

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Fall 2020 Newsletter

Vol. 4

Published by the Board of Supervisors

4030 Whitehorse Road, Devault, PA 19432 - (610) 240-0326

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

Visit our Website at: www.charlestown.pa.us



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BOARD MEETINGS

Supervisors

1ST Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 p.m.

Historical Commission

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

Environmental Advisory Committee

2nd Wednesday @ 6:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings will be held via Cisco WebEx until further notice.

2020 Charlestown Green Business Award

Charlestown Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) presented its first Charlestown Green Business Award to the Charlestown Playhouse. Information gathered from an interview with 19 standardized questions showed that this Cooperative Pre-school and Kindergarten has been actively addressing their sustainability. Some of the highlights of their achievements and efforts include remodeling the kitchen to reduce water usage and increase electricity efficiency and eliminate paper cups and plates in favor of reusable items.

An informal Board advisory team on sustainability exists, and ongoing staff meetings discuss how to eliminate waste and ensure the maximum recycling possible. Wasted paper towels used for clean-ups have been replaced by washable cloths. Natural lighting is used as much as possible, windows were replaced to achieve higher thermal efficiency, and internal LED bulbs were installed. Teachers and parents are learning how to reduce plastics use, and the Director, Laura Sacco, has a goal to completely eliminate single-use plastics in the classroom.

The school, with the assistance of Landscape Designer Allegra Churchill, obtained a grant to install green infrastructure in the parking area to reduce the rate and volume of stormwater running off the property. There are plans to initiate a formal Sustainability Committee and plans for future changes to improve sustainability.

We applaud the Charlestown Playschool's many efforts and achievements to improve the quality of the environment and the health of children that result from these practices.

The EAC requests other suggestions for companies and organizations who might be interested in a Green Business Award, for use on their websites or other posting.



Above: Laura Sacco, Director of Charlestown Playhouse

Two Conservation Easements donated by Township Residents

In October, three of our Township residents placed conservation easements on two properties with the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. Wendy McLean, an attorney who served for many years on the Great Valley Nature Center Board of Directors, conserved her 7 acre property, located on a private drive off Yellow Springs Road, so it's permanently restricted from further development.

Likewise, Jacob and Linda Merriwether conserved their 4.6 acre Yellow Springs Road property. Jacob initiated, designed, and maintained the Charlestown Citizen's website for over 10 years before the Township developed an official site of its own.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your generosity toward all residents, present and future.



We are looking for a few good people to join the Charlestown Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC). We currently have a good working group of strong individuals with skills and abilities that have helped us advise and support the township on current issues facing Charlestown. We have a series of educational programs, and we have undertaken several projects that have expanded and protected Charlestown's natural resources.

We also began *Nature News* this year, with EAC activities and invitations. If you are interested, please send your interest and name to EAC@Charlestown.PA.US. We are glad to answer your questions about what is involved in working on the EAC. The application form can be found at:

http://www.charlestown.pa.us/misc_docs/eac_application.pdf

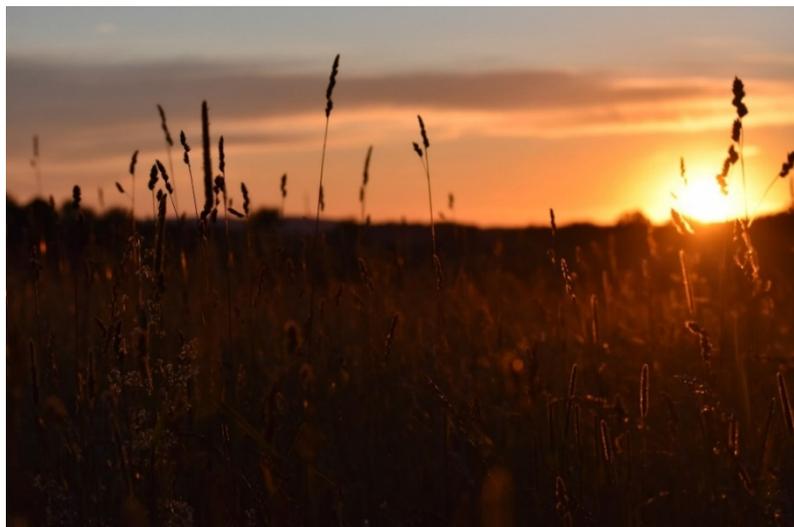


Come Experience the Natural Beauty of Brightside Farm Park

The walking trail at Brightside continues to be very popular, more so than ever during the difficult challenge of ongoing COVID restrictions.

