

I. THE VISION FOR MENDHAM BOROUGH

The Borough of Mendham, New Jersey is a community where time seems to have passed more slowly than in other parts of the County. Protective of its character, its streetscape, its development, and its residents, Mendham is a semi-rural, residential community where the names of its founding families have become the names of many of its streets, where homes sold are often referred to by the last name of the seller rather than by the street address, and where children often return to raise the next generation.

Incorporated on May 15, 1906, Mendham Borough occupies only six (6) square miles. It is served by two (2) main roads: Main Street that runs between the Mendham Township lines on both the east and west sides of town, and Mountain Avenue/Hilltop Road that runs from Mendham Township on the north to the Bernardsville line on the south. At the intersection of these roads (one of only two (2) signalized intersections in the Borough) lies the heart of this community, where several of the Borough's landmark white buildings welcome residents and visitors. Among these are the historic Phoenix House, the Black Horse Inn, Robinson Drug Shop, and One East Main, all dating to the beginning of the last century or earlier.

Home to a slow growth population of 5097 residents, Mendham Borough is a largely residential community of homes on land parcels ranging from ¼-acre lots to over 25 acres. With few existing lots available for development, Mendham Borough can best be described as a nearly built-out community on the verge of rebuilding. In fact, while there has been some new construction during the past decade in areas toward the Borough's outer borders, the heart of Mendham Borough, its Village Center, experiences much more renovation, restoration, and preservation than it does new construction. During the next decade and beyond, Mendham Borough is likely to see redevelopment in its existing neighborhoods with larger homes replacing smaller ones, occasional property divisions, and expansion of existing homes. An active Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Historical Preservation Commission, and Borough Council will continue to assure proactively that new development does not come at the expense of the historic character of the Borough, and that the vision of the Borough's leaders over the years continues to be maintained.

Designated as a Village Center by the State Planning Commission, Mendham Borough also serves as the business district for The Mendhams. In addition, the Borough is home to the regional high school that is attended by students from Mendham Borough, Mendham Township, and the Chesters. The Borough has five (5) churches, a sheep farm, cattle farms, a residential drug rehabilitation facility, a 40-unit senior housing complex, a skilled care nursing home facility, a 300-unit town home complex, and more. Much of the recent Main Street construction in the Borough has been focused on the non-residential properties, and the Historic Preservation Commission along with the Board of Adjustment and Planning Board have worked to ensure that adherence to character has been maintained in each of these developments.

A tightly-knit community where neighbors know neighbors, and where generations take significant pride in the accomplishments of residents, Mendham Borough is a community to which people are attracted because of its location, character, and services. It is also a community in which residents recognize the need for involvement and where volunteerism flourishes. Even with a small population base, Mendham Borough invests in itself, supporting youth programs, recreation, and education. The community also takes pride in its environs, with a delineated Historic District that is proposed to be expanded to encompass a larger section along the Main Street Corridor. It is by protecting the streetscape and preserving the character of the town that the Borough is able to create its distinct atmosphere from entrance to exit.

Historic but progressive, Mendham Borough adapts to the times while ensuring that the values upon which the community is based remain intact. The Borough is committed to finding ways to work to protect the community and the environment, while accommodating the trend towards larger homes, the growth of home offices and home professions, and more. The quality of life of its residents is a top priority of Mendham Borough.

As the Borough focuses on this quality of life, it is cognizant of the limitations that can affect it. The Borough has land constraints that would inhibit expansion beyond its current two (2) schools, today home to some 600+ students in the K-8 system. Thus, it balances growth against its commitment to maintain the educational standards that consistently place Mendham Borough elementary, middle, and high schools among the best in the state. Further development outside of Mendham Borough but within the region will continue to impact the regional high school population and thus, the sewer and traffic issues already faced. As such, further expansion of the high school is not acceptable. The Borough has no expansion opportunities given the restricted capacity of the current sewer plant and the inability to dispose of added wastewater. Therefore, any development on one of the Borough's few large, undeveloped land parcels would need to provide for private wastewater treatment. In addition, the Borough has virtually no roadway expansion opportunities. Considering that the Borough's main road also serves as a major thoroughfare for traffic traveling from western Morris County to Morristown and points in Essex County and beyond, the safety of its residents and the flow of traffic represent an ongoing challenge for the Borough.

As it looks to the future, Mendham Borough has a vision of maintaining its bucolic nature and character, while evolving to better serve the needs of its residents, current, and future. Key aspects of this vision are the Borough's roles as:

- ◆ A **multi-generational community**, with a broad spectrum of housing options that enable residents to raise their families and to remain in the community once their children have grown
- ◆ A **protector** of the character of its streetscape and buildings, requiring a commitment to continual renovation, restoration, preservation, and maintenance to protect the current and future landmarks of the community
- ◆ An **advocate** for the protection of open space and natural resources

- ◆ A **supporter** of entities of all types that can contribute to the ambience of a Village Center
- ◆ A **host** to the growth of home offices and home professions, enabling residents to live, work, and play in their home community, with a commitment to the modifications necessary to achieve this without impacting the infrastructure, services, or privacy of neighbors
- ◆ A **catalyst** to promote volunteerism and to identify new and better ways of working with the community
- ◆ An **ally** of retail and service oriented businesses in line with the demographics and socioeconomic characteristics of the Borough

As a century-old municipality that remains one of the most highly desirable residential areas in the state, Mendham Borough will move forward with one eye on the future and the other on the qualities that have contributed to its past growth. It embraces people, progress, and potential while it balances all against maintenance of a character that has been built over generations. Finally, it stands as a symbol of community evolution, changing slowly and purposefully based on what has been, what is, and what can be.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Grounded firmly in history and with a deep interest in protecting the character of the Borough while also addressing the emerging challenges of the 21st century, Mendham Borough maintains its commitment to the overall objectives that have contributed to the growth of our community. It also recognizes and has, since the first Master Plan adoption in 1951, evolved to include commitments to environmental conservation and protection of natural resources, to affordable housing needs, to preservation of its historical legacy, to formalization of the State Plan's designation as a Village Center, and to other objectives required of a community focused on controlled growth and evolution.

Thus, the revised goals which have emerged from the 2000 Master Plan Reexamination and this sixth submission of the Mendham Borough Master Plan reflect the unique blend of traditional and contemporary lifestyles that stand side-by-side in this community. They are:

- ◆ To retain the small town character of the community by implementing the Village Planning Criteria as adopted for Village Center Clusters to plan for new development within the Village boundary
- ◆ To preserve the rural quality of the Borough and its historic heritage beyond the Village environs
- ◆ To protect and preserve the Borough's open space and natural resources of soils, vegetation, air, and water through the wise use of planning techniques and careful control of land development

- ◆ To maintain a reasonable balance and variety of housing options within an approved housing element
- ◆ To maintain healthy business districts with a diversity of local businesses to serve the residents of Mendham Borough
- ◆ To improve traffic flow and provide for the safe movement of people and vehicles through the Borough while minimizing adverse impact on residential streets
- ◆ To provide adequate local community services and recreational facilities
- ◆ To recognize and encourage preservation and designation of those historic properties and buildings that contribute to the unique atmosphere that is Mendham, particularly those in the Historic District and which are on the State and National Registers of Historic Places
- ◆ To integrate new development and redevelopment into the historic fabric of the Village Center area
- ◆ To maintain the quality and historic character of existing buildings, including all structures which contribute to the Borough's history
- ◆ To continue to participate in area-wide programs for proper watershed management