

# Charlestown Township Newsletter

Autumn 2023 Edition

[www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us)

Published by the Board of Supervisors

11 General Warren Blvd. Suite 1, Malvern, PA 19355 (610) 240-0326

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



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Frank A. Piliero, Chairman  
Charles A. Philips, Vice Chair  
Susan T. Bednar, Member  
Kevin R. Kuhn, Member  
Hugh D. Willig, Member

## TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Christopher W. Heleniak

## MONTHLY MEETINGS:

### Supervisors

1<sup>ST</sup> Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

### Environmental

### Advisory Committee

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

### Planning Commission

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.

### Historical Commission

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday @ 1 pm  
Jan-Mar-May-Jul-Sep-Nov

### Parks & Recreation Board

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

### Zoning Hearing Board

Scheduled as-needed

Meetings are held at the  
Township office, 11 General  
Warren Blvd.

## Keystone Collections to Collect Township Real Estate Taxes Beginning 2024

Since 2013, Charlestown has had a contract with the Chester County Treasurer's office to print and mail our Township real estate tax bills each February. Recently the County proposed amendments to the contract for 2024 that increased the collection cost beyond what we could arrange with other collection companies.

After receiving proposals from Berkheimer Associates and Keystone Collections, the Board of Supervisors will enter into an agreement with Keystone Collections to begin our Real Estate Tax collection services beginning 2024.

Fees proposed by both firms were comparable, and since Keystone Collections is already the agent for our earned income tax collection as well as for the Great Valley School District, the contract was decided in their favor.

For 2024, Charlestown residents and businesses will receive tax bills and correspondence as follows:

Type of Tax	2024 Tax Collector	Mailing Date
Charlestown Real Estate	Keystone Collections	February
Chester County Real Estate	County Treasurer	February
Charlestown Earned Income Tax	Keystone Collections	March-April
Great Valley School District	Keystone Collections	July

## Introducing Mark Koenig

We're pleased to introduce our new Fire Marshal, Mark Koenig, who has taken on several roles for our Township, including oversight of maintenance at our public parks, trails and open spaces, and performing duties related to code enforcement and zoning. In addition to his work for Charlestown, Mr. Koenig is currently Fire Chief for East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Company, which covers a large portion of our Township. He is also a part time police officer for Malvern Borough. Welcome, Mark!

## Adopt A Highway Program Successful - Charlestown Road Clean up Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>

A big thank you to EAC member Dan Walker, who initiated the Adopt-a-Highway program with PennDOT for roadside clean up of Charlestown Road. Flagger Force was brought in to keep our volunteers safe while they collected 40 bags of trash in 3 hours. Thank you to Carol Armstrong, Pete Goodman, Dan Walker and son Carter Walker, and Anu Soundrarajan for their efforts!



### Other Clean up Efforts

Pfizer promotes a corporate program incentivizing its employees to provide community service. Pfizer donates \$20.00 for every employee volunteer hour to a non-profit organization of their choice.

In September, resident Thomas Yang cleaned up an area of Phoenixville Pike under the Turnpike underpass that routinely sees a great deal of litter.

Thank you, Thomas, for choosing to spend some of your volunteer hours on our Charlestown community!

*At left: Carter Walker, Dan Walker & Pete Goodman  
- photo by Anu Soundrarajan*

## Sign up for Smart911

*Excerpts from: smart911.com*

Smart911 allows citizens to provide the additional details that 9-1-1 call takers may need in order to assist them during an emergency. When you dial 9-1-1 today the information received by the 9-1-1 call center can be limited based on the type of phone you are calling on. With Smart911, anytime you make an emergency call from a phone registered with your Safety Profile, the 9-1-1 systems recognizes your phone number and automatically displays your profile on the screen of the call taker who receives your call.

- At a time when you may be panicked, or unable to communicate, or it could be unsafe to communicate, Smart911 ensures that the details you would need to tell 9-1-1 are immediately available in the event you cannot verbally provide them. Smart911 is free, private and secure.
- Smart911 users decide what information they want to include in their Safety Profile. This allows you to protect your family in the way that best meets your needs. You may change, add, and remove information whenever you choose to do so. It is your responsibility to keep the information up-to-date.
- For more information or to sign up for Smart 9-1-1, go to <https://www.smart911.com/>





## *Board of Supervisors Accept Morris Award*

Charlestown Township was selected by the French & Pickering Creeks Trust to receive their first ever Morris Award. Named for Sam and Eleanor Morris, both instrumental in the creation of the Trust, the award was presented at the F & P's Easement Landowner Appreciation gathering on September 15.