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.



Remembering Inspector Anthony Merklinger



We're sad to announce the passing of our Building Code Official, Anthony Merklinger, who passed away on September 14th. Anthony has 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.

Safety Reminders

Deer: They are most active in the fall, so be very careful on the roads.

Fireplaces & Wood Stoves: Even if you only have minimal use of your fireplace or stove, we recommend you inspect annually to look at all venting systems, chimneys, stove systems and furnace flues.

Outdoor Burning: Burning must take place in an approved container. Call the Fire Board at 610-647-1440 or 610-436-4700 and the Fire Marshal at 484-614-6119 prior to burning.

Smoke Detectors: The start and end to Daylight Savings Time is a good schedule to use to remember to change your batteries every 6 months.

Fall Trails Report

With the changing temperatures it is apparent that fall has quickly moved in. It's days like this that really make us appreciate how fortunate we are to be living where we do, surrounded by the beauty of Charlestown Township and Chester County. Our Board and a host of volunteers have been busy this summer and fall working to maintain the structural integrity and safety of our trails. It's certainly been a challenging year for the weather. From periods of drought to multiple lashings from very wet rain events, all have proved a reminder that Mother Nature will have her way, and we are left to repair and rebuild. Thank you to all who really stepped up and made a difference and thank you to our residents who actively "walk our trails with a Stewards Eye" bagging refuse and removing debris on the trails as they go. We are organizing a group cleanup day for Saturday November 14th at 9am starting at the head of the Pickering and Pickering Dam Trails. Hope to see you there.

The environment of Covid-19 has certainly changed our ability to interact with each other, and I am sure that most of us have become Zoom or WebEx friendly as we make efforts to communicate with family and friends. Please keep social distancing in mind as we try to go about living our lives as best we can. The challenges of the moment should not let us forget to be patient and considerate with our fellow hikers. There is no better time to get outside and walk. The beauty of nature is the best positive entertainment we could ever have!

All the very best,

Frank Beyer
Parks and Recreation Board Member
Trails Chairman





E-trash

- by Dr. Veda Maany, Environmental Advisory Committee

It's shiny and sleek. So enticing - the ads even say it's a magical piece of glass- iPad, smartphone, laptop, HD television. I just bought a device for my child so he is able to get an education via distance learning this year. Hopefully, as consumers, we all ask ourselves-what will I do with this product once I retire it?

First, let's give it a name; what was once the latest and greatest device is now – **e-waste**. Do I throw it in the trash or do I take the extra effort to drop it off for recycling? Let's suppose I do just throw this old device out (after I erase all my data!). Well, my e-waste is actually considered hazardous waste which includes toxic substances like lead, mercury, cadmium, brominated flame retardants (BFRs). In the local landfill, these toxic heavy metals/substances would find their way into our ground or surface water that we drink, potentially causing DNA damage and birth defects. Or if the trash is incinerated, toxins will be released into our ecosystem as cancer causing dioxins or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. This would happen even if the device gets shipped away to China, as scientists have now tracked air pollution in the upper atmosphere from China across the globe.

Fortunately, there is a worldwide movement to create a safe, ethical, and globally responsible standard for handling e-waste. In fact, in the US, 25 states have passed legislation mandating statewide e-waste recycling. Most states use the producer responsibility approach, whereby manufacturers have financial responsibility for recycling their old products. Pennsylvania is one of those states that has such a law called CDRA (Covered Device Recycling Act), Act 108 of 2010, which started in January 2012. Covered devices include: desktop computers, laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals, televisions, tablets, and e-readers. (Apple products and smartphones have their own recycling programs available in their respective retail stores). This also means there is a disposal ban on the covered devices; these devices and their components must be properly recycled and may not be taken to, nor accepted by, landfills or other solid waste disposal facilities for disposal.

