

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors:

Frank A. Piliero, Chairman

fpiliero@charlestown.pa.us

Charles A. Philips, Vice Chairman

cphilips@charlestown.pa.us

Susan T. Bednar, Member

sbednar@charlestown.pa.us

Kevin R. Kuhn, Member

kkuhn@charlestown.pa.us

Hugh D. Willig, Member

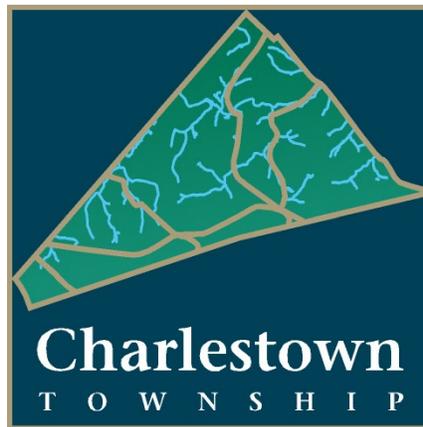
hwillig@charlestown.pa.us

Linda M. Csete, Township Manager

manager@charlestown.pa.us

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Established 1737

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in the following pages is a summary of the municipal activity occurring in Charlestown Township in 2020. 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.

Cover photo by George Csete –Autumn at Brightside, October 2020

I. ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION

Contact Information

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

(610) 240-0326 Phone
(610) 240-0328 Fax
manager@charlestown.pa.us

Website: www.charlestown.pa.us

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 507
Devault, PA 19432

Physical Location:
4030 Whitehorse Rd.
Malvern, PA 19355

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 2020

Pop. Density: 568 estimate per square mile
Households: 2,085

School District: 936 students from Charlestown were enrolled in the Great Valley School District's schools, out of their total enrollment of approximately 4,493. 192 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 2020 following a successful transition to their services in January 2013.

The Township office staff, consisting of 2 individuals, handled approximately 2,210 phone calls (24% increase from 2019, due to COVID) and received 717 visitors in 2020 (41% decrease from 2019, also due to COVID). An estimated 24,390 emails (not including spam) were received, a 41% increase over 2019 and 11,490 were sent, 98% higher than 2019. 71 right to know requests were filed and the requested documents were all provided within the required deadlines. Notary services were provided for 29 documents. 652 PA One Call tickets were processed.

The following individuals comprised the Township Staff for 2020:

Linda M. Csete, Township Manager, Secretary/Treasurer
Beth Martin, Assistant Township Secretary
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

The following consultants were appointed or re-appointed for 2020:

Auditor	Barbacane, Thornton & Co.
Building Code Official (BCO)	Anthony Merklinger Chris Madara for permits thru 9/1/20 Keystone Municipal Services for permits after 9/1/20
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

The Coronavirus/COVID 19 Pandemic

2020 ushered in a situation never dealt with before in the history of the Township. The global coronavirus pandemic that began early in the year caused a substantial change to the way our local government had to be run. Precautions began with social distancing and advanced to the close of the township office to the public on March 17th until it could be re-opened in June but requiring all visitors and township personnel wear masks and maintain distancing. A plexiglass barrier was installed at the entrance for the public. The Board of Supervisors adopted a Declaration of Local Emergency on March 20th in conjunction with the state and federal declarations. No services were deferred or delayed due to the pandemic.

Public meetings were held via Cisco Webex beginning with the Board of Supervisors meeting on April 6th and continued through the end of 2020. Orientation practice sessions with the Webex system were held on 5 occasions, with one dedicated to the public to encourage and support their right to participate in the government process.

While Charlestown Park remained closed for the pavilions, restrooms and playground, all trails in all township facilities plus the community gardens at Brightside Farm Park remained open for the public's enjoyment. The number of park visitors rose considerably, leading to the need to address issues with bike use on the trails, virtual gaming groups, and requests from for-profit groups to run programs at the park. The policy to prohibit for-profit programs was upheld.

The major Concessionaires, the Phoenixville Area Soccer Club, Phoenixville Marion Youth Club, and Healthy Kids Running Series, presented plans in September to the Parks & Recreation Board and Board of Supervisors to outline safety measures they would follow. The plan was approved and allowed them to open a modified fall season.

At right: signage approved for the PMYC outlining restrictions in place during the fall soccer season due to COVID-19.



Fire Marshal and EOC Coordinator Tim Hubbard led the Township's efforts in monitoring this emergency and taking the necessary steps to safeguard our residents. He was in regular contact with Chester County Emergency Services and attended numerous informational sessions. A burning ban was put into effect during the shutdown to avoid taxing emergency responders.

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 2020:

Alix Coleman, Brightside Farm Park Manager
Charles Buck, Brightside Community Garden Coordinator
Meg Solomon, Environmental Advisory Committee
Esther Estes, Environmental Advisory Committee
Fran Rodgers, Historical Commission/HARB for member at-large
Melissa Dicranian, Historical Commission/HARB for member at-large
Dale Frens, Historical Commission/HARB as Historic Architect
Brian Schlorff, Parks & Recreation Board
Hugh Willig, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Wendy Leland, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission as alternate
Andy Motel, Planning Commission
Matt Rogers, Planning Commission
Frank Holleran, Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals
David Greer - 6 member Valley Forge Sewer Authority Board
John Horstmann, Vacancy Board
Michael Bowell, Zoning Hearing Board
Greg Nesspor, Zoning Hearing Board 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

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

The committee continued to monitor pipeline information including Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission (FERC) responses related to Adelphia’s plans to repurpose its existing pipeline into high pressure natural gas pipelines as residents have a concern about the integrity of the pipes and design life. They also reported an exposed Buckeye pipe in the Pickering Creek in the spring, which was corrected by the pipeline company.

Other committee work included:

- Awarding the Green Business Award available to township businesses to the Charlestown Playhouse for their formation of an advisory team for sustainability that has worked to increase recycling, reduce power usage by replacing windows for natural lighting and higher thermal efficiency, install LED bulbs, and improve stormwater management in the parking area.



