

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Winter 2022 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



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Supervisors

1st Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Environmental Advisory Committee

2nd Monday @ 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 p.m.

Historical Commission

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

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings will be held at the Great
Valley Middle School, Rm 154

All meetings are open to the
public.

Permanently Preserved Open Space Reaches 40%

With the addition of three new easements placed with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust in 2021, Charlestown Township has now achieved the preservation of 40% of its 8,015 acres, one of the highest rates in Chester County.

In 2021, easements were acquired on properties owned by the Seiberts (19.7 acres), the Baldwin family (15.1 acres) and the Crowell family (111.90 acres). We continue to be innervated by the support our open space program has enjoyed, not only from the property owners willing to negotiate with us on easement purchases but from all our residents who have supported the program since the referendum to increase the earned income tax by an additional 1/2 % for this purpose was passed by 77% in 2008, one of the highest passage rates in Pennsylvania at that time.

Preserved acres include Easements on Private Property, Quasi-public space held by HOAs, Township owned open space and parks.

In addition to the trails in our HOA communities, there are 6 major trails throughout the Township, including the Horse-Shoe Trail, Pickering Trail, Thompson Trail, McDevitt Trail, and the paved trails at Charlestown Park and Brightside Farm.

The Township Parks include Charlestown Park, Brightside Farm, the Charlestown (Revolutionary War) Cemetery, the Longwood School, and Charlestown Mill. Plans for currently being discussed for a 1/2 mile paved trail at the future Jenkins Park on Valley Hill Road.

Our open space program continues in 2022 as we work with several landowners interested in preserving their property for generations to come.

If you'd like more information on the program and whether placing an easement on your property is the right choice for you, please contact our office.



License Your Dog in PA



All dogs three months or older must be licensed by Jan. 1 of each year. Violators can be cited with a maximum fine of \$300 per violation plus court costs.

An annual license is \$8.50 and a

lifetime license is \$51.50. If the animal is spayed or neutered, the annual fee is \$6.50 and lifetime is \$31.50. Discounts are available to older adults and people with disabilities.

The small license fee helps the millions of dogs in the state by funding the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

Dog licenses are available from your local county treasurer and other licensing agents. Reasons for dog licensing:

- **It's the law.** All dogs three months and older must have a current license.
- **If your dog gets lost, a license is the best way to get him back.** A license helps animal control and shelters identify your dog and get him back home safely.
- **The cost of a license is less than the penalty for being caught without one.** Owners who fail to license their dogs could face a fine of up to \$300 for each unlicensed dog.
- **License fees support animal control.** The annual fee you pay to license your dog helps keep shelters running and supports the work of the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which is responsible for ensuring the welfare of dogs, regulating dangerous dogs and overseeing annual licensing and rabies vaccinations.

What Kind of Bird Was That?

- by Pete Goodman, Environmental Advisory Committee

It occurred to me while I was driving along Yellow Springs Road near Brightside Farm Park that many folks passing by would not recognize the unusual bird shape sitting on the wire. It was winter light, strongly angled, and all I could make out was the silhouette but it was distinctive. On another day I was driving along Route 23 west of Morgantown and saw a similar silhouette that flew off the wire and went into a rapid wing flapping hover. Again, the light was strongly angled and I could see none of the bird's colors.

It was a shame not to be able to see the colors as both these birds were Kestrels, one of the most beautiful birds we have in Southeastern PA. They are the smallest of the falcons at only 9 inches long (just an inch longer than a robin) with a 22 inch wing span. Kestrels used to be more common but habitat loss is dramatically reducing their numbers regionally.

Thankfully, here in Charlestown we have Brightside Farm Park with its meadows and wetlands which are still providing habitat for the successful life cycle of the Kestrel. Here are some images of what to look for when searching out the Kestrel. I sketched the silhouettes and borrowed the color image from the internet. Good luck in spotting one of these fascinating, beneficial and beautiful birds.



