

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	2
I. Organization & Administration.....	3
II. Advisory Boards & Commissions.....	5
III. Planning.....	16
IV. Zoning.....	19
V. Legislation.....	20
VI. Engineering	22
VII. Building & Code Enforcement	23
VIII. Parks, Open Space & Trails	25
IX. Roads & Public Works	28
X. Municipal Services	30
XI. 2019 Budget & Auditing.....	33
XII. Miscellaneous	36



Established 1737

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in the following pages is a summary of the municipal activity occurring in Charlestown Township in 2019. 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
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Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 507
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Physical Location:
4030 Whitehorse Rd.
Malvern, PA 19355

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)

Land by Percentage & Acres:

Residential	16.7%	1,339 acres
Non-Residential	10.8%	866 acres
Agricultural	31.6%	2,452 acres
Wooded	38.3%	3,150 acres
Vacant/Water	2.6%	208 acres

Demographics (2010 Census):

Population: 5,671 per 2010 census
6,250 estimate for 2019

Pop. Density: 500 estimate per square mile
Households: 2,057 estimate for 2019

School District: 904 students from Charlestown were enrolled in the Great Valley School District's schools, out of their total enrollment of approximately 4,416. 162 Charlestown students attended schools outside the GVSD.

Roads:

27.47 miles of Township roads
29.95 miles of state roads

Administration

The Board of Supervisors accepted Chester County's proposal to continue property tax billing and collection services for 2019 following a successful transition to their services in January 2013.

The Township office staff, consisting of 2 individuals, handled approximately 1,790 phone calls and received 1,225 visitors in 2019. An estimated 17,300 emails (not including spam) were received and 5,800 were sent. 79 right to know requests were filed and the requested documents were all provided within the required deadlines. Notary services were provided for 56 documents. Following the completion of mandatory on-line training, the Manager renewed her 4-year notary commission in December. 503 PA One Call tickets were processed.

The following individuals comprised the Township Staff for 2019:

Linda M. Csete, Township Manager, Secretary/Treasurer
Jan C. Bird, Assistant Township Secretary thru 9/30/19
Marie Stone, Assistant Township Secretary starting 10/1/19
Lisa Gardner, Recording Secretary

Michael Allen, Staff Planner

Tim Hubbard, Public Property & Safety Coordinator, including the positions of Fire Marshal,
Assistant Zoning Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator

Jim Thompson, Project Manager/Roadmaster

Mark Cabot, Public Works Assistant and Animal Control Officer

Paul Jorgensen, Parks Assistant

In September, a very fond farewell was celebrated with Jan Bird, who retired after 18 years of service to the Township. We owe much to her for her care and attention to our residents since 2001.

The following consultants were appointed or re-appointed for 2019:

Auditor	Barbacane, Thornton & Co.
Building Code Official (BCO)	Anthony Merklinger
Construction Consultant	Robert Dettore, J.D. Bravo Co.
Engineering & Zoning Officer	Daniel T. Wright, P.E., Advanced GeoServices
Historical Architect	Dale Frens, 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	Gary Bender, Esq.
Solicitor – Zoning Hearing Board	William Hagner, Esq.
Tax Collector – Earned Income and Local Services	Keystone Collections
Tax Collector – Real Estate	Chester County Treasurer
Traffic Engineer	Traffic Planning & Design
Website	Allen Underkofler, A.P. Underkofler Associates

II. ADVISORY BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

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 volunteers were appointed or re-appointed during 2019:

Alix Coleman, Brightside Farm Park Manager
Charles Buck, Brightside Community Garden Coordinator
Pete Goodman, Environmental Advisory Committee
Carol Armstrong, Environmental Advisory Committee
Richard Findlay, Environmental Advisory Committee
Veda Maany, Environmental Advisory Committee
Greg Nesspor, Environmental Advisory Committee
Dan Walker, Environmental Advisory Committee
Meg Solomon, Environmental Advisory Committee
John Pittock, Historical Commission/HARB as member at-large
Rosemary Philips, Historical Commission/HARB for member at-large
Dale Frens, Historical Commission/HARB as Historic Architect
Ashlee Smith, Parks & Recreation Board
Chris Lawrence, Parks & Recreation Board
Dan Mount, Parks & Recreation Board
Hugh Willig, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Wendy Leland, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission as alternate
Wendy Leland, Planning Commission
Matt Rogers, Planning Commission
Dan Walker, Alternate to Planning Commission
Bob Cottone, Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals
Robert Kline— 9 member Valley Forge Sewer Authority Board
John Horstmann, Vacancy Board
John C. Martin, Jr., Zoning Hearing Board
Larry Bull, Zoning Hearing Board as Alternate

The Board of Supervisors re-commissioned the following committees:

Design Review Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Parks and Recreation Board Trails Sub-Committee

Environmental Advisory Committee

On January 7th the Supervisors adopted Ordinance #209-2019 officially creating the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) with Pete Goodman appointed as Chairman of the seven member group.

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.

Members of the EAC joined the subcommittee including planning commission and board of supervisors members to draft a renewable energy resolution, which was adopted on July 1st.

In 2019, the committee continued to provide pipeline information to concerned residents and filed a response to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with comments on its environmental assessment report related to Adelphia's plans to repurpose its existing pipeline into high pressure natural gas pipelines. Members are attended meetings sponsored by the Pipeline Safety Coalition and have a concern about the integrity of the pipes and design life.

Other committee work included:

- Continuing to work on their **education on plastics use** and initiating a Green Business Award available to township businesses.
- Setting up a booth at Charlestown Day, Sept. 14th, to educate residents about the EAC mission.
- Sponsoring a talk on the spotted lantern fly on April 29th as part of their Community Education Series and posting notices at the Park and Farm.
- Holding a second talk September 23rd when EAC member Dr. Veda Maany presented "The Environment and our Health".
- Recommending stream names for unnamed tributaries in the Township.
- Monitoring septage reports from the County Health Department and reminding property owners of their responsibilities to pump a minimum of once every three years.
- Communicating with the "Sound Walls Now Association", which is comprised of 2 EAC members, Dan Walker and Pete Goodman, and two local residents, Peggy Gallagher and Paul Stevens. The group submitted paperwork to be incorporated as a PA incorporated non-profit. It was made clear that the EAC would play a consulting role only, and the township would support the entity by upgrading the noise ordinance and providing funding for engineering and consulting but not towards litigation.
- Working with the Parks & Recreation Board on a native tree project at Charlestown Park.
- Seeking volunteers for trail work, invasive clean-outs, and other activities.
- Familiarizing themselves with stormwater management and riparian buffer issues.



Above: A family visiting the EAC Booth on Charlestown Day

- Mapping out areas of the Brightside Farm to delineate the trails and hayfields to identify areas for planting a riparian buffer along an approximate 2-acre portion of the Pigeon Run, a first order stream in Pennsylvania. They drafted a map specifying where and what plants would be suitable and researched grants sources. They performed soil sampling at the Farm on May 18th in preparation for the buffer repair.

The work will be completed in 2020 and will serve as a demonstration site for increasing bird habitat and will include edible species such as plums and berries near the community garden.



The EAC worked closely with the Green Valleys Watershed Association. Funds were secured from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, the Chester County Conservation District, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Once the final plan was presented and approved by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, volunteers began with the slope behind the community gardens. The area was cleared of invasive materials and 300 native trees and shrubs were planted along a headwater of the Pigeon Run.

