Church

Agenda

Minutes in purple

5:30 Welcome, Summer Re-Cap & Introductions

- Brief overview of our coalition was provided; if you are new to the group, visit www.njhealthmatters.org/tiles/morristownunited or email morristownunited@njhealthmatters.org for more information
- Recap of summer activities distributed with these minutes

5:40 Upcoming Events/Activities

- [Housing Alliance October Meeting/Breakfast \(October 10th, 8:30 - 10:30, Randolph Diner\)](#)
- [Good Neighbor Training](#) (Sponsored by Morristown United, led by Family Promise; **October 18th**, details TBD)
- [Under One Roof Conference \(October 19th-20th, Hyatt Regency New Brunswick\)](#)
- [Train-the-Trainer session on fair housing & housing discrimination \(October 23rd, 10:00am -3:00pm, Morris County Office of Temporary Assistance, Morristown\)](#)
 - *If you are interested in attending these events and want more information, contact Ashley.anglin@atlanticealth.org*

5:50 Joint Learning Opportunity

- Gerald Brennan, Esq., Managing Attorney, Morris County Office, *Legal Services of Northwest Jersey* (see notes on p. 4 and flyer/brochure sent with these minute)

6:05 Grant Applications and Current Funding Updates

- New Jersey Healthy Communities Network

- We are applying for funding from the 2017 NJHCN – Community Grant Program. Morristown United will oversee the grant, with strategies being led by Grow it Green (mobile market in the 435) and the Town of Morristown (park improvements at Pocahontas Park). Email Ashley.anglin@atlanticealth.org for more information.

- MUHL Mini-Grant Updates

-Townology (funding for parklet), not present

-Family Promise (Good Neighbor Training); training is in the works, currently set to be held on 10/18. Additional details forthcoming.

6:20 Calendar Review & Planning [Tabled until next meeting]

6:30 Break-Outs by Group

- Those interested in working on “trainings” will meet together
- Built Environment/Sense of Community group will meet together
 - Focus on action steps for selected strategies



7:20 **Report-Backs by Group**

- Training group:
 - Two focus groups were held since we last met. One with primarily African-American participants (~10 people). One with primarily Latinx participants (~30 people)
 - In general, people want to stay in Morristown; they are concerned about safety, drugs, and parking; they are interested in training and resources, but concerned about “opportunities” that lead to dead-ends; need more assistance navigating services/opportunities; income eligibility is too high; a racial divide is felt in the community.
 - Specific trainings people are interested in include, GED training, tenant rights, navigating affordable housing, wage theft issues, owners’ rights/permitting
 - The group is currently working on two trainings based on this information:
 - The Good Neighbor Training done by Family Promise
 - The Know Your Rights Training done by Legal Aid
 - If you are interested in helping out with these trainings or learning more about the focus group results, contact lmurphy@cfp-mnh.org or michelle.roers@unitedwaynnj.org
- Built environment/sense of community group:
 - Currently working on putting together our NJHCN grant application (due 10/20)
 - Looking for additional funding to enhance our two projects (mobile market and park improvements); Ashley will follow up with local banks and Town grant writers are also looking for additional funds
 - Town engineers working on park plan
 - Partnership between Grow it Green and Morris Habitat is moving forward; working on a public bulletin board/place to give away free produce and a retaining wall to increase safety on the site.
 - Group is interested in moving forward with the creation of lending libraries throughout the neighborhood; Sol will reach out to local libraries, Ashley will reach out to the town re: placement/permissions; Francine is willing to help with books via Jack and Jill
 - We did not get the National Center for Healthy Housing Lead Poisoning Prevention grant; however, we will connect with the Northern Regional Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes Coalition to see if we can do any additional work in this area
 - Partnership with Morris Arts is moving forward with events at the Early Street Garden; Carlos will work to integrate this more closely with our work
 - There is also interest in holding arts/music events indoors during the winter led by Morristown United to build sense of community. Possible locations include St. Margaret’s, Neighborhood House, Manihan Village Community Center. Angel can help us get into the Community Center; we would love to be able to use this space and want to know what we can do to move this process along.

