

Worcester Erier



VOLUME 16, NUMBER 3

LATE SUMMER 2011

Wastewater Treatment Plant: Rate Study

Worcester owns two wastewater treatment plants, Valley Green in Center Point and Berwick Place in Fairview Village. In July, staff presented the Board and public with an analysis of the wastewater treatment plant funds to help determine if rates are at the correct level to operate the plants and maintain an appropriate level of reserve funds. The Valley Green plant, built in 1986, serves approximately 350 residential customers in the neighborhoods of Worcester Acres, Fawn Creek, Center Point Farms, and Applewood and three commercial customers. The Berwick Place plant, built in 1991, serves over 500 residential customers in the neighborhoods of Fairview Village, Berwick Place, Chadwick Place, Heritage Village, Hilltop Estates, and Adair Drive/Methacton Avenue, along with six commercial customers.

Each fund is supported entirely by wastewater rates, not by taxes. The plants are operated and maintained by a third-party contractor. Last year, the township negotiated a new contract, reducing costs to pre-2009 levels and resulting in more efficient operations at both plants. Township staff handles all billing and accounting for the wastewater treatment plant funds. Historically, the township's costs for administration and maintenance have not been charged to these funds.

Wastewater treatment plant funds must maintain a reserve -- extra money to be used for emergencies, maintenance, and repairs. Over time, the reserves in both funds have been reduced in order to pay for necessary repairs and upgrades to the plants. Operating reserves for the two plants are based on the cost of operations and should total approximately \$575,000, but the actual reserves are less than half of that amount. In addition, a capital reserve fund must be maintained to handle major improvements to the facilities and equipment.

Looking ahead to 2012, stricter water quality standards and additional testing will be required at all wastewater treatment plants by the Department of Environmental Protection. Utility and maintenance costs are projected to rise by 2% to 3% annually. Both plants are in need of improvements to their facilities and equipment. Financial projections indicate that in 2012, each plant will be operating at a loss of approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000. Neither wastewater treatment fund has sufficient reserves to sustain operating at a loss.

The study offered several recommendations to modernize the wastewater treatment funds and provide appropriate revenue to maintain the plants in good operating condition:

- Combine the two wastewater treatment plant funds to reduce administrative costs.
- Allocate the appropriate amount of township administrative costs to the wastewater treatment funds.
- Consider gradual rate modifications to cover increases in operating costs and to begin replenishing the fund's reserves over time.

Wastewater treatment rates for customers of these two plants have remained unchanged since 1991, and are less than the rates in many surrounding townships. In that 20-year span, the cost of operating both plants has risen continually, due to stricter water treatment standards as well as the need to repair and replace equipment, piping, and structural elements of the plants. (Continued on page 2)

Back by Popular Demand!

Don't forget to register for email updates from Worcester Township!

Visit www.worcestertwp.com and click on "SIGN UP FOR E NEWS" at the bottom of the page. You can select areas of interest including meeting agendas, camps, bus trips and general township news.



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**INCORPORATED AS A
TOWNSHIP
1733**

William McCauley
Interim Township Manager
Administration Building
(610) 584-1410
www.worcestertwp.com

