

Worcester Crier



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FALL 2007

What's Happening in Worcester 2007

Chairman's Report by John R. Harris

In the Fall 2006 Worcester Crier, I wrote an article highlighting the major activities of the township over the past year. A lot of people told me that they appreciated getting the update and asked if I would do it again this year. So, here is what we have been doing since my last report.

Early this year the township office implemented a new property management computer system called Next Level. It is a remarkably powerful system for researching and recording just about everything that involves a parcel of land in the township. In addition to the extensive data it makes available to us, we can record each phone call we get from residents and see a variety of aerial maps. It is up and running very well. Having this data readily available will make accessing records easier and faster, enabling the township to increase productivity without hiring new people.

We also accepted bids to purchase and erect two new pavilions in Heebner Park. One will be near the playground and include bathrooms. The other will be near the soccer fields and include a canteen area, as well as bathrooms. We are expecting completion this fall. This is part of the ongoing Heebner Park plan, designed to provide for a complete park experience. In addition, we are wiring the gazebo for electricity to provide lighting and a speaker system in the future.

This spring we had the old springhouse, at the former Smith property on Hollow Road, restored. It lies in a corridor which the township owns and hopes to include in a trail system in coming years. The Worcester Historical Society tells us that the building may actually be a "pioneer house" in which early settlers lived before their larger stone houses were built. Watch your mailbox for a program they are planning on this subject later this fall.

This summer the Board approved a 2 million dollar contribution to the capital campaign of the Worcester Fire Company. As you have seen they have torn down their 45 year old fire house and are well into building a new one. The new firehouse will enable them to work on the trucks inside and provides training space that the previous one lacked. There are plans for two new trucks in the next few years, in addition to the one they acquired in December of 2006. Consultants hired by the township to study the long-range plans of the fire company told us that we had one of the finest fire companies they have seen anywhere...but we already knew that. Thank you, Worcester firefighters, for all that you do for our community. We encourage all Worcester residents to "buy a brick" to help the Volunteer

Fire Department pay for the improvements.

For about a year and a half, the Board has been focused on how to make use of the North Penn Army Reserve Center on Berks Rd. once it is vacated by the Army. Under procedures set out by the Department of Defense, we created a Local Redevelopment Authority and studied every aspect of the possible re-uses, structural integrity of existing buildings, environmental issues and much more. After much deliberation we decided that the best future use of the property would be as a public park. The Federal Government has a program designed to convey Federal land at no cost to local municipalities, if used for parks. We are about to make application to the National Park Service to complete the redevelopment process and utilize this program, but we probably won't have the keys to the place until 2011. Between now and then we can start to think about the various uses we may have for the grounds and buildings.

Back in 2002, the township received a grant from Montgomery County to help purchase a corridor along the Zacharias Creek between Green Hill Rd. and Hollow Rd. In January of this year we cleared a trail in that area and are now thru the permitting process (and bog turtle study... really). We are almost ready to put the trail construction out for bids. In time, the trail will connect Heebner Park to Evansburg Park. We try to make a bit of progress each time that funding for a portion of the trail becomes available

(Continued on Page 2)



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1733**

**BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS**

John R. Harris, Chairman

Chase E. Kneeland,

Vice Chairman

Arthur C. Bustard, Secretary

John V. Cornell

Township Manager

Administration Building

(610) 584-1410

www.worcestertwp.com

What's Happening in Worcester 2007 - (continued from Page 1)

The Township has had a very big year in the preservation of open space. In May, Montgomery County, through its farmland preservation funding program, made settlement on the development rights for the Elizabeth Schierenbeck property. The 49 acre property extends from Hollow Rd, almost to Valley Forge Rd. It will be permanently deed-restricted from further subdivision or development, and will also allow for construction of a trail along the perimeter.

The Township also worked with the County under the same program and came to an agreement to preserve 100 acres of Willow Creek Farm on Stump Hall Rd. We are expecting settlement to be later this fall.

