

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

11th Edition



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors:

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Established 1737

Cover photo by George Csete, Snowfall at Brightside Farm Park, Feb. 17, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in the following pages is a summary of the municipal activity occurring in Charlestown Township in 2024. The purpose of this report is to highlight Township accomplishments and noteworthy events during the past year. The details of the monthly business of the Board of Supervisors, its appointed boards, commissions and committees, and the daily activities of the Township staff can be examined through the meeting minutes, annual budget, financial statements, codes and permit reports, subdivision & land development files, monthly financial reports and numerous other records available on our website at www.charlestown.pa.us.

I. ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION

Contact Information

Office Hours:
Monday thru Friday
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

(610) 240-0326 Phone
(610) 240-0328 Fax

Mailing Address/Physical Location:
11 General Warren Blvd. Suite 1
Malvern, PA 19355

manager@charlestown.pa.us
Website: www.charlestown.pa.us

Charlestown Township Statistics

Total Area: 12.515 square miles (8,015 acres)

Charlestown is served by several post offices: Devault (19432), Chester Springs (19425), Malvern (19355) and Phoenixville (19460)

School District: Great Valley School District

Demographics (2020 Census):

Population: 6,001

Pop. Density: 482 per square mile

Households: 2,098

Roads:

26.50 miles of Township roads

23.52 miles of state roads

Administration

The Board of Supervisors accepted Supervisor Susan T. Bednar's resignation at the Feb. 5th meeting.

The Board conducted interviews of twelve candidates, and appointed Louis P. Rubinfeld to fill the vacant term until the next general election cycle in 2025.

Louis earned a doctoral degree in computer engineering. He has worked in the development of dental imaging and video surveillance equipment. He was also an adjunct professor at Villanova University and University of Pennsylvania.



Above: : Lou Rubinfeld

Due to relocating outside the Township, in December Supervisor Frank Piliero reluctantly tendered his resignation from the Board Because of the requirement that all elected supervisors reside in the Township. The Board will appoint a replacement in the New Year, and both Mr. Rubinfeld and the new appointee will be required to run for their positions in the next election if they wish to continue as Supervisors. Mr. Piliero had served on the board since January 2010.

The Township office staff, consisting of 3 individuals, handled approximately 1,470 phone calls and received 300 visitors in 2024. An estimated 12,150 emails (not including spam) were received, and 2,900 were sent. 48 right to know requests were filed and the requested documents were all provided within the required deadlines. Notary services were provided for 22 documents. 937 PA One Call tickets were processed.

The following individuals comprised the Township Staff for 2024:

Chris Heleniak, Township Manager/Secretary and Emergency Management Coordinator
Linda M. Csete, Township Treasurer/Admin
Beth Martin, Permit Coordinator/Assistant Township Secretary
Lisa Gardner, Recording Secretary
Michael Allen, Staff Planner
Mark Koenig, Fire Marshal and Property Coordinator, Code Enforcement Officer and Assistant Zoning Officer
Jim Thompson, Project Manager/Roadmaster
Mark Cabot, Public Works Assistant and Animal Control Officer
Gary Coleman, Parks Assistant

Lisa Gardner left her position as Recording Secretary on April 1st with well wishes from the Board and other staff members. She had served in this position for 12 years. Minute taking duties are now shared by remaining personnel. The following consultants were appointed or re-appointed for 2024:

Auditor	Barbacane, Thornton & Co.
Building Code Official (BCO)	Keystone Municipal Services for permits
Construction Consultant	Robert Dettore
Engineering & Zoning Officer	Daniel T. Wright, P.E., Montrose Environmental
Historical Architect	Dale Frens and Carol Quigley, Patterhrn Ives
Land Planner	Thomas J. Comitta
Open Space Monitoring	Ed Theurkauf
Solicitor – Legal Counsel	Mark P. Thompson, Esq. Lamb, McErlane, PC.
Solicitor – Planning Commission/Special Counsel	Wendy McLean, Esq.
Solicitor – Zoning Hearing Board	William Hagner, Esq.
Tax Collector – Earned Income and Local Services	Keystone Collections
Tax Collector – Real Estate	Keystone Collections
Traffic Engineer	Traffic Planning & Design
Website	Allen Underkofler, A.P. Underkofler Associates

Communications

- **Annual Report:** First developed for 2014, the Board intends to continue publishing an annual report to inform its residents and businesses of notable events and accomplishments in the prior year.
- **Facebook:** The Parks & Recreation Board continued its presence on Facebook to organize and promote recreational activities available in the Township and to feature its annual Charlestown Community Day event. A Social Media policy was adopted by the Board in 2016 and remains in effect.
- **Meetings:** The Township follows the Sunshine Rules under Act 65, posting all agendas at least 24 hours prior to any meeting, and adding new matters only after a vote to do so by the Board or Commission is taken, followed by a posting of the revised agenda. An annual Public Participation Policy is adopted by Resolution each January.
- **Newsletters:** The Board of Supervisors published four newsletters mailed to all households and businesses in the Township.
- **Website:** Improvements and updates continued weekly to the www.charlestown.pa.us site and subscribers received a weekly update of new posts. Special notices and items of interest were emailed to subscribers as needed. PDF-fillable building permit applications and a variety of associated forms were updated.

II. ADVISORY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Charlestown Township is extremely fortunate to have so many knowledgeable, talented and enthusiastic residents willing to donate a great many hours of their time to serving the community.

The following individuals were appointed or re-appointed during 2024:

Charles Buck, Brightside Community Garden Coordinator
Daniel Aquilante, Brightside Farm Manager
Michael Richter, Design Review Committee
Charlie Philips, Design Review Committee
Tom Comitta, Design Review Committee
Anuradha Soundararajan, Environmental Advisory Committee
Jill Green, Environmental Advisory Committee
Dan Walker, Environmental Advisory Committee
Carol Quigley, Historical Commission/HARB as architect representative
Rosemary Philips, Historical Commission/HARB as member at large
John Pittock, Historical Commission/HARB as member at large
Stephanie Robinson, Parks & Recreation Board
John Kulp, Parks & Recreation Board
Kyla McFadden, Parks & Recreation Board
Hugh Willig, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Michael Richter, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission as Alternate
Andy Motel, Planning Commission
Matt Rogers, Planning Commission
Bob Cottone, Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals
Sam Cupp - 6 member Valley Forge Sewer Authority Board
Richard Stipa – 6 member Valley Forge Sewer Authority Board
John Horstmann, Vacancy Board
Jean Bomm, Zoning Hearing Board



III. BUILDING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

Keystone Municipal Services provided plan review and inspection services for 2024.

A summary of building permit activity in 2024 is provided below:

	NO. OF PERMITS	CONSTRUCTION COST
COMMERCIAL: ALTERATIONS/FIT OUT	1	153,000
RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS	3	473,177
RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS	4	654,905
RESIDENTIAL: BARN	3	723,600
RESIDENTIAL: BASEMENTS/BASEMENT EGRESS	6	147,000
RESIDENTIAL: BATHROOM	2	48,000
RESIDENTIAL: DECKS	16	683,180
RESIDENTIAL: ELECTRICAL & GENERATORS	43	248,450
RESIDENTIAL: FIREPLACE	1	95,000
RESIDENTIAL: GARAGE	2	306,500
RESIDENTIAL: HVAC	17	232,475
RESIDENTIAL: KITCHEN	2	150,100
RESIDENTIAL: PATIOS	2	347,845
RESIDENTIAL: POOLS & POOL HOUSES, HOT TUBS	4	1,463,635
RESIDENTIAL: PLUMBING	7	47,690
RESIDENTIAL: ROOFS	3	154,905
RESIDENTIAL: NEW HOMES	27	12,614,721
RESIDENTIAL: SOLAR HEATING SYSTEM	4	78,980
RESIDENTIAL: STUCCO & VENEERS	3	231,386
TOTALS:	150	\$18,854,549

Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals

The UCC Board of Appeals conducts hearings and makes decisions on appeals based on a building permit applicant's claim that, in the Zoning Officer's review and approval/denial of the application, the true intent of the UCC has been incorrectly interpreted, that the provisions of the Code do not fully apply in their situation, or that an equivalent form of construction is to be used.

Members of the Board of Appeals are qualified by training and experience on matters pertaining to building construction. This includes licensure as an architect or engineer, experience in the construction industry, or a combination of training/experience as an inspector or plan reviewer. No appeals were filed in 2024.