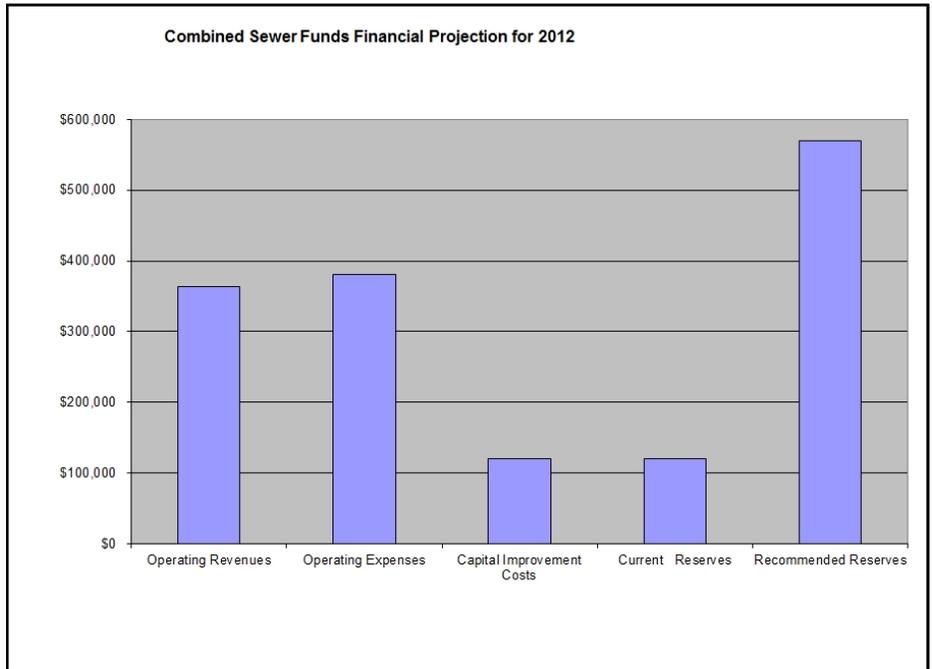
Wastewater Treatment Plant Rates (continued from page 1)

The township does have the option of selling the wastewater treatment plants, which would produce a one-time infusion of capital. However, it would also mean that the township would lose all control of the rates, which would be set by a for-profit operating company. This is likely to produce an immediate and sharp increase in rates, with little recourse for the rate-payers.

Selling the plants would also mean that the township would lose control over the expansion of these plants for additional

development. Although some expansion of service could be beneficial to residents with older in-ground systems that may be failing, uncontrolled expansion of the public wastewater treatment system in the hands of a for-profit company will inevitably lead to more development and denser development than Worcester has seen to date.

The Board of Supervisors will be considering the recommendations of this study at public meetings this fall. Interested residents can stay informed by visiting the township's home page at www.worcestertwp.com to sign up to receive email alerts when meeting agendas are available.



Don't forget to visit www.worcestertwp.com for Land Development and Zoning Information

Residents are reminded that the official township website includes information on all subdivision and land development plans that have been submitted to the township. The page can be found under the "Living Here" tab at www.worcestertwp.com. Summaries of current year applications to the Zoning Board can be found on the "Zoning" page under the "Building Here" tab. Information on zoning applications from prior years is posted on the "Boards and Commissions" page under the "Governance" tab.

Heyser Field Upgrades Underway



Worcester's Parks & Recreation Department was awarded a \$5,000 grant from PECO's Green Region Program and property renovations are underway! The horse ring is being shifted more toward the center of the property, a new fence is being installed and signage is being posted on Griffith Road.

Township Manager

In July we said farewell to township manager David Burman, who left Worcester for a position in Chester County to be closer to his family. The Board of Supervisors has contracted with Keystone Municipal Services to provide an Interim Manager, Mr. William McCauley III, as well as to conduct the search for a permanent manager.

Road Work Update

At the end of July, PennDOT closed North Wales Road between Township Line Road in Upper Gwynedd Township and Morris Road in Worcester and Whitpain Townships for the construction of a right turn lane from North Wales Road to Morris Road. North Wales Road through traffic will be detoured over Route 63 (Welsh Road), Route 202 (DeKalb Pike), and Morris Road.