Fruit bearing trees and multifunction trees will be planted in the area below the gardens. In a third area near the spring house, winterberry hollies and red twig dogwood will be planted to enhance the beauty of the setting. All plant material will be native, will be protected from deer by using cages, and will use organic methods.

- Considering an application for a Project Wingspan grant, which is a 2-year project supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Federation to the non-profit Pollinator Partnership. Funding could create pollinator sites for the Monarch Butterfly and Rusty Patched Bumble Bee and allow for maintenance later. The project would send surveyors to a location the Township would choose to verify its suitability.
- Contributing newsletter articles as part of its Environmental Education Series for residents, including a winter article on limiting the use of road salt due to its potential impact on streams, littering, septic pumping, and use of plastics.

Historical Commission/H.A.R.B.

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, Frens & Frens LLC.

Projects addressed in 2019 included:

- A continuation of Historian Jane Dorchester's research to update the Township's data for Chester County's Historic Resource Atlas Project, which catalogs historic sites, districts and

structures. In December, the team concluded field surveys to update existing Chester County reports and records of notable historic resources beyond 50 years old. These sites were matched with addresses and tax parcel numbers, while including the historical resource identification number, and any pertinent information, such as date of construction. The project will conclude in 2020, and a wall map will be provided along with a spiral bound atlas.

- Following up on last year's Grand Opening of the Charlestown Mill, seven individuals were signed up as docents to provide monthly tours of the Mill from April through October with the program slated to begin in 2020.
- Monitoring Spring Clean-up and on-going maintenance of the landscaping at the Mill by GreenWeavers Landscaping.
- Overseeing extensive tree removal and clearing by Davey Tree Company in preparation for restoration of the perimeter wall at the Charlestown Cemetery. Dale Frens prepared the bid package for restoration, but the bids were rejected due to cost in early 2020. Alternatives to the bid process will be explored in 2020.
- Review of HARB applications #1-2019 and #2-2019 leading to the Supervisors' approval of Certificates of Appropriateness for roof replacements at 662 and 670 Church Road in the Historic District.



- Coordination with the Historical Society and Charlestown Methodist Church on the Charlestown Heritage Art Show held on October 13th displaying works from past and present Charlestown area artists. The artwork was displayed at both the Church and Charlestown Mill.

At left: inside the Charlestown Methodist Church for the 2019 Art Show, photo by G. Csete

- Appointing a committee to coordinate disposition of historical archives upon the dissolution of the Charlestown Historical Society, anticipated to take place in 2020.

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.

The Planning Commission provides guidance in the following areas:

- Reviews and proposes amendments to the Township Comprehensive Plan and other planning instruments including the subdivision/land development ordinance (SLDO), zoning ordinance and other related ordinances
- Analyses petitions and requests proposing to rezone land in the Township
- Conducts technical reviews with the help of their consultants and makes recommendations on land development and subdivision plan applications
- Maintains maps and data regarding land and property in the Township
- Oversees other projects at the request of the Board of Supervisors

Activities performed in 2019 included the following:

- The Commission elected Andre von Hoyer as Chairman and Michael Richter as Vice Chairman.
- New members Matt Rogers and alternate Dan Walker were welcomed to the Commission after their appointments on February 4th.
- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors held a joint strategic planning session on March 23rd at the Marriott Extended Stay Hotel to discuss ongoing planning matters.
- The Planning Commission provided input to the Manager for the Long-Term Financial Plan Committee on projects for 2020 – 2023.
- Planning Commission member Wendy Leland, along with the Township Manager, attended quarterly meetings at the Great Valley School District office along with the other municipalities in the district to provide data on future development in order to gauge the impact on the schools.
- The Township Manager signed up with the County for electronic submission of plans for review going forward.
- Members of the Planning Commission attended the Supervisors' July 1st meeting where engineer Dan Wright gave a presentation on permeable pavement.
- The Township endorsed the Chester County Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan, Landscapes 3.
- The Planning Commission began a review of the Institutional District, ongoing at present.
- See Section III, Planning, for details on Planning Commission reviews of applications and plans.

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. Currently Pickering Crossing (Charlestown Road and Route 29) and Spring Oak (Whitehorse Road) are 60-75% along in the construction process. The TND District was created in 2004 as a proactive 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.

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 2019.

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 Township provided input for the update of the 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan, which was formally adopted by Charlestown Resolution on Sept. 3rd, and continues 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.

West Pikeland Township petitioned to join the regional committee, and a future revision to the comprehensive plan will be undertaken in 2020 as a result of them joining the group. The Supervisors executed a Letter of Commitment to Chester County for a Vision Partnership Grant to help cover the regional committee's costs for the plan update.

Phoenixville Region Multi-Modal Transportation Plan Committee

The region includes Phoenixville Borough and Upper Providence, West Vincent, East Pikeland, Schuylkill and Charlestown Townships.

Resident Richard Findlay and Supervisor Charlie Philips acted as Charlestown's representatives on the Phoenixville Region Multi-Modal Transportation Plan Committee. The committee evaluated existing

conditions for walking, biking, and mass transit, developed goals and recommendations, and prepared implementation strategies to enhance alternate means of transportation for commuters other than single occupancy vehicles.

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

The Devault Trail

This is ranked the #1 priority and opportunity in the trails category and is seen to be a key connector in the regions trail network. The Township and its consultants are continuing to press forward on this project.

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.

Charlestown Rd and Hollow Rd

Although the committee didn't identify this intersection as a high priority, PennDOT agreed there could be improved signage both north and south warning of the hazardous crossing ahead and measures were taken in 2019 to make these improvements.

The Multi-Modal Report is available on the Township website.

Parks & Recreation Board

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, 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 throughout the Township. The Parks and Recreation Board's activities in 2019 included:

- Overseeing park, field use and road event permits for various individuals and groups, including numerous special events, including several 5K fundraisers, various scout events, and church, company, and school picnics.
- Coordinating with the PMYC (580 children enrolled) and the PASC (1,000 enrolled).

At right: PMYC soccer game



- Updating Facebook postings to highlight special events and keep the public informed of both existing facilities and improvements planned or underway.
- Focusing on various maintenance items at Charlestown Park.



- Working with the Healthy Kids Running Group for their fourth season at the Park. The Group hosted their spring and fall 6-week Sunday sessions for over 100 children.
- Working with the Great Valley Mountain Bike Club for their fourth season, which educates its members on proper trail use. Area was provided for about 50 riders at the Brightside Farm.
- Assisting the Phoenixville Marion Youth Club (PMYC) and Phoenixville Area Soccer Club (PASC) with their feasibility study for installing a, 80,000 sq. ft. turf field below the PMYC clubhouse.
- Setting up Yoga in the Park with Carly Mount on the 2nd Saturdays between April 13th and October 12th.
- Parks and Rec worked with Eagle Scout candidate Ryan Thiele, who installed fencing adjacent to the soccer field to stop wayward balls.
- Overseeing tree replacement needs with landscape architect Ed Theurkauf at Charlestown Park.
- Coordinating 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 franchise agreements for both clubs were updated, re-negotiated and renewed for an additional term of seven years to 10/31/26.
- Pavilion reservations were made by over 207 individuals, businesses, schools and non-profits in 2019 for 9,400 people.