The award was presented for extraordinary conservation achievements from the years 2018 through 2022. During that period, the Supervisors, in concert with the French & Pickering Creeks Trust and 11 separate property owners, entered into easement agreements. Over 400 acres were preserved just in these 4 years, bringing the total acreage of preserved land to 3,200+ acres, 40% of the total acreage in the Township. Over the past decade and a half, The Supervisors have taken the lead in reaching out to landowners and working with the Trust to achieve these results.



*Left to Right: Bill Gladden, F & P Executive Director, Charlie Philips, Charlestown Supervisor, Pam Brown, F & P Conservation Director, Jen Trachtman, F & P Board President, Kevin Kuhn, Charlestown Supervisor. Photo by Tom Baldwin.*

## Whitetail Deer – 'tis the season

- by Pete Goodman, Environmental Advisory Committee member

I would guess that most everyone knows that we have an overabundance of whitetail deer in our area. Certainly, if you are a homeowner with a garden, you know of their presence. They are beautiful to watch as they gracefully jump fences in a single bound and munch through our carefully cultivated flower as well as vegetable gardens. There is seemingly no such thing as deer resistant plants or products to dissuade deer from eating; some products seem more like salad dressing than a deterrent. This time of year, deer are most active because it is the beginning of their mating season. The bucks chase the does, the does tease the bucks, and sometimes all of this activity spills out onto our roads and expressways. Deer are most active around dawn and dusk. At this time of year, they can appear at any time of day or night on the road edge or in the middle of the highway – singly or in groups. The one thing that is predictable about deer at this time of year is their unpredictability.

Your best defense to avoid hitting a deer is to be vigilant in observing your surroundings as you drive. Pay attention to the road ahead of you. Avoid distractions. Deer often travel in groups and walk single file. So even if one deer successfully crosses the road in front of you, it doesn't mean the threat is over. Another could be right behind it.

But, and there is always a but, a deer can bust out of the brush at the side of the road directly in front of you, and there is nothing that you can do except collide with the deer. If this is the case, and hitting the deer is inevitable, then brake using firm but gentle braking. Hitting the deer straight on is widely accepted as the best way to avoid injury. Attempting to swerve to miss the deer may put you at more risk of collision with an oncoming car, tree, or some other immovable object. Swerving could cause you to lose control of your car, creating the possibility for a more severe crash than that of the impact with the deer.

So, if you have a collision with a deer, no matter what precipitated the incident you need to assess the situation. Here is a list that you can record and carry with you in the car.

1. Before anything else, check to see if you or your passengers are injured.
2. Move your car off the street if possible.
3. Document the accident.
4. Call the police.
5. Check your car for damage and call your insurance company if necessary.

**Point #1** If anyone appears to be hurt or is unresponsive, call 911 and if necessary begin CPR. If there is property damage, a 911 call is required.

**Point #2** Move your car. If there are no injuries, consider moving



your vehicle from the roadway to a less exposed location. Examine your car for drivability. If the damage to your vehicle is extensive or fluids are leaking, call your emergency vehicle service (AAA, your insurance company, or a towing service). Turn on your hazard lights and stay inside the vehicle until help arrives. If you must leave your vehicle, stay off the road and out of the way of any oncoming vehicles. Please remember that deer are most active at dusk and dawn — times when you or your vehicle may be less visible to other motorists.

**Point #3** Document the accident. If it's safe to do so, take photographs of the roadway, your surroundings, damage to your vehicle, and any injuries you or your passengers sustained. If witnesses stop, take down their account of what occurred and ask for their contact information. It is important to stay away from the animal. A frightened, wounded deer could use its powerful legs and sharp hooves to harm you.

**Point #4** Call the police. In Pennsylvania, you only need to file a police report after hitting a deer if your vehicle is undriveable or if the collision results in a human injury or death. The police report can prove useful when filing your insurance claim. Call your local police non-emergency line if the deer is blocking traffic and creating a threat for other drivers.

**Point #5** Check your car. Don't assume your vehicle is safe to drive. Double-check that your car is drivable after colliding with a deer. Look for leaking fluid, loose parts, tire damage, broken lights, a hood that won't latch and other safety hazards. If your vehicle seems unsafe in any way, call for a tow.

**Point #6** Call your insurance company. The sooner you report damage or injuries, the sooner your agent can file and process your claim.

To request removal of dead animals from local roads, call the Pennsylvania Game Commission at (610) 926-3136. To request removal of dead animals from state roads, call PennDOT at 1-800-FIX-ROAD.