According to the law, manufacturers of devices for sale in PA must register their products with the DEP and establish ongoing recycling programs that offer covered device collection opportunities at no cost to consumers. Devices collected from consumers must be properly recycled at recycling facilities that maintain certifications from third party (non-governmental) international environmental organizations (R2, e-Stewards, etc).

Here the device components are disassembled and sorted out for recycling or proper disposal. The manufacturers are also obligated to provide an annual report on the volume of products collected, which is available to the public. Ultimately it is up to us citizens to hold them accountable for their programs. We also want to make sure that that we reward reusing first and recycling second as there are many entities – from large commercial recyclers to small, locally based non-profits – who will reuse and refurbish used equipment for resale, non-profits, and underserved communities.

As for here in Charlestown, I spoke with a source at Chester County Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA), which is located in Narvon, about 40 minutes west of our township. Eligible electronics that can be dropped off there are computer monitors, computer peripherals (keyboards, printers, mouse), and televisions. It is important to note that appliances like microwaves, phones, vacuums, etc ARE NOT considered e-waste and cannot be accepted. Chester County residents are fortunate that their county offers a small load facility where items can be dropped off AT NO CHARGE (only available to residents, commercial businesses make their own arrangements). Not every county has a drop off program! From there, the items are sent to a vendor in Philadelphia (Ecovanta). I'm happy to report that the company Ecovanta meets the e-Stewards Standard—the cleanest, most globally responsible standard for e-waste recycling. Due to an increase in drop-off activity since the onset of the pandemic and limited space, the CCSWA has to strictly limit households to 1 TV (no projection TVs) and 2 other non-TV items – a 3 item limit.

Although it is refreshing to know we have resources for proper device recycling, there still remains the consumer's dilemma – do I really need the latest and greatest? Refuse, reduce, reuse, and lastly recycle.

Managing Growth Creatively: Traditional Neighborhood Development in Devault

- by Michael Allen, Staff Planner

As you have probably noticed, there is a lot of construction activity in the Devault area. This is the culmination of a proactive effort by the Township to control the development in this area. The Township recognized back when the Slip Ramp was proposed in East Whiteland Township that we needed to be in front of the wave of development that was predicted. While open space preservation has been a high priority for the Township, it has also been our objective to concentrate development where there are major roads as well as public water and sewer in an attempt to contain suburban sprawl.

This work started 15 years ago when the Comprehensive Plan was updated and resulted in the area being rezoned in 2010 to the Traditional Neighborhood Development Area (TND Area) that now exists.

The TND Area, as it commonly referred to, is allowed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Municipal Planning Code to encourage the creation of compact, mixed use walkable places. There is significant control granted to the Township in the design and control of all aspects of development in these areas.

