

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors:

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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 2021. 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 the Ice Dam Ruins

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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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

School District: 1,081 students from Charlestown were enrolled in the Great Valley School District's schools, out of their total enrollment of approximately 4,574. 225 Charlestown students attended schools outside the GVSD.

Demographics (2020 Census):

Population: 6,001
Pop. Density: 545 per square mile
Households: 2,124

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 2021 following a successful transition to their services in January 2013.

The Township office staff, consisting of 2 individuals, handled approximately 2,636 phone calls and received 943 visitors in 2021. An estimated 16,690 emails (not including spam) were received, and 11,376 were sent. 71 right to know requests were filed and the requested documents were all provided within the required deadlines. Notary services were provided for 48 documents. 794 PA One Call tickets were processed.

The following individuals comprised the Township Staff for 2021:

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
Cheryl Jorgensen, Parks Assistant

The following consultants were appointed or re-appointed for 2021:

Auditor	Barbacane, Thornton & Co.
Building Code Official (BCO)	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., superceded by Wendy McLean, Esq. 4/19/21
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 2021:

Alix Coleman, Brightside Farm Park Manager
Charles Buck, Brightside Community Garden Coordinator
Dan Walker, Environmental Advisory Committee
Veda Maany, Environmental Advisory Committee
Sharon Richardson, Environmental Advisory Committee
Nancy Long, Historical Commission/HARB for historic district resident member
Ashlee Beyer, Parks & Recreation Board
Dan Mount, Parks & Recreation Board
Stephanie Robinson, Parks & Recreation Board
Hugh Willig, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Wendy Graham, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission as alternate
Michael Churchill, Planning Commission
Michael Richter, Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals
Sam Cupp - 6 member Valley Forge Sewer Authority Board
John Horstmann, Vacancy Board
Jean Bomm, Zoning Hearing Board

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 performed the following tasks in 2021:

- 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.
- Enhanced the EAC webpage on the Township website to add their presentations and other resources. Revised the mission statement, and drafted by-laws.
- Researched pesticide ordinances
- Promoted the Penn State Extension's "Streams in your Backyard" series of 5 webinars in February-March.
- Sought volunteers for trail work, invasive clean-outs, and other activities. Carol Armstrong performed extensive Johnson Weed removal at Brightside in October.
- Surveyed the previously installed plants and trees at the Brightside riparian buffer area and treated Ailanthus trees to help eliminate the habitat for Spotted Lanternfly. The forested buffer helps protect the unnamed tributary of Pigeon Run, a tributary of Pickering Creek, that flows out of the ground in Brightside Farm Park. Wildflowers were planted along the buffer and a sign was designed to be installed in 2022 crediting the state and county's conservation grant programs that provided project funding.
- Collected water samples measuring nutrients, ions, cations, and oxygen, and suspended solids on a monthly basis for the Project Impact Assessment study by Drexel University Academy of Natural Sciences, Stroud Water Research Center, and Green Valleys Watershed Association. Chemical and flow sampling will provide baseline data to study the impact of the riparian buffers that were installed from 2019 to 2020.
- Applied for two grants, one from the National Fish and Wildlife federation grant as well as a Cold Water heritage grant, to help restore a riparian buffer in the open space at the Deerfield community. Almost 300 trees and shrubs were planted on the headwaters of Pigeon Run in the conserved common space of the development with the partnership of the Deerfield Housing Association. The trees and labor were donated. Initial planting of the 140 trees acquired through the Green Valley Watershed Association and PA Audubon Society took place in May and June. Additional trees and shrubs were obtained from the Chester County Conservation District.

The Pigeon Run is a first order tributary of Pickering Creek and provides drinking water to local communities. The EAC's goals were to cool the stream to improve it for fish and other aquatic life. In 2021, the EAC battled the vines and other tall meadow plants to maintain the plantings in good shape, with a resulting high survival rate.

Below: Photos by Carol Armstrong: The Riparian Buffer at Deerfield



BEFORE: September 3, 2020



AFTER: June 10, 2021

- Promoted certification programs including the Watershed Friendly Property, Pollinator, and Master Gardeners.
- Reviewed green energy options for the Township's electric service and presented them to the Board on July 6th. There were two PA based providers for solar and wind energy. The cost of switching to the Energy Co-Op - PA is \$3,000 more a year (at .1190 per kilowatt-hour) however, the Board asked for more information as it requires they become shareholders, which may not be legal. The Township reverted to PECO Energy after the Direct Energy contract had concluded.
- Contributed newsletter articles as part of the Environmental Education Series for residents, including articles on light pollution, project wingspan, energy efficiency, pollinators, the Deerfield pasture protection project, trails & littering, and recycling.
- Continued to publish 4 editions of their electronic newsletter on environmental subjects, Nature News.
- The EAC hosted three community education programs (one virtual, two live) as part of its education series, including a webinar by Meg Solomon on recycling & composting entitled "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Getting Started", "Look Who's Coming to Dinner"(creating a garden for pollinators) by Sharon Richardson, and "Streams of Charlestown: Quality, Wildlife, and Fishing" in by Pete Goodman.
- Provided educational outreach tables at Charlestown Day and Election Day. Conducted Township cleanups for Earth Day.
- Consulted with Parks & Recreation Board on fertilizer and herbicide recommendations for scope of work when renewing the Township landscaping contract.

- Consulted with Township residents by request on issues of individual concern regarding stormwater effects on their properties, options for removal of ailanthus trees on private property, and dissemination of information on 5G cellular systems.
- Consulted with project manager regarding sound walls for our Township for the PA Turnpike Commission expansion construction. Sound walls are not planned by the PTC except for an area adjacent to Charlestown Oaks, because of the relatively low population density, but the EAC is speaking with concerned citizens as inquiries arise.
- Attended Chester County Solid Waste Authority's annual Recycling meeting and Resource Recycling conference (virtually) in Harrisburg to gather helpful resources.
- Worked with local Girl Scout Troop leader regarding the troop's interest in planting native plants in Charlestown Park for a Girl Scout badge.
- Researched ordinances to regulate pesticides in municipalities, for consideration in drafting an ordinance for Charlestown.
- Discussed new projects for 2022: Identifying and prioritizing areas in the Township for consideration of riparian buffer restoration and sought solutions for Pickering Stream bank erosion at the Ice Dam.