IV ENGINEERING



The following projects/tasks undertaken by the Township Engineer are in addition to review of Subdivision & Land Development Plans as outlined in Section III, Planning and in addition to zoning and SLDO Ordinance reviews, conditional use application reviews, and construction and E & S permit inspection.

Act 167 – Stormwater Management

The Township Engineer, Daniel Wright, P.E. continued the Township program to monitor outfalls as previously mapped. PA Act 167 mandates that municipalities adopt the stormwater management standards prescribed by it, also entitled the Stormwater Management Planning Act. The Township's annual NPDES permit was renewed in July.

The Engineer performed the annual inspections of stormwater management systems overseen by HOAs and development management companies. This program includes any developments that were required to obtain an NPDES permit for construction, and only applies to later projects as a Best Management Practice.

Additional compliance measures required by the DEP for the next MS-4 period were approved in 2023, primarily to be comprised of an infiltration basin at the Township's Phoenixville Pike property that sits below the PA Turnpike. The 60' x 45' proposed basin will allow the Township to demonstrate compliance within the required 4 year reporting period. The Supervisors approved going out for tree removal bids in late 2024 as the first step before the basin can be constructed in 2025. The annual MS-4 report was completed by the Township Engineer and Stormwater Management Coordinator and submitted by the 9/30/24 deadline, and the Township's revised Pollutant Reduction Plan was approved by the DEP.

Developer Escrow Releases

The Engineer reviewed and signed off on escrow release requests for developments under construction in accordance with their financial security agreements throughout the year. The Board of Supervisors approved a final escrow release for the Meadows subdivision in 2024.

Planning Modules

The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537, as amended) requires that sewage facilities planning be conducted for any new residential or commercial developments that will generate sewage. Sewage facilities planning is a process that will determine if the Township's existing sewage collection, conveyance, and treatment facilities have the capacity to handle sewage flow from proposed developments. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Chester County, and the Township are all involved in the review and approval process. Planning Modules for the Pellegrini

residence on Charlestown Road and Bodine Properties LLC were approved for transmission to the Dep, and final approval is pending.

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) Maintenance Facility Improvement Plan

The PTC continued construction on its new Devault Maintenance Facility and coordinated with the Engineer on stormwater plan review and facility layout. A conservation easement for approximately 18 acres of the property is required per one of the conditions of land development approval. Negotiations on the easement agreement were approved on October 7th. Theurkauf & Associates will add an annual inspection of the property for open space compliance to their schedule moving forward. Construction of the facility is expected to conclude in 2024 as well.

Quarry Activities

The Engineer monitored Independence Construction Materials blasting reports that were sent to the DEP and addressed residents' concerns.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The EAC advises the Supervisors on environmental issues, the protection and preservation of natural resources, and the possible uses of open land, along with providing educational materials and outreach to businesses and residents of the Township on matters such as recycling, stormwater and septic system management, and pipeline safety.

The Committee performed the following tasks in 2024:

1. Recruited two new members to the EAC 7-member board.
2. The EAC submitted an application to name the unnamed stream that flows through Charlestown Park to the U. S. Board on Geographic Names, after receiving approvals from Chester County and Charlestown Township. The name, Kwiamwis Siputët, a Lenape name that translates to Hawk Creek, was officially approved by the USBGN on 5/9/24. The Delaware Tribe of Indians of Bartlesville Oklahoma were consulted in the naming of the stream. Kwiamwis Siputët now appears on Chesco Views.
3. Adoption of Charlestown Road by the EAC for litter cleanups twice a year from Rt. 29 north to the Charlestown Mill. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation installed "Adoption by EAC" signage. All residents are invited and encouraged to participate in the April and October cleanups.
4. Presented the Charlestown EAC Alkaline Battery Recycling program to the statewide WeConservePA conference.
5. Continued the management of the Alkaline Battery Recycling program.
6. Continued to produce Nature News quarterly on environmental news and information for residents to protect Charlestown's natural resources.
7. Continued to support the Pennsylvania Bird Town program committee. The committee installed 7 Barn Owl and 13 Kestral boxes in sites in Charlestown offered by residents and deemed by the PA Fish and Wildlife Commission to be advantageous for these species. Also conducted the Great Back Yard Bird Count.





8. Held Native Species Day event at Brightside Farm Park with information on invasive species requested by residents throughout the year. It included the Second Annual Children's Art Contest with prizes of bird houses and bird feeders, and social medial acknowledgement of their work.

At left in the Children's Art Contest:

*Special Mention:
5th grade sculpture – Natalie
Ruby-throated hummingbird*

9. Received a grant for a Beyond Plastics program to improve the sustainability of Charlestown Municipal parks. Presentations were made, but a decision was deferred until the landscaping contract with the youth sports associations is reviewed for renewal.
10. Riparian buffer maintenance at Brightside Farm Park by the EAC was continued, resulting in a good report by the Chester County Conservation District of an 85% survival rate of plantings. Many plantings are beginning to develop canopies. The trees, shrubs, and planting infrastructure were received via a grant from the Keystone 10Million program to replace dead plants in the riparian buffer. The EAC initiated an ongoing effort to replace the short tubes that were used when shrubs were planted, to cages that are made and installed by the EAC and its volunteers to protect the growing shrubs from animal damage. They maintained a small nursery of plants to use for the riparian buffer.
11. Wrote and proposed a single-use plastic bag and item ordinance now under consideration in 2025 by the Township Supervisors.
12. Provided information on the EAC programs in which residents can participate at the November election Charlestown polling place.
13. Provided articles for Township newsletters: "New Bird Nest Boxes"; "Interested in Finding New Ways to Restore the Environment Right at Home?"; "Birds at Brightside Farm Park"; "Pennsylvania Native Species Day, May 16, 2024"; and "Nest Box Update: Year One - Trial, Errors, Successes and the Lessons Learned".

preservation, and property improvements. A portion of the non-encumbered EIT tax was transferred to the General Fund to provide additional revenue for general purposes.

The **General Fund Capital Fund** is funded from real estate taxes and a portion of the unencumbered EIT taxes. Expenditures in 2024 were for traffic planning consultant services for the upgrades to the Phoenixville Pike & Yellow Springs/Sidley Road intersection and a sidewalk plan for Yellow Springs Road adjacent to Route 29 (Morehall Road).

A Recreational Fee-in-Lieu Fund holds funds paid by developers who chose this option over providing open space and recreation in their subdivision and land development plan. These funds and any new funds collected will be used to enhance recreation at selected alternate locations such as Brightside Farm, Jenkins Park, and Charlestown Park.

A Stormwater Management Fund has been in place for the Whitehorse at Charlestown development since 1997. The developer opted for this escrow arrangement rather than form a Homeowners Association. No funds have been expended since the fund was set up.

A Transportation Fund was established in 2016 under Act 209 allowing for impact fees from developers to be used for future traffic improvements. No funds have been expended from the fund through 2024.

Federal COVID relief funds were received in 2021 and 2022. A plan for the use of these funds, which must be done in accordance with federal and state procedures and auditing requirements, was included in the 2024 Budget to use \$100,000 for a contribution to the Great Valley Community Organization's Community Center. All funds must be appropriated by 12/31/24 and expended by 12/31/25, including any additional interest accrued.

Budget amendments were adopted by Resolution at the May 1st Supervisors' meeting. Amendments take place in order to adjust revenue numbers and re-apportion expenditures as actual receipts and expenses become known. This ensures sufficient funds for remaining costs and obligations.

The **Long Term Financial Plan**, first developed in 2016, was revised for 2024-2028. The plan is utilized as an internal guide and was updated in the fall as one of the tools used in preparing the 2024 budget, particularly for capital improvement projects.

The Budget Work Session was held October 21st, and a final draft was prepared prior to the November 4th Board of Supervisors meeting at which time it was approved for advertising. The final 2024 budget was adopted on December 2nd.

The Swiss Pines Fund was acquired in November 2023 after the Township received Swiss Pines and surrounding parcels from the Bartschi Foundation and Bumeder estate. They are used solely for the maintenance and improvement of these nine parcels.

Finance

In February, the Treasurer was interviewed for an update of the previous Standard & Poors Rating of AA-. Following the interview and subsequent S & P rating meeting, the rating of AA- was upheld.

In April, the C.D. with First Resource Bank matured and the Township reinvested the funds in a new C.D. at 4.75% interest.

The Township continued to utilize ADP payroll services for the handling of semi-weekly payroll.