At left: Charlestown Park on Sept. 14th on Charlestown Day



- *Photo by George Csete*

- Working with the Charlestown Day Committee for their event on September 14th.

- Continuing Lantern Fly education, extermination, and mitigation. The Township received its mandated training from the PSU extension on 7/18/19 and received a permit from the PA Department of Agriculture.
- Received notification of Cinco de Mayo bike race and French Creek Iron Tour events that crossed through Charlestown.
- Dan Mount joined the board to replace retiring member Sue Staas.

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 2019.

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.

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:

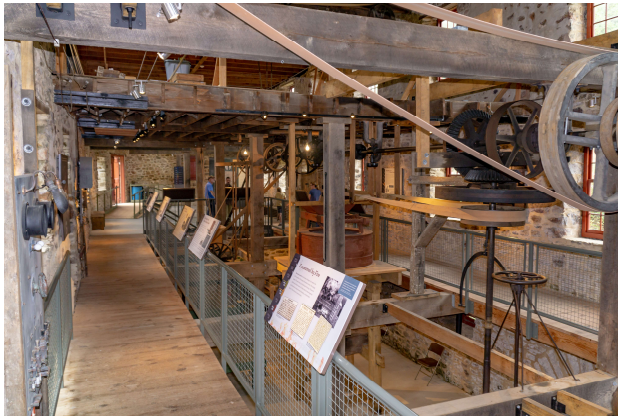
- Determining compliance with the zoning ordinance for an applicant's proposed project or use,
- Responding to requests for service related to alleged illegal uses and activities,
- Coordinating enforcement actions and due process related to zoning enforcement,

- Participating in Zoning Hearing Board meetings in an official capacity and witnessing during appeals to his/her land use determinations.

Charlestown Day Committee

The Committee organized the seventh annual Charlestown Day event held on September 14th. Proceeds went to Friends of Charlestown, which provides funding for local non-profit groups.

A 5-K Race sponsored by Go Fox was held between 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. to benefit the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.



The Exhibits at Charlestown Mill were on display for visitors, and both fire companies brought equipment for families to check out.



Live music was performed by The Thin Line Band. For kids' entertainment, there was the ever popular Face Painter, Bubbletopia, the Science Tellers, and bounce houses by Bouncy Roo. The Mobile Mess Hall was selected as the food vendor and there were over 20 vendors with displays to visit and shop.

- photos by Allen Underkofler and George Csete

Trails Committee

Parks & Rec Board member Frank Beyer was head of the trails committee.

Numerous trail repairs were made, including areas of the Pickering Trail, Ice Dam and McDevitt Trail. Employees of Johnson & Johnson volunteered their time along with Parks & Rec members.



Above: "Spring Beauties", one of a variety of spring ephemerals, flowers that bloom in the woods before leaves are on the trees.

Trail Walks were scheduled and conducted in the Spring and Fall.

Notice of the hikes were published in the newsletters and on the website. These included a wildflower walk on April 28th along the Pickering Trail that began with a tour of the Charlestown Mill, and a butterfly walk on August 24th at the Brightside Farm.

Maps of each of the 6 Township trails are available on the Township website along with a MyZyp app for both Android and Apple phones that locates the trails on google maps and provides a map of each trail with its description.

Trail signs were added or replaced as needed.

Professional tree removal services were needed for fallen trees on the various trails, including Pickering Dam trail. Mowing service was provided for the Pickering and Pickering Dam Trails. Permission was granted for a Temple film student to video along the Pickering Trail as part of her senior thesis project, with coordination from the Township on procedure and safety matters.

III. PLANNING

Subdivisions & Land Developments

The following subdivision/land development applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2019. Review comments, when requested, were prepared by the Township Planner, Engineer and Solicitor.

SD #416-18 Commons G.V. Lot 1 – A land development plan was proposed for expansion of parking at General Warren Village with review continuing in 2020.

SD #417-18 Meyer – A preliminary/final subdivision plan for a 6 lot subdivision of George Meyer's 23.8 acre property at Bodine and Foster Roads, with applicant to return for a recommendation once the NPDES and PennDOT permits are in place.

SD #418-19 Andersen – A minor subdivision was reviewed for a two lot subdivision of a 13.3 acre property at 23 Eastwick Drive and was recommended for approval. The Board of Supervisors approved the application on 8/5/19.

SD #419-19 Buntten-Stewart – A minor subdivision plan to adjust the lot line between two parcels on Union Hill Road, approved by the Board of Supervisors on 11/4/19.

SD #420-19 Grafinger – A minor subdivision plan to combine two parcels on Hollow Road, approved by the Board of Supervisors on 10/7/19.

SK #01-2019 David Saunders – proposed new home construction at 14 Aldham Lane that would encroach on side yard setback. The Planning Commission encouraged the applicants to revise their plans to avoid the need to go to the Zoning Hearing Board. The Saunders consequently revised their plans and were able to obtain a building permit without the need for this extra measure.

SK #02-2019 Buntten-Stewart - proposed lot line change for parcels zoned Farm Residential at 2045 and 2061 Union Hill Road. The Planning Commission recommended moving forward with a minor subdivision plan.

Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2019:

CU-2018-3 Andersen – Application to permit a conventional lot subdivision on the 13.3 acre property at 23 Eastwick Road for 2 lots. The Supervisors approved the conditional use on May 6, 2019.

CU-2018-04 Crown Castle – Application to permit the construction of a pole with cell module in the PennDOT right of way in front of the Grange Building. The Supervisors approved the conditional use on March 4, 2019.

CU-2019-1 George Meyer - Application to permit a conventional lot subdivision on the 23.8 acre property at Bodine and Seven Oaks Roads for 6 lots. The Supervisors approved the conditional use on April 1, 2019. Mr. Meyer agreed to provide an easement to take the Horse-Shoe Trail off-road along his property.

CU-2019-2 Michael Richter – Application to permit the construction of a guest quarters at 141 Ravenhill Road. The Supervisors approved the conditional use on September 3rd.

CU-2019-3 Mine Road Partners – Application to permit the construction of an arena for a private sports club. Review is continuing into 2020.

CU-2019-4 Russell Becker – Application to permit the construction of a guest quarters at 2130 Conestoga Road. The Planning Commission recommended approval and the hearing was scheduled for January 6, 2020.

Traffic Planning

The firm Traffic Planning & Design was appointed on May 6, 2019 as traffic engineering consultant. The Planning Commission oversaw the placement of the signal at Route 401 (Conestoga Road) and Valley Hill Road on the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program), which is administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. TP & D submitted the grant application by the 6/30/19 deadline, and due to PennDOT's support, improvements to this signal were approved and will be fully funded by this reimbursement program in the amount of \$2,110,000.

Additional projects assigned to TP & D included: following up on safety improvements to the Hollow Road and Charlestown Road intersection, traffic study for the Sidley Hill and Yellow Springs Road intersection and providing a thorough review of Chapter 10 of the PRPC comprehensive plan relating to traffic.

Other Planning Issues

Reviewed the Special Study Supplement for the Valley Creek Trunk Sewer Sale at Tredyffrin Township's request. This was as a result of the sale of the trunk line causing a change to the Township's Act 537 Plan ("Official Plan"). The Planning Commission determined there were no comments necessary on Charlestown's behalf and the Supervisors adopted a resolution amending the Plan to include the study as a supplement on May 6th.