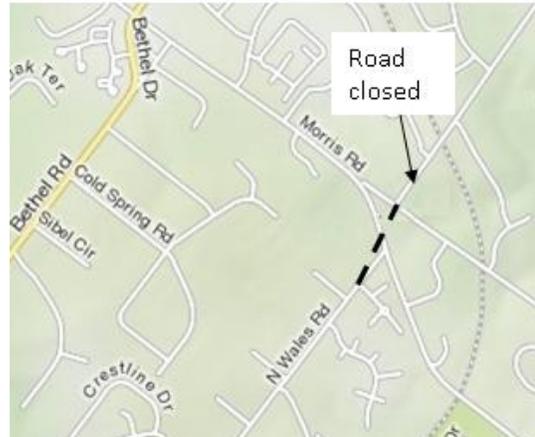
The realignment project will eliminate two existing T-intersections at Morris and North Wales Roads and create a single four-way signalized intersection. The contractor will also re-surface the roadway approaches, widen the roadway to provide right and left turn lanes, and improve drainage, pavement markings, and signs.

The first phase of this project closed North Wales Road from April through the end of July between Skippack Pike and Morris Road. This section has now reopened to traffic.

Allan A. Myers, LP, of Worcester, Pa, is the general contractor on the \$1,790,282 project, which is financed with 80 percent federal and 20 percent state funds. The project is expected to be completed by November 2011.

PennDOT reminds motorists they can log on to 511pa.com or call 511 from any phone to check traffic conditions on major highways before heading out. You can follow local PennDOT information on Twitter at www.twitter.com/511PAPhilly.

Also affecting Worcester residents is the Pennsylvania Turnpike's Northeast Extension Widening and Reconstruction Project. Construction on the Southern Section, from the Mid-County interchange to Berks Road, is now in progress and is expected to be completed in late 2013. The Northern Section of this project, between Berks Road and the Lansdale interchange is now in final design, with an anticipated construction start in 2014. More information can be found on the turnpike's website at www.paturnpike.com/ConstructionProjects/mpA20toA30/



Fall Waste Collection & Burning Regulations

All trash haulers are required to offer curbside collection for leaf disposal at least once during the spring and once during the fall of each year.



Montgomery County is declared as a "NO BURN" zone and it is not permissible to burn leaves. Residents may also drop off their leaves at Worcester Township's DEP approved leaf drop off location:

Barnside Farm Compost Facility

991 Haldman Road
Schwenksville, PA 19473
610-287-8880

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday, 7:30AM-4:30PM
Or by Appointment

Trespassing

In the event an individual is trespassing on your property please contact the state police at (610) 584-1250 to report the incident. It is of the utmost importance to Worcester Township that your safety and well being are protected.



The Board of Supervisors would like to thank the Public Works and Park Maintenance staffs for working through the night during Hurricane Irene and in the days following to restore safe conditions to our roads, parks and administration offices.



Ordinance Revisions

Home-Based Business. The township continues to revise and update some of our ordinances to better serve our residents. Recently the Board of Supervisors enacted an ordinance to allow No-Impact Home-Based Businesses in residential districts of the township.

The business must be an accessory use to the residential dwelling and may not have any employees other than resident family members. The business must be compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood. It may not generate any traffic or trash in excess of normal levels for a residential use. No outside appearance of a business use is allowed, including signs, additional parking, or lights.

Pennsylvania law requires municipalities to allow such business activity in residential districts. However, a Homeowners' Association may impose stricter provisions within a neighborhood or may prohibit home-based businesses altogether. Likewise, any deed restriction or easement concerning business activity will supersede this ordinance.

The ordinance is posted on the township's website at worcestertwp.com under the "Governance" tab.

Village Overlay. The Planning Commission is working on a village overlay ordinance for Cedars Village. The ordinance proposes to allow residents to add certain low-impact retail and office uses on their properties. The types of non-residential uses would be regulated according to different districts that will be established within the overlay area.

Cedars has been a working village since 1849, when the original Cedars Country Store was opened. The proposed ordinance seeks to retain the village character of the area while allowing property owners more flexibility, particularly on the properties along Skippack Pike.

The Planning Commission will be discussing the draft ordinance at future meetings, prior to making its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Interested residents are invited to attend the Planning Commission's meetings and are encouraged to sign up on the township's website to receive email notifications of meeting agendas.

