



MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP
MUNICIPAL CENTER
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MOUNT LAUREL, NEW JERSEY 08054

Township Acquires St. John Neumann Monastery Property

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOUNT LAUREL-As part of the Township's 20 year plan for open space acquisition, Mount Laurel Township announced the acquisition of 564 Walton Avenue, otherwise known as the St. John Neumann Monastery property.

The Township will acquire 71 of the 88 acre parcel. The Diocese of Trenton will continue to operate St. John Neumann Church. The Rosary Garden and a small house on the property will revert to a non-profit organization that will maintain the Rosary Garden. That piece of the 88 acre parcel was subdivided to enable the maintenance of the Garden. Should efforts to maintain the Rosary Garden fail, the property would revert to the Township.

"The Township is thrilled to be able to acquire a property that adds to our growing list of open space acquisitions," said Deputy Mayor Dennis Riley. "This property is filled with trees and green open space many residents use for walking and running. Now, the residents are guaranteed it will stay that way."

This new acquisition is contiguous to 88 acres previously purchased by the Township. Since obtaining the property was part of the Township plan of open space acquisition, the purchase of the property will not result in any tax increase to Township residents.

"The Township continues to try and find ways to save the Township from over development," said Mayor Richard Van Noord. "Some of the development in our Township is out of our control and state mandated, but when we have a chance to preserve the character of this Township, we will do whatever we can to make it happen."

The Township will acquire the Monastery building on the property. Initial plans are to turn the building into meeting space. The Cistercians Monks, who currently own the property, will return to Italy in the next 90 days. As part of the agreement, the Cistercians will have six months to remove all articles and windows, which may require an auction, and have 12 months to relocate a nativity scene.

"Mount Laurel is a leader in the state in open space preservation," said Riley. "We realize that quality of life is extremely important to the families of Mount Laurel."