Reviewed a proposed amendment to the West Whiteland Township Comprehensive Plan regarding Bike and Pedestrian Planning at that township's request. There were no changes to the plan relevant to Charlestown, therefore no comments were submitted.

Reviewed and recommended approval for two waiver requests from the Stormwater Management Ordinance for the Lees on Whisper Lane and Feiners on Foster Lane.

Updated the County Planning Commissions listings for the Pickering Road bridge for the Bridge Bill.

Ordinances

The Planning Commission concluded 3 years of work on amending the conditional use section of the Zoning Ordinance, including revisions to the definitions section, standards and criteria, and amending the list of uses for each zoning district. The Supervisors adopted Ordinance # 210-2019 enacting these changes.

Planning Modules & Act 537 Plans

Andersen Subdivision of 2 lots in the Eastwick Development – DEP approved the planning module application following Township review and approval.

Salita Residence – Township approved a planning module application for a residence on Howell Road.

The DEP determined that planning modules were not required for the Bunten-Stewart and Grafinger subdivision applications.

IV. ZONING

The following Zoning Hearing Board applications were considered in 2019:

2018-05 William Dungee: The applicant requested that the restaurant use at the Stables Bar at Charlestown and Coldstream Roads be identified as a non-conforming use that had operated continuously, thereby allowing Mr. Dungee to sell to a group wishing to operate an Italian restaurant following purchase of the property. The hearing opened on Dec. 18th and was continued to Jan. 15, 2019. The non-conforming use was approved.

2019-01 Janet Rubino: The applicant requested a special exception for her property at 3269 Blackberry Lane to increase the area of a nonconforming dwelling and a variance to increase the area of the nonconforming dwelling to more than fifty percent (50%) of its existing area, a variance from the setback requirements and a determination by the Zoning Hearing Board that the ordinance does not preclude dwelling use of a separate building situated on the applicant's property. The hearing opened on May 28th, was continued to June 18th, after which the request was granted.

2019-02 Matsiras: The applicant sought variances to allow a single-family home to be constructed on combined parcels #35-3-85 & 86 that will fall under the minimum lot size and required 50-foot side yard. In addition, since some acreage will be removed from these two lots to add to the PA Turnpike's lot 35-3-87, that lot also required variances for expansion of a non-conforming lot and from the 50-foot side yard requirement. The variances for Paul Matsiras were granted on 12/4/19; the variance for the Turnpike Commission was denied.

2019-03 ABC Supply Company: The applicant sought a variance to allow an expanded storage area for the existing warehouse and wholesale facility at 25 Spring Mill Drive, which would expand the existing non-conformance for maximum permitted impervious coverage by 10%. The variance was granted on November 7th.

2019-04 Grafinger: The applicant sought a variance to allow construction in very steep slopes for an addition to his home at 4113 Hollow Road.

V. LEGISLATION

Ordinances

The following ordinances were adopted in 2019:

209-2019 Ordinance creating the Environmental Advisory Committee

210-2019 Ordinance Amending Chapter 27, Section 1809 Conditional Use Standards

Resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted in 2019:

928-19 Resolution to appoint Barbacane Thornton as auditors for 2018

929-19 Resolution appointing John C. Martin to Zoning Hearing Board

930-19 Resolution appointing Larry Bull as Alternate Member to Zoning Hearing Board

931-19 Resolution appointing Bob Cottone to UCC Board

932-19 Resolution listing Township depositories for 2019

933-19 Resolution adopting credit card policy for 2019

934-19 Resolution Designating Emergency Service Providers

935-19 Resolution approving Purchase of Conservation Easement – Beam-Dugdale parcel #35-2-45

936-19 Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Certain Lands by Charlestown – Auchincloss parcels 35-3-75 and 35-3-75.1

937-19 Resolution Commending Michael Allen

938-19 Resolution Re-Adopting Agricultural Security Area Map

939-19 Resolution appointing Dan Walter as Alternate to Planning Commission

940-19 Resolution approving Purchase of Conservation Easement – Thompson 35-2-119.1H

941-19 Resolution approving Purchase of Conservation Easement – Davis 35-4-70

942-19 Resolution endorsing Chester County Planning Commission Landscapes3

943-19 Resolution Amending Act 537 Plan to Include Valley Creek Trunk Sewer Study

944-19 Resolution Amending 2019 Budget

945-19 Resolution on Renewable Energy

946-19 Resolution to Dispose of Records #10

947-19 Resolution Adopting the Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan

948-19 Resolution Adopting Revised Permit Fee Schedule

949-19 Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Easement on Seibert Parcels 35-4-33.2 and 35-4-34

950-19 Resolution Re-adopting Emergency Operations Plan

951-19 Resolution to enter into agreement with Phoenixville Marion Youth Club

952-19 Resolution to enter into agreement with Phoenixville Area Soccer Club

953-19 Tax Levy Resolution

954-19 Resolution Adopting 2020 Budget

VI. 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. continues 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

23 letters were sent to HOAs and development management companies informing them of their responsibility to have their stormwater management systems inspected annually by a certified professional engineer. They were required to provide a letter to the Township by September 30th, certifying the system is functioning properly. This notification was required for 2019 as part of the Township's MS-4 Program, with annual follow-up thereafter. The requirement impacts larger developments that were required to obtain an NPDES permit for construction, and only applies to later projects as a Best Management Practice. The annual report was filed by the September 30, 2019 deadline.

In the fall, a revision to the Stormwater Management ordinance was discussed by the Planning Commission that will provide an exemption for a structure called a "High Tunnel", which is used for storing agricultural materials. These types of structures would be not be required to provide stormwater management facilities if they don't result in an impervious area exceeding 25% of all structures located on the owner's total contiguous land area.

The Township will need to consider funding compliance measures for the next MS-4 period in 2020. Valley Creek in the southern portion of Charlestown Township has tested high in silt content and the DEP is requiring a 10% reduction effort and will require the delineation of the drainage area to each storm sewer system controlled by the Township within the urbanized area that is located within a watershed impaired for siltation or nutrient impairment. Most of the Township is in the Pickering Creek watershed, and at this time, no additional requirements must be met, although this may change in the future.

Quarry Activities

The Engineer monitored Independence Construction Materials blasting reports.

Road Improvement Project

The Engineer oversaw Improvements to selected Township roads including Township Line Road, a section of Union Hill Road, Howell Road and Southwest Avenue.