In April, the Supervisors amended the EAC ordinance to provide for two alternate members.

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 2021 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. As a result of the project, the Historical Commission began work on amendments to the Historical Resource Ordinance, which will continue into 2022.

- Review of HARB application #2-2021 leading to the Supervisors' approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of an addition on a historic structure at 69 Hillsover Lane.
- 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 2022.

Revolutionary War veterans and soldiers who served in the War of 1812, along with local residents (up to 1864) were buried here.



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.

Wendy Graham's resignation from the Planning Commission after 21 years of service was reluctantly accepted by the Supervisors after she relocated from the Township. Residency is required for Planning Commission members. She also served on the Historical Commission/HARB for 14 years and had 2 terms as Judge of Elections.

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 2021 included the following:

- The Commission elected Andre von Hoyer as Chairman and Michael Richter as Vice Chairman.
- The Planning Commission provided input to the Manager for the Long-Term Financial Plan Committee on projects for 2022 – 2025.
- Planning Commission member Wendy Graham, along with the Township Manager, attended quarterly meetings with 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. They learned that the School District may have old files belonging to the Township. Arrangements will be made in 2022 to go through them.
- The Planning Commission recommended revisions to the regulations for equestrian use in the Farm Residential zoning district. The amended ordinance was adopted on April 5th.
- The Planning Commission reviewed wind and solar energy regulations and determined no changes were needed at the present time.
- They reviewed the open space elements for the TND districts and developed a chart of minimum numbers of various types of open space including a plaza, green/square, mini-park/plaza or neighborhood park.
- The Planning Commission reviewed and commented on the draft Regional Comprehensive Plan, which was amended following West Pikeland Township joining the group.
- They met with members of the County Planning Commission in July to review the Township's ordinances relative to natural resources including steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands, riparian buffers, and flood plains with recommendations for improvements they are continuing to review into 2022 in order to propose amendments for the Board's consideration.
- They reviewed a zoning amendment proposed by Malvern General Warren Owner LLC to include

Laboratory Use in the NC-2 Zoning District and recommended adoption at their December 14th meeting.

- 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 nearly completed. 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.

In 2021, the DRC reviewed a proposed parking lot design to expand parking at General Warren Village, primarily due to demand from P.J. Whelihan's, which was approved by the Board on Sept. 7th.

The DRC continued to monitor the plan and the design guidelines for Devault Village at Spring Oak after the final plan was approved and site work began in late 2021. Revised architectural drawings were approved on December 7th following the DRC's review to ensure compliance with impervious surface coverage restrictions. The final design manual was reviewed and recommended, with approval expected from the Supervisors in early 2022.

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 2021.

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 PRPC asked for a volunteer from each Township for its trail committee, and Planning Commissioner Dan Walker came forward to serve in this capacity.

Phoenixville Region Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

The region includes Phoenixville Borough and Upper Providence, West Vincent, East Pikeland, Schuylkill and Charlestown Townships. The Plan consists of evaluation of existing conditions for walking, biking, and mass transit, and developed goals and recommendations. The plan outlines 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. In 2021, the Township continued to work with 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 Devault Trail (for which a feasibility study was already undertaken in 2015) would utilize a six-mile, dormant freight rail line currently owned by Norfolk South-

ern to create a pedestrian/bicycle connection between 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.

Following his relocation to Maine, Chris Lawrence stepped down as Chairman and Dan Mount was elected in his place for the remainder of 2021. Mr. Lawrence was an integral part of the Board and guided the members to a smooth transition, with the many members stepping up to continue their efforts.

The Parks and Recreation Board's activities in 2021 included:

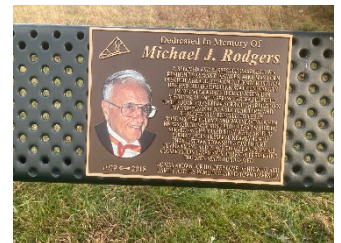
- Overseeing park, field use and road event permits for various individuals and groups, including numerous special events, various scout events, and church, company, and school picnics. 285 reservations were made for the pavilions in 2021.
- Coordinating with the PMYC (580 children enrolled) and



Above: The large pavilion at Charlestown Park

the PASC (1,000 enrolled). A modified spring schedule was followed due to COVID.

- Discussed the PASC's potential expansion and acquisition of fields adjacent to Charlestown Park.
- Working with Eagle Scout Candidate Larisa Greway on her project to install a giant checkerboard/chess game at Charlestown Park.
- Installing a bronze memorial marker at Brightside Farm Park in memory of former Supervisor Michael Rodgers. A ceremony with family was postponed due to COVID.
- Updating Facebook postings to highlight special events and keeping the public informed of both existing facilities and improvements planned or underway.
- Focusing on various maintenance items at Charlestown Park, including replacement of the roof on the PASC shed and the roof, gutters with leaf guards, garage door and windows on the PMYC clubhouse, as well as repairs to the Wetlands Overlook.





- Working with the Healthy Kids Running Group for their sixth 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 prepared their area at Brightside Farm Park and performed some trail clean up before starting their program for the season.
- Overseeing tree replacement needs with landscape architect Ed Theurkauf at Charlestown Park.
- Coordinating with Cheryl Speaker of the Phoenixville Recreation Department on a Summer Camp at Charlestown Township Park. Pavilions were reserved to accommodate about 25 people (20 students, 5 staff) daily from June 21 to July 30th, 9 am to 3 pm. The program was successful and the organization was very cooperative with keeping the restrooms tidy and trash removed at the end of each day.
- 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.
- Proposing an amendment to the Park Rules to include “No smoking or tobacco use” as part of the Young Lungs at Play program, which was adopted on April 5, 2021.

The pavilions at the Park, were in very high demand this year after the COVID vaccine became widely available and people enjoyed the safer, outdoor venue.



- Photo by George Csete

- Coordinated with the EAC on Weed Warrior/invasive species management on various Township properties.

- Working with planner Ed Theurkauf on a plan for the future Jenkins Park, which consists of 16 acres along Valley Hill Road. Following discussions with neighbors and a presentation at the November 1st Board of Supervisors meeting, they will pursue a modest approach to development to begin with a walking trail, small natural-themed playground, and minimum parking area to create an amenity for the surrounding residents rather than a more widespread attraction.

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 2021.

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.