*At Right: Laura Sacco, Director of Charlestown Playhouse,
photo by Carol Armstrong*

- Reviewing a request from the Phoenixville Area Energy Transition Planning group for the Township’s participation in a regional Vision Partnership Grant from the County for a feasibility study.
- Sponsoring a talk by Carol Armstrong on Plastics and Our Health on January 28th as part of their Community Education Series. Other scheduled talks were unfortunately canceled or postponed due to COVID-19.
- Seeking volunteers for trail work, invasive clean-outs, and other activities.
- Familiarizing themselves with stormwater management and riparian buffer issues.
- Improving an approximately 2 acre bird habitat at Brightside Farm by planting 300 native trees and shrubs along a headwater of the Pigeon Run (a first order stream) as an improvement to the riparian buffer. The plants included edible species such as plums, 48 blueberry bushes, persimmons and pawpaws near the community garden. The project was accomplished through a collaboration with Green Valleys Watershed Association and the cooperation of the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust and Chester County, both of which hold protective easements on the property. Additional invasive species removal and planting was undertaken in the fall.



Phase 2 of the project included the installation of additional trees and protective tree cages. Two trees were planted to thank two exiting EAC members for their service: Richard Findlay, who had moved from the Township, and Greg Nesspor, who was named to the Zoning Hearing Board.

At Left: Carol Armstrong, Richard Findlay, Tomoko Torii, Pete Goodman - Photo credit: Judith Goodman

Tree species included red oak, American holly, black cherry, American redbud, swamp white oak and pussy willow.

The concept is to get a functional forested buffer established on the unnamed tributary of Pigeon Run, a tributary of Pickering Creek, that flows out of the ground in Brightside Farm Park.

- Coordinating with the Deerfield Homeowners Association on a riparian buffer project to begin in 2021.
- 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.
- Started an electronic newsletter to be published quarterly on environmental subjects. The first edition of Nature News was circulated in August.

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 2020 included:

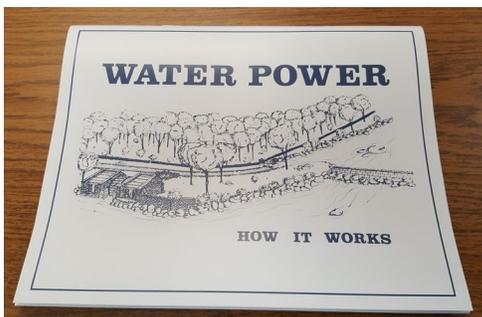
- The completion of Historian Jane Dorchester's research to update the Township's data for Chester County's Historic Resource Atlas Project, which catalogs historic sites, districts and structures. By March, the team had concluded field surveys to update existing Chester County

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. A wall map will be provided along with a spiral bound atlas.

Determining whether a resource is significant to the history of the Township, or beyond to the county, state or nation, entails establishing the resource's historical integrity. Integrity is defined as having a place or role in history, and the significance of that role. The reason all resources over 50 years old are cataloged even if they are of no significance is that a resource can gain significance over the course of time.

This project documents the architecture of the Township as well as its development history to provide insight into the variety of resources found here.

- Monitoring Spring Clean-up and on-going maintenance of the landscaping at the Mill by GreenWeavers Landscaping.
- Due to COVID, the Board postponed the hiring of two masons and four laborers to be placed on the payroll temporarily to repair the wall at the Charlestown Cemetery until 2021.
- Receipt of HARB application #1-2020 for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the Epstein farmhouse on Charlestown Road. The application was withdrawn 5/11/20.



- Purchase of 100 copies of Water Power Book by Robert A. Howard that details the use of water in mill operations similar to the Charlestown Mill.

Scheduled tours of the mill weren't possible during 2020 but numerous volunteers have indicated their interest in serving as guides once conditions allow tours to resume.

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 2020 included the following:

- The Commission elected Andre von Hoyer as Chairman and Michael Richter as Vice Chairman.
- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors held a joint bus tour on January 18th to review the results of planning efforts at various sites throughout the township.
- The Planning Commission provided input to the Manager for the Long-Term Financial Plan Committee on projects for 2021 – 2024.
- 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 to gauge the impact on the schools.
- The Planning Commission proposed revisions to the regulations for equestrian use in the Farm Residential zoning district with discussions continuing in 2021.
- The Planning Commission reviewed and commented on the draft Comprehensive Plan

submitted by Uwchlan Township, which is required by the Municipalities Planning Code for adjacent municipalities. Given the generally compatible uses (medium density in Uwchlan, already in place, and low density in Charlestown) they had no additional comments.

- The Planning Commission hosted a special presentation by Tom Comitta on the history of the Traditional Neighborhood Development design for Charlestown Township. The event was held at the Desmond Hotel for safe distancing, with the public invited to attend via Webex. Proposed amendments to the TND ordinance will result moving forward.
- Recommended an update to the fee-in-lieu fee schedule for recreational facilities to the Board of Supervisors, to be adopted by resolution in January 2021.
- A fee of \$24,325.00 was assessed for the Meyer subdivision under the current schedule since the application was approved prior to the update.
- Discussed next steps for municipal office planning.
- Reviewed Signal Plan Update for Yellow Springs Road and Phoenixville Pike with Traffic Planning & Design.
- 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 70-75% 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 2020.

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 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. The agreement was revised and re-adopted in April to include new member West Pikeland Township and a revised Comprehensive Plan to include West Pikeland was in process through the end of the year.

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.

Two 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. With the assistance of Traffic Planning and Design and TMAAC, a grant application was awarded by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVPRC) to conduct an Activation Study to focus on ownership, liability and maintenance of the proposed future trail. The proposed Devault Trail (for which a feasibility study was already undertaken in 2015, available on the Township website) would utilize a six-mile, dormant freight-rail line currently owned by Norfolk Southern to create a

pedestrian/bicycle connection between the Borough of Phoenixville to the north, and the office parks and corporate employment centers of Great Valley, located to the southwest.

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.

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 2020 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). A modified fall schedule was followed due to COVID.