VII. BUILDING & CODE ENFORCEMENT



A summary of building permit activity in 2019 is provided below:

	NO. OF PERMITS	CONSTRUCTION COST
COMMERCIAL: HVAC	1	13,850
COMMERCIAL: ALTERATIONS/FIT-OUT	8	901,978
COMMERCIAL: DEMOLITION	1	4,800
COMMERCIAL: ENTRANCE PIERS	1	20,000
COMMERCIAL: FIRE SUPPRESSION	2	113,950
COMMERCIAL: CELL TOWERS & ANTENNAS	1	15,000
COMMERCIAL: ELECTRICAL	2	8,900
COMMERCIAL: ROOF	1	220,000
COMMERCIAL: UTILITY POLES	1	10,500
RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS	3	300,000
RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS	13	1,228,474
RESIDENTIAL: BARN	1	37,860
RESIDENTIAL: BASEMENTS/BASEMENT EGRESS	16	340,610
RESIDENTIAL: BATHROOM	6	161,830
RESIDENTIAL: BREEZEWAY/WALKWAY	2	6,700
RESIDENTIAL: DECKS	17	310,841

RESIDENTIAL: DEMOLITION	2	45,759
RESIDENTIAL: NEW DUPLEX HOME	2	525,400
RESIDENTIAL: ELECTRICAL & GENERATORS	13	74,233
RESIDENTIAL: FENCE	2	59,450
RESIDENTIAL: GARAGE	3	165,000
RESIDENTIAL: HVAC	8	124,091
RESIDENTIAL: KITCHEN	5	194,889
RESIDENTIAL: PATIOS	8	171,424
RESIDENTIAL: PLUMBING	1	5,125
RESIDENTIAL: POOLS	7	528,293
RESIDENTIAL: POOL HOUSE/CABANA	1	56,500
RESIDENTIAL: PORCH	1	80,000
RESIDENTIAL: ROOFS	25	380,765
RESIDENTIAL: SHEDS	5	22,551
RESIDENTIAL: SHOWROOM	1	12,500
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY HOME	16	5,973,708
RESIDENTIAL: SOLAR HEATING SYSTEM	3	55,837
RESIDENTIAL: STUCCO & VENEERS	6	507,459
RESIDENTIAL: SUNROOM	1	86,000
RESIDENTIAL: TOWNHOUSE	12	3,065,580
TOTALS:	203	\$15,829,857

Beginning January 7th, the Supervisors appointed Anthony Merklinger of Cornerstone Inspection Services as Building Code Official, and he worked with the township office staff to streamline permitting procedures for both applicants and the Township.

Extensive updates to various form, instructions, and the fee schedule were made with PDF writable versions available on the website.

VIII. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Agricultural Security Area – The seven year ASA review was completed with the adoption of Resolution #938-2019 re-certifying the ASA map. The map lists all parcels suitable for agriculture that were submitted since 1996 by property owners.

Auchincloss Property – The sale of the 30-acre Auchincloss homestead parcel was finalized on February 11th and is permanently preserved under an easement with the French & Pickering Creeks Trust.

The vacant parcel, also 30 acres, was sold with closing finalized on August 15th and allows for the construction of a single family home.

Brightside Farm Park –The farmhouse lease with the current renters was renewed for an additional year. Maintenance items for the farmhouse, including bathroom renovations, and repairs to outside steps and sidewalk were performed in the fall by approving a change order on an existing 2015 contract with J.D. Bravo Co.

All sixty garden plots were leased at 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.

The Garden Coordinator began research on the best way to repair the aging fence posts and chicken wire, which will go out to bid in 2020.



The walking trail at Brightside Park continues to be very popular. The trail includes benches positioned along the one mile loop, and other amenities, such as a trash receptacle, bike rack, dog stations, and an information kiosk, are available adjacent to the parking lot.

At Left: Walking Trail at Brightside Farm Park.

- photo by George Csete



Above: The Wisner Rapp House, Photo by Darrah Ribble

The Township promoted two Free Concerts on June 20 and July 25 at the Wisner-Rapp House, adjacent to Brightside Farm Park. The Charlestown Historical Society sponsored the concerts featuring a James Taylor tribute band in June and Irish music by the Malarky Brothers in July. People were invited to park in the Brightside Trail lot adjacent to the Rapp House.

Over 200 people attended the concerts and enjoyed the music and views of one of the most picturesque spots in the Township.

Charlestown Park

Drain repair at the soccer fields was coordinated between the Township Engineer and the Roadmaster prior to the start of the soccer season on March 31st.

New programs with the Phoenixville Marian Youth Club led to 100% registration with over 200 players. The Club played on Mondays and Wednesdays and allowed the White Horse Rugby Football Club teams to play on the fields Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“Tree of Heaven” was removed from the Park as it is the primary food source for spotted lanternflies. Deer protection was installed around younger trees by volunteers, and tree replacement was needed in some instances. The Township Manager took the mandatory state training and received certification in addressing the problem on July 18th.

Four major events were held at the Park this year, including Charlestown Day and a Run, Walk & Roll by the Orion Group, the Diwali celebration, and the Renaissance Academy’s 20th anniversary color splash 5K.

The reservation system for renting the pavilions worked smoothly for the third year. Children’s birthday parties were the main reason for reservation, followed by picnics and family reunions.

Longwood School – At the corner of Valley Hill and Bodine Roads sits the restored foundation of what was originally a one-room schoolhouse built in 1857 for the children of African American farmers.



Split rail fencing was repaired and replaced around the perimeter.

At right: The site of the Longwood School at the corner of Valley Hill and Bodine Roads.

- 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 renewed contracts with Davey Tree Service and Charlestown Landscaping expire 3/31/2021, which is the last year of the contract that included an option to extend each year for up to three years total. Both firms performed in a highly satisfactory manner.

Open Space Acquisitions – The Township acquired 50 additional acres of open space through conservation easements purchased from Karen Beam (10 acres) and James and Mary Jo Thompson (23 acres). Both were placed with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

Charlestown, jointly with East Whiteland Township was awarded a \$540,537 grant from the DCNR for acquisition of the 142 acre “Balderson” Tract owned by Spring Ridge Management, which will likely take place in 2020. It borders Phoenixville Pike and Rt. 401 and is located across from the High School. The Charlestown section borders Charlestown Oaks. 57 acres are in Charlestown.

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.

In July, Volunteers from the Parks & Rec Board including trail coordinator Frank Beyer, employees from Johnson & Johnson were organized by Ashlee Smith to perform maintenance and to make improvements to the Pickering Trail by adding stone in wet areas and repairing a footbridge.



- Photo by Ashlee Smith

IX. ROADS & PUBLIC WORKS

Contact: Roadmaster/Public Works Project Manager Jim Thompson, (610) 656-9315
publicworks@charlestown.pa.us

The Five-Year Road Improvement Plan was reviewed and updated. Improvements for 2019 were undertaken as follows: Resurfacing of the last section of Union Hill Road from Tinkerhill Lane to Whitehorse Road, Howell Road, Township Line Road and Southwest Avenue. Extensive repairs were performed on Warner Lane.

Dan Malloy Paving was awarded the contract for the road improvement project. The Roadmaster accommodated requests from several residents for improving their curbing along these roads while the paving work was underway.

The Annual Road Maintenance contract was awarded to Melchiorre Construction Co. Additional Improvements in 2019 performed included:

- Curve warning sign added to Yellow Springs Road
- Snow & Ice Removal throughout winter season
- Improvement of stormwater issue on Bodine Road with installation of new piping and grates
- Repair of sinkhole on Buckwalter Road at railroad tracks

In addition to general traffic signal maintenance, Armour & Sons adjusted the signal at Morehall Road and Route 29 following complaints of phasing issues, determined to be caused by misalignment of the camera.

A traffic speed sign was purchased from Traffic Logix, Inc. and was used to collect data on speeds along various township roads. The stealth mode of the sign allows for the collection of data when the sign appears to be turned off and was used to compare with speeds when the sign was fully operational.

Now that Eastern Salt Company (formerly Oceanport Industries) is listed on the State Contract, the Township purchased road salt from Co-Stars rather than soliciting bids. The contract with West Goshen Township to provide brine was renewed at the same price since 2014.