The Authority owns and operates 90 miles of collection line, 9 pump stations and a regional treatment plant, serving approximately 22,000 customers in nine Chester County municipalities: Charlestown Township, East Pikeland Township, Schuylkill Township, Easttown Township, East Whiteland Township, Malvern Borough, Tredyffrin Township and Willistown Township. Recently, the area was extended to include a portion of West Vincent Township.

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 Public Safety & Property Management Coordinator is named as an Assistant Zoning Officer and is also authorized for enforcement.

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.

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. Remnants of Hurricane Ida removed parts of the Pickering Trail, eroded around bridge supports, or removed them, and left debris around and on trail bridges. The Engineer provided a design plan to replace the bridge including the ramp to the bridge. Repairs will continue into 2022.

All trails were visited and many of the repairs were undertaken by volunteer groups. The McDevitt trail was reblazed. A group of Boy Scouts beautified the berm between the Park and the University and planted some native species. Trail signs were added or replaced as needed.

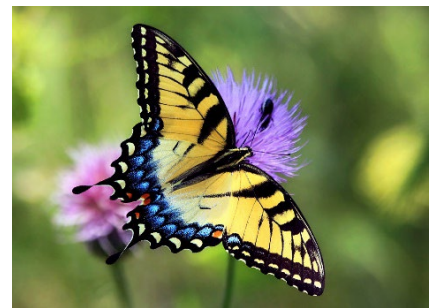
Trail Walks were scheduled and conducted in the Spring and Fall thanks to coordinator Esther Underhill.



Notice of the hikes were published in the newsletters and on the website, including the April 24th wildflower walk along the Pickering Trail. With several leaders available, the group was able to safely distance the walkers for one of the first Township sponsored post-COVID activities of the year.

A butterfly walk on August 29 at the Brightside Farm also took place and was enjoyed by a record number of residents. Volunteer Esther Underhill has been hosting these walks for many years.

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.



Professional tree removal services were needed for fallen trees on the various trails, including the Horse-Shoe Trail, Pickering Dam and McDevitt Trails. 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 2021. Review comments, when requested, were prepared by the Township Planner, Engineer and Solicitor.

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

SK-02-2021 Boyle, Frank – Sketch plan depicting apartments above retail in TND-3

SK-03-2021 Hallett, Nancy – Sketch plan proposing lot line change between two parcels at 4034 Tinkerhill Road in order to get the septic field entirely on the parcel that contains an existing house. The second parcel is vacant except for the portion of the septic field.

SK-04-2021 Davison, Bill - proposed flex building at 3250 Phoenixville Pike, located in the Neighborhood Commercial zoning district. Any proposed development would require variances from the minimum lot area, depth of front, side, and rear yards.

SD-416-2018 GV Commons Lot One – expanded parking at General Warren Village, primarily due to demand from P.J. Whelihans, was approved on Sept. 7th.

SD #423-20 Beyond Meat – Revised Final plan for plant expansion was under review by the Planning Commission in the Spring but put on hold by the applicant until their zoning appeal hearings are concluded in 2022.

SD #425-21 Frank Boyle/SMF Properties – Lot combination plan for 1001 & 1003 Yellow Springs Road, which had an existing twin building straddling the two lots. The plan was approved by the Supervisors on April 5th.

SD #426-21 Frank Boyle/SMF Properties – Land development plan for 1028 Yellow Springs Road conversion of a garage into an office building with apartment above. Recommendation for approval was made Dec. 14th following clarification for the parking plan.

SD #427-21 Martellucci – Minor subdivision plan for 2 lot subdivision of 4.734 acres at 4099 Howell Road. Recommendation for approval was made Dec. 14th subject to the preparation of a shared driveway agreement.

Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2021:

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

CU-2021-2 Potters Industries LLC – laboratory use in the LI District at 3222 Phoenixville Pike was approved April 5th.

CU-2021-3 Venatorx – laboratory use in the LI District at 24 Spring Mill Drive was withdrawn by the Applicant.

CU-2021-4 PA Turnpike Commission – construction of utilities in steep slopes to service the proposed Devault Maintenance Facility was approved November 1st. The Turnpike Commission appealed the decision and negotiations on the conditions of approval will continue into 2022.

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 following placement of the Route 401 & Valley Hill Road intersection on the CMAQ list (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program). The Larson Design Group was awarded the design contract earlier this year and engineering is now underway. The project moved into the Engineering phase during 2021. Estimated project completion is Spring 2024 and will include widening the intersection and adding left turn lanes.

A second project was coordinated with East Whiteland Township to pursue grant funding 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. For many years, the Yellow Springs/Sidley Road and Phoenixville Pike intersection has been in need of turning lanes, particularly in the late afternoon when the Great Valley Middle and High Schools let out. Charlestown and East Whiteland Townships coordinated their efforts to pursue two grants to add left turn lanes on Phoenixville Pike in both directions and a right turn lane from Sidley Road onto Phoenixville Pike. The specifications were re-written by Traffic Planning & Design after an earlier grant application through the ARLE program was declined in 2020. The grant application for the DCED was submitted in June, and an application through PennDOT's MTF program submitted on November 5th. The Township received word that the second application, for the DCED multi-modal grant, was awarded in the amount of \$699,307, with Charlestown Township and East Whiteland Township to each contribute \$150,000 in order to reach the total project amount of \$999,307. Design on the improvements will start in 2022.

Armour & Sons replaced a school signal at the Charlestown Playhouse that had been struck by a vehicle. The cost was covered by insurance.

Other Planning Matters

Regional Planning

The Planning Commission reviewed a proposed amendment to the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan following the inclusion of West Pikeland Township to the group. There were no changes to the plan relevant to Charlestown, therefore no comments were submitted. The Amended Plan was adopted by the Supervisors in September.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Schuylkill Township Land Use Assumptions Report at their request and had no comments.

Biennial County Transportation Inventory Update

The group reviewed the County's Inventory and updated the Rt. 401 & Valley Hill Road signal improvement to Active Status and added future widening of the one-lane bridge on Route 29.

Amendment to Potential Service Area Radii for Selected Recreational Areas Map in Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

The Planning Commission updated the map to include potential service area radii that can be used when determining the use of Fee-in-Lieu funds, such as those acquired this year for the Meyer subdivision. The Supervisors declined to adopt the chart and preferred to keep the service area unrestricted.

Equestrian Use

The Planning Commission finalized the equestrian use ordinance, which was adopted by the Supervisors on April 5th.