At right: PMYC soccer game

- Production of 8 bronze bench markers at Charlestown Park were installed.
- 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 fifth season at the Park. The Group hosted their spring and fall 6-week Sunday sessions for over 100 children. The activities were adjusted to meet Covid-19 restrictions that allowed the children to use the perimeter of the PMYC fields.
- Working with the Great Valley Mountain Bike Club, which educates its ~50 members on proper trail use. This year the group began preparing their area at Brightside Farm Park and performed some trail clean up before putting the program on hold due to COVID.
- 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.

During the Yellow Phase of COVID-19, only distance-based practicing was permitted. After transitioning to the Green Phase, all teams were permitted to start up using the rules established for that phase. The Phoenixville Marion Youth Club did the following in 2020:

- Started youth drill camps.
- Ended tackle and gave their football equipment to a vendor to distribute.
- Established safety plans and procedures for fall flag football
- Saw improvement due to new field and grounds treatments
- Began in the Summer to share the restrooms with the PASC clubhouse
- Replaced gutters and fascia that had detached from the clubhouse.

The Phoenixville Area Soccer Club scheduled drill camps and finished field work. The Healthy Kids Running changed their run to running the field edges.

- The pavilions at the Park, while in very high demand, had to be closed to reservations this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- We were happy to keep the walking trail open, however, and it was extremely popular during the shut down.



At left: The trail at Charlestown Park in October 2020

- Photo by George Csete



MOVIES IN THE PARK

On August 15th at 7:30 PM, in partnership with the Technical College High School and with the help of local coordinator GoFox Events, Charlestown Parks and Recreation hosted its first drive-in movie!

250 Tickets were sold out in 2 hours for "The Princess Bride". A second movie event held on October 24th with three showings, 2 of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, and a matinee of Coco was scheduled due to the enthusiastic response.

Pictures submitted of movie-goers in their Halloween costumes, jack o lanterns, or art of Charlestown Township, were shown on the big screen before the movies! Food was provided by Mobile Mess Hall. Sponsors' logos and information were shown on-screen before each showing.

- Sponsoring a virtual 5-K Thanksgiving event.
- 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 that remained in effect through 2020.

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 2020.

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

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Parks & Recreation Board created an alternate way to involve the community for both their enjoyment and for the betterment of the township. Brightside Farm Coordinator Charles Buck first suggested using the day to do group community projects similar to those usually performed on Earth Day (canceled in April). Other suggestions followed and were incorporated into the plan.

Trails Committee

Parks & Rec Board member Frank Beyer was head of the trails committee. Members of the Board volunteered as stewards of selected trails to better oversee maintenance.

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.

Several trail workdays took place in the fall with volunteers meeting at the Pickering Trail / Pickering Dam Trail Head at Pike's Peak Road and Pickering Dam Road. Weeds were removed along with smaller fallen trees. The roadside parking area was repaired along with the footbridge area with the assistance of the Roadmaster and the trail was re-blazed.



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

Notice of the hikes were published in the newsletters and on the website. While the April 26th wildflower walk along the Pickering Trail had to be canceled due to the pandemic, a butterfly walk on August 29th at the Brightside Farm took place and was enjoyed by a record number of residents.

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 and McDevitt Trails. Tree of Heaven was removed along an area off Rees Road, with the HOA of Spring Oak helping offset the cost. Mowing service was provided for the Pickering and Pickering Dam Trails.



III. PLANNING

Subdivisions & Land Developments

The following subdivision/land development applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2020. Review comments, when requested, were prepared by the Township Planner, Engineer and Solicitor.

SK-01-2020 Frank Boyle – Sketch plan of two properties in the TND-3 zoning district, to demonstrate his request for consideration of a zoning amendment to allow apartments above retail in that district. An ordinance amendment was adopted on August 3, 2020.

SD #395-09 Spring Oak – Amended final plan to revise the lot configuration for 4 townhouse units on Lots 97-100. The easterly lot lines for lots 97, 98 and 99 will move 1.83 feet to the east to prevent Lot 97 from encroaching on the westerly side yard setback. The Planning Commission recommended approval on June 9, 2020 and the Supervisors approved the application on July 6, 2020.

SD #417-18 Meyer – Preliminary/final subdivision plan for a 6 lot subdivision of George Meyer's 23.8 acre property at Bodine and Foster Roads. The Planning Module was approved by the DEP in July, and the Supervisors approved the application on November 2nd once the NPDES and PennDOT permits were likewise approved.

SD #421-2020 Buntin-Stewart - the second application for a proposed lot line change for parcels zoned Farm Residential at 2045 and 2061 Union Hill Road. The Supervisors approved the minor subdivision plan on March 2, 2020.

SD #422-2020 PA Turnpike Commission – application for a maintenance facility off Valley Hill Road. The Zoning Officer determined that since this is an essential use, it was permitted at the proposed location on the opposite side of the turnpike from the existing facility, which will be demolished. The PTC offered a conservation easement of ~20 wooded acres south of the maintenance facility to be preserved by Natural Lands Trust, and they agreed to allow an existing trail that is partially on turnpike property. Proposed lighting was shielded to the extent possible while height fell under the Turnpike's uniform conformity requirements to insure worker safety. The Supervisors approved the application on December 7th.

SD #423-2020 Devault Foods - application for final plan approval for land development expansion and improvements following preliminary approval that had been granted in 2004 with annual extensions on the deadline to file the final application. With collaboration from Spring Oak residents, the township and the applicant, the final plan was approved on September 1st with an MOU indicating it would not be

recorded, but instead revised to a different configuration that was more acceptable to the nearby community. That plan will be submitted for review in 2021.

SD #424-2020 Haly – application for reconfiguration of lot lines for three parcels owned by Walter and Joann Haly. The plan was approved on October 5th.

Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2020:

CU-2019-3 James Bruder – Application to permit the construction of a private club for recreation at 4345 Whitehorse Road was withdrawn in January 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. The Supervisors approved the application on February 3, 2020.

CU-2020-1 Turning Pointe Dance Center – Application to permit an educational use in the TND Area 3 zoning district was approved August 3rd.

Traffic Planning

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

In 2019, TPD obtained a DVRPC grant for \$2,110,000 was obtained following placement of the Route 401 & Valley Hill Road intersection on the CMAQ list (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program). The next step was undertaken in 2020 for PennDOT to seek funding for the design phase. Construction is anticipated for 2024-2025.

