



# CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Published by the Board of Supervisors:

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## Township Purchases Open Space

- Kevin R. Kuhn, Supervisor and Rosemary Philips, Co-Chair, HARB

After several months of negotiation, the Township purchased the 53 acre Cornog-Suplee property along Phoenixville Pike and Yellow Springs Road, more recently known as the Volpi Tract. The purchase price was \$852,000 (\$16,075 per acre). This was lower than the appraised value and substantially less than the Township typically pays landowners to place conservation easements on their property.

This property has been the subject of much litigation over the years when the previous owner challenged the Township to erect three billboards at the top of the property along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There have also been numerous development proposals in the past, none of which were approved due to their poor design as well as their attempt to over-develop the site.

This property is on Charlestown Township's list and map of historic resources and contains an abandoned home with some historic significance. It dates back to 1790 according to a date stone in one gable end of the house. There is also a stone spring house, the foundation of a barn, and the ruins of at least one outbuilding. It's possible that some traces of the other buildings that were once on the land still exist as well.

The tract can be traced to a land grant from William Penn to Richard ap Thomas in 1681 for 500 acres. The property has expanded and decreased in size through the years.

The property provides an excellent buffer along Phoenixville Pike from the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Additionally, eliminating commercial development on the site will preserve the existing natural buffer for residents of Charlestown Oaks along Yellow Springs Road. At this time, the Board of Supervisors is considering subdividing the home and five acres and auctioning it off with the stipulation that the home be rehabilitated. The balance of the property is currently heavily vegetated and the thought at this time is to leave it in its natural state. Long term plans are to incorporate it into our Parks and Recreation program and possibly construct a playing field on the lower section of the property.

### Are You Connected?

Be Alerted to New Postings on the Township Website, [www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us)

You can sign up for weekly updates, typically sent on Thursdays or Fridays, to be sent to your email address so you don't miss any of the latest news here in Charlestown.

You'll be informed when agendas and minutes are posted for the various meetings, and when special events like Charlestown Day are planned. To sign up, email [admin1@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:admin1@charlestown.pa.us)

## Charlestown Historical Society Thanks all for the Successful Charlestown Community Day

CHS thanks Parks & Rec Chairman Bob Jones and everyone on the Parks and Recreation Board for the wonderful Charlestown Park events at Charlestown Community Day. Sue Staas, of the Trails Committee and Ann Kline of CHS are thanked for the wonderful planning of the bus tour. Christine Merryman organized the joyous Art Show held at the Wisner-Rapp House. The show included Charlestown Elementary School students' art works depicting Charlestown scenes. Charlestown artists, Debbie Kuhn, Charles Segal, Barbara Grant, Ann Kline, Milo Winters, Alix Coleman, Robert DeWilde, and Carolyn Casswell gave many people joy with their paintings of Charlestown. (Buy the CHS calendar for 2014 to see some of these works!)

Many residents told us they learned a lot from the talk by Nancy Loane about the soldiers and Dr. Kennedy, George Washington's physician, when they visited the Charlestown Revolutionary Cemetery.

All residents are welcome to attend the CHS 40th Anniversary Dinner on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Go to Jacob Merriwether's website, [Charlestown.org](http://Charlestown.org) for more details and a listing of our fall meetings.

Enjoy the beauty of Charlestown during the rest of the summer. E-mail Barbara De Wilde at [dewilde2249@yahoo.com](mailto:dewilde2249@yahoo.com) if you have any questions about the Charlestown Historical Society.

*at right: Former Township Supervisor Paul Hogan and his wife, Jean Hogan, pose at the Rapp House in historical costume as Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Wisner*

*- photo by Barbara DeWilde*



## Voter Information Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> is Election Day!



This is the year for local elections. Charlestown Township voters will be selecting candidates for Township Supervisor, Great Valley School Board, Tax Collector, Auditor, Judge of Elections and Inspector of Elections. Voters will also be selecting candidates for Superior Court, Court of Common Pleas and several County offices.

Charlestown residents vote at the Charlestown Elementary School, 2060 Charlestown Road. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

# Planning Your Home Improvement Project



Property improvements are complex and expensive, involving the creation of construction and design plans, smart budgeting, scheduling, and understanding the permitting process. Permitting isn't the exciting part of your project, but familiarizing yourself with these requirements should be addressed BEFORE you get too far along with your contractor.