Stormwater Management Ordinance

The Planning Commission recommended amendments proposed by the Engineer to the Stormwater Management Ordinance, and the Supervisors expect to adopt the amendments in 2022. The Engineer proposed improvements to the Township's 40 acre property at Phoenixville Pike and Yellow Springs Road to capture water run off from the Turnpike via an infiltration bed, to reduce silt reaching the road. This improvement would satisfy new MS-4 requirements and would take place in 2023-2024.

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.

The Board reluctantly accepted Member John C. Martin's resignation after he relocated out of the Township following 20 years of service. Residency is a requirement of zoning hearing board members. John Martin also served 3 full terms on the Board of Supervisors from 1978-1995 and was an Elected Auditor from 1996-2001.

The following Zoning Hearing Board applications were considered in 2021:

2021-01 Carlo Failla – Restaurant Sign to exceed maximize size in Residential-1 zoning district, and to be lighted. The variance was granted on April 7th.

2021-02 GC Commons Lot One LP – Expanded parking to exceed maximum impervious surface coverage. The variance was granted on May 6th.

2021-03 Aditya Puri – Extension of deck into open space at Charlestown Meadows. Since the open space at this community still exceeds the minimum requirement, the variance was granted on April 7th.

2021-04 Thomas A. Fillippo – appeal from violation of use of warehouse at 4030 Whitehorse Road. The application was withdrawn.

2021-05 Beyond Meat Inc. – appeal from noise violation citations. This matter is ongoing.

2021-06 William S. Davison – relief from setbacks for a flex space at 3250 Phoenixville Pike. The application was withdrawn. An ordinance to allow flex space in the NC-1 district was adopted in Jan. 2022.

2021-07 R.J. Smolenski - relief from setback for a deck at 102 Windy Hollow Dr., granted Dec. 7th.

2021-08 Anand Mahalingham - Extension of deck into open space at Charlestown Meadows. Since the open space at this community still exceeds the minimum requirement, the variance was granted Dec. 7th.

2021-09 Malvern General Warren Owner LLC – application to amend zoning ordinance to allow laboratory use in the NC-2 District. The ordinance amendment was accepted and adopted in Jan. 2022.

2021-10 Priyesh Malvankar - Extension of deck into open space at Charlestown Meadows. Since the open space at this community still exceeds the minimum requirement, the variance was granted on Dec. 7th.

V. LEGISLATION

Ordinances

The following ordinances were adopted in 2021:

- 213-2021 Ordinance Regulating Generators
- 214-2021 Ordinance to Amend Zoning Chapter 27, adding Equestrian terms and uses
- 215-2021 Ordinance to Amend Chapter 16, Park Rules to Prohibit Tobacco Use
- 216-2021 Ordinance to Amend Chapter 6, adding 2 Alternates to Environmental Advisory Committee
- 217-2021 Ordinance to Amend Chapter 27, TND maximum height 35 feet
- 218-2021 Ordinance regulating traffic on certain roads – Wells Road 25 MPH

Resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted in 2021:

- 976-2021 Resolution to appoint Barbacane Thornton as auditors for 2021
- 977-2021 Resolution appointing Jean Bomm to Zoning Hearing Board
- 978-2021 Resolution appointing Bill Westhafer to UCC Board
- 979-2021 Resolution listing Township depositories for 2021
- 980-2021 Resolution adopting credit card policy for 2021
- 981-2021 Resolution Designating Emergency Service Providers
- 982-2021 Resolution setting fee schedule for Recreational Fee in Lieu program
- 983-2021 Resolution Approving conservation easement acquisition – Crowell
- 984-2021 Resolution to Amend 2021 Budget

- 985-2021 Resolution to Dispose of Records #12
- 986-2021 Resolution to appoint Wendy McLean to oppose Zoning appeal – Thomas A. Fillippo
- 987-2021 Resolution to Amend 2021 Budget #2
- 988-2021 Resolution to apply for multimodal grant for Phoenixville Pike/Yellow Springs Road intersection signal
- 989-2021 Resolution adopting Regional Comprehensive Plan as Township Plan
- 990-2021 Resolution declaring Local State of Disaster Emergency
- 991-2021 Resolution to Amend 2021 Budget #3
- 992-2021 Resolution requesting Multi-Modal Transportation Fund Grant
- 993-2021 Resolution Adopting the Emergency Operations Plan for Charlestown Township
- 994-2021 Resolution Authorizing Linda Csete as Agent for FEMA Hurricane IDA \
- 995-2021 Resolution Adopting Chester County hazardous mitigation plan
- 996-2021 Resolution Adopting 2022 Budget
- 997-2021 Resolution Adopting Tax Levy for 2022

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 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.

Additional compliance measures required by the DEP for the next MS-4 period were proposed by the Engineer, primarily to be comprised of an infiltration basin at the Township's Phoenixville Pike property that sits below the PA Turnpike. The 60' x 45' proposed basin was approved in concept by the Supervisors with design to take place in 2022 and construction in 2023. This will allow the Township to demonstrate compliance within the required 4 year reporting period.

Developer Escrow Releases

The Engineer reviewed and signed off on escrow release requests for developments under construction in accordance with their financial security agreements throughout the year. The Board of Supervisors approved releases for Spring Oak, Devault Village, Cedar Run, and The Meadows in 2021.

Quarry Activities

The Engineer monitored Independence Construction Materials blasting reports that are sent to the DEP.

Road Improvement Project

The Engineer oversaw Improvements to selected Township roads including Wells Road and several roads in Charlestown Hunt. Innovative Construction 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. Construction is anticipated to start in 2022.