The draft ordinance will be posted on the township's website at www.worcestertwp.com under the "Building Here" tab on the "Legal Notices" page.

Transferable Development Rights in Worcester

The township is looking into an ordinance that would give landowners in some zoning districts another option besides residential development. Transferable development rights, or TDRs, have been used in some communities for years to allow landowners to realize some of the value from their property without actually developing it. A TDR option benefits all residents because it allows areas of farmland and open space to remain undeveloped permanently.

TDRs can be transferred from the original property, called the "sending parcel," to another property on which increased density is allowed. This option is already in place in the township's Conservation Subdivision ordinance. Residential TDRs can also be converted to commercial development rights, which is an option the Planning Commission has been exploring in order to allow increased flexibility for village-scale retail and office growth. Converting residential TDRs to commercial development provides a community-wide benefit by avoiding the construction of homes that will create an additional tax burden on the school system.

TDRs can be sold on the private market, or they can be purchased by the municipality. The township would then have the option of reselling the TDRs when a developer needs additional options, but only in districts where an ordinance allows increased commercial or residential development with the use of TDRs. Sales of TDRs by municipalities are governed by the Second-Class Township Code and are required to be conducted via sealed bid. In Lancaster County, where TDR programs have been active for over 10 years, municipalities are currently selling development rights for approximately \$4000 each.

An important point is that landowners are never *compelled* to sever or sell their TDRs. The program is completely voluntary. The monetary value of TDRs is determined solely between the seller/grantor and the buyer/grantee.

By adding the TDR option to our zoning ordinances, Worcester can give landowners the legal ability to sever and sell their development rights while continuing to own the land. The TDR ordinance will also provide a method to determine how many TDRs a landowner is entitled to claim. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will be considering such an ordinance this fall. Interested residents can sign up on the township website to receive email notification of these meeting agendas.

2011 Fall and Winter Bus Trips!

To register for all trips, please call Worcester Township at 610-584-1410. Space is limited!

For details on ALL trips, please visit www.worcestertwp.com/bus_trips.htm

NEW YORK CITY ON YOUR OWN

Saturday, October 8

Depart Worcester Area: Approx 8am

Depart NYC: Approx 6:30pm

\$45 per person

Spend a day in NYC and leave the driving to us! Our luxury motor coach will drop you off in Times Square, near the Visitors' Center.

BILLY ELLIOT on BROADWAY

Wednesday, November 2

Depart Worcester Area: Approx 8am

Depart NYC: Approx 6pm

\$145 per person

Set in a small town, the story follows Billy as he stumbles out of the boxing ring and into a ballet class, discovering a surprising talent that inspires his family and his whole community, and changes his life forever.

RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Three Dates in 2011!

Monday, December 5, 2011

Depart Worcester Area:

Approximately 7:30am

Depart NYC: Approximately 4pm

\$105 per person

This trip features round trip coach transportation and seats in Orchestra Section 600 for the 11am show, along with a voucher for a free popcorn and beverage. Approximately 3 hours of free time in NYC before departing for home.



Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Depart Worcester Area:

Approximately 7:30am

Depart NYC: Approximately 4pm

\$105 per person

This trip features round trip coach transportation and orchestra/1st mezzanine seats for the 11am show, along with a voucher for a free popcorn and beverage. Approximately 3 hours of free time in NYC before departing for home

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Depart Worcester Area:

Approximately 8am

Depart NYC: Approximately 5pm

\$105 per person

This trip features round trip coach transportation and orchestra/1st mezzanine seats for the 2pm show, along with a voucher for a free popcorn and beverage. Approximately 3 hours of free time in NYC before the show.

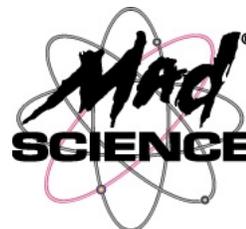
2011 Fall and Winter Mad Science Classes!