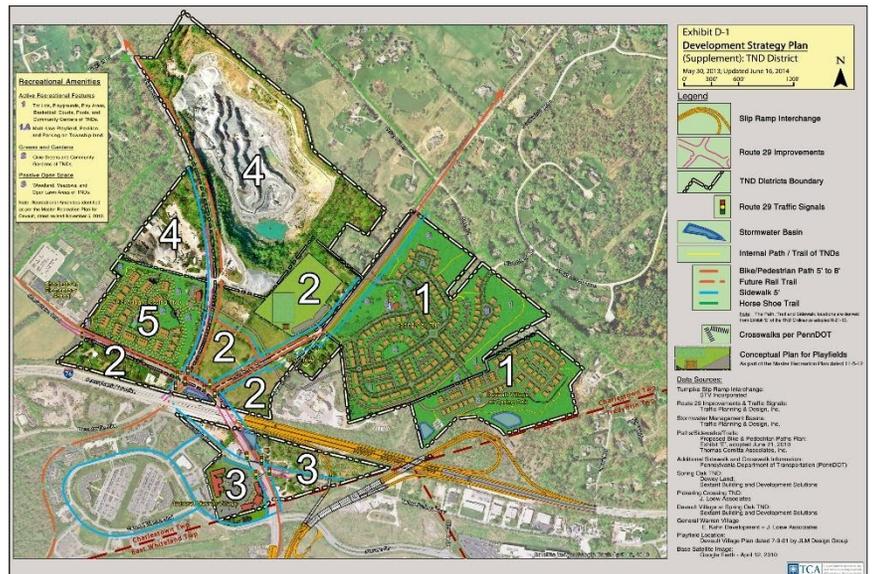
The map at right shows the extent of the TND Area. This area was previously zoned for Industrial and Business uses. The TND Area is divided into 5 districts; TND 1 and 5, are primarily residential, and will have single, twin and townhouse homes. TND 2 is primarily retail and commercial, TND 3 is for retail and commercial and TND 4 is for a conference center and a Continuing Care Retirement Community.

The Spring Oak development was approved in 2010 for 184 mixed residential units and is currently under construction on the large TND 1 parcel fronting Whitehorse Road.

An application is currently under review for the smaller TND 1 parcel behind Spring Oak for 78 homes presently referred to as Devault Village at Spring Oak.

The 76 unit Pickering Crossing townhouse community is under construction at TND 5 along with a modest commercial office building along Charlestown Road.

TND 2 will be primarily retail and office with a small number of apartments over the retail and a few live-work units. The latter is to provide small business owners the opportunity to live above their businesses. TND 2 is the heart of the TND area and will serve as the needed link between the other areas providing the interconnecting roads and walkways that are necessary to support a TND. It is planned that this area will also provide for community and recreational activities. Although there has been some interest expressed in developing this area, as of this writing there are no plans to develop TND 2.



- continued on page 6

Continued from p. 5– TND in Devault

TND 3 is primarily restaurant/retail/commercial. The largest component of this TND area is located at the intersection of Yellow Springs/Warner Roads and Morehall Road (Route 29). The Marriott Extended Stay Hotel is toward the back of the site, and retail space and a restaurant now occupy the front of the site. The addition of the hotel was added at the request of the property owner and is a viable and useful addition to the Township for this area. The hotel is intended to accommodate travelers for extended stay periods and does not have a public restaurant.

TND 4 is the presently operating quarry and asphalt plant. This area is zoned primarily for a conference center and/or a Continuing Care Retirement Community. Currently there is no proposal in front of the Township for this location.

Interested in our planning efforts? The Planning Commission meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month. (Check our website for agendas and meeting location & schedule updates.)

[ed. Note: This article originally appeared in the Summer 2015 Newsletter and has been reprinted with updates]

Ways to Control Stormwater on Your Property



After experiencing one of the rainiest years on record, have you ever wondered what you can do to control stormwater on your property? There are many different things you can do to manage stormwater on your property, including:

- Downspout Disconnect/Redirect - If your downspouts are directed onto a paved or concrete surface or are directly connected to the storm drain system, look for opportunities to redirect them to lawn and garden areas. Just be sure that all downspouts are directed away from foundations to avoid basement flooding.
- Rain Barrels - Rain barrels capture and hold water until it can be used or slowly released into planted areas. For rain barrels to be effective at controlling

stormwater, it is important to have a plan for using the water before installing one.