Spring clean-up and repairs included road sweeping, culvert and inlet clean outs, and pothole patching. Tree removal was performed along many of the Township roads and the open space properties, including downed trees and limbs on Aldham Road, Benburb Road, Blackstone Lane, Blackberry Lane, Buckwalter Road, Charlestown Hunt Drive, Hilltop Road, Lincoln Road, Pickering Spur, Rees Road, Sidley Hill Road, Somerset Lane, Union Hill Road, Warner Lane, and in Charlestown Park.

Shoulder work and inlet repairs were done on Union Hill, Buckwalter, Maryhill, Ravenhill, and Tinkerhill Roads as well as curb, sidewalk, apron, inlet and head wall repairs at Charlestown Hunt.

The Engineer worked with PennDOT to determine the cause of severe flooding at Route 29 and Charlestown Road in February and March. Flooding was due to a sinkhole that caused a drainage pipe to collapse. PennDOT affected repairs promptly after the cause was identified.

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 in all situations reported. The system provides a tracking number and email notification when the reported problem has been resolved.

The Engineer and Township Manager met with PennDOT representatives in February to discuss the future replacement of the bridge on Pickering Dam Road. The Township communicated its interest in keeping the bridge low profile and rural in character due to the narrow road and its proximity to the Historic District. As plans develop, the Historic Commission, EAC and Planning Commission will be involved, and there will be meetings inviting public input.

The 3-year Contract with Armour & Sons for signal service maintenance is in place until February 1, 2020. The initial rate increase of \$5.00 per hour will remain the same for the length of the contract.

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*.

X. MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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.
- **Instagram:** Parks and Rec initiated an Instagram account with the help of volunteer Ashlee Smith in 2018. It was linked to the Facebook page and the Townships website. The Township made hundreds of photos available for this new feature.
- **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. Subscribers received a weekly update of new posts. Special notices and items of interest were emailed to subscribers as needed. Upgrades were completed in 2017 to make the website more easily accessed by a wider variety of devices. The web designer focused on improving the already extensive photo gallery. PDF-fillable building permit applications and a variety of associated forms were updated. The contract with web designer Allen Underkofler was renewed in November for an additional year.

Public Safety

- **Police Services:** Charlestown Township is served by the Pennsylvania State Police, from the Embreeville Barracks. Lt. William J. Donahue was the station commander in 2019.
- **Fire Companies and Ambulance Services:** Charlestown Township is served by two fire departments, the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association, the Kimberton Fire Company (fire) and West End Fire Company (ambulance).



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

The Manager, Fire Marshal and Supervisors Philips and Kuhn attended the Kimberton Fire Company dinner meeting on May 16th updating the municipalities they serve on budget and service matters. The Township promoted the annual Kimberton Fair held each July, benefitting the Fire Company, in our newsletter and on the website.

Charlestown holds a seat on the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association board, held in 2019 by Supervisor Kevin Kuhn. 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.
- Supervisor Susan Bednar completed National Incident Response (NIMS) Training provided by Chester County Department of Emergency Services during a half day workshop on February 2nd that included information on the county services, the Emergency Management Handbook for Elected Officials, and an overview of Pennsylvania Title 35.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** Charlestown re-adopted its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in November 2019. 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. The Fire Marshal/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. He completed paperwork for the County EOC related to flooding from the heavy rains throughout the year. The Biennial drill took place on November 19th and included the Fire Marshal, members of the staff and Board of Supervisors, volunteers and county emergency personnel. Residents were made aware of the availability of potassium iodide tablets at the Kimberton Fire House.

Animal Control: Charlestown auto-renewed its contract with the Brandywine SPCA to enforce the Dog Ordinance (dogs running at large) and Noise Ordinance (barking) for a five year period from 2019-2023. The Township also has an Animal Control Officer to assist residents with animal trapping and removal.



- **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. A controlled burn was approved in October for one property.
- **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 reviewed and approved two applications for fireworks displays and bonfires.
- **Hazardous Materials:** The Fire Marshal consulted with businesses as needed regarding HazMat issues and registration requirements.

- **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.
- **Prescription Pill Drop Off:** The locations throughout Chester County where prescription pills can be disposed of is posted on the website.
- **School Safety:** The Fire Marshal participated in the Great Valley School District's tabletop exercise for Charlestown Elementary School and reviewed their lock down plan.
- **Townwatch:** The Fire Marshal continued to support the efforts of the Spring Oak and Whitehorse at Charlestown developments' Townwatch programs.

Waste Management & Recycling



Waste Hauler Private Subscription: Charlestown Township vetted several area haulers who are licensed to collect trash and recyclables for residents and businesses in 2019. Property owners contract privately with the hauler of their choice for waste hauler services.



- **Advertisement** of the Lanchester Landfill's acceptance of electronic devices at no charge through December 2019.
- **Annual Recycling Meeting:** The Manager attended County's annual recycling meeting on September 13th. The Act 101 application for the annual recycling grant was submitted by the Sept. 30th deadline.
- **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 six collection events held throughout 2019.
- **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.

Utilities

- **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 belongs to the Valley Forge Sewer Authority. The Board executed a resolution amending the Official Sewage Facilities Plan to include the Valley Creek, Trunk Sewer study at their May 6th meeting. The Board approved the Sanitary Sewer Needs Analysis study prepared for Dan Wright and it was forwarded to the VFSA at their request.

XI. 2019 BUDGET & AUDITING

Auditing

The Board of Supervisors appointed Barbacane, Thornton & Company, LLP to perform the Annual Audit for 2018. This firm performs a comprehensive audit of all Township accounts and prepares the Department of Community & Economic Development Municipal Annual Audit and Financial Report to be filed with the state by April 15th each year.

In addition to this full audit, audits are performed by the State Auditor General's Office on the Liquid Fuels Fund (bi-ennially), Pension Fund (tri-ennially), and Workers' Compensation (annually).

The previous year's financial report was posted with Dun & Bradstreet, Moody's and the EMMA database as required for the bond program.



Budgeting

The Charlestown Township Board of Supervisors approved the 2019 budget at its December 2018 meeting. The 2019 budget consisted of three separate funds: General, Liquid Fuels, and Capital Projects. All tax rates remained the same as in 2019.

The **General Fund** represents the principal operating fund for the Township, including fire protection, road maintenance and improvements, planning, zoning, code enforcement, permit inspections, engineering, legal, and administration. The 2019 General Fund Budget was balanced as required under the Second Class Township Code without the need for a property tax increase.

Receipts for the **State Liquid Fuels Fund** are provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from gasoline taxes disbursed annually to all municipalities in the state. The receipts are based upon Township road miles and population. Use of the fund is limited to road maintenance/reconstruction and related equipment purchases.

The **Open Space Capital Fund** is funded from the open space tax (1/2 of 1% on earned income) pursuant to PA Act 153 (Open Space Preservation Act) and from the general earned income tax (1/2 of 1% on earned income). The open space tax revenue may only be expended on the acquisition of interests in real property and costs associated with those acquisitions. For the 2019 budget, the Supervisors restricted the receipts from the general earned income tax to open space, historic preservation and property maintenance and improvements. The **General Fund Capital Fund** is funded from real estate taxes and was used for road resurfacing projects in 2019.

Budget amendments were adopted by Resolution at the May 6th Supervisors' meeting.