\$24,941.24 in funds previously obtained from FEMA will be used to repair damage to the Pickering Trail footbridge at the Ice Dam from Sept. 2021's Hurricane IDA. Design work was completed, and approval is pending by the DEP. Permits will be obtained with the project going out to bid in 2025.

The third American Rescue Plan annual report was filed by the April 30th deadline. The Township has opted to take the standard project approach, which provides the most flexibility for use of the funds and has simpler reporting requirements. The report indicates that half of the funds were expended on emergency services in 2022. A \$100,000 contribution was made to the Great Valley Community Organization in 2023, with an additional \$100,000 in 2024.

Taxes

Real Estate Taxes

The Board of Supervisors contracted with Keystone Collections to collect real estate taxes beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

The Township's .75 mil real estate tax has been unchanged since 2003.

Earned Income Tax & Local Services Tax












The Township is a member of the Chester County Tax Collection Committee with the Treasurer attending committee meetings semi-monthly as Charlestown's voting member. This countywide committee has the jurisdiction to oversee the collections of earned income and local services taxes for all taxing authorities within the county. Keystone Collections Group continues to be the contracted tax collection service for these taxes.

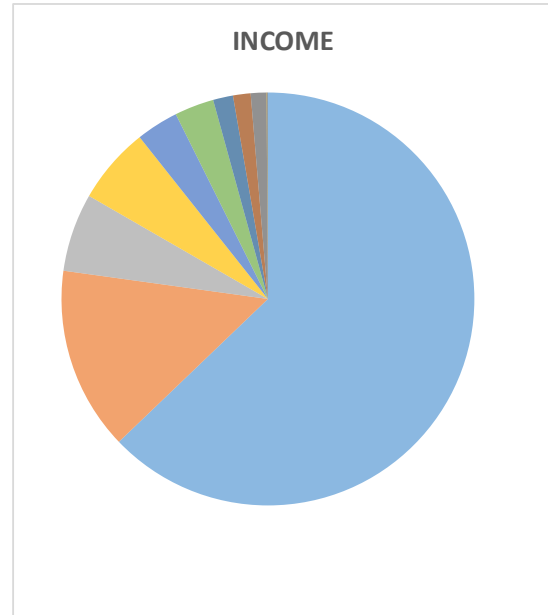
Transfer Taxes

The Township receives ½% from real property transfers.




















2024 Revenue & Expenditures – All Funds *

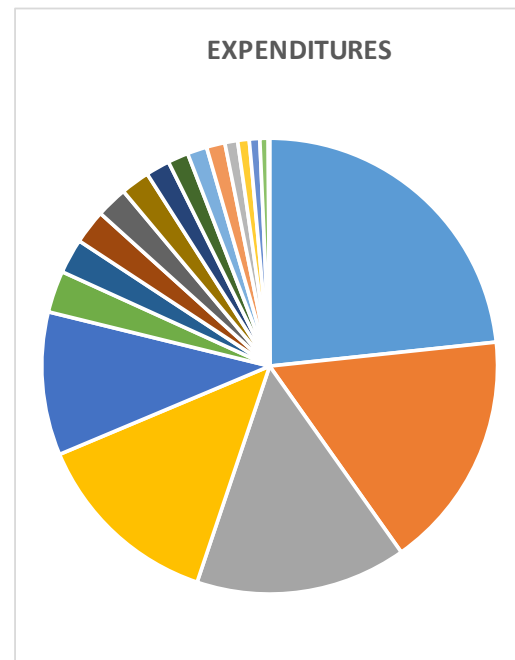
All Funds Income 2024

Earned Income Tax	5,656,426	62.8%	
Dividends	1,291,614	14.3%	
Real Estate Tax	551,733	6.1%	
Real Estate Transfer Tax	541,040	6.0%	
Permit Fees	297,826	3.3%	
State & County Rev. & Grant	277,890	3.1%	
Local Services Tax	140,788	1.6%	
Rents & Recreat. Use Fees	123,853	1.4%	
Cable Franchises	110,613	1.2%	
Fines & Forfeits	5,972	0.1%	
Application & Review Fees	3,750	0.5%	
Total:	9,001,505	100%	



All Funds Expenditures 2024

Bonds & Notes	1,007,663	23.3%	
Road Maint & Improvement	729,564	16.9%	
Parks & Recreation	646,532	15.0%	
Public Safety	584,013	13.5%	
Administration	439,039	10.2%	
Municipal Office	128,069	3.0%	
Donations	106,501	2.5%	
Permit Review & Inspection	104,813	2.4%	
Easements & Acquisitions	96,271	2.2%	
Charge to Applicants	88,908	2.1%	
Engineering	73,727	1.7%	
Insurance	63,282	1.5%	
Zoning	60,260	1.4%	
Legal	56,604	1.3%	
Environment and Open Sp	39,133	0.9%	
Internet & Website	35,315	0.8%	
Historical Resources	32,200	0.7%	
Planning	25,506	0.6%	
Recycling & Waste Mgmt	4,258	0.1%	
Total:	4,321,658		



* Data is for General Reference Only: Audited figures will be available after March 15th

VII. HISTORICAL

The Historical Commission/HARB reviews subdivision and land development plans in the Historic District comprising parts of Church Road, Pickering Dam Road, and Charlestown Road as well as serving as a resource to homeowners seeking advice regarding additions/alterations for historic homes and properties outside of the District with professional support from consultant Dale Frens and Carol Quigley of Patterhrn Ives. The HARB reviews plans for construction within the Historic District. Upon their recommendation, the Board of Supervisors issues a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work.

Projects addressed in 2024 included:

1. Development of a 2025 Calendar featuring historic properties in the Township, collected by member Paul Stevens.
2. The Historic Resource Atlas Project, which concluded in 2022, was followed in 2023 by 17 site visits during April, July, and November to numerous prospective properties to determine if they are suitable for adding to the Historic Resources List. The list was finalized to include 11 resources in early 2024. In May, the Supervisors accepted Jane Dorchester's proposal to complete the historic resource survey forms for these 11 resources on 9 properties. After this work is concluded, the Historical Commission will propose amendments to the Historical Resource Ordinance to the Supervisors in 2025.



3. Monitored Spring Clean-up and on-going maintenance of the landscaping at the Mill by GreenWeavers Landscaping.

At left: Autumn scene at the Charlestown Mill, photo by George Csete

VIII. LEGISLATION

Ordinances

The following ordinance was adopted in 2024:

224-2024 Ordinance amending Chapter 18 – Sewers and Sewage Disposal to amend Tier One and Tier Two limits for sewer discharges and time limits for waste permits and waste hauler licenses to be consistent with the VFSA rules & regulations.

Resolutions

1047-24 Independent Auditor Appointment

1048-24 Appoint Bob Cottone to UCC Board

1049-24 Appoint Jean Bomm to ZHB

1050-24 Name Depositories for 2024

1051-24 Credit Card Policy

1052-24 Designating Emergency Service Providers

1053-24 Public Participation Policy

1054-24 Recreational Fee-in-Lieu Schedule

1055-24 Approval of Valley Forge Sewer Authority Act 537 Special Study

1056-24 Budget Amendment 2024 - #1

1057-24 Support for PA Commission for U.S. Semiquincentennial

1058-24 Re-adoption of Emergency Operations Plan

1059-24 Acquisition of Conservation Easement on the Alleva Property

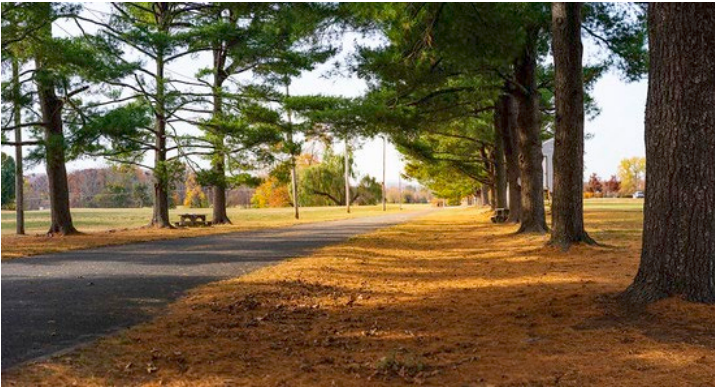
1060-24 Tax Levy 2025

1061-24 Adoption of the 2025 Budget

IX. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Dan Mount continued as Chairman for 2024. The Parks and Recreation Board advises the Board of Supervisors on matters of recreational policy and the development and maintenance of parks and trails in the Township, including the 44 acre Charlestown Park on Township Line Road, the 75 acre Brightside Farm Park, the future Jenkins Park on Valley Hill Road, the Pickering Trail between Charlestown Road and Route 29, and other recreational and open space.