Permits are required for various home improvement projects, including new construction, additions, alterations (such as finished basements), decks, storage sheds, roofing, fences, pools and others. To ensure that your project does or does not require a permit, please contact the office at (610) 240-0326 or check the "Guide to Permits" on our website under "Permits & Forms" at [www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us).

## Types of Permits

Charlestown Township issues five types of permits related to building and construction.

**Zoning Permit:** A Zoning Permit is required whenever your project involves placing, constructing or expanding a physical structure on your property (including driveways), or changing the use of your property. A Zoning Permit is also required for Demolition and Signs. This permit confirms that the Zoning Ordinance allows the work project you're proposing.

**Grading, Erosion and Sedimentation (E & S) Permit:** All improvements creating a footprint of at least 500 square feet must have an E & S plan which is submitted for approval with the Zoning Permit Application. Disturbances and impervious surface coverage over 500 square feet requires a \$200.00 fee and an engineered plan. Disturbances and coverage under 500 square feet have no extra fee, and a hand drawn sketch plan is sufficient. No permit is required for disturbance under 100 square feet.

**Building Permit:** A Building Permit is required whenever your construction project will need to be inspected to insure that it meets the standards of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC). The UCC covers all aspects of construction: framing, electric, plumbing and mechanical. All projects that will affect any of these systems must have a Building Permit. The UCC uses the International Residential Code 2009 for Residential Construction and the International Building Code 2009 For Commercial Construction.

**Electrical Permit:** An Electrical Permit is required for all electrical improvement projects.

**Plumbing Permit:** A Plumbing Permit is required for all plumbing improvement projects.

**HVAC Permit:** An HVAC/Fuel Tank Permit is required for all HVAC or fuel tank improvement projects.

## Construction Exempt from Permits

- Repair or replacement projects which don't involve structural changes or changes to the plumbing or electric systems.
- Replacement windows and doors of the same size.
- Interior Remodeling (Alterations) that do not move or change walls, or involve plumbing or electrical work
- Re-roofing if less than 25% of the roof is being replaced.
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures, such as sinks and toilets.
- Replacement of switches, receptacles, and lighting fixtures rated at 20 amps or less.
- Landscaping fences under 8' in height (ones that do not fully enclose an area). However, they must meet all fence requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

## Door to Door Solicitation

From time to time, the Township receives calls and questions about solicitation on their properties.

Our Ordinance requires that any person or organization engaged in peddling, canvassing, soliciting or taking of orders, either by sample or otherwise, or accepting donations directly or indirectly, for any goods, wares or merchandise upon any of the streets or sidewalks or from house to house within the Township must first obtain a Solicitation Permit.

A Solicitation permit is not required for children under 18 years of age soliciting or peddling on behalf of a nonprofit, school or governmental organization or for persons soliciting on behalf of a nonprofit or neighborhood organization for either donations to, or membership in, such organization. These activities are protected under Freedom of Speech.

Those required to obtain a permit are given an identification card by the Township and must show it to you in order to identify themselves prior to any actual soliciting activities.

Hours are restricted from Nov. 1 – Mar. 31 to the hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., all days of the week.

Hours are restricted from Apr. 1 – Oct. 31 to the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., all days of the week.

Township residents may post a “No Soliciting” sign, not to exceed 80 sq. inches in size, on the front door of their residence. It is a violation of the Ordinance for anyone to go onto a property that is posted, and violations can be reported as “Criminal Trespass” to the State Police.

## Chester County Planning Commission Unveils County-wide Transit Ride Guide

The Chester County Planning Commission in partnership with the Chester County Human Services Department, Chester County Department of Community Development, and county transit agencies have released a “Ride Guide” to educate Chester County residents on available transportation services in Chester County. Chester County is served by four public bus providers, two rail providers, a county-wide paratransit system and taxi service in select locations of the County. The Ride Guide was created as a one-stop resource to inform and direct transit users to the appropriate transit options that address their particular transportation needs.

Included in the Ride Guide is information about each of the County’s four transit options (passenger rail, bus, taxi, and paratransit service), and links to the transit agency’s website where transit users can obtain more information about eligibility, procedures, schedules, and fares. For additional information about the Chester County Ride Guide please go to [www.ChescoRideGuide.org](http://www.ChescoRideGuide.org), where transit users can also utilize an interactive map that showcases all available transit services within the County and allows users to distinguish where each transit option is located and what options are available at each location.

We encourage anyone who is an existing or potential transit user within Chester County to explore what the Ride Guide has to offer.