Perched



Soaring



Hovering - fast wing beats

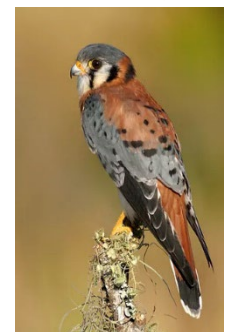


Image from Central Wisconsin Kestrel Research



Visit our Website's Useful Links



The Township Website at www.charlestown.pa.us is continually updated with the latest information for your reference and use. In addition to announcements of latest events, posting of meeting minutes and agendas, we have a comprehensive list of useful links to information from county, state, and neighboring local communities, sources to info on the environment, public safety, recreation, planning, transportation & more.

If you would like to be in the know on current Charlestown happenings, you can sign up for our weekly email blast by emailing admin1@charlestown.pa.us and we'll add you to our list.



Environmental Advisory Committee Seeks New Members

We are looking for a few good people to join the Charlestown Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC). The Charlestown EAC is a working group of individuals with skills and abilities that help us advise and support the township on current issues facing Charlestown.

We have a series of educational programs and have undertaken several projects that have expanded and protected Charlestown's natural resources. We produce *Nature News* quarterly with notices of news, recommendations for best practices for stewarding natural resources on private property, EAC activities, and invitations.

The EAC meets at the Great Valley Middle School at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. If you are interested in serving on the EAC and you live in Charlestown, please send your interest and name to mnem.np@gmail.com. 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

2021 Annual Report Available Now Accomplishments & Notable Events

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors

The Supervisors have published its 8th Annual Report outlining the accomplishments of the various boards, commissions, committees, and personnel for the previous year along with details and statistics about Charlestown.

The report is a summary of the municipal activity occurring in the Township during 2021. Its purpose is to highlight Township accomplishments and noteworthy events during the past year. The full 50-page report is available to you on the Township Website, www.charlestown.pa.us or upon request to the Township Office.



Earth Day Event Scheduled for April 9th

The Township has sponsored an Earth Day event for the past 16 years and recently the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and the Parks & Rec Board have become more involved to include planting along with the clean-up of open space and trail areas as well as roadside litter pick up.

We continue to be pleased at the amount of participation we see each year.



Tree planting at Charlestown Park

We invite the business community, homeowners' associations, Scouts and other organizations to join us, either in the form of providing volunteers or offering sponsorship. Safer, off-road tasks can be planned for younger children.

For clean-up tasks, the Township will provide trash bags, gloves, and safety vests for volunteers. Filled bags may be left at the side of the road for the Township and PennDOT crews to pick up later.

Volunteers have to option of starting from the Township office for coffee, juice, and donuts, or receiving a reimbursement for refreshments provided on site by their own group.

If you're not available on April 9th (or the rain date of April 23rd) but still wish to participate on a different day, contact the Township Office to obtain supplies and safety instructions. **Call or e-mail Linda Csete at the Township office if you'd like to participate: (610) 240-0326 or admin1@charlestown.pa.us**

Tax Information for 2022

Real Estate Taxes: The millage rate for real estate taxes is .75 (3/4) mills, unchanged for 17 years. Your real estate taxes for 2022 will be collected by the Chester County Treasurer Department. Tax bills are mailed the week of February 1st to the property owner's address of record. For questions, call the County Treasurer's office at 610-344-6370 or email them at TreasurerDept@chesco.org.

Earned Income Tax and Local Services Tax: Both are collected by the Keystone Collections Group. Charlestown Township's Earned Income Tax is 1% for residents. The rate for non-residents is 1/2%.

The **Local Services Tax** is \$52.00 per year, deducted by your Charlestown Township employer. Persons earning under \$12,000 per year are exempt from this tax.