The Parks and Recreation Board's activities in 2024 included:



Above: Autumn at Charlestown Park, photo by George Csete

1. Monitored park, field use and road event permits for various individuals and groups, including numerous special events, various scout events, and church, company, and school picnics. 240 reservations were made for the pavilions in 2024, exceeding 229 in the previous year.

Due to the number of calls and inquiries, a contract was entered with MyRec, an online park reservation software system that will be set up to manage reservations in 2025.

2. Updated Facebook postings to highlight special events and keep the public informed of both existing facilities and improvements planned or underway.
3. The water fountains were repaired and are now in working order.
4. A new flag was installed at the Veteran's Grove and the flagpole was repaired.



5. Worked with the Healthy Kids Running Group for their seventh season at the Park. The Group hosted their spring and fall 6-week Sunday sessions for over 100 children.

6. Continued work with the Great Valley Mountain Bike Club, which educates its ~50 members on proper trail use. The Club performs clean up at Brightside Farm twice a season as a "thank" you for the use of the property. They held a "New Riders" camp on July 8 – 10.



7. Coordinated with the Phoenixville Marian Youth Club (PMYC) and Phoenixville Area Soccer Club (PASC). These groups hold franchise agreements with the Township for the use of the playing fields at Charlestown Park in exchange for maintaining those fields and providing hundreds of area children the opportunity to participate in soccer, football, field hockey and lacrosse.

The PASC reported that 748 kids were registered for the spring soccer session with an additional 250 signed-up for travel soccer.

The PMYC reported 180 registered for lacrosse, 300 for flag football, and 80 for field hockey.

Improvements to the Township-owned PMYC clubhouse building were made, including keyless locks, updated clubhouse signage, review of the electrical system, and permitting for additional lighting. New signage with the new PMYC logo includes a 4' x 8' sign for the clubhouse and a 3' x 5' sign for the press box.

8. Unfortunately, a Memorial Day event hosted by the Parks & Recreation Board along with the Charlestown Historical Society was canceled for May 26th at the Charlestown Cemetery due to inclement weather.
9. Charlestown Historical Society hosted a Free Concert on Thursday, June 20 at the Wisner-Rapp House featuring the Bluegrass Trio "Borderline".
10. Recommended a Girl Scout Silver Award project presented by Morgan Duffy of Troop #4321 for a Little Library at Charlestown Park. The project involves altering a kitchen cabinet containing books for all ages to be placed next to Pavilion #3 facing the playground. A sloped roof on the cabinet will protect the contents from rain. Bookmarks will be made by the troop members, and she lives close enough to the park to check on the library regularly.
11. Recommended a Girl Scout Silver Award project presented by Sarabella Firkin of Troop #4321 for a bird garden at Charlestown Park, to consist of a bird bath, feeder, bird house and plantings. There would be a plan for cleaning and maintaining the bird bath and refilling the bird feeders.
12. Recommended a Girl Scout Gold Award project presented by Aarna Singh of Troop #41914 for a native flora garden including a 10 x 10 octagonal prefab gazebo, built-in benches, and the planting of native species with informational signage at a location along the fitness trail loop at Charlestown Park.
13. Parks & Rec member Stephanie Robinson's overview to the Supervisors in December of their plan to work with scout groups to help manage both major projects and maintenance items in Charlestown Park going forward was well received.
14. The Parks & Recreation Board posted its 2024 schedule in January and circulated this poster:

SAVE THESE DATES!

2024

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION EVENT SCHEDULE

APR 21 [NEW!] **SUNDAY BRUNCH SERVICE**
11 AM-2 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK

APR 28 **WILD FLOWER WALK**
10 AM | PICKER DAM CREEK TRAIL

MAY 18 **SPRING TRAIL CLEANUP DAY**
8 AM-11 AM | PICKERING DAM CREEK TRAIL

MAY 19 **SUNDAY BRUNCH SERVICE**
11 AM-2 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK

MAY 27 **MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**
10 AM-11 AM | OLD CHARLESTOWN CEMETERY

JUN 13 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

JUN 15 **BIRD WATCHING WALK**
TBD | PICKERING DAM CREEK TRAIL

JUN 16 **SUNDAY BRUNCH SERVICE**
11 AM-2 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK

JUN 27 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

JUL 11 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

JUL 25 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

AUG 8 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

AUG 22 **SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**
7 PM-9PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK OR BRIGHTSIDE FARM

SEP 28 **CHARLESTOWN DAY**
11 AM-3PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK

OCT 20 **SUNDAY BRUNCH SERVICE**
11 AM-2 PM | CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP PARK

NOV 21 **FALL TRAIL CLEANUP DAY**
8 AM-11 AM | PICKERING DAM CREEK TRAIL

*OUTDOOR EVENTS, LINEUPS
& SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
FOR WEATHER & OTHER REASONS.

*FOLLOW THE CHARLESTOWN PARKS &
RECREATION FACEBOOK PAGE FOR
EVENT DETAILS, UPDATES &
ANNOUNCEMENTS.

*EVENT SPONSORS & VENDORS WANTED!

*PLEASE CONTACT MAKINLEE FOX
(INFO@GOFOXONLINE.COM) FOR EVENT
SPONSORSHIP & VENDING
OPPORTUNITIES.



Brightside Farm Park

The farmhouse lease with the current renters was renewed for an additional year with no rent increase since an adjustment was made in 2022.

Sixty garden plots were leased in the community gardens, which continue to be very popular with our residents. The Gardeners' group has a closed Facebook page for those interested in sharing garden related information.

Greater attention was given to cleaning up of the non-public areas of the farm in 2024. Smaller dilapidated outbuildings were removed, old equipment was removed, and no trespassing signs were posted to encourage visitors to stay on the public trail.

The Supervisors continued with the ten-year Grassland Bird Sanctuary Plan with RES Landscaping. Following the completion of Phase I in 2023, the Board continued with Phase II in 2024, which included reseeded.



BIRD TOWN
PENNSYLVANIA

Eight kestrel boxes and three barn owl boxes are now installed at Brightside Farm Park and other locations. The Park also provides 22 blue bird boxes and 2 Screech owl boxes. The Township Participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) at Brightside on February 17th.

Undeterred by the snowy weather, members of the Audubon Society and township residents counted 21 species and saw a kestrel in flight (below left) and a northern mockingbird (below right):



- photos by George Csete

In 2024, Charlestown Bird Town was upgraded from its original status of a green level Bird Town to Silver, bypassing the Bronze level. We're very pleased to have made this dramatic jump in our first full year as a PA Bird Town Township.

CBT members have put up Kestrel and Barn Owl boxes across the Township. As mentioned, we numbered each box to help us track our progress and organize any data we collect. While every property is not suited for a Kestrel or Barn Owl box, other birds use nest boxes that any

homeowner can host. Through this program, we hope residents see they can help birds and promote a healthy environment.



On Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., Dan Mummert, a diversity biologist with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, placed leg bands on Kestrel chicks nesting at Brightside Farm Park while the nervous parents watched from the sky. Four of the five eggs had hatched by May 26th. This unique event was open to the public and approximately 60 enthusiastic visitors attended.

Banding of purple martins took place on July 1st.



Nature Photography at Brightside Farm Park

On June 5th, two of VFA's accomplished nature photographers and outings leaders joined Township Residents for a "golden hour" field session where they shared tips on how to shoot everything from wildlife and landscapes to macro images of flowers and plants at Brightside Farm Park.

Aurora Borealis over Brightside Farm Park October 10, 2024

A rare treat appeared the evening of October 10th at Brightside Farm Park. Numerous residents stopped by to enjoy the view of the northern skies.

- Photo by George Csete



Charlestown Park continues to be extremely popular with visitors. (pano photo by G. Csete)



Monitoring and Enforcement Program for Open Space - The Township continued its program with consultant Ed Theurkauf to perform stormwater management inspections semi-annually for Homeowners Associations, private properties, and Township owned open space and stormwater facilities, assessing the criteria of invasive species, erosion, and functionality. This monitoring also helps fulfill our requirements under Act 167. Dan Wright reviewed engineering inspection reports submitted on behalf of homeowners' associations and private owners of stormwater management facilities.

Open Space Maintenance – The contracts for Tree Work and Mowing/Landscaping went out to bid in February-March, each for a 3-year term ending in 2027. Davey Tree Service and Charlestown Landscaping were awarded the contracts.