- Planting Trees - Planting trees is a great way to reduce stormwater runoff. If you have a stream on your property, planting trees along the stream can be the best thing you do for water quality and the trees will help prevent the stream from eroding away your property. The more trees the better but aim for a forest that is at least 35 ft. wide. At the very least don't mow your lawn directly up to the edge of the streambank. Let the grass grow some roots!
- Meadows - If trees aren't an option on your property, adding other types of plants is a good substitute. Any areas where lawn can be replaced with ornamental grasses, flowers, and shrubs will have a positive impact on controlling stormwater on your property. Meadows, whether large or small, increase the ability of the land to absorb water. Meadows can be a great way to reduce the amount of time you spend mowing the grass and can be placed in the areas that are the most difficult to mow.
- Rain Gardens - One of the best options for managing stormwater on your property is to install a rain garden. A rain garden is a bowl shaped garden that can capture and hold water until it is able to be absorbed into the soil. Rain gardens can be a do-it-yourself project, but it may be wise to seek the services of a landscape professional. These are just a few of the many options available for controlling stormwater. Many projects you can tackle on your own but if you have complicated stormwater issues on your property, consider getting help from an engineer or landscape professional. If you have additional questions about stormwater, or you are just interested in learning more, you can find a full series of videos and articles at Penn State Extension www.extension.psu.edu

Charlestown Brightside Farm Park Riparian Buffer along the Headwater of Pigeon Run

- by Carol Armstrong, Vice Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee



This summer, the EAC has been busy caring for the trees that were planted along the headwaters of Pigeon Run on Brightside Farm Park. Plant growth there is fierce, and the young trees had to be cleared from vines and plants growing five and six feet tall. We replaced the few that had not survived since the first planting in Fall 2019 with red oaks, American hollies, and a black cherry that were donated to us by Mary Westervelt of the Treddyffrin EAC.

More came from the PennState Master Watershed Steward tree sale: an American Redbud, a Swamp White Oak, and a Pussy Willow.

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

The Swamp White Oak was planted on September 27 in a small ceremony in appreciation of Richard Findlay's service on the EAC, as he contemplates a move from the Township with his wife, Tomoko Torii. Also on that date, we remembered many droll and ironic conversations with Greg Nesspor and planted the Redbud to thank him for his service as he moved on to become a member of the Zoning Hearing Board for our township. Finally, the Pussy Willow was planted near the trail and the stream in good soil and sun, so that next spring when walkers meander the trail near the little stream, they can see the beautiful catkins amidst the other saplings, and appreciate the beauty of trees.

Remember from our EAC article on pollinator gardens - these are some of the great pollinators for our native insects and birds.

Last but not least, EAC Secretary Veda Maany's children collected Common Milkweed seeds at Brightside Farm Park. Along with the seeds of other tall native grasses and flowers, we will plant these in an experiment this fall to see if they can compete with the aggressive multiflora rose (an invasive), blackberry, and smothering vines, and bring more variety and biodiversity to the buffer.

We expect a new field of trees to expand the riparian buffer at Brightside this fall. If you'd like to get involved in some way, let us know (eac@charlestown.pa.us).

The Heart of a Tree (abridged) 1912 - By Henry Cuyler Bunner

*What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants a friend of sun and sky;
He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty, towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh;
For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard –
The treble of heaven's harmony –
These things he plants who plants a tree.*

*What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
The seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage
The harvest of the coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see –
These things he plants who plants a tree.*



Help Your Community and Planet: Recycle Household Items at the Community Eco Store, Phoenixville

268 million tons – that’s how much trash we generate in one year (US EPA). A single person in the U.S. throws away about 1,650 pounds of trash each year, almost 5 pounds *per day*. It doesn’t have to be this way! Did you know that there are many household items like [dead pens](#), [toothpaste tubes](#), [deodorant sticks](#), and [spent Brita filters](#) that don’t have to be trashed? Ashlee Beyer, a Phoenixville resident, and the Community Eco Store in Phoenixville are determined to keep lots of traditionally non-recyclable items out of landfills – [but we need your help](#). We’ve signed up for several free recycling programs offered by TerraCycle® and are looking for willing volunteers to collect waste items from your home to be sent in for recycling.

TerraCycle® offers free recycling programs to the public for hard-to-recycle waste. For every shipment we send in, TerraCycle® awards points that can be redeemed to help us help others through their nonprofit partners, including providing clean drinking water to people in need, feeding hungry Americans, reducing carbon emissions, adopting acreage in the Amazon rainforest, and providing supplies to natural disaster victims. Points can also be redeemed for local charities and school districts. Join us in collecting waste to benefit our communities and the Earth!