After years (it seems like decades) of township efforts, the County Commissioners made an outright purchase of the 19-acre Doris and Robbie Rothenberger farm on Skippack Pike. It is part of the Wentz family's original farmstead and will be a wonderful enhancement to the historical park that Montgomery County operates next door at the Peter Wentz Farm.

Ongoing, we are working with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission on their planned rebuilding and widening of the turnpike for its entire length in Worcester. The primary issues involve sound barriers and water retention basins, along the most densely populated sections to protect Worcester residents from the increased sound and water runoff that will come from increasing traffic and a widened roadway. We are awaiting the results of their summer sound impact studies.

We have been advised by PECO that they must put a new substation at or near, the intersection of 3 major power lines near Fisher and Wentz Church Roads. There are 2 nine-acre sites in that area under consideration, which PECO currently owns. We are awaiting their decision as to which one they will be using. Construction is expected to begin in 2008.

We thank our hard-working road crew and office staff for another successful year of handling all of the permitting, inspection and development matters, snow plowing, grass mowing, road maintenance and much more.

My colleagues, Chase Kneeland and Art Bustard join me in thanking all of our residents for allowing us to serve you in trying to keep Worcester running smoothly and to keep Worcester the green, rural community that we all love. If there are other matters you would like to know more about, visit our web page at www.worcestertwp.com and please feel free to call our Township Manager, John Cornell at (610) 584-1410, or myself, at (610) 584-8395.

The Worcester Township Charity Fund Comes to a Close *.

It is with much regret that after 40 years, the Worcester Township Charity Fund must come to an end. Worcester residents have generously supported local chapters of national charities and local organizations through their contributions to the fund. What began decades ago with a small group of volunteers going door-to-door collecting for 3 national charities has grown into a charity fund that has supported 12 national and 16 local charities. Because of the *newest* change in the tax laws that became effective January 2007, the Worcester Township Charity Fund can no longer operate as it has in the past. The committee regrets that this service can no longer be provided to the residents of Worcester.

In 2002 a member of the Worcester Township Charity Fund recognized the need for an emergency relief fund to assist township residents experiencing a financial crisis due to a personal tragedy or hardship. A **non-tax** deductible fund was set up to provide one-time assistance to those Worcester families in need.

While it has been necessary to close the Worcester Township Charity Fund Drive, the Worcester Emergency Fund will continue to operate as it has for the past 5 years. The Emergency Fund has provided approximately \$2000 in relief to several families in our community. Aid has been provided through store certificates and in one case the purchase of heating oil. The fund receives refer-

als through local schools, churches and emergency service agencies.

Worcester residents may continue to make non-tax deductible contributions to the
Worcester Emergency Fund
P.O. Box 962
Worcester, PA 19490

Your generosity is most appreciated.

Thank you again for your many years of support and generosity!

The Worcester Township Charity Fund Committee

Local Charities – please continue your support!

Worcester Volunteer Fire Department, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Montco Assoc. for the Blind, Center for Loss and Bereavement, Community Housing Services, Family Services of Mont. Co., Habitat for Humanity, Laurel House, Methacton H.S. Post Prom Event, Salvation Army (Norristown), Sebastian Riding Academy, Variety Club, Visiting Nurses (in Norristown & Lansdale), The Wellness Place, and Wissahickon Hospice

* NOTE: The Worcester Township Charity Fund has at all times been a private charity and is not affiliated with the municipal government of Worcester Township.

Radio City Christmas Spectacular - December 3, 2007

Join us for America's most beloved holiday theatrical, The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, starring the world-famous Rockettes

Worcester Township is offering first mezzanine seating and luxury coach transportation to the December 3, 2007 11:00 AM performance.

The coach will depart the Worcester Township Building at 7:30 AM on Monday, December 3.

We have seats reserved in the first mezzanine section.



Free-time will be available after the show for lunch and shopping.

We will depart New York City at 4:00 PM.
Cost - \$79 per person (first mezzanine seat and bus transportation).

Only a handful of seats on this popular annual trip remain.

Please contact the Township Building at 610-584-1410 to sign up today!