Open Space Acquisitions

In 2023, negotiations were held to acquire an easement on the Alleva Property consisting of 20.5 acres near Merlin and Pikeland Roads. The easement, which will be placed with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, will be finalized in early 2025. An easement was acquired from the Nesspors in 2024.

Acquisition of Swiss Pines

Planning and maintenance work began at Swiss Pines in January. During 2024 the facility was closed to the public, and there was no trespassing or hunting allowed on the property. First and foremost is the need for safe entrance/exits and parking areas. Assessments, surveys, and construction drawings must be developed for the existing structures and new improvements. The requirements for bidding and contracting of larger jobs will take additional time.



Various maintenance tasks were undertaken during the year, beginning with home inspections for each of the occupied tenant houses to ensure safety and code requirements were being met. Repairs were scheduled and performed as needed, including asbestos mitigation.

Demolitions of small, dilapidated structures, the remnants of the Bartschi House, a swimming pool, and stage area were undertaken. The septic systems on Tree Lane and Swiss Lane were all located and pumped. Additional underground tank removals were undertaken.

Chester County Bamboo LLC was engaged to begin mitigation of the overgrown bamboo along Charlestown Road, and a contractor was engaged to remove the dilapidated fencing.

New leases were executed with the existing 6 tenants on Swiss Lane and Tree Lane. The tenant at 52 Swiss Lane moved out and the house remains vacant as repairs are undertaken.

The Supervisors, Planning Commission members, and several consultants and staff held a property walk-through on Saturday, April 6th.

A new well was dug to serve the residences on Tree Lane. Tank removals were undertaken and conduit for the new electrical service for the well was installed.

The garage door on the barn was replaced in order to secure the structure.

The dilapidated house on Swiss Lane has been demolished.

A project to repair the foundation at 61 Swiss Pines was approved to go out to bid in late summer.

Resident Gary Coleman was contracted to continue maintenance at Swiss Pines as he had done for the Bartschi Foundation, including grounds work.

In addition to maintenance work, the Solicitor attended several assessment hearings to lower taxes on several of the parcels and work toward tax exempt status on others.

In June, the Supervisors approved a proposal from Thomas Comitta Associates to create a Preliminary Master Plan over a six-eight month period. A subcommittee was created, composed of members Cordelia Kane from Parks & Rec, Township Engineer Dan Wright, Dan Walker representing both the Planning Commission and EAC, and Supervisors Charlie Philips and Kevin Kuhn. For the 17 acre Gardens, the Supervisors added Rosemary Philips and Nancy Long from the HARB with consulting from Carol Quigley. Staff planner Mike Allen would also be consulted. The first meeting of the committee was held on July 25th, with additional meetings held on Oct. 24th and Nov. 20th, when the preliminary plan was first reviewed.

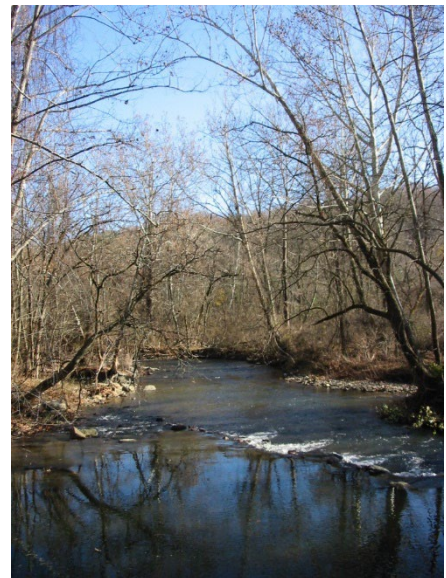
Trails

Township nature trails include the Horse-Shoe, Pickering, Pickering Dam, Thompson, and McDevitt Trails. Paved trails are featured at Brightside Farm Park and Charlestown Park.

Repairs, trail clearing, and signage updates were made to the McDevitt Trail in the spring.

The Township obtained FEMA funding to repair the footbridge, including the ramp to the bridge.

At right: A View of the creek along the Pickering Dam Trail -photo by G. Csete



Due to the sensitivity of the site and requirement for DEP oversight, additional tasks were needed prior to submitting the permit application to work in the stream. A bog turtle assessment was undertaken by DuBois and Associates in the fall. Construction will take place in the spring of 2025.

Parks and rec Board member Cordelia Kane accompanied Theurkauf Design & Planning on the spring inspection of the Pickering Trail. A partially exposed open well was discovered and subsequently covered with a steel plate.

Parks and Rec Board member Scott Ammerman functioned as the point person for the Township's trails.

Roadmaster Jim Thompson performed clean up along the Thompson Trail off Union Hill Road, popular with equestrians. He removed numerous small trees for clearing and safety purposes.

All trails were visited and many of the repairs were undertaken by volunteer groups. The Parks & Recreation Board hosted Trail Clean Up Day on May 18th and November 9th for the Pickering Dam Trail.

Professional tree removal services were needed for fallen trees on the various trails. Mowing service was provided for the Pickering and Pickering Dam Trails. There was a minor amount of trash to pickup, fallen trees that need to be cleared, repair and relocation of foot bridges, and the manual removal of invasive plants.

A wildflower walk was hosted by Parks & Rec on April 28th along the Pickering Dam Trail that was attended by approximately 30 people.

The Supervisors approved a right-of-way agreement to allow PECO Energy to enter a portion of the Township's Pickering Preserve property adjacent to the Pickering Dam Trail to install 4 anchor guys (covered support cables) on 4 poles within the property and to perform tree maintenance work.

Charlestown Day Committee

The Parks & Recreation Board organized the tenth annual Charlestown Day event held on September 28th. Members Makinlee Fox and Stephanie Robinson organized the event and developed vendor and sponsor flyers, yard signs, and social media material to promote it.

Proceeds went to Friends of Charlestown, which provides funding for local non-profit groups. The day's activities were held from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm under cloudy skies. Following are some photos of the day's events taken by the Township webmaster, Allen Underkofler, and published with the subjects' permission.





X. PLANNING

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission performs a variety of important services for Township citizens, developers, and businesses. They advise on the planning and implementation of the Township's Comprehensive Plan and related policies and ordinances along with the following tasks:

- Review and propose amendments to the Township Comprehensive Plan and other planning instruments including the subdivision/land development ordinance (SLDO), zoning ordinance and other related ordinances.
- Analyze petitions and requests proposing to rezone land in the Township
- Conduct technical reviews with the help of their consultants and make recommendations on land development and subdivision plan applications
- Maintain maps and data regarding land and property in the Township
- Oversee other projects at the request of the Board of Supervisors

The following is a detailed list of matters reviewed during 2024.

Ordinances

Ordinances discussed during the year included those for:

Accessory dwelling units (in-law suites)
Agritainment
Grid Scale Solar

Strategic Planning Session

The Planning Commission and Supervisors met jointly on February 3rd to discuss future and ongoing planning strategies.

Subdivisions & Land Developments

The following subdivision/land development applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2024. Review comments, when requested, were prepared by the Township Planner, Engineer and Solicitor.

Sketch Plan #01-2024 Bodine Properties - Proposed two lot subdivision of 2081 Bodine Road. Lot 1 abuts Bodine Road, and the proposed Lot 2 is an interior lot that includes a small dwelling to be demolished. Lot 1 includes a house, garage, and pool to remain on that property. Comments were provided at the April 9th meeting.

Sketch Plan #02-2024 DV Phoenixville Pike - Proposed self-storage facility and associated improvements on the property. The applicant currently owns approximately 9 acres and is negotiating with 2 neighboring property owners for the remaining ground. Challenges include steep and very steep slopes and setback requirements. Comments were provided at two meetings with a resubmission expected in 2025.

SD #423-20R Beyond Meat – Preliminary Plan for expansion of the Beyond Meat processing plant at 1 Fillippo Way, was approved by the Supervisors in 2023; awaiting final plan submission.

SD #432-23 Chucktown – Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for a 5,100 sq. ft. office/warehouse building in an NC-1 district property on the south side of Phoenixville Pike, west of the PA Turnpike, remains pending.

SD #433-24 Alleva – Lot combination for 1 & 2 Honeysuckle Lane. The plan was approved by the Supervisors on July 1st.

SD #434-24 Bodine Properties – Minor subdivision plan for 2081 Bodine Road. The Sewage Facilities Planning Module was approved on September 3rd. Subdivision plan review will continue into 2025.

Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2024:

CU-2024-1 Kulp – Request for conditional use approval of a new garage to be 75.47% of the principal structure ground floor area, exceeding the ordinance by 25.47% was recommended on May 14th and approved by the Supervisors on June 3rd.

CU-2024-2 Jablonski – Request for conditional use approval of a pole barn to exceed 50% of the principal structure ground floor area, was recommended on August 13th and approved by the Supervisors on September 3rd.

CU-2024-3 Zaro – Request for conditional use approval to allow the expansion and renovation of an existing 3-car garage to construct guest quarters on the second and third floors, approved by the Supervisors on December 2nd.

Waiver Requests

Waiver #1 - Request by Mark Overton to allow construction of a garage in the front yard of his property at 15 Dobs Lane was recommended on February 27th and approved by the Supervisors on March 4th.

Waiver #2 – Request by Ronald and Carol Vickers to permit an above ground pool in the front yard at 1 Benburb Road. The request was denied since the Board determined the pool could fit in the side yard with some clearing work.

General Planning Matters

Additional activities performed in 2024 included the following:

- Elected Matt Rogers as Chairman and Dan Walker as Vice Chairman. Wendy McLean, Esq. was appointed as Solicitor to the Planning Commission.
- Provided input to the Manager and Treasurer for the Long-Term Financial Plan on projects for 2024 – 2028.
- Planning Commission member Dan Walker, along with the Township Manager, attended quarterly meetings with the Great Valley School District office along with the other municipalities in the district to provide data on future development to gauge the impact on the schools.

Design Review Committee

The Design Review Committee oversees the detailed design process of the Traditional Neighborhood Development District (TND), which is a compact, neighborhood driven multi-use district located in the area of Charlestown Township known as Devault.

The TND District was created in 2004 as an initiative-taking means of mitigating the impact of market forces that would lead to more intensive commercial and industrial uses following the construction of the Turnpike Slip Ramp in East Whiteland Township. The Design Review Committee includes one member of the Planning Commission, one member of the Board of Supervisors, and the Township Planning Consultant.

The DRC reviews applications for land development in the TND District, focusing on the developer's specific Graphic Design Guidelines, which must comply with the key design elements specified by the Township. The Committee also reviews requests for material and product substitutions that arise as development is underway and is actively involved in the aesthetics of public improvements in the district.

Pickering Crossing (Charlestown Road and Route 29) and Spring Oak (Whitehorse Road) construction have both been completed. The second phase of Spring Oak, Devault Village, has had permits issued for all the twin units, with some single units still to be constructed.

A grant was approved in 2023 by the Commonwealth Financing Authority for sidewalk installation, pedestrian signal upgrades, and crosswalk improvements at the Morehall Road (SR 29) and Yellow Springs Road intersection in the amount of \$177,417, covering nearly the entire project cost of \$178,025. Design has been ongoing throughout 2024, and the project will go out to bid in 2025 with construction to follow.

Transportation Advisory Committee

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) relies on the 2014 Transportation Capital Improvements Plan, which is required by Act 209, to enable a municipality to provide for transportation capital improvements through the imposition of impact fees upon new development. No new fees were assessed in 2024.

Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee

Members include the Townships of Charlestown, Schuylkill, East Pikeland, West Pikeland, and West Vincent along with the Borough of Phoenixville. The Committee performs reviews of proposed zoning amendments and selected subdivision and land development plans for its members. The Regional Planning Commission has an advisory status like that of the Chester County Planning Commission, and the review period runs concurrently with the CCPC's review.

Along with the other members, Charlestown continued to work together under the implementation agreement that outlines the strategy for the members to plan their future by directing growth into designated growth areas and into older communities for revitalization while maximizing the efficient use of the public infrastructure. Focus is also placed on preserving the Region's historic sites, rural areas and natural resources.

Dan Walker was Charlestown's representative on the PRPC's trail committee, which was created in 2022.

Phoenixville Region Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

The region includes Phoenixville Borough and Upper Providence, West Vincent, East Pikeland, Schuylkill and Charlestown Townships. The Plan consists of evaluation of existing conditions for walking, biking, and mass transit, and developed goals and recommendations. The plan outlines implementation

strategies to enhance alternate means of transportation for commuters other than single occupancy vehicles.



Two projects located in Charlestown are identified on the Plan, which continue to be priorities moving forward:

The Devault Rail to Trail Project

Two aspects of the project have been completed. The first was the Devault Trail Feasibility Study, published in 2014. The second step was the finalization of the Devault Trail Activation plan in 2022. This plan set forth recommendations for the appropriate groups (and structure) to acquire, own, and manage the future trail, and serves as a catalyst for the immediate next stages in the process: the formation of a working group for the inter-municipal agreement and the property research and engineering steps that continue to push the trail project forward.

TMACC confirmed the County is maintaining its position that they are not interested in ownership even if the acquisition is completely funded. Likewise they are not interested in taking on a maintenance role.

The current concept for ownership remains an intermunicipal agreement, with each municipality owning their own section of the trail and maintaining it. If the project continues, the third step will be to apply for a DVPRC grant with assistance from TMAAC. The grant application will cover these steps of the activation plan:

1. Title Searches
2. Study of environmental conditions
3. Structural conditions
4. Preparation of a Master Plan

PA29 Narrow Bridge

The current configuration of the road at this point causes traffic to slow/back up at peak times thus motivating motorists to favor other roads traversing the Township. If the bridge is determined to be structurally deficient, then federal funds may be available for replacement and widening.

Traffic Planning

The firm Traffic Planning & Design served as traffic engineering consultant. The Township worked with consultants Traffic Planning & Design on two major intersection improvement projects.

In 2019, TPD obtained a DVRPC grant for \$2,110,000 following placement of the Route 401 & Valley Hill Road intersection on the CMAQ list (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program). The

project will begin in Spring 2025 and will include channelization improvements and the addition of left turn lanes on Route 401 for both northbound and southbound traffic.

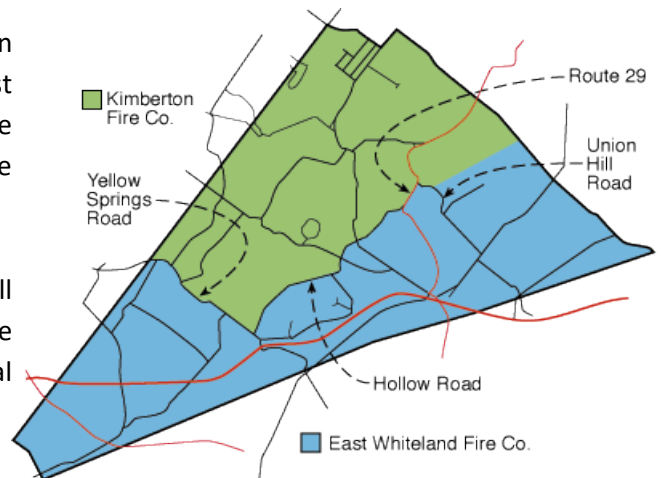
Planning continued on improvements to the intersection of Phoenixville Pike/Yellow Springs Road/Sidley Road. Although the intersection is completely located within East Whiteland Township, it was permitted by PennDOT in both Township's names due to its initial construction being required because of the approval of Charlestown Oaks. The grant of \$600,000 covered most of the estimated cost of \$999,300 with each Township contributing \$50,000 to cover the balance. However, PennDOT has come back citing a federal requirement that the intersection include ADA curb ramps for an additional \$100,000. Each Township will now have to take on \$50,000 more to cover the cost. No sidewalks are proposed and there are no plans to add them at a later date, but the ramps are required in order to get the permit approved. Charlestown and East Whiteland Township have agreed to split the additional cost at \$50,000 apiece to move forward.

With a grant award of \$177,417 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to install sidewalks, pedestrian signal upgrades, and crosswalk improvements at the Morehall Road (SR 29) and Yellow Springs Road intersection, planning will continue into 2025.

XI. PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Police Services:** Charlestown Township is served by the Pennsylvania State Police, from Troop J, the Embreeville Barracks with Captain Robert C. Wagner, station commander.
- **Fire Companies and Ambulance Services:** Charlestown Township is served by two fire departments, the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association, the Kimberton Fire Company (fire) along with the and West End Fire Company (ambulance).

