

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Spring 2020 Newsletter

www.charlestown.pa.us

Published by the Board of Supervisors

4030 Whitehorse Road, Devault, PA 19432 - (610) 240-0326

Township Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday - Friday



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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Supervisors

1ST Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 p.m.

Historical Commission

Semi-monthly 3rd Tuesday
@ 4:00 p.m.

Environmental

Advisory Committee

2nd Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are held via Cisco
Webex until further notice
during COVID

Devault Trail Update

In June 2020, Charlestown was awarded a \$64,000 grant through the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The Chester County Transportation Management Association (TMAAC) is taking the lead for us with the project, which is to conduct an Activation Study to develop a structure for the ownership and management of the proposed trail.

A committee including representatives from Charlestown and these organizations is meeting monthly for 6 months, then every other month for 6 months through 2021 with project completion in early 2022. The group is currently focusing on analysis of existing conditions.



Coming Soon: A Virtual Public Open House is being planned for May. Please check our website for an announcement of the date and details for participating.

The Open House will provide an update on the Devault Trail and invite public comment and support. The display documents will be posted ahead of the meeting on our website so viewers can better study and prepare any questions they'd like to have addressed at the meeting.

How does this tie into the County's trail system? Chester County is: (1) completing the county portion of the Schuylkill River Trail (near completion), (2) extending the Chester Valley Trail a mile further (Main Street in Exton to the Oaklands Business Park, under construction); (3) connecting and extending the Struble Trail; (4) extending the CVT westward to Enola over a PennDOT right of way. They completed the Warner Spur Master Plan, most of which is in Tredyffrin and will connect to the Chester Valley Trail and the future Devault Trail.



The trail will be similar to the Chester Valley Trail in design, as a 10-12 foot multi-use trail, with attractive fencing similar to that at the CVE where needed.

At left: The Devault Branch along Aldham Road

Walking the Brightside Trail - by Esther Underhill



Brightside Farm Park has a bit of everything. Take time to look around when you walk the trails. Check out the flowers that are blooming and bees that are buzzing in the hedgerows.

This year at Brightside, the milkweed will remain in fields so that the Monarch Butterflies can spend part of their journey with us. From summer to fall, we can enjoy the pink milkweed flowers. Later, monarch eggs on the leaves will hatch and the caterpillars will feast on them.

Traveling monarch butterflies stop each summer to lay eggs that will hatch as yellow, white and black striped caterpillars.

Next comes a beautiful green chrysalis and finally a new butterfly. This process begins again for one or two generations. Then, instead of laying eggs, they load up on nectar from goldenrod and other late blooming natives and head south. In late August or early September, we will take a walk at Brightside to see how many butterflies, bugs, and caterpillars we can see and identify. Check the next newsletter or the township website for the date and time.

Interested in Ecology & Environmental Issues?

The **Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)** has recently expanded to provide for two additional members to act as alternates in addition to the 7-member group. We meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7 pm and advise and support the township on current issues facing Charlestown. We have a series of educational programs, and we have undertaken several projects that have expanded and protected Charlestown's natural resources.

If you are interested, please send your interest and name to EAC@Charlestown.PA.US. We are glad to answer your questions about what is involved in working on the EAC. The application form can be found at: http://www.charlestown.pa.us/misc_docs/eac_application.pdf

At Right: Early stages of the EAC's riparian buffer project at Brightside Farm



In Remembrance of former Supervisor Paul J. Hogan

We were saddened to learn that former Supervisor Paul J. Hogan passed away on February 19th at the age of 93. Paul served as Supervisor for 10 years from 2000-2009, was a member of the Parks & Recreation Board from 1990-1995 and of the Planning Commission during the 1960s.

Paul served during World War II in the 101st Airborne Division. During the early 2000's he was on site daily for months while the Charlestown Mill was under rehabilitation and managed the payroll for the 30+ masons and other workers employed by the Township for the project.

At left: Paul and Jean Hogan dressed as Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Wisner for Charlestown Day 2017 in front of the Wisner-Rapp House on Yellow Springs Road.

PLANNING YOUR PLANTINGS FOR POLLINATORS

- by Sharon Richardson, photos by Carol Armstrong, EAC Members

It should come as no surprise to anyone that our pollinators are in trouble. We have reduced their natural habit, choked out many of the plants our pollinators need with invasive plants and chased some of our pollinators away with pesticides.