# *Highlights from Board of Supervisors Public Meetings in 2023*

## January

- Addressed Reorganization Matters including Annual Appointments and Setting of Salaries
- Preliminary Approval granted for Beyond Meat Land Development Plan
- Easement Modification for 3050 Hollow Rd
- Adoption of Updated Employee Handbook
- Adoption of Resolution to Set Fee-in-Lieu Schedule for 2023

## February

- Heard Presentation of Jenkins Park Master Plan
- Approval of Minor Subdivision Plan for James Stillittano
- Approval of Preliminary Subdivision plan for Greene-Marks
- Received Award for Achieving Birdtown USA Status
- Heard Presentation of Brightside Bird Sanctuary Project by Resource Environmental Services LLC (RES)

## March

- Renewed Brightside Farmhouse Lease
- Adopted Amendments to Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 27 Part 2, Definitions
- Approved GreenWeaver Landscapes Proposals for Spring Clean up and Maintenance of Charlestown Mill

## April

- Approved Lot Coconsolidation Plan for Drew & Marjorie Alleva
- Approved PA Turnpike Devault Maintenance Facility settlement agreement
- Adopted Resolution for DCNR Grant Application for Jenkins Park project

## May

- Approved Change Orders #15, 16 & 17 for Office Fit-Out Project
- Adopted Resolution to Amend Budget
- Approved Contribution to the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association for Tree Replacement
- Directed Township Engineer to Review Needed Stormwater System Repairs in Charlestown Oaks
- Awarded Annual Road Equipment & Labor Contract

## June

- Awarded Contract for the 2023 Road Improvement Project
- Renewed Annual Insurance Coverage
- Held Hearing to Consider Expenditure of Open Space Funds for Alleva Property
- Approval of RES Landscape Plan Phase II for Brightside Farm
- Approval of Letter of Commitment for Growing Greener Grant for Stroud Water Research Center

## July

- Approval of Charlestown Landscaping Proposal for Phoenixville Pike Property



## *Highlights – Continued from p. 4*

### August

- Authorized Investment of Maturing Open Space Funds
- Approval of Greene-Marks Final Subdivision Plan
- Adoption of Resolution to Amend Credit Card Policy for 2023
- Approved Change Order to 2023 Paving Project
- Approval of PMYC Building Repairs at Charlestown Park
- Heard Presentation of Interim Budget Report

### September

- Heard Presentation on Single Use Plastics by Anuradha Soundararajan

### October

- Conducted 2024 Budget Work Session
- Heard Engineer's Annual MS-4 Update
- Executed Letter of Support for Application to Name Stream - Kwiamwis Siputët
- Approved Pension Plan Minimum Municipal Obligation 2024
- Reviewed Tax Collector Options for 2024
- Heard Presentation of Proposed Verizon Tower at Charlestown Park

### Coming in November & December:

- Hearing to Consider Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Wireless Communications Facilities
- Resolution for Tax Levy 2024 and Adoption of the 2024 Budget
- Website Agreement Renewal
- Signal Service Contract Renewal
- Brandywine Valley SPCA Contract Renewal
- Resolution to Acquire Conservation Easement – Nesspor Property
- Resolution Re-Adopting the Emergency Operations Plan
- Resolution to Revise Official Sewage Facilities Plan – Pellegrini Planning Module
- Real Estate Tax Collection Agreement with Keystone Collections
- Turnpike Maintenance Facility Conservation Easement Agreement
- Resolution Deputizing Keystone Collections to Collect Real Estate Taxes

### Other Matters addressed at the meetings include:

- Approval of financial reports, budget amendments and all payment transactions
- Acceptance of reports from the various boards & commissions
- Overviews of applications to the Zoning Hearing Board
- Conditional Use Hearings for various applicants
- Appointments to fill Board & Commission Vacancies that took place after Reorganization
- Approval of Developer Escrow Releases
- Approval of Waiver Requests
- Approval of Records Disposition in accordance with the Records Retention Schedule
- Citizens' Forum – Matters brought forward by residents of the Township