Employers throughout Chester County are required to withhold all earned income and local services taxes quarterly. Forms and instructions, including e-filing, can be found at www.keystonecollects.com

Earned Income Tax Return Due April 15

It's that time of year again. The 2021 local earned income tax return filing deadline is approaching. E-filing is available through the Keystone Collections Group's website at: www.keystonecollects.com

E-filing is the easy, fast and secure way to file your 2020 tax return. You will need your W-2, your Social Security Number and any other income documents that may apply (such as a PA-UE or a Schedule C).

If you have questions regarding local tax filing, visit Keystone's website and check out their [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or call Keystone's **Taxpayer Helpline** at 1-888-539-1100 to speak with a local, knowledgeable Taxpayer Service Agent.

You can also email your questions 24/7 to [Taxpayer Support](#). Taxpayer Service Agents try to respond to all online inquiries within three business days.

Update on the Riparian Buffer Project at Brightside Farm Park

- by Carol Armstrong, Chair, Environmental Advisory Committee

We had a very productive planting day at Brightside Farm Park to replace the shrubs and trees from our 2019 planting that didn't make it. The volunteers were very strong, helpful, and determined to complete the task, and Pete Goodman, I, and the whole EAC of Charlestown are very grateful for their help, which made a big difference.

This is a site where we are vigorously trying to restore the riparian buffer along the springs on the old farm lands that at this site go into the headwater of Pigeon Run in the Delaware River Watershed.

Thanks to guidance and help from our partners, especially Green Valleys Watershed Assoc., the Chester County Conservation District, and the Master Watershed Stewards of Penn State Ext, Pigeon Run is being tested for aquatic bugs, fish, chemistry and stream flow by the Academy of Science/Stroud WRC/GVWA. The tests will establish baseline data in order to learn if benefit from the major increase in the riparian buffer can be found in future years when the trees have created canopy over Pigeon Run and its springs.

The plants that were used from a PACD and CCCD grant were:



American Hazelnut
Red Osier Dogwood
Shad serviceberry
Winterberry – at right
Highbush blueberry

Common Persimmon
American Plum - at left
Elderberry



At this replanting, we give thanks to:

Zoe Warner - MWS and Malvern EAC , shown below:



David Manning - MWS
and generous volunteer
to local efforts

Toni Gorkin - PA Master
Naturalist, trained at
GVWA and Uwchlan EAC

Jim Warihay. volunteer
extraordinaire who
came as friend of Toni

Our tireless Pete Goodman, 2021 Chair of Charlestown's EAC, and members of the EAC who helped prep the site, cut perfect short stakes, and planted.

Thank you to Charles Buck for letting us use the community garden to protect the plant stock.

We couldn't do any of this without Cori Trice (Watershed Coordinator of CCCD) and Victoria Laubach (Exec. Dir. GVWA)

- Thank you always.

I know my mouth is watering and my eyes shining just thinking about the bounty that these multifunction plants will bring to the wildlife and humans at this park.

The planting is not completed as we have to move on to the 2020-planted acreage, but we got more than 50% done on 11/20/21!

Join the Charlestown Weed Warriors!

- by Ashlee Beyer, Parks & Recreation Board Member

The Charlestown Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) and Parks and Recreation board have formed a Weed Warrior program to combat invasive species threatening the health and beauty of our township parks. We are seeking gardeners and outdoor enthusiasts interested in beautifying and improving the ecological health of our preserved land. **Our inaugural Weed Warrior event will take place Saturday, April 2nd, 2022, at the Brightside Farm Park (park at the community gardens) (rain date Sunday, April 3rd).** We will be tackling the invasive Multiflora Rose.



Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) is a highly invasive rose species from Europe that is listed as a noxious weed in Pennsylvania. Prolific seed production and spread allows it to take over cropland and natural areas quickly. It grows in dense thickets with long arching canes that exclude native species and the mass of sharp thorns makes management and removal difficult. White flowers bloom in May - June with small red berries (hips) appearing in August. Multiflora rose can be identified from native rose species by the fringed petiole where the leaves join the main stem (see image at right). Multiflora rose also produces leaves much earlier than other native species, so it stands out in early spring when most other species are still dormant. Read more at: <https://extension.psu.edu/multiflora-rose>.