The **Long Term Financial Plan** first developed in 2016 was revised for 2019-2023. Supervisors Frank Piliero and Charlie Philips, and Planning Commissioner Bill Westhafer served on the Committee along

with the Manager. The committee consulted in July and updated the five year plan as a guide for internal use. It was used as one of the tools in preparing the 2020 budget, particularly for capital improvement projects.

Taxes

Real Estate Taxes

Charlestown continued its contract with the County Treasurer's office to collect its municipal real estate tax. 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. 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.

Finance

The Township has now achieved a Standard & Poors Rating of AA, which is the highest ranking possible for a municipality of its size.

In October, the Township redeemed 12 month certificates in the CDARS program with First Resources Bank to seek a better option to maximize interest income. Funds were subsequently transferred to a PLGIT Prime account.

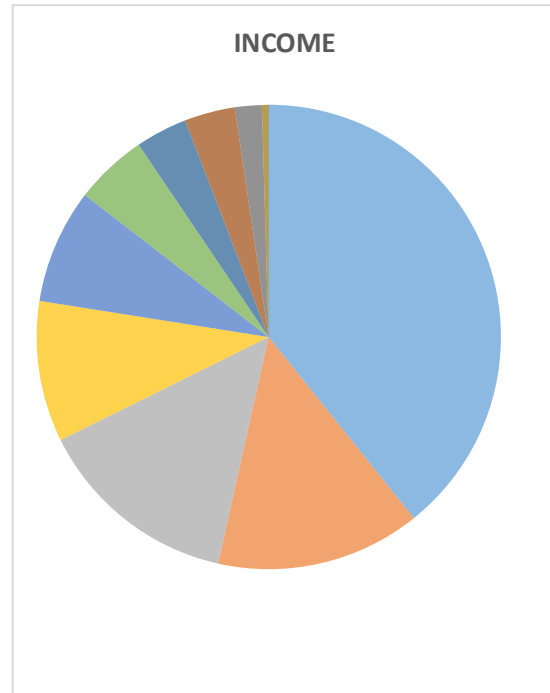
In August, the Bond Series 2015 schedule was reviewed by Supervisor Frank Piliero and the Township Manager, determining that no advance payments need to be considered for the time being, and annual reviews will be undertaken going forward.

In December 2019, the Treasurer set up an account with ADP payroll services and a separate checking account for the handling of bi-weekly payroll beginning 1/1/2020.

2019 Revenue & Expenditures – All Funds

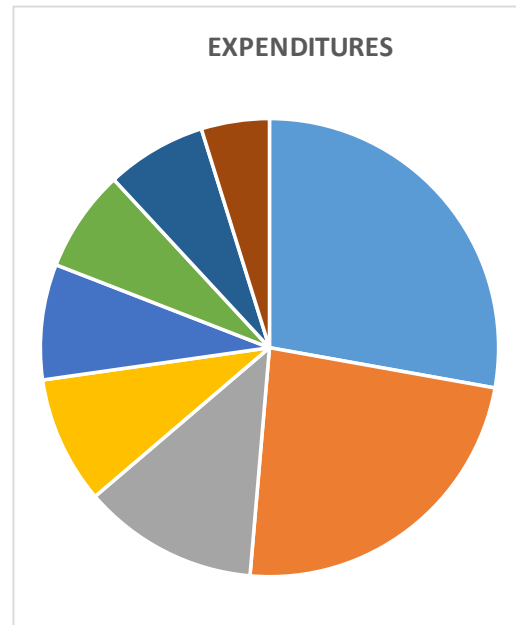
All Funds Income 2019

Earned Income Tax	4,114,874	53.5%
Sale of Assets	1,405,555	18.3%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	510,775	6.6%
Real Estate Tax	507,858	6.6%
Permit Fees	351,540	4.6%
State Revenues & Grants	286,062	3.7%
Dividends	181,516	2.4%
Cable Franchises	129,095	1.7%
Local Services Tax	126,191	1.6%
Application & Review Fees	66,424	0.9%
Park Rents & Fees	16,115	0.2%
County Revenues & Grants	682	0.01%
Fines & Forfeits	275	0.0%
Total:	7,696,962	100%



All Funds Expenditures 2019

Easements & Acquisitions	935,307	24.0%
Road Maint & Improvement	790,762	20.3%
Public Safety	417,180	10.7%
Bonds & Notes	302,044	7.8%
Parks & Recreation	273,879	7.0%
Administration	242,525	6.2%
Permit Review & Inspection	237,932	6.1%
Legal	161,694	4.2%
Engineering	118,477	3.0%
Zoning	98,890	2.5%
Historical Resources	82,428	2.1%
Insurance	67,250	1.7%
Charge to Applicants	61,092	1.6%
Planning	34,284	0.9%
Environment and Open Sp	30,296	0.8%
Internet & Website	23,187	0.6%
Municipal Office	11,171	0.3%
Recycling & Waste Mgmt	2,710	0.1%
Total:	3,891,108	100%



MISCELLANEOUS

Addressing in Devault

The owner of Devault Foods and the Chester County addressing coordinator met with the Manager and Fire Marshal in February to clarify addresses along Devault Lane and re-address the 3 Devault Foods buildings on the newly named Fillippo Way to improve emergency response time and eliminate the ongoing problem of tractor trailers that travel on Devault Lane after missing the turn in front of the Devault Building.

Signs were posted for a four-way stop intersection with Devault Lane and Fillippo Way and a new street sign for Fillippo Way was installed.

The address was properly displayed on the entrance to the Devault Building, which includes the Devault Post Office and Township Office.

Audio Visual Equipment

The Township purchased a projector and peripheral equipment to use during public meetings and at the office, where a screen was installed in the conference area.

Building Permit Fees

The permit fee schedule was reviewed and updated in 2019. A modest review fee was instated to ensure the cost of permit review is covered in the event the applicant later withdraws the application. This fee goes toward the total permit fee, so it has no effect on the cost for most applications. Minimum charges were increased for several project types, and a zoning fee was added for projects that require a zoning permit only.

Census 2020

The Township concluded its role in working with the Census Bureau to compare and update addresses to ensure our population is accurately counted and that all new homes and neighborhoods are included. An article was written for the Fall Newsletter outlining the importance of the census, how the data is used, and how to respond when the materials arrive in early 2020.

Cell Tower Location Agreement

The Township entered into a Right-of-Way Use Agreement with Crown Castle to install a wireless communications tower on Spring Mill Drive for a fee of \$500.00 annually plus 5% of adjusted gross revenues.

Codification of Ordinances

Codification services continued with General Code and the annual updates took place in the summer. 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.

Computer Upgrades

Due to the discontinuation of support for Windows 7, three of the township computers were upgraded with Windows 10 Professional installed.

Continuing Training and Education

Members of the Board of Supervisors and the Township Manager attended seminars including the annual Pennsylvania State Association of the Township Officials conference in Harrisburg and the Chester County Association of Township Officials conference in Malvern.

Donations

The Township provided its annual donations to Camp Cadet of Chester County and the Phoenixville Public Library.

Earth Day

On April 6th, 110+ volunteers covered about 10 miles of roadways for litter pick-up, plus large areas of the Pickering Preserve, Charlestown Park, and Brightside Farm Park, and collected over 250 bags of trash.