VII. BUILDING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

A summary of building permit activity in 2021 is provided below:

	NO. OF PERMITS	CONSTRUCTION COST
COMMERCIAL: ALTERATIONS/	5	2,203,719
COMMERCIAL: CELL TOWERS & ANTENNAS	6	130,000
COMMERCIAL: ELECTRICAL	2	197,000
COMMERCIAL: FIRE SUPPRESSION	1	122,500
RESIDENTIAL: ADDITIONS	3	1,108,727
RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS	3	78,165
RESIDENTIAL: BARN	2	45,500
RESIDENTIAL: BASEMENTS/BASEMENT EGRESS	19	375,775
RESIDENTIAL: BATHROOM	2	32,650
RESIDENTIAL: DECKS	28	873,095
RESIDENTIAL: DEMOLITION	1	10,500
RESIDENTIAL: ELECTRICAL & GENERATORS	53	462,359
RESIDENTIAL: GARAGE	2	270,000
RESIDENTIAL: HVAC	4	56,258
RESIDENTIAL: KITCHEN	4	233,420
RESIDENTIAL: PAVILION/PERGOLA	5	226,075
RESIDENTIAL: PORCH	1	52,589

RESIDENTIAL: PATIOS	10	329995
RESIDENTIAL: POOLS	6	472,000
RESIDENTIAL: ROOFS	23	57,105
RESIDENTIAL: SAUNA	1	13,000
RESIDENTIAL: SHEDS	1	8,124
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY HOME	13	4,387,418
RESIDENTIAL: SOLAR HEATING SYSTEM	2	8,226
RESIDENTIAL: STUCCO & VENEERS	4	578,947
RESIDENTIAL: SUNROOM	1	142,050
RESIDENTIAL: TOWNHOUSE	9	1,923,780
TOTALS:	208	14,878,977

Keystone Municipal Services provided plan review and inspection services for 2021. The previous inspector, Chris Madara was retained to close out projects approved prior to 9/1/20.

VIII. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Brightside Farm Park –The farmhouse lease with the current renters was renewed for an additional year with no rent increase in rent since an adjustment was made in 2020. The roof was replaced on the farmhouse and the water heater was replaced.

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. They held a harvest picnic in September for the group.

This summer, Planning Commissioner Andy Motel arranged for a Bird Watching Walk at Brightside led by Patti and John Werth of the Valley Forge Audubon Society on June 24th. They had previously spotted many varieties of bird, including a pair of Kestrels, which are not so common in Southeastern PA. They were actively courting, and in a follow up visit by Dan Mummert, Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the PA Game Commission, 4 Kestrel eggs were discovered. During our 2019 Earth Day event, Planning Commissioner Dan Walker had installed the kestrel box on a utility pole, along with two owl boxes in the wooded areas.



Dan Mummert and his volunteers monitored the nest and when the chicks were 10-24 days old and in June banded them for the Game Commission's tracking program. Mummert works with landowners to promote habitat for these and other species, and offered to visit Brightside through the Game Commission’s “Private Landowner Assistance Program.” Via this free-of-charge program, the PGC offers guidance to landowners with not less than 10 acres how to enhance their land for wildlife. Other birds sighted this year include the Eastern Meadowlark, which is quite rare in PA, as well as orchard orioles and boblinks, all species that nest in high grasses.

Charlestown Park



Most activities at the Park resumed in 2021 following the 2020 shutdown due to COVID. The Park’s pavilions, playing fields, and walking trail remained extremely popular with area visitors. (photo by G. Csete)

An agreement was reached on December 7th with the U.S. Surety Company to settle the outstanding issues with the 2015-2016 park improvement project that included the pavilions and restroom building.

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. The area is maintained for visitors and features a historic marker.



At right - 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 and coordinated with Mr. Theurkauf on an updated program to ensure future compliance and take enforcement action when warranted.

Open Space Maintenance – The renewed contracts with Davey Tree Service and Charlestown Landscaping expired 3/31/2021 and the Township went out to bid for new 3 year contracts. Charlestown Landscaping was awarded the new landscaping contract, which was amended to reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides and perform more hand weeding whenever feasible. Davey Tree was again awarded the new Tree Service contract.

The frontage along the 40 acre parcel owned by the Township near Phoenixville Pike and Yellow Springs Road was cleared to allow for a grass strip for a more attractive appearance and to keep overgrowth away from the road.

Open Space Acquisitions – The Township acquired 19.7 additional acres of open space through conservation easements purchased from Thomas & Margorie Seibert , 15.1 acres from Janet Baldwin and Nancy Long, and 112 acres from the Crowell family that were placed with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

Charlestown, jointly with East Whiteland Township continued to work toward an acquisition of the 142 acre "Balderson" Tract owned by Spring Ridge Management and 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.

A \$24,325 payment was received from George Meyer as a fee in lieu of recreational facilities for his 5 lot subdivision at Foster and Bodine Roads. These funds were placed in a separate account for future park and open space improvements.

An additional payment will be assessed from owner of Lot #1 of the Stoudt subdivision on Merlin Road in lieu of the required tree replacement of 55 trees on the lot that was developed as a private residence. Notes on the original subdivision plan indicated that if the trees couldn't be replaced on site, they or their value would be due the Township as alternate compensation. These funds will be placed in the account for future improvements.

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.



Above: Along the Pickering Dam Trail

- photo by G. Csete

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.

The Trail Committee, a sub-group of Parks and Rec, was led by Ashlee Beyer and Frank Beyer (no relation). They conducted an assessment of Pickering Trail following Hurricane Ida and created an inventory of items for repair, including the main bridge that will likely involve FEMA/PEMA funding in 2022.

Ashlee Beyer began research and planning for a Weed Warrior Program in collaboration with the EAC that will seek to remove invasive plant species from the trails and parks.

The Devault Rail to Trail Project

The supervisors appointed Linda Csete, Susan Bednar, Michael Churchill, and Chris Lawrence to the Project Steering Committee for the Devault Trail Study to work with TMAAC. The Steering Committee held its first public meeting (virtually) on June 15th to elicit comments and questions.



Above: Library of Congress Photo of the trestle bridge over Route 29 (State Road) currently owned by Norfolk Southern and would be made part of the Devault Trail.

In association with TMAAC, the Township worked on a feasibility study funded by a TCDI grant 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.

Charlestown Day Committee

The Committee, led by the Parks & Recreation Board's Stephanie Robinson, organized the eighth annual Charlestown Day event held on September 25th. Proceeds went to Friends of Charlestown, which provides funding for local non-profit groups. A 5-K Race was held at 8:00 a.m. with the rest of the day's activities beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Beautiful weather and the desire to get out for some fresh air all led to a great time at our annual Charlestown Day event.

The 5K race was the second largest ever, with 52 participants. Proceeds benefited the non-profit Friends of Charlestown organization.

We thanked the 41 student volunteers from the GVCO Caring Hands community service group who gave a cumulative 120+ hours of their time at the event.



The Bounce House was a hit as always

The following page features pictures & captions from the day, with photos by Allen Underkofler and George Csete.