Our popular Saturday winter programs are back this year ~ \$42 per class

Register and pay for all 4 classes and save 15%: Regular Price = \$168, you pay \$143

Register and pay for any 3 classes and save 10%: Regular Price = \$126, you pay \$113

Register and pay for any 2 classes and save 5%: Regular Price = \$84, you pay \$80



Optical Illusions: Saturday October 15

For Grades K-5 ~ 9:30AM-12:30PM

Children will build their own periscope while learning about optics, reflection and sight.

They will watch celebrity images change before their eyes, study optical illusions, and observe that the brain is easily fooled. Seeing is not always believing...



Slimey Science & Smoky Ice: Saturday Jan. 21

For Grades K-5 ~ 9:30AM-12:30PM

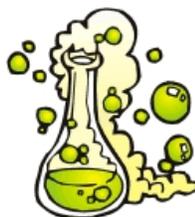
SLIME - Explore the exciting world of polymers, the chemical reactions we use to create them and the inner workings of silly putty. Transform two regular liquids into an oozing batch of your very own slime.

DRY ICE - Explore the 3 states of matter. Turn water to ice in 30 seconds, build a giant bubbling potion, carbonate plain drinking water and create the same awesome smoke illusions used in the movies

Survival, Predators & Prey: Saturday Feb. 18

For Grades K-5 ~ 9:30AM-12:30PM

Predator or Prey; which will you be? In our newly revamped camp, kids will learn how animals, big and small, adapt to life here on earth. Campers will learn how birds and beasts catch their prey without becoming someone else's lunch and will then be challenged to survive in the pulse pounding "Food Chain Survival" game. In addition, kids will enjoy hands-on fun learning how changes in wind, water and temperature can affect Earth's inhabitants.



Shake it Up!: Saturday March 17

For Grades K-5 ~ 9:30AM-12:30PM

Children will investigate chemical changes, by stirring up simple, safe household items to discover how things interact on a chemical level.

Township of Worcester
1721 Valley Forge Road
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TOWNSHIP MONTHLY MEETING TIMES

Board of Supervisors

1st Monday at 9:00 am
3rd Wednesday at 7:30 pm

Planning Commission

4th Thursday at 7:30 pm

Planning Commission Work Session

2nd Thursday at 7:30 pm

Zoning Hearing Board

4th Tuesday at 6:30 pm

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

Visit www.worcestertwp.com for agendas
& minutes and sign up to receive emails
when new agendas are posted

From The Zoning & Building Department:

Township Residents May Need A Permit For:

- New buildings and additions
- Grading for areas in excess of 500 square feet
- Changes in existing building use or occupancy
- Interior alterations, including but not limited to finished basements
- Structural repair or replacement
- New or replacement of an electrical, gas, mechanical, or plumbing system
- Wood decks, concrete patios, or porches
- Roofing or replacement
- Driveways, including but not limited to new construction entering a township road and widening
- Decorative walls/ Driveway Entrance Columns
- Swimming pools, spas, or hot tubs
- Fencing
- Sheds, garages, barns, gazebos, greenhouses, or other accessory structures
- Signs
- Tennis and sport courts
- Retaining walls over 4 feet
- Demolition

An owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a **residential building** or erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace an electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system regulated by the Uniform Construction Code shall first apply to the Building Code Official and obtain the required permit **\$403.62a** (relating to permit application).

All permits submitted to Worcester Township are first reviewed for compliance with Zoning – Chapter 150. The building department then reviews the permit application for compliance with the Uniform Construction Code.

Please visit the Township website at www.worcestertwp.com and click on **"Building Here"**. The "Building Permits" and "Zoning" buttons contain all permit forms and requirements as well as our searchable Zoning Code.

**DISCLAIMER – THE ABOVE LIST OF PERMITS IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE.
PLEASE CONTACT THE TOWNSHIP WITH ZONING & BUILDING QUESTIONS**