Parks & Rec Board Chairman Chris Lawrence, Veda Maany of the Environmental Advisory Committee, and resident Jill Williams assisted the township staff with planning for the event. Mr. Lawrence worked with volunteers to install tree cages for over 40 trees at Charlestown Park.



Coldstream Road

Residents and members of the Environmental Advisory Committee tackled the enormous amount of litter along Coldstream Road.

The Township Manager applied for and was granted a Special Events Permit from PennDOT to close Coldstream Road for two hours to allow volunteers to safely pick up litter along the road.

The Fire Marshal and Roadmaster were on site to handle the road closing and re-opening. Resident Jill Williams signed up 15 volunteers for the clean-up effort with help from EAC members Veda Maany and Carol Armstrong.

Brightside Farm Park

EAC and Planning Commission member Dan Walker brought his own equipment and son Carter to install a kestrel house on an existing pole, and two Eastern Screech Owl houses along the wood line, all of which need to be at a higher elevation than other bird houses.

Planning Commissioner Andy Motel and former P.C. member Mike Allen put up 10 Blue Bird Houses with recommendations from Edie Parnum, from “Backyards for Birds” and Valley Forge Audubon Society.



Above: Dan and Carson Walker below the newly installed kestrel house.



Pickering Dam Trail

The Longuas, with daughters Margot on the left, and Calla on the right, cleaned up an area along the Pickering Creek frequented by fishermen.

They stand next to the state bridge on Pickering Dam Road that was constructed in 1918 and is slated for replacement in 2022.

Charlestown Park

Parks & Recreation Board Chairman Chris Lawrence headed the efforts at the Park, which included mulching for 40 young trees and general park cleanup.

Litter crews also worked along Township Line Road adjacent to the Park. They picked up 10 bags of trash including 2 tires, installed a rain water control bar on the nature trail, and killed lanternfly eggs.

A subgroup headed off to the Pickering Trail to collect trash and take pictures for future trail repair.





Charlestown Meadows Community

With coordination from HOA President Frank Pafumi, residents of the Charlestown Meadows community have been holding an annual clean up event for their open space areas for 11 years.

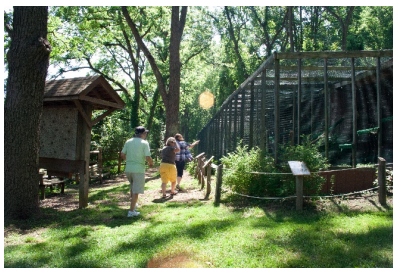
The Township is able to provide supplies for independent groups like the Meadows by arranging for them to pick up their supplies from the Township office at any time, not only during the week of the official Township event.

Great Valley Nature Center

On March 2, 2017 the board of directors of the Nature Center held a public meeting and announced that the Nature Center had run out of funds and due to mounting debt were dissolving the organization.

The Nature Center was founded back in 1974 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The property was donated along with initial start-up funds by Arnold Bartschi, the founder of Swiss Pines. At that time there was also a deed restriction placed on the property by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Both the restriction as well as the original articles of incorporation for the Nature Center provide that if it ceases operations as a “nature center” the property reverts to the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

When the Nature Center ceased active operations on the property, there was an outstanding mortgage on the property held by Phoenixville Federal Bank & Trust. Both the Township and the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust made attempts in 2018 and 2019 to work with the bank to address the mortgage debt and the deed restriction with approval from the Attorney General of Pennsylvania.



The foreclosure action on the property that was initiated in 2018 by the bank with the intention of selling it to a private landowner continued throughout 2019. The Township continues to actively engage the parties with the goal of public ownership of this community resource and the furtherance of the Nature Center’s original mission and made a motion to intervene on 6/18/19 for this purpose.

Meeting Location Changes

Due to renovations at the Great Valley Middle School, the Manager met with Jim Abraham at the Great Valley High School to arrange relocation of all July and August meetings to the Choral Room at the High School.

Memorial Day Ceremony

The Township approved the Charlestown Historical Society's request to hold a ceremony on May 27th at the Charlestown Cemetery to honor over 250 soldiers buried there since the Revolutionary War and all the men and women who have served our country in the military.

Office Facility

A proposal with architectural firm Kimmel Bogrette was approved in November 2017 to undertake a feasibility study for constructing a Township Building. Discussions continued through 2018 to select the best location out of the four possible sites, and whether to go to the next step of developing an RFP for an architect. In 2019, the Board put the project on hold for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile the Board Chairman and Manager met with the landlord on July 16th for the current office to negotiate terms through 2022. Improvements to the office were included in the new three year lease, which was made effective Nov. 1, 2019 to Oct. 31, 2022.

Pipeline Issues

While there is no proposed construction on the pipeline in Charlestown, the Environmental Advisory Committee continued to follow the Adelphia Gateway Project and joined the push for a more thorough environmental impact study. The pipeline traverses the Brightside Farm along with numerous private properties. The Fire Marshal attended pipeline safety training in 2019.

Risk Management Program

The Township continued its association with Simkiss & Block to procure cost effective insurance coverage for workers' compensation, auto, commercial, terrorism, public officials coverage, treasurer's and manager's bonding, umbrella and employee practices.

Anthony Merklinger met with Peggy Parks from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) so she could collect data for rating the Township's ISO fire score. The ISO fire score is a rating that determines how well its local fire departments can protect its community and home. Insurance companies use the score to help set home insurance rates, as a home that is less likely to be severely damaged or destroyed by fire is cheaper to insure. Building code enforcement is part of the equation. The ISO representative was very impressed with Mr. Merklinger and this, along with the data collected from our fire companies, resulted in a strong rating for Charlestown.

Scanning Services and Records Retention

In May, the Township accepted a proposal from ScanTek Inc. to develop a cloud-based document management program using Treeno Software. 32 boxes of files were sent to ScanTek to begin the process of digitalizing documents. Township staff received training in three parts on use of the system. Commercial and residential building permits dating back to the year 1990 were the first to be scanned, to be followed by subdivision files. Scanning of old files will likely continue for several years, and new files will be scanned moving forward.

The Manager continued the process of reviewing files in offsite storage to determine those of no further administrative value. This will not only save in storage costs but serves to identify those records to be preserved with the new document management system. It will make older, but still relevant, information more accessible, not only to the Township staff and consultants but also to its residents.

Septage Management

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. Enforcement will begin in 2020, the first year that data will be available to identify those properties not in compliance with the ordinance to pump systems every three years. Reminders were sent to individual property owners and newsletter and website articles were produced to help make everyone aware of the requirement.

Township-Wide Gateway Signage

The Planning Commission reviewed designs for Entrance and Gateway signage with the Township logo that will be installed in 18 locations on roads as travelers enter township limits. A large sign is planned for Devault at the main gateway. Maintenance of the meadows along the Devault Gateway was performed by GreenWeavers Landscaping. Expanded mowing and trimming was requested of Charlestown Landscaping to improve the area's appearance. Their contract was extended into 2020 to create a better meadow environment and to add plantings.

Government and Professional Affiliations

Charlestown Township is a member of the following organizations:

- Chester County Association of Township Supervisors (CCATO)
- Chester County Consortium of Managers
- Chester County Historical Preservation Network
- Chester County Intermediate Group (for purchasing)
- Chester County Secretaries in Government Association (CCSIGA)
- Chester County Tax Collection Committee
- Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association
- Co-Stars (for purchasing)
- National Alliance of Preservation Commission
- 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.



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