Giant bubbles from Bubbletopia made for good clean fun



Music by the Mighty Manatees provided a festive air to the day's events



At left: The Lady on Stilts was a source of fascination for adults & kids alike



Visitors checked out the various booths set up in the Park Pavilions



Both the East Whiteland & Kimberton Volunteer Fire Companies were on hand to greet the public and give kids a close up look at their equipment

IX. ROADS & PUBLIC WORKS

The Five-Year Road Improvement Plan was reviewed and updated. Improvements for 2021 were undertaken as follows: Resurfacing and widening of Wells Road, and resurfacing of roads in the Charlestown Hunt development including: Battle Creek Way, Loudoun Place, Amwell Valley Drive, plus sections 1R, 1L, Section 2, and Section 3 of Charlestown Hunt Dr.

Innovative Construction Services was awarded the contract for the road improvement project. The Roadmaster accommodated various requests from residents and addressed their concerns while paving work was underway.

The Annual Road Maintenance contract was awarded to Cedar Springs Construction Company and the Tree contract to Davey Tree Company. Additional Improvements in 2021 performed included:

- Snow & Ice Removal throughout winter season
- Repair of berm on Pine Drive to improve stormwater issues.
- Speed limit signs replaced on Howell Road, and new signs on Wells Road following a reduction in the speed limit.
- Extensive tree removal along Sycamore Lane
- Repair to four headwalls on Buckwalter Rd and Sycamore Lane.
- Replacement of inlet box on Hedgerow 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 and Fall clean-up and repairs included road sweeping, culvert and inlet clean outs, and pothole patching. Tree removal was performed throughout the year along many of the Township roads and the open space properties, including Union Hill Rd, Sidley Hill Rd, Blackberry Lane, and downed trees and limbs on Dobs 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. PECO performed extensive tree removal and trimming along the main roads to try to reduce future power outages. Scott Neumann, County representative for PECO, attended the March 1st Supervisors meeting to address outage concerns and the extensive tree trimming performed to reduce future outages.

PennDOT removed pervasive Bamboo along Charlestown Road at Swiss Pines in January. This is best done when the bamboo is frozen.

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*.

PennDOT made signage and striping upgrades on both approaches of the Coldstream and Charlestown Road intersection to enhance the appearance and safety of the intersection.

Design began in 2012 on the future widening of the Turnpike between mileposts 312 and 319, beginning just west of the Downingtown interchange and extending to the Route 29 (slip ramp) interchange. The project is now in Final Design and was divided into two sections. Construction dates for both sections have yet to be determined.

X. MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Relocation of the Township Office

After a search in the Spring and Summer, the Board of Supervisors executed a long term lease that will move the Township Office to 11 General Warren Blvd in the Fall of 2022.



The current lease at 4030 Whitehorse Road concludes in the latter half of 2022, and that, combined with today's favorable market conditions for leasing commercial real estate provided a unique opportunity to negotiate a reasonable agreement that includes the fit-out of the new offices, which will provide amenities that have been lacking up till now to better serve our residents and businesses. This new facility will enable us to hold all public meetings on site instead of at the Great Valley Middle School. The additional costs of the move, fit-out, and ongoing rent and associated monthly expenses can be managed without the need for any tax increase in 2022.

Norr Inc. was appointed to perform the design and create the architectural drawings, with the landlord, Tin Cup Realty, to obtain the contractor and begin the alterations in early 2022. Five planning meetings were held in 2021 to finalize plans and the fit-out schedule.

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 Beyer in 2018. It was linked to the Facebook page and the Townships website. The Township made hundreds of photos available for this new feature.
- **Meetings:** New Sunshine Rules under Act 65 require posting of agendas at least 24 hours prior to any meeting, and new matters to be added only after a vote to do so by the Board or Commission followed by a posting of the revised agenda. Charlestown took steps to ensure the new law was being properly observed.
- **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. 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) along with the and West End Fire Company (ambulance).



In addition, Uwchlan Ambulance Company serves a small portion of the western part of the Township.

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

Charlestown holds two seats on the East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association board, held in 2021 by Supervisor Kevin Kuhn, who has served on the board for 9 years. Resident Frank Beyer was 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.
- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** Charlestown re-adopted its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in November 2021. 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. The Biennial drill took place on November 16th and included the Fire Marshal, members of the staff and Board of Supervisors, volunteers and county emergency personnel.
- Hurricane Ida in September caused flooding throughout the area, although generally the Township had little damage. A boil advisory from Aqua PA continued for about a week after the storm, and there were some reports of power outages and water rescues by our emergency providers. The Supervisors declared a Disaster Emergency for Charlestown Township, which made the Township eligible for funding to recoup some of the costs associated with the event. A Request for Public Assistance was filed with FEMA by the Nov. 15th deadline.

Animal Control: Charlestown is in the 3rd year of its 5 year contract with the Brandywine SPCA to enforce the Dog Ordinance (dogs running at large) for a five year period from 2019-2023. The Township also has an Animal Control Officer to assist residents with animal trapping and removal. The Zoning Officer handles barking complaints.



- **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. He issued 5 agricultural burn permits and 25 open burning permits in 2021.
- **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 6 applications for fireworks displays.

- **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.

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 2021. Property owners contract privately with the hauler of their choice for waste hauler services.



- **Advertisement** was provided for the Lanchester Landfill's acceptance of electronic devices at no charge through December 2021.
- **Annual Recycling Meeting:** The Manager attended County's annual recycling meeting on May 20th. The Act 101 application for the annual recycling grant was submitted by the Sept. 30th deadline. The Manager conferred with DEP coordinator Mary Alice Reisse on required amendments needed to the Recycling Ordinance.
- **Revised Recycling Ordinance:** The Ordinance was revised to provide in accordance with DEP recommendations on December 6th, to be scheduled for a hearing in 2022.
- **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 three collection events held throughout 2021. Since COVID began, registration has been required but actually has served to speed up the drop-off process.
- **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 is part of the Valley Forge Sewer Authority.

XI 2021 BUDGET & AUDITING

Auditing

The Board of Supervisors appointed Barbacane, Thornton & Company, LLP to perform the Annual Audit for 2020. 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 2021 budget at its December 2020 meeting. The 2021 budget consisted of three separate funds: General, Liquid Fuels, and Capital Projects. All tax rates remained the same as in 2021.