A second project was coordinated with East Whiteland Township to pursue an ARLE grant to improve the intersection of Phoenixville Pike and Yellow Springs/Sidley Roads by adding left turn lanes on Phoenixville Pike in both directions and a right turn lane from Sidley onto Phoenixville Pike. Charlestown's supervisors adopted the resolution to apply for the grant on June 1st, and East Whiteland Township followed suit to meet the June 30th application deadline. Unfortunately, the project was not chosen for a grant this year. We will revisit the scope and grant elements to determine how to best proceed in obtaining funds, likely to include a re-submission for an ARLE grant in 2021.

The Township coordinated with PennDOT on its improvements to the Charlestown Road and Coldstream Road intersection by requesting that the new owners of the former Stables Bar move the

sign that has been located in the right of way for many decades. Charlestown Road will be widened to allow for a left turn lane onto Coldstream Road.

Other Planning Matters

Reviewed a proposed amendment to the Uwchlan Township Comprehensive Plan at that township's request. There were no changes to the plan relevant to Charlestown, therefore no comments were submitted.

A special meeting was held at the Desmond Hotel Amphitheater for the Planning Commission and Supervisors in September to review the history of the Traditional Neighborhood Zoning District Areas 1 - 5. Due to social distancing requirements, the meeting was made public via webex and only the board and commission members were in attendance. The background of how the area was planned, lessons learned, and future development were discussed. Take-aways from the meeting continued to be discussed through the end of the year, with proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to be considered in 2021.

Ordinances

The Planning Commission reviewed a request for a zoning ordinance change to allow apartments above retail in the TND Area 3 zoning district and recommended its approval on May 12th. The Supervisors adopted ordinance #212-20 on August 3rd.

The Planning Commission formed a subcommittee to develop a proposed ordinance amendment related to equestrian uses in the farm residential district. Planner Tom Comitta, Planning Commissioner Andy Motel, and HARB member/equestrian Melissa Dicranian worked with the Solicitor on the proposed amendments, which continued through the end of 2020. Revisions were needed because two years ago, the zoning ordinance was modified by removing "educational use" from the Farm Residential District. It was later determined that equestrian use should be reinstated as a use since it is agricultural by nature.

Planning Modules & Act 537 Plans

Aden, Timothy - 1/13/20 DEP denied exemption for 2336 Pikeland Rd, part of Three Ponds subdivision

Becker, Russell – Township and DEP approved a planning module application for 2130 Conestoga Rd.

Meyer, George – Township and DEP approved a planning module application for a five lot subdivision at 2227 Bodine Road

IV. ZONING HEARING BOARD

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

In 2020, Alternate member Larry Bull resigned due to his relocation out of the township. Greg Nesspor was appointed to fill the vacancy.

The following Zoning Hearing Board applications were considered in 2020:

2020-01 James Bruder: The applicant sought a variance to allow construction of a storage building at 4277 Whitehorse Road that exceeds 50% of the square footage of the principal commercial structure.

2020-02 Devault Foods: Substantive Validity Hearing to challenge the enforcement action taken by the zoning officer for violation of the noise ordinance.

V. LEGISLATION

Ordinances

The following ordinances were adopted in 2020:

211-2020 Ordinance Authorizing the Incurrence of Nonelectoral Debt

212-2020 Ordinance to Amend TND-3 to Allow Apartments above Office

Resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted in 2020:

955-20 Resolution to appoint Barbacane Thornton as auditors for 2019

956-20 Resolution appointing Michael Bowell to Zoning Hearing Board

957-20 Resolution appointing Frank Holleran to UCC Board

958-20 Resolution listing Township depositories for 2020

959-20 Resolution adopting credit card policy for 2020

960-20 Resolution Designating Emergency Service Providers

961-20 Resolution Adopting Pension Plan (update for IRS regulations)

962-20 Resolution for TCDI Grant Application for Devault Trail Activation Plan

963-20 Declaration of Local State of Emergency

964-20 Waiver of Late Fees for 2020 township real estate taxes if paid by 12/31/20

965-20 Solicitation Permit – Setting of Application Fee

966-20 Amendment to 2020 Budget

967-20 Resolution to Apply for ARLE Grant for Signal Improvements to Phoenixville Pike and Yellow Springs Road Intersection

968-20 Resolution to Amend Budget to Expend Additional Funds for Emergency Services

969-20 Resolution to Authorize Offer for Marcella Thomas Conservation Easement

970-20 Resolution to Authorize Offer for Baldwin Property – Bodine Road

971-20 Resolution to Expend Funds to Acquire Great Valley Nature Center

972-20 Resolution to re-adopt Emergency Operations Plan

973-20 Tax Levy Resolution

974-20 Resolution Adopting 2020 Budget

975-20 Resolution to Dispose of Records #11

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.

The Engineer coordinated with the Fire Marshal on two reports of spills, one at 3222 Phoenixville Pike and the other at 1 Fillippo Way, to ensure proper clean up and reporting was undertaken.

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

The DEP provided a review letter for years 2018 and 2019, indicating that they will require more specific, measurable goals for the education portion of the program. The Manager revised the Stormwater Management Plan to provide this information for Minimum Control Measures 1, 2 & 6, which are the public education and outreach program, public involvement and participation program, and pollution prevention and good housekeeping.

The Township Engineer was responsible for upgrades to the Plan for Minimum Control Measures 3, 4 & 5, which include the illicit discharge detection and elimination plan, construction site stormwater management control, and post-construction stormwater management in new or re-development.

The Township was made aware that in the future it may be called upon to fund additional compliance measures for the next MS-4 period. Valley Creek in the southern portion of Charlestown Township has tested high in silt content and the DEP is requiring a 10% reduction effort.

A stormwater management agreement was approved for work related to extension additions at 315 Buckwalter Road.

Quarry Activities

The Engineer monitored Independence Construction Materials blasting reports.