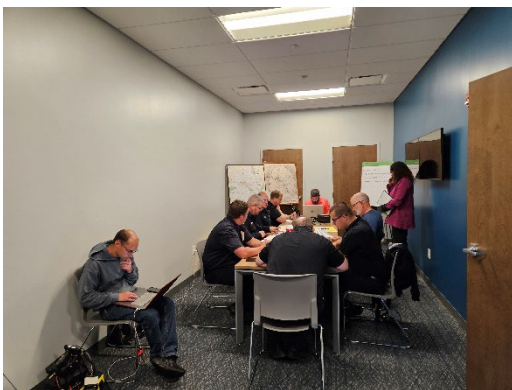
In addition, Uwchlan Ambulance Corps serves a small portion of the western part of the Township. The Supervisors approved an additional \$2,500.00 capital contribution toward new equipment in August.



Kimberton/West End Fire Companies cover the northern portion of the Township while East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association covers the southern area.

Charlestown holds two seats on the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association board, held in 2024 by Supervisor Kevin Kuhn, who has served on the board for 11 years and Township Manager Chris Heleniak, who was initially appointed in 2022 and continued to serve in 2024. This fire department has operated as a joint venture with Charlestown since its inception in 1952.

- Charlestown provides funding to the Fire Companies and Ambulance Services through annual contributions and by passing through the Firemen's Relief funds apportioned to the Township from the Commonwealth.



Emergency Operations Center (EOC): Charlestown re-adopted its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in November 2024. This plan is designed to provide prompt and effective emergency response procedures to be followed in the event of a major emergency or disaster to protect the health, safety and welfare of Charlestown residents. The Emergency Operations Center, located at the Township office, consists of computers, communications and other equipment to be used in the event of an emergency that might affect the residents of the Township.

A biennial drill is conducted to practice and review emergency management procedures. The next drill will take place in 2025.

The Fire Marshal and EOC Director attended quarterly training sessions for Emergency Management personnel provided through the County Department of Emergency Services, including hazard mitigation training, and participated in county DES Emergency Management Radio and Limerick Siren Tests.

- **Animal Control:** A 5-year contract covering 2024-2028 is in place. The Township also has an Animal Control Officer to assist residents with animal trapping and removal. The Zoning Officer handles barking complaints.
- **Burning Regulations, Smoke Detectors and Fireplace Safety:** The Fire Marshal continued to provide information to the residents on the burning ordinance and advise on general safety practices.
- **False Alarms:** The Township continued to enforce its ordinance warning first time offenders of false fire alarms and assessing a fine for repeat false alarms. Warnings and fines were issued as needed.
- **Fireworks:** The Fire Marshal reviews any applications for fireworks displays.
- **Hazardous Materials:** The Fire Marshal consulted with businesses as needed regarding HazMat issues and registration requirements. Administration continued with annual registration of hazardous materials from township businesses as required by our ordinance.
- **Trespassing and Vandalism:** The Fire Marshal continued as ongoing liaison to the State Police to report and address trespassing and vandalism issues that occurred along trails and in areas adjacent to the PA Turnpike owned by various homeowners' associations.
- **PA One Call:** The Township continued its support and education outreach to remind residents and contractors to call 8-1-1 before they dig.



XII. PUBLIC WORKS

The Five-Year Road Improvement Plan was reviewed and updated. No improvements were budgeted for 2024.

The Annual Road Maintenance contract was delayed going out to bid in 2024 in order to update the specifications and to split the bid document to separate snow & ice removal from the rest of the road equipment and labor bid. The Invitation to Bid was placed on PennBid. On July 1st, both contracts were awarded to Cedar Springs Construction Company. Work performed in 2024 included:

- Major clean up after 5 inches of rain on January 23rd
- Snow & Ice Removal throughout winter season
- Roadside mowing along Township roads
- Inlet and swale cleaning on Township Roads
- Street sweeping
- Repaired swale along Aldham Road with shotrock and fixed blacktop curb by guardrail.
- Replaced pipes on Pickering Spur, perform widening and shoulder work.
- Base repair and curbing for Mary Hill, Raven Hill, and Crestview Roads
- Repairs to Academic Way
- Base repair and shoulder repairs to Buckwalter Road
- Base Repair to Wyndham Lane
- Base Repair to Somerset Lane
- Inlet repairs on Green Briar Lane, Wyndham Lane, and streets in the Whitehorse @ Charlestown development.
- Repair of sinkhole at inlet box in Charlestown Hunt development
- Repairs to Sycamore Lane to resolve ongoing water runoff issues.
- Repaired curbing on Wyndham Lane
- Long Fence repaired guardrail on Lincoln Road caused by tree damage.

Salt was purchased from American Rock Salt Company via the Co-Stars program rather than by soliciting bids.

Spring and Fall clean-up and repairs included road sweeping, culvert and inlet clean outs, and pothole patching. Tree removal was performed throughout the year along many of the Township roads and the open space properties, including Aldham Road, Blackberry Lane, Bodine Road, Buckwalter Road, Foster Road, Green Lane Road, Lincoln Road, Mine Road, Pickering Spur, Pine Drive, Rees Road, Ridgewood Road, Sidley Hill Road, Tinkerhill Lane, Tinkerhill Road, Union Hill Road, Wells Road, and Yellow Springs Road.

The Roadmaster was in contact with PennDOT for tree trimming and sight distance clearing along state roads and communicated numerous problems with trees and limbs on wires to PECO.

The Township Office continued to utilize PennDOT's online system for reporting road concerns where prompt attention was given to all situations reported. The system provides a tracking number and email notification when the reported problem has been resolved.

The Contract with Armour & Sons for signal service maintenance was extended for an additional year to end February 2025.

Merlin Road Bridge Replacement

Beginning in January, PennDOT closed a portion of Merlin Road to replace the 24-foot wide bridge located between Pikeland and Coldstream Roads. The road was reopened in May.

Pickering Dam Road Bridge Replacement

The Supervisors provided feedback on PennDOT's project to replace the Pickering Dam Road bridge and selected the second style option of Type 10M railing in black.

Sign Management Program

The Roadmaster continued to replace and install signage as outlined in the Township Sign Management Program, which was put into effect in March 2014 as mandated by the State and includes the assessment and maintenance of retro-reflectivity for regulatory and warning signs at or above the standards spelled out in the federal *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

Turnpike Widening

The Turnpike Commission's widening project construction began in 2023 and is ongoing as they reconstruct and widen approximately four miles of the Turnpike between Milepost 312 (just west of the Downingtown Interchange) and Milepost 316 (near the Valley Hill Road overpass in Charlestown).

The existing four-lane roadway will be upgraded to six lanes. The project will also include construction of new stormwater facilities, and replacement areas for wetlands and streams.

XIII. UTILITIES

Private Well Water

The Township provided information published by the Pa Department of Health on protecting well water and ensuring its quality through newsletter and website articles.

On-Site Septic Systems

The Township continued to access Chester County Health Department's database to track the required pumping and inspection of all septic systems every three years.

Public Water

For those areas served by public water, Charlestown Township is served by Aqua PA.

Public Sewer

For those areas served by public sewer, Charlestown Township is part of the Valley Forge Sewer Authority.

The Valley Forge Sewer Authority was incorporated by Charlestown, East Pikeland and Schuylkill Townships in 1968 and is a utility owned by its customers. Its business is to recycle wastewater into clean water for stream discharge and to produce a specialized fertilizer product utilized by area farmers.

The Authority owns and operates 90 miles of collection line, 9 pump stations and a regional treatment plant, serving approximately 22,000 customers in nine Chester County municipalities: Charlestown Township, East Pikeland Township, Schuylkill Township, Easttown Township, East Whiteland Township, Malvern Borough, Tredyffrin Township and Willistown Township. Recently, the area was extended to include a portion of West Vincent Township.

XIV. WASTE & RECYCLING

- **The Lanchester Landfill's** acceptance of electronic devices was promoted on the township's website and in newsletters.
- **Annual Recycling Meeting:** The County's annual Act 101 Workshop was held on October 31st. The Act 101 application for the annual recycling grant was submitted by the Sept. 30th deadline. The Recycling Ordinance was reviewed to confirm compliance with DEP regulations.
- **Participation in Chester County Household Hazardous Waste Program:** Charlestown Township once again joined this program that allowed Township residents to bring unwanted hazardous household, automotive products, home maintenance, lawn and pest control products to any of four collection events held throughout 2024. Pre-registration was required and made the drop off process run smoothly.
- **Prescription Pill Drop Off:** The locations throughout Chester County where prescription pills can be disposed of are posted on the website.
- **Battery disposal:** The EAC set up boxes at the Township Office and Devault Post office for disposal of batteries. Both boxes were heavily used, with the batteries packed and shipped off to a recycling location. EAC member Pete Goodman separated out batteries that are not eligible for the program such as lithium batteries and took them to Narvon's Waste Disposal site. Member Carol Armstrong took four full boxes of batteries in late summer and early fall to ship to the reclamation company.
- **Waste Hauler Private Subscription:** Charlestown Township licensed area haulers to collect trash and recyclables for residents and businesses in 2024. Property owners contract privately with the hauler of their choice for waste hauler services. Numerous complaints were received about lack of service from A.J. Blosenski, and the solicitor sent a letter to that hauler in March.
- **Yard Waste Disposal Drop-Off:** Charlestown continued its arrangement with the Borough of Phoenixville to have access to their yard waste drop off site at 18 South 2nd Avenue in Phoenixville.