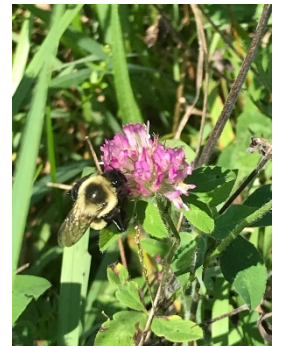
When we use the term “pollinator”, many people think of honeybees, but there are many different kinds of pollinators, including native bees, butterflies, birds, bats and flies. So why are pollinators important? We depend on pollinators to fertilize plants. Birds cannot successfully reproduce when pollinators are severely reduced. Humans and other animals rely on pollinated plants to produce our food, our medicine, and our fibers. In addition, the majority of flowering plant species found world-wide require animal-mediated pollination to make the seeds that will become the next year’s flowers.



at left: grey hairstreak butterfly

Since it’s the season to be shopping for plants in local nurseries or online, here are some highlights on how to plan for a garden that supports these important pollinators.

- 1) Select “productive plants”. What are productive plants? These are plants that support pollinators with food (pollen) sources and/or are host plants. Most of these plants will be native, but there are some non-native plants that are also beneficial to the pollinators. How do you find a list of productive plants? There are MANY resources and websites on line to assist you in selecting productive plants. One of the most comprehensive is the National Wildlife Federation because they provide a link to the plants most beneficial to the pollinators living in your zip code by visiting: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/about/native-plants>
- 2) The key to purchasing plants that will support pollinators is **selection**. The focus should be on having plants that will support our pollinators throughout the seasons. Before you think about what to **select**, you’ll want to consider how much space you have, what type of soil you have, the amount of moisture you typically have and how much sunshine you have. Even if you do not have a garden, using pollinator plants in containers on your patio or deck can still help our pollinators.
- 3) Selecting the right plant for the right space is KEY. If a plant is described as requiring full sun, it really means the plant will do best if it has a minimum of 6-8 hours of sunshine. Before you go shopping, determine where you intend to plant your new purchases. Write down the characteristics of the locations you are planning to use so that you can check the plant tags at the nursery to check which plants are compatible with your site.
- 4) Moisture is another critical factor in plant selection for your site. If the plant likes constant moisture, you have to select a wet location on your property OR be ready to water it regularly. If it is drought tolerant, it will likely not be happy in a wet place. Commercial plant tags usually do NOT include this information, so check with a reputable source such as the [Missouri Botanical Garden Plantfinder Website](#).



At right: bumblebee on clover

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... continued from page 3 *Planning your Plantings*

- 5) Succession planting is critical to keeping our pollinators healthy. Many shoppers get intrigued by the beautiful plants blooming right now, but pollinators need food, shelter and habitat year-round.
- 6) If you fill each available space in your garden now with a plant that is blooming now, you run the risk of starving your pollinators in the fall. Migrating pollinators need to bulk up for their journey, while permanent residential pollinators rely on seeds, nuts, and seedpods to survive the winter.
- 7) Please don't tidy up your garden in the fall – leave the leaf litter for our native insects' larvae and leave the seed pods and berries for the birds! In the spring, be patient; don't rush out to clean up the dead stalks, seed pods or leaves. Wait until the daytime temperature is over 50 degrees for 7 consecutive days. There are many insects who lay eggs and/or hibernate in those stalks and dead leaves; give them the opportunity to vacate. If you clean up too soon, you may be discarding your baby pollinators!



If you follow these few simple steps, you will be inviting many more pollinators to your garden throughout the seasons.

For more information, join us on June 16th when Sharon Richardson will be presenting “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner.” Sharon will share tips on ecological practices and provide suggestions for specific plants to add to your outdoor buffet. Check our website at www.charlestown.pa.us for login details when they become available.

At left: Cabbage white butterfly on pieris rapae

Wear Bright Colors: Walking or Biking!



Sometimes a bright, sunny day can still make you invisible to cars.

When you enter the shadows caused by a tree canopy, drivers may not see you if you're wearing dark colors, so remember to wear brighter clothing.

Walkers should carry a small light or use their phone flashlight to make themselves more visible.

Spotted Lanternfly Control – What to Do This Spring



Early detection is critical to minimize damage to your landscaping. In spring, look for black insects with white spots.

Closer to summer, look for bright red insects with white spots and black stripes. Noticeable symptoms of damage are wilted foliage and tree trunks and branches with open oozing wounds.

Destroy egg masses/fall, winter and spring:

Check for egg masses on trees, cement blocks, rocks and any other hard surface. Scrape them off using a plastic card or putty knife, and then place the masses into a bag or container filled with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer. This is the most effective way to kill the eggs.