For more information, please visit: [www.ChescoRideGuide.org](http://www.ChescoRideGuide.org) or contact Justin Smiley, Ride Guide Project Manager, at 610-344-6285 or [jasmiley@chesco.org](mailto:jasmiley@chesco.org).

# Hazardous Waste Safety for our Homes and Businesses

In 2000, Charlestown Township adopted Ordinance 100-2000 requiring the annual registration of hazardous materials for anyone storing or using hazardous materials above certain specified quantities. While most of these registrations relate to commercial operations, some home businesses may also involve hazardous materials storage that triggers the threshold for registration.

In the event of a fire, it's critical that our responders have this information, not only for their own safety, but for yours and that of your neighbors.

If you operate a home business and store materials considered to be hazardous, please check the ordinance on our website at [www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us) by finding Ordinances and Codes along the top of the home page and selecting Code of Ordinances, then accessing Chapter 7 in the Index to review these requirements.

<b>Stop Using Hazardous Products in Your Home Use Safer Alternatives Instead</b>	
Ammonia-based cleaners	Vinegar, salt and water mixture for surface cleaning. Baking soda and water for the bathroom.
Abrasive cleaners	Rub area with one-half lemon dipped in borax, then rinse.
Floor or furniture polish	1 part lemon juice, 2 parts olive or vegetable oil.
Silver polishes	Soak in boiling water with baking soda, salt, a piece of aluminum.
Toilet cleaners	Baking soda, toilet brush.
Disinfectants	One-half cup borax in 1 gallon water.
Drain cleaners	Plunger; flush with boiling water, one-quarter cup baking soda, one-quarter cup vinegar.
Rug/upholstery cleaners	Dry cornstarch sprinkled on, then vacuumed.
Water softener	One-quarter cup vinegar in final rinse.
Oil stains	White chalk rubbed into stain before laundering.
Glass cleaner	White vinegar and water or rubbing alcohol and water.
Copper cleaner	Paste of lemon juice, salt and flour or, rub on tomato paste, rinse off and buff.
Abrasive cleaners	Baking soda
Stainless steel polish	Baking soda or mineral oil for shining, vinegar to remove spots.
Stain Remover	Vinegar
Mildew remover	Lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt.

## Natural Cleaning Products - Shopping List

Vinegar	Salt	Lemons	<b>For more information on safer alternatives to cleaning products, go to these websites:</b>  <a href="#">Union of Concerned Scientists</a> <a href="#">EPA - Environmentally Preferable Purchasing</a> <a href="#">Health &amp; Safety Information on Household Products</a> <a href="#">Earth 911</a>
Baking Soda	Borax	White Chalk	
Aluminum Foil	Flour	Lemon Juice	
Cornstarch	Rubbing Alcohol	Vegetable Oil	
Olive Oil	Tomato Paste		



## Trail Walks and Work

**A walk in the park** is scheduled for: **Brightside Farm: Sunday, August 25, 2:00**

We're hoping for a sunny day with lots of butterflies. If not, we'll just enjoy a walk in the park. If you have any questions please e-mail:

Esther Underhill, [underwalt@aol.com](mailto:underwalt@aol.com), or Sue Stass, [suestaas@verizon.net](mailto:suestaas@verizon.net).

**Thank you to those who turned out to help with our work days at Brightside.**

Another work day is scheduled for **Thursday, August 29, 9:00 to 11:30**. We will continue to remove Mile-a-Minute vine.



This invasive is growing along the trails throughout the farm. If your child or scout troop needs a community service project, we'd like to work with them. Mile-a-Minute vine is an annual, so it will die back with frost. However, it's a prolific seeder. We'd like to eliminate as many seeds as possible.

**We will schedule two more work days** before winter and post them on the township web site: [www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us) Hope you can join us!

*At left: Charlestown's Least Wanted: Mile-a-Minute Vine*

## Yard Waste Disposal Drop-Off Site

Our neighbors at the Borough of Phoenixville continue to offer Charlestown residents access to their yard waste drop off site at 18 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Phoenixville. The site is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. year round and on Saturdays from March 1 - November 30 from 7:00 a.m. – 3 p.m.