XV. ZONING

Zoning Hearing Board

The Charlestown Township Zoning Hearing Board is a three-member board of residents appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Zoning Hearing Board is a quasi-judicial body that reviews appeals under the Township Zoning Ordinance. Applications to the Zoning Hearing Board are submitted to the Township Office, and hearings are scheduled on an as-needed basis.

The following Zoning Hearing Board applications were considered in 2024:

2023-02 Stauffer – A request for a variance to permit the construction of a detached garage in steep and very steep slopes on Primrose Lane was denied on August 29th. The applicant filed an appeal on September 27th and a court date is expected in early 2025.

2023-03 Hertzfeld – Appeal from enforcement notice dated 10/18/23, or in the alternative to seek a variance to permit commercial use on the property. Prior to the opening of the hearing, the applicant reached an agreement with the Township to cease operations at the location as of December 31, 2025 and execute a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions including a restriction against further subdivision and specific use restrictions.

2024-01 Carpenter (B & D Mechanical) – Appeal from enforcement notice dated May 21st to seek a variance to permit commercial use on the property. The applicant reached a settlement with the Township prior to the hearing. A penalty was assessed and operations ceased by November 30th. Submission of permit applications is pending for two structures constructed without approval.

2024-02 Bodine Properties LLC – Variance request to construct a driveway within the 20 foot setback of a private access road. The hearing was held on August 14th and the variance was granted.

2024-03 Zaro, Christopher & Meg – Variance request to allow guest quarters with full kitchen and to exceed 1,000 sq. ft. The hearing was held on Sept. 11th and the variance was granted.

Zoning Officer

As prescribed by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, the Township Zoning Officer is the sole official responsible for enforcement of the zoning ordinance.

The primary means of managing land use activities is through municipal zoning. The public involvement in private land use matters and business activities in the Township typically begins with an application to the Township for a zoning permit, which is required for construction and other activities to verify and authorize the legal use of property in accordance with the zoning regulations.

The Zoning Officer has various enforcement and procedural duties that include:

- Determining compliance with the zoning ordinance for an applicant's proposed project or use,
- Responding to requests for service related to alleged illegal uses and activities,
- Coordinating enforcement actions and due process related to zoning enforcement,
- Participating in Zoning Hearing Board meetings in an official capacity and witnessing during appeals to his/her land use determinations.

XVI. MISCELLANEOUS

Cable Franchise Renewal

The Board engaged the Cohen Law Group to negotiate the cable franchise agreement with Verizon and that work is ongoing.

Codification of Ordinances

Codification services continued with General Code. Since a full codification of ordinances was undertaken in 2021, only those ordinances adopted in 2024 were appended to the Code this year. Tools are available for the planning commission, supervisors, consultants and Township personnel to make and track various notes that aid in the ordinance review process.

Continuing Training and Education

Township staff attended webinars hosted by the Pennsylvania State Association of the Township Officials. The Township Manager attended the Association for PA Municipal Management conference in Bethlehem, PA.

Devault Gateway

RES Great Lakes LLC (Resource Environmental Solutions), a prominent company in the industry that works with Longwood Gardens, continued to carry out its project schedule for the Basin Beautification Project along Route 29 and the Turnpike. Maintenance continued on landscaping installed in 2023.

Donations

The Township provided its annual donations to Camp Cadet of Chester County and the Phoenixville Public Library. A donation of \$100,000 was made to the Great Valley Community Organization toward its community center, using a portion of ARPA funds earmarked for this purpose. The GVCO serves the surrounding communities of East Whiteland, Willistown, and Charlestown.

Earth Day

The Spring Earth Day event took place on April 13th and was overseen by the Environmental Advisory Committee. Charlestown Road was featured as an Adopt-a-Highway location. Flagger Force was utilized to keep participants safe along the roadway. Residents volunteered to take part in safe-distanced clean up and park & trail enhancement activities. Bags, safety vests, and gloves were provided to volunteers.

Charlestown Park

Troop Leader Karen Buzzi reports that there were 28 scouts collecting trash along with 15 parents who stayed to help at Charlestown Park. Thank you to troops 41861, 480, 41233, and 4347, and to Ms. Buzzi for this great photo below.



Charlestown Road

Members of the Environmental Advisory Committee, led by Dan Walker, undertook a roadside cleanup of Charlestown Road on Oct. 19th through PennDOT's adopt-a-highway program. He initiated the program with PennDOT in 2023, and Flagger Force was on site to keep our volunteers safe from traffic.



Pickering Creek

Along the Pickering Creek trail, the Longua family reprised their many-years efforts as friends of the Pickering Creek with Dad Bill Longua taking the pictures shown above.



Great Valley Nature Center

Plans for the Township to purchase the property from the Trust and lease it back to them as their headquarters were changed after the Trust decided against moving ahead. The Trust will now seek a buyer for the property.

- photo by Carol Armstrong

I.T.

The manager worked with Intermedia Group to convert our email system to a Microsoft Exchange based system.

Due to the need to meet ADA compliance requirements for the website beginning 2026 and the desire to update the format and content of the site as a whole, the Supervisors approved a contract with CivicPlus, a company that specializes in technology solutions for local government and is used by the majority of townships in our area. Because creating and building the new site will take as long as 6-8 months, the existing contract with web designer Allen Underkofler was renewed on a month to month basis to cover the transition period into 2025.

Pipeline Concerns

While there is no proposed construction on the pipeline in Charlestown, the Environmental Advisory Committee continued to monitor the Adelpia Gateway Project. The pipeline traverses the Brightside Farm along with numerous private properties.

Risk Management Program

The Township continued its association with Simkiss & Block to procure cost effective insurance coverage for auto, commercial, terrorism, public officials coverage, treasurer's and manager's bonding, umbrella and employee practices. The proposal from Travelers Insurance was accepted at a cost comparable to the previous term's policies.

Scanning Services, File Management and Records Retention

The Township continued scanning documents using DocuPhase's cloud-based document management software. Scantek handled larger files and documents, while smaller materials were uploaded by staff. Commercial and Residential building permits, subdivision files, and decisions from the zoning hearing board, HARB, and conditional use applications are all in the system along with all available conservation easement documents. More recent documents are on file at the Township Office and are scanned once the application or project has closed out.

The staff continued the process of reviewing files in offsite storage to determine those of no further administrative value. This saves in storage costs and also helps to identify those records to be preserved to make older, but still relevant, information more accessible.

Township files are securely backed up on a cloud based system.

Voters Services

The Township provided details and links to information on how to apply for mail-in and absentee ballots as well as how to register to vote, in order to encourage residents to participate in the elections of 2024.



Government and Professional Affiliations

Charlestown Township is a member of the following organizations:

Association for PA Municipal Management
Chester County Association of Township Supervisors (CCATO)
Chester County Consortium of Managers
Chester County Historical Preservation Network
Chester County Secretaries in Government Association (CCSIGA)
Chester County Tax Collection Committee
Co-Stars (for purchasing)
National Alliance of Preservation Commission
Pennsylvania Municipal Management Association
Pennsylvania Parks and Recreation Society
Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Phoenixville Region Multi-Modal Transportation Committee
Transportation Management Association of Chester County

A limited number of copies of this Annual Report are available upon request from the Township Office.

Index to Abbreviations Used in the Annual Report

ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
CCPC	Chester County Planning Commission
CMAQ	Community Multiscale Air Quality Modeling System
DCNR	Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DVRPC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
E&S	Erosion & Sedimentation Control
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
GVCO	Great Valley Community Organization
HARB	Historical & Architectural Review Board
HOA	Homeowners Association
MS-4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OSI	Open Space Institute
PADEP	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
PRPC	Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
RES	Resource Environmental Solutions
SALDO	Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee
TMACC	Transportation Management Association of Chester County
TND	Traditional Neighborhood Development
TPD	Traffic Planning & Design



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