 The Community Eco Store (252 Bridge St, Phoenixville, PA, <http://www.communityecostore.com/>) accepts the following items. *If you have experienced cold or flu-like symptoms, please wait 2 weeks from symptoms subsiding to donate out of consideration for others.*

ALL BRANDS of personal care items (empty of excess product):

- Toothpaste tubes and caps
- Plastic toothbrushes and associated plastic packaging
- Deodorant sticks and caps
- Floss containers
- Mouthwash bottles and caps
- Plastic soap bar wrappers
- Plastic disposable razors
- Replacement razor cartridge heads
- Flexible or rigid plastic packaging for the razors

ALL BRANDS of used writing implements:

- Pens
- Highlighters
- Mechanical pencils
- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Watercolor dispensers and paint sets
- Flexible plastic packaging for these items

BRITA® products:

- BRITA® filters and packaging
- BRITA® pitchers and dispensers
- BRITA® bottles

Plastic Wrappers (rinsed of food residue):

- Snack/chip/candy bags and wrappers

For more information about this collection, please reach out to Ashlee at admin@naturenutproject.com.

Check out TerraCycle®’s website, <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/>, for more free recycling programs.

ACCEPTED WASTE



Great Valley Nature Center Progress

- by Kevin R. Kuhn, Township Supervisor

At their October 5th meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution to move forward with our plans to secure the Great Valley Nature Center property.

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 next step is for the Township to purchase the property from the Trust and 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.



Introducing Keystone Municipal Services

The Township has engaged the services of Keystone Municipal Services for plan reviews and inspections. The procedure to submit a building permit remains the same, which is start by visiting our website for forms and instructions and following up with questions to the Township Office.

Join our Township Meetings Via Cisco Webex

Due to the COVID pandemic, all Township meetings are being conducted electronically (online) until further notice via Webex, a cloud based audio conferencing tool with computer and telephone access.

Public participation is welcome and encouraged!

To attend these meetings, check our website for a list of the meetings for the month with instructions and meeting codes.

Call or email the township office if you need further guidance. We all look forward to in-person meetings as soon as guidelines deem it safe to do so, but in the meantime, we hope you join us virtually!

Please Support Your Fire Departments

Charlestown is protected by two fire departments, East Whiteland Volunteer Fire Association and Kimberton Fire Company.



Both of these organizations have experienced dramatic increases in their cost of doing business while at the same time suffering declining contributions. The increased cost of emergency calls due to expanded Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) has had a dramatic impact on their bottom line. Additionally Kimberton had to cancel their biggest fundraiser, the Kimberton Fair this year due to COVID-19. Please make a point of supporting this important volunteer organizations who do so much to keep all of us safe.



Preparing for the Winter Season

Last year we didn't have much of a winter and hardly any snow. But it pays to be prepared, so now is the time to check your property near the road, particularly in the road right of way.

How much snow this winter? Even Frosty can't say!

Improve the sight lines for your neighbors and fellow commuters by trimming back any vegetation that grew too close to the road over the past season.

Inspect your mailbox to avoid damage from snow plows this winter. Mailboxes and posts should be no nearer than 6 inches from the face of the curb. Straighten leaning mailbox posts, and replace older, worn, and weakened posts that can snap or be pushed over when plows press snow up against them.

Which Roads in Charlestown are State Roads?

For Maintenance Issues on State Roads listed below, call the PennDOT maintenance number at 484-340-3200.

Bodine Road	Hollow Road	Pikeland Road	Yellow Springs Road (north of Hollow Rd)
Charlestown Road	Merlin Road	Seven Oaks Road	
Church Road	Morehall Rd (Rt. 29)	State Road (Rt. 29)	
Coldstream Road	Newcomen Road	Valley Hill Rd (East of 401)	Yellow Springs Rd (east of Morehall/Rt. 29)
Conestoga Rd (Rt. 401)	Phoenixville Pike	Whitehorse Road	
Foster Road	Pickering Dam Road		