Road Improvement Project

The Engineer oversaw Improvements to selected Township roads including the roads in Charlestown Hunt (Charlestown Hunt Drive, Taconic Drive, Windy Hollow Drive, Tipperary Drive, Beaufort Drive) and Raven Hill Road. Advanced Pavement Group (formerly Dan Malloy paving) was the contractor for the project.

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) Maintenance Facility Improvement Plan

The PTC underwent planning for a major upgrade to its Devault Maintenance Facility. The Turnpike Commission coordinated with the Engineer on stormwater plans. Mr. Wright reviewed the stormwater management calculations which contained supporting plans and documents as well as showing the proposed facility layout. This review was done in conjunction with the Land Development application submitted by the PTC.



VII. BUILDING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

A summary of building permit activity in 2020 is provided below:

	NO. OF PERMITS	CONSTRUCTION COST
COMMERCIAL: ADDITION	1	157,012
COMMERCIAL: ALTERATIONS/FIT-OUT	8	4,389,922
COMMERCIAL: CELL TOWERS & ANTENNAS	2	52,000
COMMERCIAL: ELECTRICAL	1	90,300
COMMERCIAL: SIGN	1	6,000
COMMERCIAL: FIRE SUPPRESSION	2	71,580
RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS	3	1,091,600
RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS	6	1,719,950
RESIDENTIAL: BARN	2	251,800
RESIDENTIAL: BASEMENTS/BASEMENT EGRESS	18	459,196
RESIDENTIAL: BATHROOM	5	100,165
RESIDENTIAL: BREEZEWAY/WALKWAY	1	32,000
RESIDENTIAL: DECKS	27	744,933
RESIDENTIAL: DEMOLITION	4	60,200
RESIDENTIAL: ELECTRICAL & GENERATORS	53	489,185
RESIDENTIAL: FENCE	13	60,370

RESIDENTIAL: GARAGE	7	755,820
RESIDENTIAL: GREENHOUSE	1	3,467
RESIDENTIAL: GUEST HOUSE	1	200,000
RESIDENTIAL: HOT TUB	2	3,400
RESIDENTIAL: HVAC	6	96,894
RESIDENTIAL: PATIOS	7	182,060
RESIDENTIAL: POOLS	7	594,800
RESIDENTIAL: ROOFS	38	996,510
RESIDENTIAL: SHEDS	2	8,500
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY HOME	12	5,042,268
RESIDENTIAL: SOLAR HEATING SYSTEM	3	23,462
RESIDENTIAL: STUCCO & VENEERS	6	448,000
RESIDENTIAL: STONE WALL	1	28,225
RESIDENTIAL: TOWNHOUSE	14	3,484,113
TOTALS:	203	\$22,183,245



We were sad to announce the loss of our Building Code Official, Anthony Merklinger, who passed away on September 14th. Anthony had provided inspection services for Charlestown since 2007, and by all accounts had a remarkable breadth of knowledge related to his 19 certifications.

Anthony loved riding 4-wheelers, motorcycles, hunting, and fishing. He proudly served in the U.S. Air Force and was the owner/operator of Cornerstone Inspection Services, LLC.

Anthony is survived by a son and three daughters.

Following Mr. Merklinger's medical leave in July, the Board appointed an interim inspector, Chris Madara, to continue with inspections. In September, the Township engaged the services of Keystone Municipal Services for plan reviews and inspections going forward.

Due to two lengthy power outages that affected the majority of township residents in 2020, applications for generators were received at 4 times the volume of any previous year, creating issues that hadn't previously been of concern for noise and visual impact in the more condensed zoning districts. The supervisors reviewed the existing guidelines and proposed a new stand-alone ordinance to be considered for adoption on January 4, 2021 regulating the installation of standby generators and transfer switches, both of which require an electrical permit.

VIII. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Brightside Farm Park –The farmhouse lease with the current renters was renewed for an additional year with a \$100.00 increase in rent now that various scheduled improvements to the house have been completed, including bathroom renovations, roof and siding replacement, and repairs to outside steps and sidewalk.

All sixty garden plots were leased at the community gardens, which continue to be very popular with our residents to the extent that an expansion is being discussed for 2021. The Gardeners' group has a closed Facebook page for those interested in sharing garden related information.

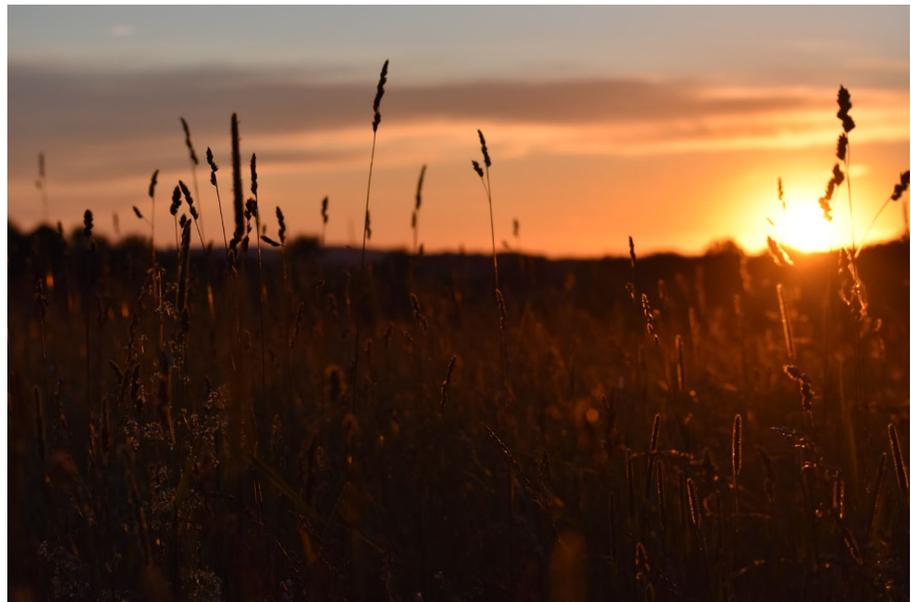
Resident and gardener Tom Kerrigan spent considerable time as a volunteer repairing the garden fencing.



The walking trail at Brightside Park continues to be very popular.

Resident Julie Amador sent a series of animals, birds, and insect photos she took during her many visits to the park.