Tree banding/spring and summer

When the nymphs first hatch, they will walk up the trees to feed on the softer new growth of the plant. Take advantage of this behavior by wrapping tree trunks in sticky tape and trapping the nymphs.

Parks & Recreation – Seeking Activity Committee Members

Our Parks & Rec Board welcomes new activity committee members and trails stewards to help keep trails and the park in good shape.

Activity Committee: Help us organize Yoga and Movies in the Park, Butterfly & Flower walks, and our annual Charlestown Day event

Trails Stewards: We need people who are familiar with our individual township trails to be our eyes & ears and report any issues.

*At right: families on
Charlestown Day 2019
enjoying a performance
by "The Science Tellers"*

*– photo by
Allen Underkofler*



Our 16th Earth Day Event Held on April 10th

This year, the Township adjusted its Earth Day activities to observe COVID safety protocols while organizing a clean-up of selected township roads, parks and open space on April 10th. The Township provided trash bags, gloves, safety vests and bottled water for volunteers.



*Above: Earth Day volunteers from Charlestown Meadows
Photo by Frank Pafumi*

The Parks and Recreation Board focused on clean-up at Charlestown Park, while several HOAs, families and individuals picked up litter along various roads.

Long-time volunteer John Pickering picked up 17 bags of trash along Route 29. Charlestown Meadows participated for its 12th year for their biggest effort to date.

Over 45 volunteers took part in collecting trash and debris. Roadmaster Jim Thompson and Fire Marshal Tim Hubbard were once again involved in these group efforts.

Tentative – Charlestown Day Coming this Fall at Charlestown Park

We're hopeful that this fall will see a safe return to public events, so we encourage you to mark your calendars so you're available to enjoy this special day of community spirit while enjoying the beauty of our park this coming fall.

Road Updates



Traffic Signal Upgrades

Conestoga (Rt 401) & Valley Hill Roads

In 2019, our traffic consultant firm, Traffic Planning & Design, assisted us in receiving a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission grant for \$2,110,000 to upgrade the existing signal with left turning lanes. The next step was undertaken in 2020 when PennDOT obtained funding for the design phase. Larson Design Group was awarded the design contract earlier this year and has begun work. Estimated completion is Spring 2024.

Yellow Springs/Sidley Road and Phoenixville Pike

For many years, this intersection has been in need of turning lanes onto Sidley Road and Yellow Springs Road from Phoenixville Pike, particularly in the late afternoon when the Great Valley Middle and High Schools let out.

Charlestown and East Whiteland Townships coordinated their efforts to pursue an Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) grant to add left turn lanes on Phoenixville Pike in both directions and a right turn lane from Sidley Road onto Phoenixville Pike. Unfortunately, the project was not chosen for a grant last year. We're reexamining the scope and grant elements to determine how to best proceed in obtaining funds, which will likely include a re-submission for an ARLE grant this year.

Coldstream & Charlestown Roads

PennDOT will be making signage and striping upgrades on both approaches of the Coldstream and Charlestown Roads that will enhance the appearance and safety of the intersection.

Potholes & Sinkholes!

Following the freeze-thaw of winter, Springtime is the official season for potholes in Pennsylvania. The majority of potholes and sinkholes reported in our Township are along state-owned roads.

To report a problem on a township road, call the office at 610-240-0326 or email us at:

manager@charlestown.pa.us

For problems on PennDOT roads, you can contact the township office or report them directly to PennDOT at the Chester County Maintenance Office number 484-340-3200.

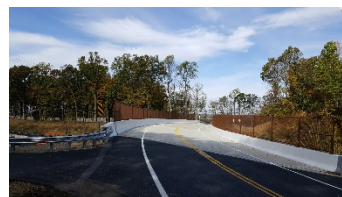
PennDOT also has an online reporting link where you can report a road concern and receive a tracking number and email when the problem has been addressed. That link is:

<https://customercare.penndot.gov/>

PA Turnpike Widening Update

Design began in 2012 on the future widening of the Turnpike between mileposts 312 and 319, beginning just west of the Downingtown interchange and extending to the Route 29 (slip ramp) interchange.

The project is now in Final Design and was divided into two sections. Construction dates for both sections have yet to be determined.



The bridge over Yellow Springs Road was completed in 2016 as a precursor to the Turnpike widening project.