Township Joins Park and Recreation Coalition

Worcester Township has formed a coalition with the park and recreation departments in neighboring townships Skip-pack, Lower Providence, Limerick and Upper Providence. This joint effort will allow Worcester residents to benefit from expanded programming and reduced costs. The 2007 fall and winter bus trips are now available on the township web site (www.worcestertwp.com).

You can also sign up to receive email updates on trips as they are announced. Please send an email to jlantzillo@worcestertwp.com and request to have your email address placed on our mailing list.

Tentative plans for early 2008 include the Philadelphia Flower Show and a Washington DC bus tour followed by a luncheon cruise on The Odyssey.

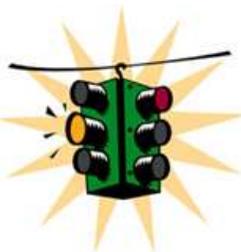
Summer Intern Program a Success!

Worcester Township hired three summer interns in 2007 to assist with park maintenance and administrative duties. Two interns assisted the public works department with general duties related to playground upkeep, fixture repair, lawn care and mulching park properties throughout Worcester. Heebner Park, Sunnybrook and East Mount Kirk Park all benefited from the extra attention and support.

Our administrative intern began the task of compiling all zoning, subdivision and individual property records into one integrated archived system, stored by each individual address in the township. Now, administrative staff is well on its way to easily linking all historical activity related to any property within the township.

Energy-Efficient Traffic Lights Being Installed

Worcester Township has started converting traffic signal lights to longer-lasting LEDs (Light-emitting diodes). LED lamps are a type of solid state lighting that uses LED technology rather than electrical filaments. LED lamps can last up to 10 times longer than a fluorescent bulb. They generate little heat, have long lasting durability and require less power to operate, saving energy and labor costs for replacement.



Verizon Service Installation Underway

In 2006, Verizon came to the Board of Supervisors and requested approval to begin selling television service in the township. This request was approved, with Worcester being one of the first to reach agreement with Verizon. This will provide township residents with choices in their cable service.

Not all of the Township will be covered initially, as Verizon will be rolling out the service via the telephone service infrastructure. We have encouraged them to proceed as expeditiously as possible to cover the entire township. It is hoped that sometime in 2008 the initial service can begin. Verizon has also been installing its fiber-optic lines in the township to facilitate their FIOS system of internet and telephone service. It is hoped that competition in both sectors will have a positive effect on costs to township residents.

Gypsy Moths – How to Prevent Tree Damage

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provides extensive information on their web site (www.dcnr.state.pa.us) about preventative measures to reduce damage caused by gypsy moths. Yard debris, such as tires, lumber or cinder blocks provide shelter for the moths, and should be removed. Birds and mice, typical predators of the moths, are better able to prey on the moths when they are out in the open.

Keep trees and shrubs pruned, as healthier plants are better able to resist gypsy moth damage.

A Note of Thanks

From Vice Chairman, Chase Kneeland

At the end of this year, 2007, my second term as Township Supervisor will be completed. I want to take this opportunity to say what a privilege it's been to serve the residents of Worcester Township over the last 12 years. Having lived in Worcester for nearly 50 years I have seen the area evolve and grow, and being part of the guiding of that evolution has been very rewarding. During my two terms as Supervisor we've seen many new folks become township residents, the creation of our first Township Newsletter known as the "Worcester Crier", the opening of Heebner Park, the building of Worcester Elementary School, the sewerage of Fairview Village, the expansion of our Historical Society, numerous Open Space acquisitions, a comprehensive road restoration and maintenance program put into operation, the partnering with our Worcester Volunteer Fire Department in the building of a new Firehouse, Park System expansion and improvements in terms of playing fields,

paved walking trails, and satellite mini-parks in the larger developments in Worcester. The addition of a Park & Recreation Director, a new Township Manager and several well-qualified Road Crew staff have helped to streamline and make more efficient the operation of our Township Administrative Office. In the near future we'll see pavilion & restroom facilities at Heebner Park and the creation of the Greenway, a paved trail bordering Zacharias Creek running between Hollow Road and Green Hill Road. Our Township tax has not increased in 12 years, although our real estate taxes, used for the support of the Methacton School District, continues to be a challenge for many. In addition to these are many more items too numerous to list.