She kindly granted the Township permission to use them in its publications, like the ones displayed at left and below.



Charlestown Park

Education on the spotted lanternfly continued in 2020 as the 3rd year the invasive species has been a problem in the area.



Due to COVID-19, most activities at the Park were canceled or modified to allow some uses to continue. The Park's walking trail remained extremely popular with area visitors. (photo by G. Csete)

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 29 additional acres of open space through a conservation easement purchased from Bob and Denise Davis (17.1), and donated by Wendy McLean

(7), and Jacob and Linda Merriwether (4.6). All three were placed with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

Charlestown, jointly with East Whiteland Township continues to work toward an acquisition of the 142 acre “Balderson” Tract owned by Spring Ridge Management. A \$540,537 grant was awarded from the DCNR for the project, located across from the Great Valley High School. The Charlestown section borders Charlestown Oaks. 57 acres are in Charlestown.

The PA Turnpike Commission offered a 20 acre easement to the Township in lieu of providing for recreation as required by the Subdivision & Land Development ordinance to satisfy the requirement for a fee-in-lieu of that provision, and as an exchange for various waivers associated with their land development plan to expand their maintenance facility. An existing trail on the turnpike property will remain in place.

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.

Volunteers from the Parks & Rec Board served as trail stewards for the various trails and participated in general clean up, addition of blazing, removal of invasives and thick vegetation as needed.



*Above: Historic Marker leading to the Pickering Dam Trail
- photo by G. Csete*

The Devault Rail to Trail Project



In association with TMAAC, the Township submitted a TCDI grant application for a feasibility study to address the questions of ownership, maintenance and liability of the potential Devault Trail, which proposes to acquire the rail bed currently owned by Norfolk Southern for conversion into a walking/bike/equestrian trail. The grant was approved in December.

At left: The trestle bridge over Route 29 (State Road) is currently owned by Norfolk Southern and would be made part of the Devault Trail.

The supervisors appointed Susan Bednar, Michael Churchill, and Chris Lawrence to the Project Steering Committee for the Devault Trail Study to work with TMAAC.

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 2020 were undertaken as follows: Resurfacing of Raven Hill Road, and roads in Charlestown Hunt including Charlestown Hunt Drive, Beaufort Court, Taconic Drive, Tipperary Drive, and Windy Hollow Drive.

Advanced Paving Company (formerly Dan Malloy Paving) was awarded the contract for the road improvement project. The Roadmaster accommodated various requests from several residents and addressed their concerns while paving work was underway.

The Annual Road Maintenance contract was awarded to Melchiorre Construction Co. Additional Improvements in 2020 performed included:

- Snow & Ice Removal throughout winter season – minimal in 2020.
- Improvement of stormwater issues on Bodine Road, Buckwalter Road, Foster Road, Ridgewood Road, Green Lane Road
- Repair of curbing on Aldham Road and Union Hill Road
- Repair and replacement of inlets in the Charlestown Hunt community, Whitehorse at Charlestown development, Spring Meadow Farm Lane, Three Ponds, and Jamie Lane

Salt was purchased from Eastern Salt Company via the Co-Stars program 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 Blackberry Lane, Bodine Road, Buckwalter Road, Crestview Road, Maryhill Road, Somerset Lane, and in Charlestown Park.

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 assisted PennDOT in addressing bamboo concerns at Swiss Pines, and the request to the new owners for re-placement of the sign at the former Stables Bar, which was in the road right of way. The Valley Forge Sewer Authority was also contacted with regard to mapping manholes in the area of Charlestown and Coldstream Roads in preparation for PennDOT's road resurfacing project.

The Roadmaster made arrangements through Armour & Sons for replacement of a township-owned utility pole along Academic Way that was cracked during a late November storm.

Long Fence Co. was called in for guardrail repair along Aldham Rd and Sidley Hill Rd.

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.

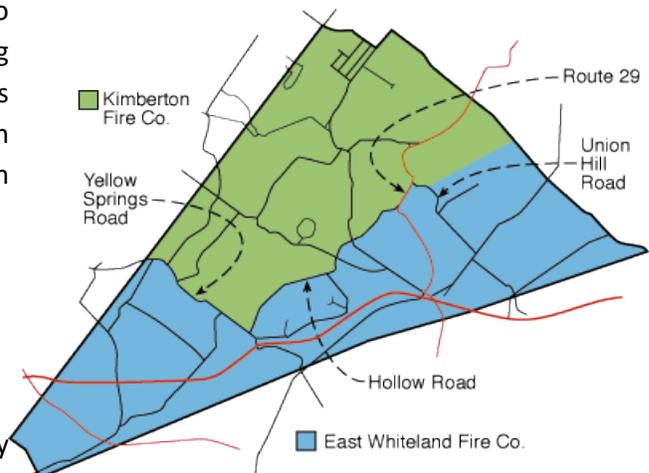
The 3-year Contract with Armour & Sons for signal service maintenance was extended for an additional year to end February 2022.

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 and subscribers received a weekly update of new posts. Special notices and items of interest were emailed to subscribers as needed. The website was designed to be more easily accessed by a wider variety of devices, and the web designer continued to add to the 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 with Captain Bradley J. Getz, station commander.
- **Fire Companies and Ambulance Services:** Charlestown Township is served by two fire departments, the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association, the Kimberton Fire Company (fire) 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.

Since our providers were unable to hold their various fundraising events due to the pandemic, the Township encouraged its residents and businesses to make special donations to its EMS providers to support them during this challenging crisis. The Township Supervisors passed a vote to donate an additional \$5,000 to each of its 4 providers. In addition, the township passed a resolution on June 1st amending the budget to provide an additional \$60,000 to the Kimberton Fire Company to make up for our portion of the lost profits from the annual fair, which was canceled due to Covid-19.

Charlestown holds two seats on the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association board, held in 2020 by Supervisor Kevin Kuhn, who has served on the board for 8 years. Resident Frank Beyer was newly appointed in 2020. 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. An additional \$100,000 was donated to Kimberton for new equipment in 2020.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** Charlestown re-adopted its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in November 2020. 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.