2021 Chester County Household Hazardous Waste Events

Charlestown Township is a 2021 Participant in the Chester County Hazardous Household Waste Event Program. Bring unwanted hazardous household, automotive products, home maintenance, lawn and pest control products to the next Collection event. There are three remaining events this year as listed below, all from 9 am – 3 pm.

Saturday, June 19, 2021
Coatesville CCIU center
1635 E. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320

Saturday, October 9, 2021
Government Services Center
601 Westtown Rd
West Chester, PA 19380

Saturday, August 28, 2021
Oxford School District Admin. Building
125 Bell Tower Lane
Oxford, PA 19363

By Appointment Only – Preregistration is Required
at: www.chestercountysqa.org

COVID Updates

Federal Funding

As part of the federal COVID recovery plan, Charlestown Township will receive \$620,298 in two parts, the first half in June 2021 and the second half in 2022.

We're still waiting for instructions from the State as to procedures, auditing requirements, and exactly what the funds can be used for.

In general terms, it can be used to reimburse us for COVID-related expenses and for lost revenue due to COVID plus specific categories of capital improvements not including roads and bridges. (There may be additional funding for roads and bridges yet to come.)

The costs and lost revenue will include budget years 2020-2023, and all funds must be expended by 12/31/24.

Charlestown Township will place these funds in a separate account until a budget plan is developed for them.

Resumption of In-Person Public Meetings

Since the initial shutdown took place in 2020, we've been holding all our public meetings online via Cisco Webex.



The Supervisors and other boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation Board, Historical Commission/HARB and Environmental Advisory Committee are all looking forward to the day we can safely resume holding in-person meetings.

While the online option made it possible to continue handling all necessary business for the Township, it has been far from ideal in many respects.

We're hoping to announce the changeover to in-person meetings in the coming weeks, and when we have a meeting location available to us, we'll be sure to follow all safety protocols that may continue to be in place for some time to come.

Parks and Trails Are Open



All Township trails remained open throughout the pandemic. This Spring, we've re-opened Charlestown Park, including the restrooms and use of the 6 pavilions.

While observing safety protocols, our youth groups have resumed activities, including the Phoenixville Marion Youth Club, Healthy Kids Running Series, Great Valley Mountain Bike Club, and Phoenixville Area Soccer Club. Phoenixville Borough will be holding a summer camp at Charlestown Park this summer.

Reservations for a modest rental fee can be made for our small, medium, and large pavilions by completing the reservation form available on our website at: http://www.charlestown.pa.us/permits/CP_Pavilion_Reservation_Form.pdf

Your Official Source of Township Information

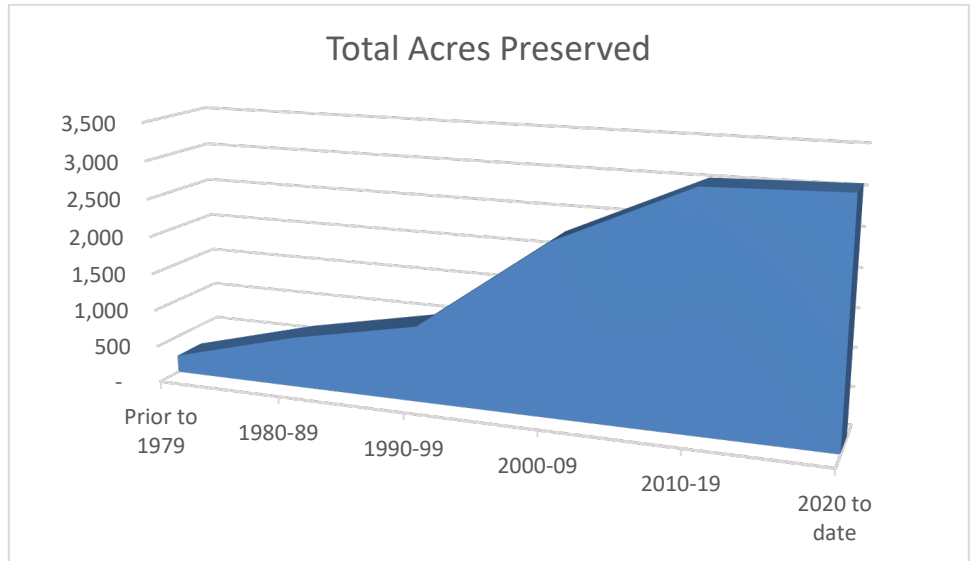
The Township Website at www.charlestown.pa.us remains your official source of information. To receive a weekly email update of additions to the site plus occasion special notifications, email a request to: admin1@charlestown.pa.us to be added to our distribution list.