These accomplishments happen due to the creative activity of Board members working together with basically a shared vision, never just the work of one member. I have had the benefit of working with dedicated and hardwork-

ing Board members over the years, and our current Board members John Harris and Art Bustard are exactly that sort of Supervisor, as were John Graham and Frank Davey earlier in my terms. I anticipate Steve Quigley will become our next Supervisor following the November elections, and he too is a dedicated and long-term Worcester resident with service to those living in our Township foremost in his heart. The best kind of government is that which operates fairly quietly and invisibly in the background, noting the needs of the residents and reaching out to meet them with a minimum of fanfare while also looking toward the future with a visionary eye. It's my belief that our community can look forward to many more years of good municipal management, reasonable growth, and consistent attention to the needs of our residents.



Worcester Volunteer Fire Department Building Update

Construction on the new Worcester Volunteer fire house is well underway. For information on the "Buy a Brick" campaign, please contact the department directly at 610-584-5159

Protect Yourself from Identity Theft



Identity theft takes many forms, but generally, it occurs when someone gains access to your personal information to obtain credit, loans or make large purchases in your name. There are many proactive things consumers can do to reduce the risk of being a victim of this crime:

- Buy a shredder! Take care to shred all papers and pre-approved credit card offers that come in the mail before discarding. Any papers that might contain personal financial information should be shredded.
- Place all outgoing mail in a US Mailbox or at the post office. Do not place mail in your personal mailbox with the flag raised.
- Get new checks delivered to your bank for pick up, not your home address. Use a post office box for mail delivery, if possible.
- Monitor your credit reports and monthly credit statements for suspicious activity.
- Do not give out personal information over the telephone.

New Developments on PA Turnpike Widening Project

On October 4, 2007, the PA Turnpike Commission presented alternative design plans for the proposed widening project effecting approximately 10 miles of the Northeast Extension. The new plan proposes up to a 65% reduction in the number of properties that should be impacted by the proposed construction. The preliminary plan revealed impacts affecting well over 200 individual properties in Worcester and neighboring townships.

The alternative plan calls for the incorporation of retaining walls, and the identification of new sites for storm-water basins. These basins were originally the primary reason for the proposed residential property impacts.

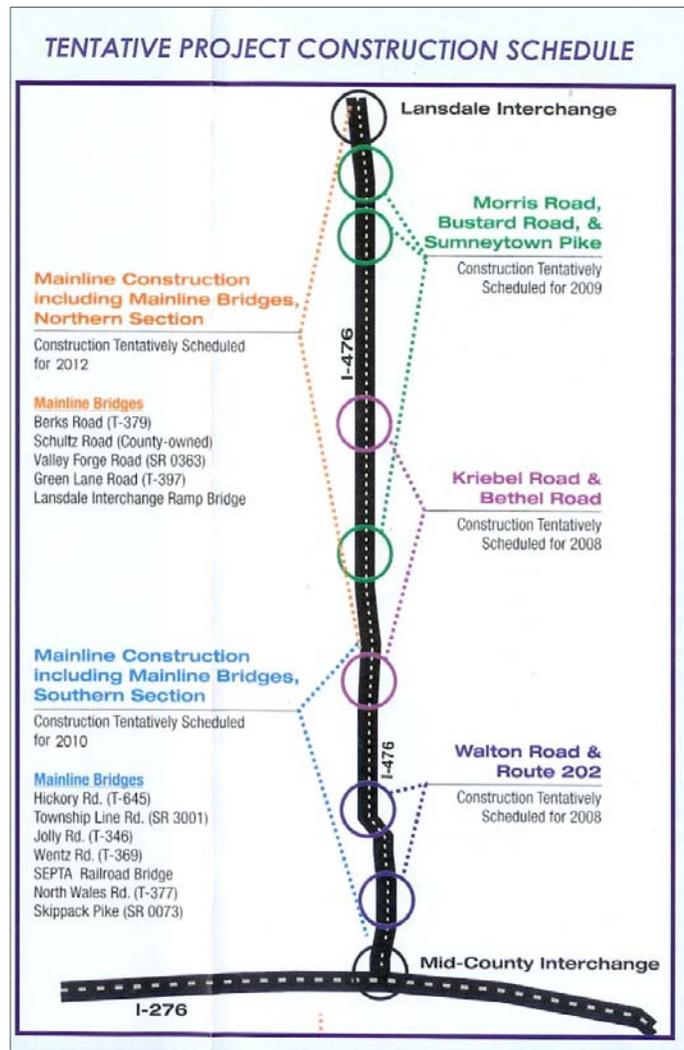
Nearly 800 people attended various Turnpike Commission plan meetings in the Spring of 2007. The input and concerns from residents and township officials were instrumental in the Turnpike Commission's desire to re-evaluate the project design.