Animal Control: Charlestown is in the 2nd year of its 5 year 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 one application for a fireworks display.
- **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.
- **Townwatch:** The Fire Marshal continued to support the efforts of the Spring Oak and Whitehorse at Charlestown developments' Townwatch programs.

Derecho Storm June 3rd

In addition to COVID 19, a rare weather phenomenon occurred on June 3rd termed a Derecho, sometimes referred to as an inland hurricane. Over 90% of the homes and businesses in the Township lost power and many waited 1-4 days for it to be restored. Most of this was due to fallen trees on wires as it was estimated that hundreds of trees were lost. The outage at the Township Office lasted for 3 days during which administration worked from home to stay in contact with residents reporting issues relating to the storm. EOC Coordinator Tim Hubbard helped place more vulnerable areas, such as those blocked in by a fallen tree with no alternate egress, on the County Emergency Services list to expedite with PECO.

Hurricane Isiais July

Challenges continued into July, when the remains of Hurricane Isiais came to Charlestown and caused extensive tree damage and more power outages for our residents, once again with some out of service for as long as 4 days. The township office was affected as well. The staff followed the same plan

carried out in June, with administration working from home, and the Roadmaster and EOC coordinator assisting residents and working to oversee restoration of the widespread damage caused by the storm.

Christmas Day Outage

Heavy rains starting on Christmas Eve and totaling over 5" once again caused extensive power outages in many township communities. Many residences were out for most of the day. For a smaller group of homes, it was a multi-day outage.

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 2020. 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 2020.
- **Annual Recycling Meeting:** The Manager attended County's annual recycling meeting virtually in September. 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 2020.
- **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.

XI 2020 BUDGET & AUDITING

Auditing

The Board of Supervisors appointed Barbacane, Thornton & Company, LLP to perform the Annual Audit for 2019. 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 2020 budget at its December 2019 meeting. The 2020 budget consisted of three separate funds: General, Liquid Fuels, and Capital Projects. All tax rates remained the same as in 2020.

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 2020 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 2020 budget, the Supervisors restricted the receipts from the general earned income tax to open space acquisition, historic preservation, and property improvements.

The **General Fund Capital Fund** is funded from real estate taxes and the only expenditures in 2020 were for road improvements.

Budget amendments were adopted by Resolution at the May 4th Supervisors' meeting.

The **Long Term Financial Plan** first developed in 2016 was revised for 2020-2024. Supervisors Frank Piliero and Charlie Philips, and Planning Commissioner Bill Westhafer served on the Committee along with the Manager. The committee was consulted in August and updated the five year plan as a guide for internal use. It was used as one of the tools in preparing the 2021 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 July, the Township redeemed 12 month certificates in the CDARS program with First Resources Bank and reinvested in new CDARS instruments along with additional idle funds that had been in the PLGIT Prime Account.

In February, Supervisor Frank Piliero and the Township Manager met with Mike Wolf of Boenning and Scattergood to begin the process of refinancing the 2015 Bond Series to obtain lower interest rates with the same payment schedule. After the Township repeated its achievement of obtaining a AA Rating

from Standard and Poors, the bonds were refinanced and will save over \$400,000 over their remaining life.

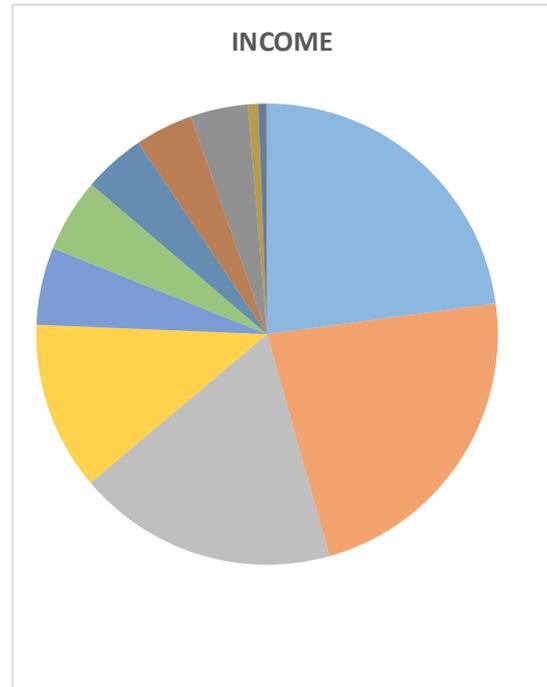
The Pension Plan was re-adopted in February to satisfy new IRS requirements. The parameters for the plan were not changed.

Beginning in January 2020, the Township used ADP payroll services for the handling of bi-weekly payroll.

2020 Revenue & Expenditures – All Funds

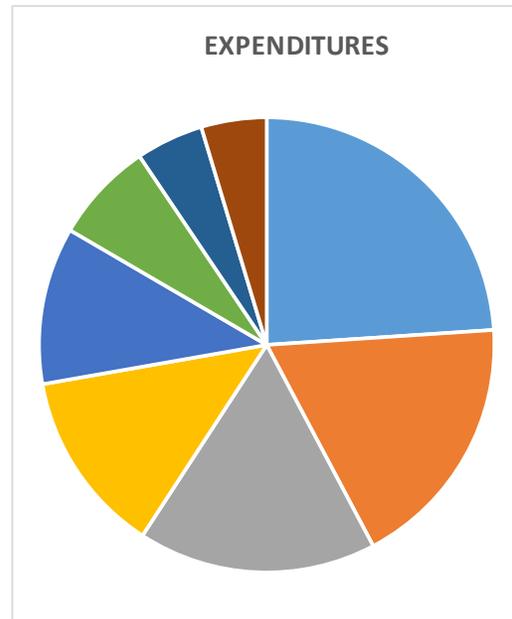
All Funds Income 2020

Earned Income Tax	4,268,663	65.2%
Real Estate Tax	521,732	8.0%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	519,294	7.9%
Permit Fees	415,847	6.3%
State Revenues & Grants	269,135	4.1%
Cable Franchises	123,785	1.9%
Local Services Tax	117,756	1.8%
Dividends	99,098	1.5%
Application & Review Fees	92,521	1.4%
Donation-Townwatch	92,022	1.4%
County Revenues & Grants	16,603	0.25%
Rents & Fees	12,525	0.2%
Fines & Forfeits	1,110	0.0%
Total:	6,550,091	100%