# ***A Go To Source for Ecologic and Environmental Programs and Information – Your Environmental Advisory Committee***

*by Carol Armstrong, EAC Chair*



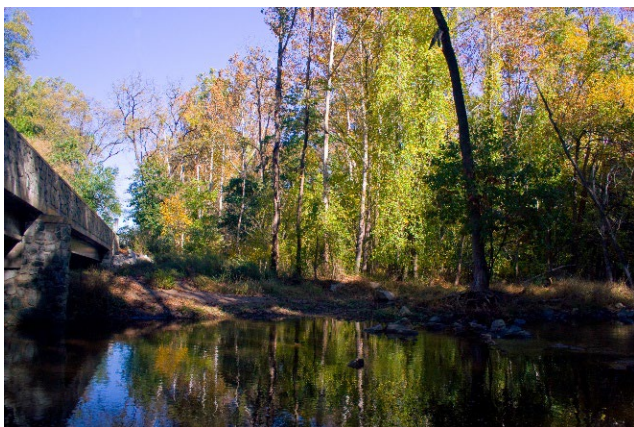
Gentle winds, blue and grey skies, and good spirits greeted Charlestown Day – a day of community celebration – again this year at Charlestown Park. Parks and Recreation planned the event, and the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and Planning Commission both had tables to provide information about our township. EAC and Planning Commission members collaborate on Bird Town, which Charlestown qualified for this year – look for the signs posted on Charlestown Road, White Horse Road, Phoenixville Pike, and State Road/Rt. 29.

The EAC table had exhibits on native plants that our local birds prefer, the value of trees, how to deal with pesticides and hazardous materials, and *pervious* pavements that can be considered for roads, parking lots, and driveways. There was also information on our regular programs of alkaline battery recycling, native species restoration, and clean ups of Charlestown Road which the EAC adopted this year. Most popular of all are the native plant giveaways. We sponsored two programs this year: (1) Several residents provided evidence of digging out a noxious invasive plant(s) from their property and received native plants and shrubs as replacements, and (2) visitors who answered 10 environmental questions received a free native plant.

Look for new environmental programs by the EAC coming up in 2024, such as a program on how to make your property more watershed friendly! Charlestown has headwaters of three special protection (High Quality and Exceptional Value) stream watersheds, so it is up to residents' diligence and community spirit to protect those streams – the Pickering, Valley, and French Creeks. Headwaters are where planting trees and shrubs can make the biggest impact on water quality and stream ecosystems.



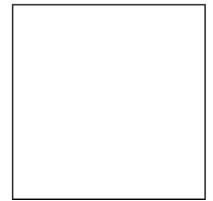
## ***Pickering Dam Clean Up Event – Volunteers Welcome!***



Along with professional contractors for repair of the Pickering Trail footbridge and for removal of several trees, the Parks & Rec Board is planning a trail clean up on November 4<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of November 11<sup>th</sup>. If you enjoy our trails and would like to volunteer some time, we'd love to have you join us. Even an hour helps make a big difference!

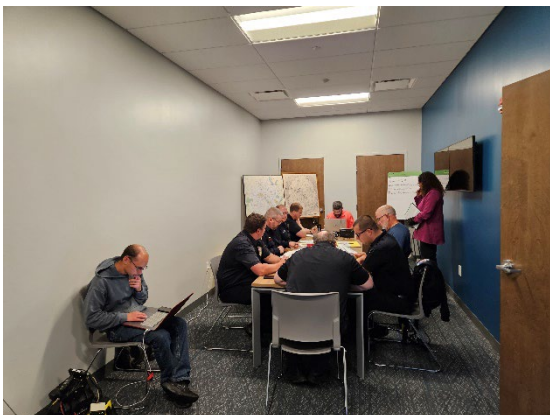
Volunteers will meet at the trailhead near the dam at 8:00 a.m. Wear boots for muddy conditions and bring water. All other materials & supplies will be provided. If interested, please email [manager@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:manager@charlestown.pa.us) to confirm you're planning to attend!

**Charlestown Township**  
**11 General Warren Blvd. Suite 1**  
**Malvern, PA 19355**



## ***Biennial Limerick Exercise***

Charlestown Township participated in the biennial Limerick Exercise Drill on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Township Manager Chris Heleniak serves as our Emergency Management Coordinator. Other participants included Supervisor Kevin Kuhn, Treasurer Linda Csete, and volunteers from the East Whiteland Fire Association. Charlestown passed its evaluation with both County Emergency Services and FEMA, which sent personnel to monitor our exercise.



The Charlestown Township Emergency Management Coordinator is appointed by the governor of Pennsylvania and acts on behalf of the Board of Supervisors. All municipalities are required to have a coordinator. The Emergency Operations Center is located at the Township Office and consists of computers, communications and other equipment to be used in the event of an emergency that might affect the residents of the township.

Examples of these emergencies include: flooding, storms, tornados, hazardous materials accidents, and nuclear plant incidents. The volunteers take part in various training activities hosted by Exelon and the Chester County Emergency Management department, and participate in practice drills.

Charlestown has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that 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 Plan is reviewed and readopted annually.