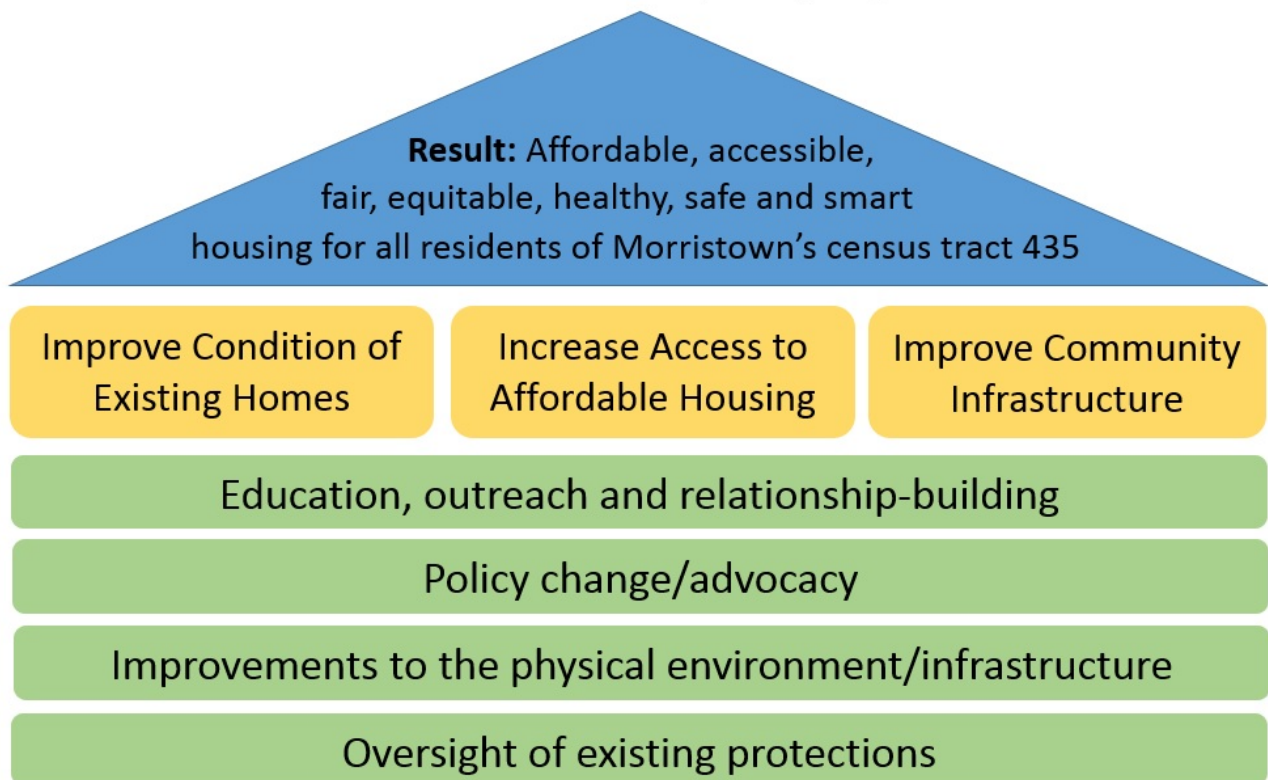
7:30 **Close**

Next meeting: October 23rd, 5:30 – 7:30



Our Impact Statement: We will improve the condition of existing homes, increase access to affordable housing stock (rented and owned), and improve the built environment/community infrastructure via resident education and outreach, policy change/advocacy, improvements to the physical environment, and oversight of existing protections for all people living in 435 with a particular focus on equity.

Morristown United for Healthy Living: Impact Model





Joint Learning Opportunity Notes (Legal Services of Northwest NJ):

- Office location: 30 Skylar Place, Morristown (accessible to people with disabilities)
 - Intake line: (973) 285-6911
 - People with a summons of complaint or a warrant of removal are seen immediately; complaints about landlords are connected to an attorney
- Clients must be at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (and their assets are also assessed) to be able to get representation from Legal Services of Northwest NJ
- Overall goal related to housing is making sure that housing is accessible, sanitary, and safe. They focus on what tenants can do to make sure their housing needs are met and that their rights as tenants are protected.
 - Legal Services are available to speak to tenant groups about particular issues
 - They also work to make sure clients have the income they need to afford their rent via connection to other programs (e.g., Temporary Rental Assistance program)
- In NJ laws are very protective of tenants because there is a shortage of affordable housing. Tenants have a lot of remedies/rights under NJ law, but people do not often know what they can do or what services/laws are in their favor.
 - **It is very important for tenants to understand that if they get a letter from a landlord or lawyer, they don't have to move out. The only legal way for a tenant to be evicted is for the landlord to file a complaint in landlord/tenant court.**
 - **Landlord "self-help" tactics (like changing the locks) is illegal and is a criminal offense**
 - Morristown has rent-leveling (aka rent control) policies in place. This restricts how much landlords can increase rent while a unit is occupied. However, once a unit is vacant, the landlord can increase rent to match "market rates." Landlord cannot make "unconscionable" rent increases (i.e., an amount that would seem outrageous to the common person/court). There is no statewide statute for this.
- Legal Services of Northwest NJ accepts federal funding; therefore, clients must have legal documentation. HOWEVER, they can connect people to Legal Services of New Jersey, who don't take federal funding and therefore don't require legal status, at least for providing advice/resources.
- Questions and Answers:
 - Q: Has the number of eviction due to inability to pay gone up recently?
 - A: It goes in cycles with the economy
 - Q: What if there are concerns about safety? For example, harassment by other tenants in public housing. What if the housing authority isn't taking action?
 - A: Call the intake number. Public housing tenants have additional rights (e.g., right to a public hearing). Make sure that you have complaints on file and keep track of all contacts/documentation. Look up the Grievance Procedure included in your lease. Convene a tenant group (there is a regulation—with the force of law—that all public housing have tenant groups). In communications, copy the



Executive Director (in Morristown, there is currently a Acting Director, Douglass Priester) and the attorney for the Housing Authority.

- Q: I've had the same job for three years, and my assets haven't changed but my rent was increased without fair notice. How can this happen?
 - A: The Housing Authority is allowed to charge up to 30% of your income for rent. If you disagree, request a meeting with whoever made the determination. You have a right to a grievance hearing. If your requests are ignored, you can also reach out to the HUD regional office in Newark. Public housing is subject to federal oversight.
- Q: What if people are told that they will be evicted if they make complaints?
 - A: This is illegal. NJ has a "retaliatory eviction law" that prohibits landlords from retaliating against tenants who make complaints.
- Action item: Hold training for community members on tenant rights
 - Training sub-group is working to hold a training led by Gerry at Neighborhood House in November. Additional details to come