All Funds Expenditures 2020

Bonds & Notes	855,422	20.6%
Public Safety	653,587	15.7%
Road Maint & Improvement	604,807	14.5%
Easements & Acquisitions	466,108	11.2%
Parks & Recreation	399,005	9.6%
Administration	255,588	6.1%
Permit Review & Inspection	171,136	4.1%
Engineering	165,834	4.0%
Legal	132,107	3.2%
Charge to Applicants	117,686	2.8%
Zoning	107,715	2.6%
Insurance	67,257	1.6%
Planning	62,197	1.5%
Historical Resources	28,827	0.7%
Environment and Open Sp	27,997	0.7%
Internet & Website	22,945	0.6%
Municipal Office	19,174	0.5%
Recycling & Waste Mgmt	1,105	0.0%
Total:	4,158,497	100%



XII MISCELLANEOUS

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 by the extended deadline of October 31st. An article was written for the Summer Newsletter outlining the importance of the census, and how the data is used.

Charlestown Townwatch

President Bob Wert and Treasurer Emory Todd of Charlestown Townwatch turned over \$91,990.03 in unused funds from the now inactive Townwatch to the Township for general use. The original donations to Townwatch came from the Township and private sources, mostly residents.

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.

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.

Devault 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.

Donations

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

Earth Day

In the fall, rather than our normal Charlestown Day celebration that not possible due to COVID-19, we called upon our residents to take part in a belated socially-distanced Earth Day cleanup. We asked residents to clean up along the edges of their property or in parks, streams and trails nearby. We invited individuals, groups and families to post a picture of the results to the Charlestown Parks Facebook page with the hashtag #TrashTag!

Great Valley Nature Center



- photo by Carol Armstrong

At their October 5th meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to move forward with plans to secure the Great Valley Nature Center property since the Board of Directors of the Nature Center dissolved its organization in 2017.

This will be a multi-step transaction in coordination with The French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust (F&PCCT) and Phoenixville Federal Bank & Trust, which is controlling the property since the Nature Center defaulted on their loan.

Initially the F&PCCT will take over the bank's position since they hold a deed restriction on the property. The Trust will lift the restriction requiring the property be used only as an educational facility. The next step is for the Township to purchase the property from the Trust. The Trust will use those funds to renovate and fit-out the barn for their corporate offices under a long term lease arrangement.

This will be a long term project and the intent will be to eventually place a conservation easement on the property, secure a tenant/caretaker for the house, and expand the nature trails on the property to restore the public's enjoyment of this unique gem.

Memorial Day Ceremony

The Charlestown Historical Society's annual ceremony 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 was unfortunately canceled for 2020 due to COVID. The Society hopes to continue its tradition in 2021.

Office Facility

In 2019, the Board put the project on hold for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile the current office lease is in place until Oct. 31, 2022.

Pipeline Issues

While there is no proposed construction on the pipeline in Charlestown, the Environmental Advisory Committee continued to monitor 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. An EAC member discovered that the Buckeye Pipeline had an exposed pipe in Pickering Creek, and reported it to the Engineer on April 23rd.

The Fire Marshal attended Chester County Pipeline Safety Task Force meetings throughout the year.

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. The Township's provider in the past, Scottsdale Insurance, discontinued its offerings so a full request for proposals was issued to obtain the best service and pricing.

Anthony Merklinger met with a Labor and Industry auditor to review inspection procedures for the five year period from 2015-2019 and received a report detailing findings on 2 of 3 selected projects.

Scanning Services and Records Retention

In 2019, the Township began an aggressive schedule for scanning documents using a cloud-based document management program using Treeno Software that continued into 2020. Township staff received training in three parts on use of the system. Commercial and residential building permits dating back to the year 1980 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.

An extensive reorganization of all files in the township office was conducted in conjunction with the scanning and retention efforts.

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. Targeted reminders began in August 2020, since 2020 was the first year that data was available to identify those properties not in compliance with the ordinance to pump systems every three years. Newsletter and website articles were produced to help make everyone aware of the requirement.

Spring Oak and Devault Foods Issues

The owners/managers of Devault Foods worked with the Township supervisors and zoning officer to resolve numerous issues, including noise, odor, and traffic, brought to the Board's attention by residents of Spring Oak. In January, a sound study was done to determine decibel levels at Spring Oak, Devault Lane was converted to one way traffic to decrease truck traffic, and special filters were installed at the processing plant to mitigate odor complaints. A more permanent sound device was installed for continuous monitoring in June that was extended into 2021.

Through the willingness of Devault Foods to address the concerns brought to them, by September, when the final land development plan for Devault Foods was approved, many changes were made that will reduce noise, odor and lighting impacts on the Spring Oak neighborhood. This was in conjunction with a collaborative effort between the Township and the Applicant to re-design the plan following approval and submit an amendment that was more sensitive to the wishes of Spring Oak residents.

Devault Foods was sold to Beyond Meat in early November, and Township officials met with their representatives shortly after to discuss ongoing mitigation of sound, odor, and lighting concerns. Noise and odor complaints increased toward the end of 2020 and efforts are underway to work with the new owners to address them going forward.

Voters Services

The Township provided details and links to information on how to apply for mail-in and absentee ballots as well as how to register to vote, in order to encourage residents to participate in the elections of 2020.

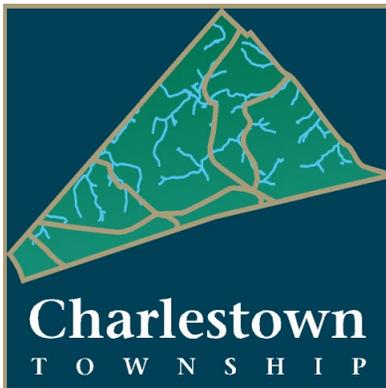


Government and Professional Affiliations

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.



CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP

P.O. BOX 507

DEVAULT, PA 19432

(610) 240-0326