Above photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

To manage Multiflora rose, canes should be cut 1" from the ground 3-6 times per year to slow the growth of the plant and kill it. Seeds can survive for up to 20 years in soil, so cutting the plant back before it flowers and fruits is essential to slowing its spread! Share your progress tackling Multiflora rose on your property with us on Facebook or Instagram (tag @CharlestownDay or @CharlestownPAParks in your post)!

Visit the EAC's page on the Charlestown website for more invasive species information:

http://www.charlestown.pa.us/environmental_advisory_committee.aspx

Useful Contacts for your Reference

Tax Rebate Available to Volunteers

Pennsylvania State Police (610) 486-6280

PennDOT Maintenance for State Roads
(484) 340-3200

For Township & County Real Estate Taxes: Chester
County Treasurer (610) 344-6370

For Great Valley School District Real Estate Taxes:
Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100

For Earned Income & Local Services Taxes:
Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100

SPCA (610) 692-6113



In exchange for volunteer service in the Great Valley public schools, residents aged 60 or older can receive a rebate on their property taxes.

The Great Valley School District offers this program to provide senior citizens with property tax relief while also engaging our seniors in the public schools.

For additional information, please visit
<https://www.gvsd.org/Page/12106>.

Short-Term Lodging in Charlestown

- by Dan Wright, P.E., Zoning Officer



Short-Term lodging services such as AirBnB, VRBO and Kayak have become popular as an alternative to short-term stays in hotels or motels. In response to this, the Charlestown Township Board of Supervisors has updated the Zoning Ordinance to allow short-term lodging in the Farm Residential District under certain conditions.

These conditions have been put into place to protect adjacent neighbors. Each property owner who is considering setting up a single family home that they occupy to be periodically used as a short-term rental, must obtain Conditional Use approval from the Board and demonstrate that the following conditions are met:

- The rental room(s) shall be within an owner-occupied single-family detached dwelling.
- The rental shall be a minimum of two days, but not to exceed 30 consecutive days to a transient visitor, and not to exceed 120 days throughout a calendar year.
- No signs shall be erected to indicate a short-term lodging location.
- No exterior changes or modifications to a single-family detached dwelling shall be made in order to accommodate short-term lodging.
- The maximum number of adult overnight transient visitors per short-term lodging shall be six.
- The owner shall obtain a short-term lodging license from the Township.
- The owner shall pay a registration fee to the Township, to be renewed every two years, in accordance with the Charlestown Township Fee Schedule.
- The owner shall maintain a database/ledger, indicating the dates when short-term lodging takes place, and the number of persons housed during the rental.
- No business meetings shall be permitted during the short-term lodging.
- All off-street parking regulations of section 27-1300 of the Zoning Ordinance shall apply.

Call or Email the Township Office for more information:

(610) 240-0326 or admin1@charlestown.pa.us

Charlestown Township Meeting Schedule 2022

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Board of Supervisors 1st Mon. 7:00 p.m.	3	7	7	4	2	6	5*	1	6*	3	7	5
Environmental Advisory Committee 7:00 p.m., 2nd Mon.	10	14	14	11	9	13	11	8	12	10	14	12
Planning Commission 2nd Tues. 7:30 p.m.	12 *	8	8	12	10	14	12	9	13	11	8	13
Historical Commission 3rd Tues. 4 pm	18	None	15	None	17	None	19	None	20	None	15	None
Parks & Recreation 3rd Thurs. 7:30 p.m.	20	17	17	21	19	23	21	18	15	20	17	15

* Meeting held one day later than usual.

NOTE: Meetings are held at the Great Valley Middle School, Room 154, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern, PA. Check the agendas posted on www.charlestown.pa.us prior to each meeting.

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