For a fee of \$5.00 per car or \$10.00 per truck, Charlestown residents may drop off yard waste including the following: brush, flower and flower cuttings, garden trimmings, grass clippings, houseplants, leaves, pruning, shrubbery, tree trimmings, tree twigs and branches, weeds, untreated wood chips and yard debris

In addition to the drop-off service, Phoenixville Borough offers yard waste compost, leaf compost and hard wood mulch to participants. For more info, go to: <http://www.phoenixville.org/Departments/Sanitation/Compost.html>

Please follow these regulations when dropping off yard waste:

- There is an attendant on duty who is responsible for directing the unloading of materials and the activity of those visiting the site. Use of the site when an attendant is not on duty is prohibited. The attendant on duty has the right to reject any or all material brought to the site.
- All persons entering the facility agree that the attendant must see their driver's license and may take a picture of the vehicle and its registration plate.
- This service is offered to residents only and is not for commercial enterprises.
- Leaves and other yard waste may be either loose or in biodegradable paper bags.

## Citizen Water Quality Hotlines

Citizen awareness is needed to report water pollution. Citizens are encouraged to be on the lookout for illicit (illegal) discharges to our creeks and encouraged to call 911 or the "Hotline" numbers below to report them. Remember all of our storm drains lead to creeks, and there should be only rain going into these drain.

Over the past four months, residents in your watersheds have reported the following illicit discharges and practices which can foul our creeks and drinking water: leaking sanitary sewer manhole covers (especially during dry weather), soapy or power washing water entering storm drains, strong sewage odors, odors of gasoline, swimming pool discharges into streets, broken water mains, drainage of sump pumps directly into creeks, dumping of trash and yard waste near creeks, running hoses into creeks or storm drains, and fish kills, by calling these numbers. Please save them for future reference.

Your efforts are key to protecting clean water!

DEP Water Quality Complaint Hotline Daytime	484-250-5991	Weekdays 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
DEP 24 Hour Water Quality Hotline	484-250-5900	Anytime, including evenings and weekends
Spills and other Emergencies Hotlines	PA DEP 484-250-5990	PA Emergency MGT Agency 1-800-424-7362
Clogged or leaking sanitary sewer lines; sewage smell in creek	Valley Forge Sewer Authority 610-935-1553	Weekdays 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM After hours call 911
Fish Kills, Illegal Fishing	PA Fish Commission 1-855-FISHKILL	Also call DEP Water Quality 484- 250-5991
Broken water mains	Aqua Pennsylvania	610-525-1402 - 24 hours

## Thought Provoking Recycling Statistics

**ALUMINUM** – Recycling 1 pound of steel or aluminum saves enough energy for a 60 watt light bulb to run for over 1 day. This equates to enough energy to heat and light 18,000,000 homes in 1 year.

**PLASTIC** – Americans use 2,500,000 plastic bottles every hour! Recycling plastic saves twice as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.

**GLASS** – The energy saved from recycling 1 glass bottle can run a compact fluorescent bulb for 20 hours. Recycling also results in 20% less air pollution and 50% less water pollution than making a new bottle from raw materials.

**PAPER** – Each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. This represents an energy savings of 64%, water savings of 58%, and 60 lbs less air pollution.

*These facts and more can be viewed at [www.recycling-revolution.com](http://www.recycling-revolution.com)*



**KEEP  
DISTANCE**  
IT'S THE LAW  
**FOUR  
FEET**



**SHARE the ROAD**  
IT'S ROAD SAFETY, NOT ROCKET SCIENCE

### Tips for Motorists

#### STAY ALERT

Bicycles are legal vehicles in Pennsylvania and are subject to the same rules as cars

#### GIVE SOME ROOM

When passing a bike, give at least four feet of space – It's the law!

#### TAKE A LOOK

Check for bikes before turning or opening your car door

#### LAY OFF THE HORN

Don't honk at a bicyclist unless they are in immediate danger

#### PAY ATTENTION

Texting and emailing is against the law – and downright dangerous!

### Tips for Bicyclists

#### OBEY THE LAW

A bicycle is a legal vehicle with the same rights and responsibilities as a motor vehicle.

#### RIDE ON THE RIGHT

But if the road is too narrow for cars to safely pass or when there are hazards, ride in the center of the rightmost lane.

Never ride against traffic.

#### BE PREDICTABLE

Don't weave in and out of traffic. Signal when possible.

#### STAY VISIBLE

Use a front light and rear reflector in low light and bright clothing all the time.

To find out more about bicycling in Chester County go to: [wcbuer.org/ShareTheRoad](http://wcbuer.org/ShareTheRoad)



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