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 2021 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 2021 budget, the Supervisors used the majority of the receipts from the general earned income tax for open space acquisition, historic preservation, and property improvements.

The **General Fund Capital Fund** is funded from real estate taxes and the only expenditures in 2021 were for road improvements.

A Recreational Fee-in-Lieu Capital Fund was opened in March with \$24,325 in funds paid by a developer who chose this option over providing open space and recreation in the plan for his 5-lot subdivision. These funds and any new funds collected will be used to enhance recreation at selected alternate locations such as the Brightside Farm and Charlestown Park.

A Transportation Fund was established in 2016 under Act 209 allowing for impact fees from developers to be used for future traffic improvements. No funds have been expended from the fund through 2021.

Federal COVID relief funds were received in June in the amount of \$314,149 and were placed in a new capital fund. A second payment in the same amount is expected in 2022. A plan for the use of these funds, which must be done in accordance with federal and state procedures and auditing requirements was in discussion that will continue into 2022. In general terms, the funds can be used to reimburse COVID-related expenses and lost revenue due to COVID (plus specific categories of capital improvements not including roads and bridges). There may be additional funding for roads and bridges yet to come. All funds must be expended by 12/31/24.

Budget amendments were adopted by Resolution at the May 3rd, August 2nd, and October 18th Supervisors' meetings. Amendments take place in order to adjust revenue numbers and re-apportion expenditures as actual receipts and expenses become known.

The **Long Term Financial Plan** first developed in 2016 was revised for 2021-2025. 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 2022 budget, particularly for capital improvement projects.

The Budget Work Session was held October 18th and a final draft was prepared prior to the November 1st Board of Supervisors meeting at which time it was approved for advertising. The final 2022 budget was adopted on December 6th.

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.

Richard Findlay, the elected tax collector, resigned in January due to his move out of the Township, and Esther Estes was appointed as interim tax collector for the remainder of 2021. This position has no duties since the County Treasurer is deputized to perform the collections.

Earned Income Tax & Local Services Tax

The Township is a member of the Chester County Tax Collection Committee with the manager attending committee meetings semi-monthly. 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 achieved and now maintains a Standard & Poors Rating of AA, which is the highest ranking possible for a municipality of its size.

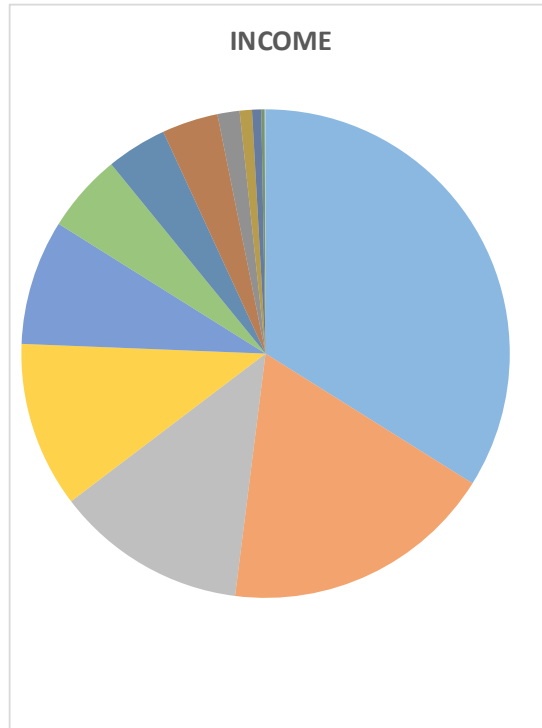
In July, the Township redeemed 12 month certificates in the CDARS program with First Resources Bank and reinvested in a new CDARS instrument to maximize interest earned.

The Township continued to utilize ADP payroll services for the handling of bi-weekly payroll.

2021 Revenue & Expenditures – All Funds

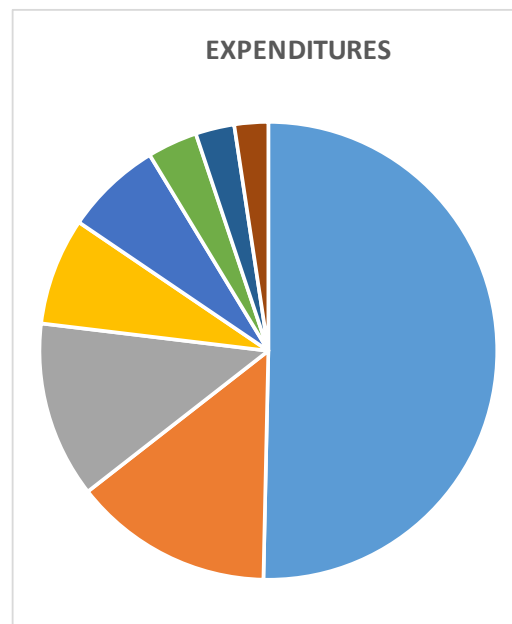
All Funds Income 2021

Earned Income Tax	5,215,368	63.5%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	1,015,024	12.4%
Real Estate Tax	541,256	6.6%
Permit Fees	379,226	4.6%
Federal Revenues & Grants	328,366	4.0%
State Revenues & Grants	247,668	3.0%
Application & Review Fees	155,802	1.9%
Cable Franchises	119,851	1.5%
Local Services Tax	111,214	1.4%
Dividends	43,869	0.5%
Recreation Fee in Lieu	24,325	0.3%
Rents & Recreat. Use Fees	18,110	0.2%
County Revenues & Grants	6,713	0.08%
Fines & Forfeits	1,738	0.0%
Total:	8,208,530	100%



All Funds Expenditures 2021

Easements & Acquisitions	3,600,784	46.8%
Bonds & Notes	1,009,866	13.1%
Road Maint & Improvement	890,364	11.6%
Public Safety	541,884	7.0%
Parks & Recreation	489,167	6.4%
Legal	253,152	3.3%
Permit Review & Inspection	196,152	2.5%
Engineering	170,987	2.2%
Charge to Applicants	120,618	1.6%
Administration	115,033	1.5%
Insurance	81,428	1.1%
Zoning	79,798	1.0%
Planning	51,784	0.7%
Municipal Office	37,836	0.5%
Internet & Website	26,727	0.3%
Historical Resources	16,079	0.2%
Environment and Open Sp	11,498	0.1%
Recycling & Waste Mgmt	1,562	0.0%
Total:	7,694,719	100%



XII MISCELLANEOUS

Cable Franchise Renewal

The Township Manager and Solicitor worked on the franchise agreement renewal with Verizon, which provides an annual fee as compensation for using public property in its rights-of-way for cable lines. Negotiations will continue into 2022.