Additional Acres Added to Charlestown's Conserved Lands

In April 2021, the Township acquired an easement on 19.7 acres on Pikeland Road property owned by Thomas and Margorie Seibert. The easement is held by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

This brings the total conserved open space in the Township to 3,103 acres, which is 38.71% of our total 8,015 acres.

At right: the cumulative efforts of our open space efforts ... so far



Planning & Zoning Update

The following subdivision/land development applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2020 – 2021 to date.

Subdivision & Land Development

SK-01-2021 Martellucci – Sketch plan of 2 lot subdivision of 4.734 acres at 4099 Howell Road. The Planning Commission recommended that Tom and Karen Martellucci proceed with their proposed 2 lot subdivision after it was determined no zoning relief would be required if the shared driveway was placed into single ownership with an easement for Lot #2.

SK-02-2021 Boyle, Frank – Sketch plan depicting apartments above retail in TND-3, to facilitate future planning and was for discussion purposes only.

SK-03-2021 Hallett, Nancy – Sketch plan proposing lot line change between two parcels at 4034 Tinkerhill Road in order to locate the septic field entirely on the parcel that contains an existing house. The Planning Commission recommended that Mrs. Hallett proceed with a minor subdivision plan.

SK-04-2021 Davison, Bill - Sketch plan proposing flex building at 3250 Phoenixville Pike, located in the Neighborhood Commercial zoning district. The Planning Commission advised that any proposed development would require variances for the use and from the depth of front and rear yards.

SD #420-20 Beyond Meat – Revised Final plan for plant expansion, currently under review and scheduled for the May 11th Planning Commission meeting.

SD #425-21 Frank Boyle – Lot combination plan for 1001 & 1003 Yellow Springs Road, which has an existing twin building that had straddled the two lots. Combining them made it simpler to connect to public sewer. The plan was approved by the Supervisors on April 5th.

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Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2020-2021 to date:

CU-2020-1 GV Commons Lot One – educational use in the TND zoning district to permit the Turning Point Dance Center, approved 9/1/20.

CU-2021-1 Derek & Jamie Finger – construction of a pool, associated stormwater facilities, and a walkway in steep slopes at 9 South Winds Lane, approved April 5th.

CU-2021-1 Potters Industries LLC – laboratory use in the LI District at 3222 Phoenixville Pike, approved April 5th.

Zoning Hearings

The following applications to the Zoning Hearing Board were reviewed in 2020-2021 to date:

Z-2020-1 Withdrawn.

Z-2020-02 Withdrawn.

Z-2021-01 Carlo Failla – The applicant sought a variance to allow a lighted sign in excess of 6 square feet at Failla's pizza restaurant at Charlestown & Coldstream Roads, approved 4/7/21.

Z-2021-02 GV Commons Lot One – The applicant sought a variance to exceed the maximum impervious square footage by 1.85%. The hearing is ongoing and was continued to May 6th.

Z-2021-03 Aditya Puri – The applicant sought a variance to allow a deck extension into open space on Sagewood Drive, approved 4/14/21.

Introducing Beth Martin

Following Jan Bird's retirement in 2019 after 18 years with the Township as Assistant Township Secretary, Charlestown is fortunate to have Beth Martin join us.

Beth has been with us for a year now, since she began last May as a temp during the height of COVID, and was officially hired for her position in October.

Beth's duties include the processing of building permit applications prior to review and approval, scheduling inspections, and juggling the multitude of duties that come with our Township administration.



Voter Services –Primary Election is May 18, 2021

How to Check your Registration:

Go to: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx>

How to Register to Vote:

May 3, 2020 is the last day to register before the May 18th election. Download the application at:
https://www.votespa.com/Resources/Documents/Voter_Registration_Application_English.pdf

If you have any questions, please call 1.877.VOTESPA (1.877.868.3772)

Your registration is **not complete** until processed and accepted by your county voter registration office.

How to Get a Mail in or Absentee Ballot – Use the Same Form for Either One

Download the form at: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin>

Please note, if you plan to vote using an absentee or mail-in ballot in the 2021 MUNICIPAL PRIMARY held on 05/18/2021, your completed application must be received in the county office by 5:00 PM on 05/11/2021. The deadline to return your voted absentee or mail-in ballot is 8:00 PM on 05/18/2021

Charlestown Township
P.O. Box 507
Devault, PA 19432