

THE HILLS COMMUNITY IN SOMERSET COUNTY: A BRIEF HISTORY & OVERVIEW

Written by Bob Zorechak

The Hills: In the beginning...



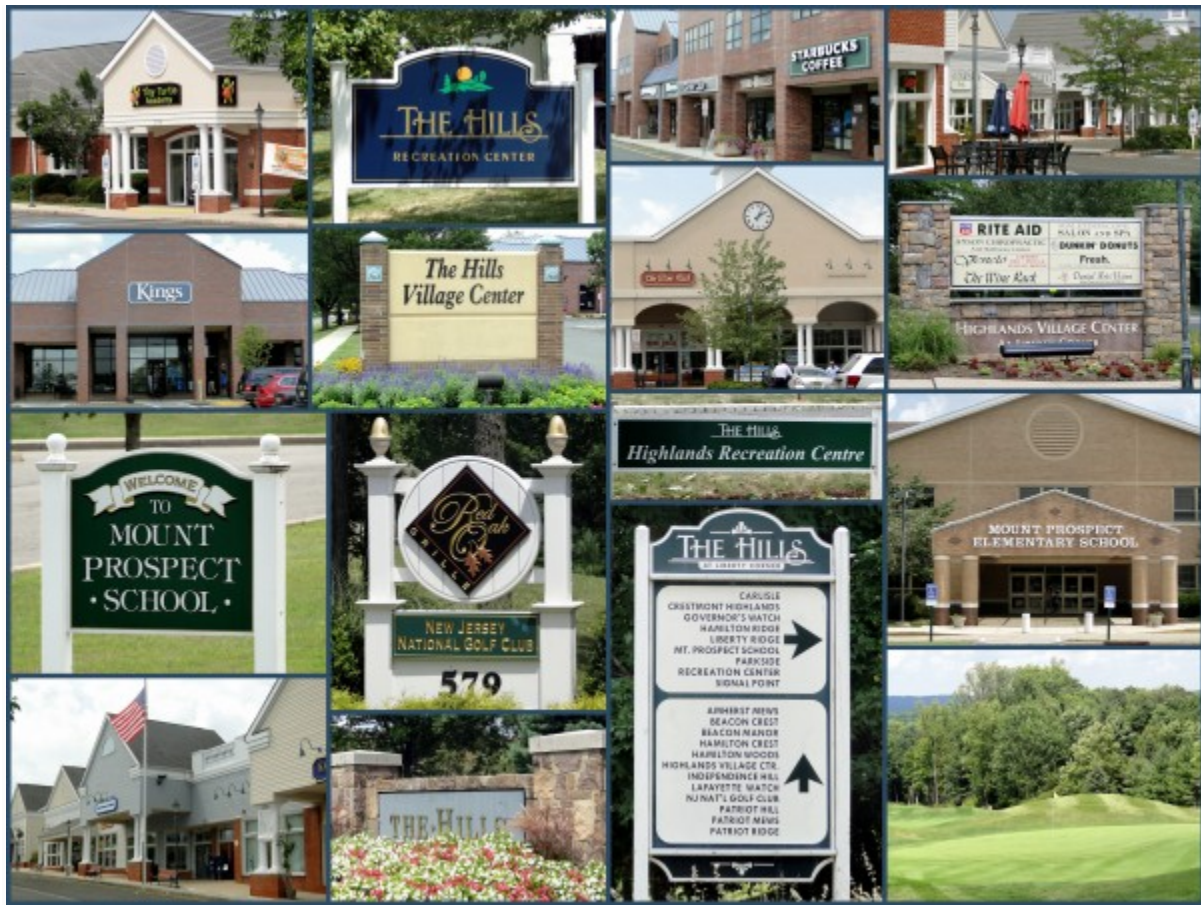
The origins of this community, which is one of the largest planned developments in New Jersey, dates back to 1969 when the descendents of Grant Schley sold Schley Mountain for \$2.2 million for development of what is now known as The Hills Development of Bedminster and Bernards Township (Basking Ridge). By the time construction began in earnest on the Bernards side in the mid-1990s, Johns-Manville had sold its 50 percent share to William E. Simon and Sons. This group, in turn, auctioned off huge parcels to major home builders like K. Hovnanian, Gale Wentworth & Dillon, Pulte Homes, Matzel & Munford, Toll Brothers and several others.

Situated on 1,800 acres atop Schley Mountain in the bucolic Watchung Hills this development encompasses the two townships of Bernards (Basking Ridge) and Bedminster in Somerset County, where Interstates 287 and 78 cross.

In addition to its prime location, The Hills serves a unique niche in the market where buyers are able to purchase a home at a reasonable cost in a relatively wealthy area and gain entry into the heart of the state's famous "Hunt Country". There are also other advantages such as a diverse pool of housing styles, sizes and prices to fit everyone's needs. The location also provides close access to many of the state's leading employers including some of the most well noted Fortune 500 companies in the fields of telecommunications, pharmaceutical, banking, finance & insurance, and engineering, just to name a few. Close access to other employment hubs such as Newark, New Brunswick, Morristown, Bridgewater

and even NYC is also a big advantage to residents. Besides being close to a host of the state's major highways, public transportation is also an attractive option with NJ Transit train service available in several convenient locations just outside the development.

In total, The Hills has a total of 4,728 single family homes spread out over 38 different neighborhoods varying in style and size from 1 bedroom / 1 bathroom condominiums for just under \$200k, all of the way up to 6 bedroom estate style homes which have sold for well over \$2M.



The Hills at Basking Ridge

The Basking Ridge portion of the community has 16 different neighborhoods with 1,893 homes situated on 1,280 acres of land. Included within this space is an elementary school (Mount Prospect School), a 260 acre championship golf course, a restaurant, and a day care center, some of which are part of a 50,000 square feet. Commercial space included within a small shopping center located on top of Schley Mountain (Highlands Village Shopping Center). There are two clubhouses, with pools, exercise room, tennis &

basketball courts, baseball & soccer fields, walking/jogging/cycling paths and plenty of open space offering gorgeous scenery and plenty of natural beauty surrounding the nearby hills.

In addition, Basking Ridge offers an onsite public elementary school within the development, which is part of an award winning, highly ranked and well known school system recognized for its excellence throughout the state. Getting access to the Basking Ridge school system is a primary draw for many people looking to move to this area. Other advantages of living in Basking Ridge include its wide array of housing choices, its historical past, its charming, tree-lined downtown shopping district, world class restaurants, outstanding public parks, library & recreational programs along with its beautiful open spaces are just a few of the things that translates to a very high quality of life for all of its residents.