Census 2020

The Township received the new census data in September, seeing a 6% increase in population since the 2010 census, with a new count of 6,001 residents.

Codification of Ordinances

Codification services continued with General Code and the annual updates took place in the summer. A full codification of ordinances was undertaken this year incorporating all ordinances adopted since late 2019. 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

The Township Manager attended webinars hosted by the Pennsylvania State Association of the Township Officials since no one from our Township wished to attend the conference in Harrisburg due to COVID concerns. The Chester County Association of Township Officials conference was held virtually on November 11th.

Coronavirus/COVID 19 Pandemic

Public meetings were held via Cisco Webex and continued until it was determined that we could resume in-person meetings in July at the Great Valley Middle School. Masks were required by the School District.

Charlestown Park was able to open fully this year, including 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 major Concessionaires, the Phoenixville Area Soccer Club, Phoenixville Marion Youth Club, and Healthy Kids Running Series, continued with the safety measures put in place last year to allow for modified activities until they could resume regular games and practices.

Fire Marshal and EOC Coordinator Tim Hubbard monitoring COVID guidelines to take the necessary steps to safeguard our residents.



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. The Board remained unsatisfied with the area and entered into a new agreement with RES Great Lakes LLC to make further improvements in 2022.

Donations

The Township provided its annual donations to Camp Cadet of Chester County and the Phoenixville Public Library. Chris Porcelli, the Library's Director of Development, attended the April 5th Board meeting to extend a thank you to the Township Supervisors for their long-standing and generous support and give an update on services available during COVID.

Earth Day

Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, modifications were made to our Spring Earth Day event held on April 10th. We called upon our residents to take part in safe-distanced clean up and park & trail enhancement activities. The Charlestown EAC held a raffle for small groups and individual efforts to clean roadside litter if they emailed before & after photos. The Longua family's name was drawn to win a "reduce your plastic use" basket (contains non-plastic alternatives for common products: toothbrush, floss, Hydro Flask water bottle, Lush shampoo bar, BlueLand liquid hand soap with tablet refills). Bags, safety vests, sanitizer, and gloves were available for pick up at the Township office. Over 50 bags of trash were collected, and cleanups took place at the Brightside Farm, Charlestown Park, and along the many trails.

Employee Handbook and Administrative Procedure Manual

The existing Employee Handbook was re-drafted for the Board's consideration using tools provided by ADP, the Township's payroll service company. The Manager developed a procedure manual that outlines

all administrative functions with step by step instructions that will be helpful with future personnel changes and turnover.

Generator Regulations

The Board amended Township Code Part 6, Chapter 10, Health & Safety to add regulations for residential stand-by generators. Portable generators were not regulated by this new ordinance, which requires a 21 foot setback to meet decibel restrictions.

Great Valley Nature Center



- photo by Carol Armstrong

In 2020, 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), which has taken on the debt with Phoenixville Federal Bank & Trust and is in the process of having ownership transferred to them.

Progress has been slow. Since they hold a deed restriction on the property, the F& PCCT 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.

In Remembrance

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

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

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



Pickering Crossing Sound Monitoring

A sound study was ordered from Thornton Acoustics beginning June 21st following complaints of noise from the adjacent asphalt plant. The Township Engineer Dan Wright and Will Thornton met with the plant management to discuss the results that may require heavy equipment and operations changes to reduce spikes on the report.

Pipeline Concerns

While there is no proposed construction on the pipeline in Charlestown, the Environmental Advisory Committee continued to monitor the Adelpia Gateway Project. The pipeline traverses the Brightside Farm along with numerous private properties.

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.

Scanning Services, File Management and Records Retention

The Township continued scanning documents using Treeno's cloud-based document management software. Commercial and residential building permits dating back to the year 1960 are now in the system along with approximately 60% of subdivision files. All zoning hearing board, HARB, and conditional use decisions that were available were also scanned along with all available conservation easement documents. This gives us the capability of downloading a "property file" that includes all applications and decisions relating to a specific parcel.

The Manager continued the process of reviewing files in offsite storage to determine those of no further administrative value. This saves in storage costs and also helps to identify those records to be preserved to make older, but still relevant, information more accessible.

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

All Township computer files were set up for automatic back up on Microsoft 365's One Drive cloud storage system, and are also backed up twice a week on an external hard drive kept in a remote location.

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. Newsletter and website articles were produced to help make everyone aware of the requirement.

Short Term Lodging

An Application form for a short-term lodging license was drafted by the Manager and reviewed by the Zoning Officer to be ready for use in the event of an inquiry regarding compliance with these regulations.

Spring Oak and Beyond Meat (formerly Devault Foods) Issues

The owners/managers of Beyond Meat continued to work with the Township to resolve numerous issues, including lighting, noise, odor, and traffic, brought to the Board's attention by residents of Spring Oak and nearby residences. In February, the sound monitoring was extended to August to record decibel levels at Spring Oak and later extended to the end of the year. After the January start-up period when sound levels exceeded the maximum, improvement was noted from that time forward. A "no right turn" sign was posted on Whitehorse Road for Devault Lane in a continuing effort to stop truck traffic from entering after missing the turn at Fillippo Way and new Beyond Meat signage was installed. LED light fixtures were added to reduce glare from the plant. Odor complaints continued into February, after which time additional filters were installed to better resolve the issue.

A noise citation was issued to Beyond Meat that remains under appeal. The Township and Beyond Meat representatives continued to work on a plan to mitigate the noise in hopes that the appeal can be withdrawn by March 31, 2022. The plan includes a trailer management plan with areas where trailers are not permitted to park. Sound buffering blankets are to be installed for the rooftop and the nitrogen area will be moved to the back of the plant before March 15, 2022. All improvements, along with the associated contractors and schedules will be provided in a report for monitoring by the Township.

Complaints of both noise and odor continued throughout the year and were addressed on an as-needed basis.

Swiss Pines

Public interest continues to be strong for the dormant Swiss Pines private gardens. The Township remains interested in facilitating restoration and a return to public use of the property.

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 2021.



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

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