Plans for public review will be available once complete.

For further details, please visit the project web site via www.paturnpike.com.

Township Residents Featured in National Publication

Worcester residents Dave and Carol Spacht and the Spacht Sawmill were recently featured in Fine Woodworking Magazine. The Spachts purchased the nearly 80-year old mill in 1983, and have turned it into a thriving boutique lumberyard. While serving as a rural sawmill, the Spachts also play host to school tours where children learn the process of how lumber is made.



Where Do I ?

Drop off household hazardous waste, such as old computers, televisions, pesticides, household chemicals, car batteries and motor oil?

Montgomery County Household Hazardous Waste Collections take place throughout the year at various locations in the county. For updated information on items that are accepted and drop off locations and dates, please visit:

www.wsaemc.org/Recycling



Obtain a dog license?

Montgomery County dog licenses can be obtained at over 30 locations throughout the county, along with a new online service available at www.padoglicense.com.

For questions, please contact the Montgomery County Treasurer's Department at 610-278-3070.

Obtain a US Passport?

Applications for US Passports may be made in person at the Montgomery County Court House, Swede and Airy Streets, Court House 1st Floor, Norristown, PA 19404, Monday through Friday 9am-3:30pm. Many US Post Offices also offer passport application services. For locations and times, please visit www.usps.com/passport.



Township of Worcester
1721 Valley Forge Road
P.O. Box 767
Worcester, PA 19490-0767

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TOWNSHIP MONTHLY MEETING TIMES

Board of Supervisors

3rd Wednesday at 7:30pm

BOS Work Sessions

1st Monday at 8:00am

Planning Commission

4th Thursday at 7:30pm

Planning Commission Work Sessions

2nd Thursday at 7:30pm

Joint Meeting

December 3 at 9:30am

Zoning Hearing Board

November 27 at 6:30pm
December 18 at 6:30pm

*All Public Meetings are held in the
Worcester Township Community Hall
1031 Valley Forge Road*

Did you know.....?

- Worcester Township no longer requires a Use & Occupancy inspection on the resale of a residential property.
- The Fairview Village sewer plant was recently upgraded with the addition of an emergency generator to prevent future problems resulting from power loss.
- The Township office has recently updated the software and computer system to better handle the increasing volume of information provided and requested, including an enhanced back-up system to protect against unforeseen losses of data.
- The Park and Recreation Department will once again be offering discounted ski tickets to area resorts this winter. Please stay tuned to www.worcestertwp.com for updates on availability, pricing and locations.
- On September 19th, The Board of Supervisors voted to ask PENNDOT to add the Route 363 corridor between Stump Hall Road and Woodlyn Avenue to their Traffic Improvement Plan. This is part of a long term effort to improve the traffic conditions in this highly traveled corridor and brings state and federal money towards a comprehensive solution.
- Residents on public sewer, it is your responsibility to keep a current mailing address on file with the Township for billing purposes.
- Residents who do not have local earned income tax withheld by their employer are required to submit it quarterly to Berkheimer Associates. Forms and information are available by calling 1-800-360-8989.