

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Autumn 2022 Newsletter

www.charlestown.pa.us

Published by the Board of Supervisors

4030 Whitehorse Rd. P.O. Box 507, Devault, PA 19432 - (610) 240-0326
Township Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Visit our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/CharlestownDay/>



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Christopher W. Heleniak
manager@charlestown.pa.us

BOARD MEETINGS

Supervisors

1ST Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

2ND Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.

Historical Commission

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

Environmental Advisory Committee

2ND Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation

3RD Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Check our website for meeting location, which is subject to change depending on the completion of the new office.

New Township Office Fit-Out Nearing Completion

Within the next few weeks, the Township Office will be completed and ready for us to move in! We're looking forward to the improved functionality of the new 5,000 sq. ft. space, which will include a public meeting room with up to date audio-visual presentation capabilities. The office will be ADA compliant and accessible for all residents.

As with construction projects in general in 2022, we've experienced some delays in obtaining the materials and equipment necessary to complete the fit-out, but our representative, Bob Dettore of J.D. Bravo Company has worked diligently on the Township's behalf to minimize these delays to the extent possible.



The move itself is expected to take 2 days to complete. During that transition, the office will be closed to the public until we're up and running in our new space. We intend to keep this downtime to a minimum and will be able to return phone calls and emails while the move is underway.

We're pleased to note that this upgrade to our facilities and our service to you will be managed without the need for any tax increase in 2023.



Look for a postcard in your mailbox in the coming weeks that will announce the timing of our relocation and the availability of our new offices and meeting room!



Our New Address will be: 11 General Warren Blvd, Malvern, PA 19355

Phone Number will stay the same: (610) 240-0326

All Things Water in Charlestown Township

- by Meg Solomon, EAC Member



Water is something we take for granted. We trust that we will have adequate supplies of clean water for all tasks and drinking. Water is a natural resource that protects and harbors our wildlife, vegetation, and us (and our pets!)

Note: The focus of this article is on water sources other than water that comes in plastic bottles (bottled water that you purchase).

DRINKING WATER and WATER USED IN OUR HOMES

Chances are you have either:

1. Well water that is on your property. For more information on maintaining clean and safe well water, see [Chester County Health Department - Well Water](#).
2. Public water from a source such as Aqua or Pennsylvania American Water.

No matter how you access your water for personal use, it does not diminish the need to treat water as a precious commodity and conserve it whenever possible. Conserving water will save money and preserve a valuable resource for our present and future use.

Here are some simple things you can do to reduce your water usage.

1. Shorten your showers. Can you take a 5 minute shower?
2. Use cool or cold water for laundry.
3. Minimize car washing and lawn watering.
4. Turn off the water every time you are not actively using it.
5. Notice how long it takes to wash dishes, etc. and be creative in how you can reduce that time.
6. Recycle water used to wash produce- use it to water your plants.
7. If you can, use a watering can to water gardens/plants instead of a hose.

WATERWAYS in CHARLESTOWN

Charlestown does not have large bodies of water but our streams, creeks, etc. are very important. There are some wild trout in the upper reaches of Pickering as well as stocked trout fisheries.

Streams are given designations by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Pickering Creek is designated as a High-Quality stream by the DEP. This high-quality designation gives it special protection (i.e., development occurring in the area requires a 150 ft. stream buffer). There is also a small portion of Valley Creek that flows through Charlestown, which is designated Exceptional Value.

For more information see this [Integrated Report](#) by the PA Dept. of Env. Protection (DEP) about our streams in Charlestown: Pigeon Run (almost entirely within Charlestown), Pickering Creek, and Valley Creek. In the [Report Viewer](#), enter a standard such as the water supports aquatic life or is potable (Choose: Select a Layer), and then the stream name. The bottom of the screen displays what that stream quality supports. This is a good project for students as well as learning about water in our own township.

WILDLIFE and PLANTS

Water feeds all life in the ecological community; birds and other wildlife, aquatic life, trees, food, and flowers. If the water is not clean it affects the entire chain of life. Native vegetation provides food for aquatic life and other wildlife and the shade from trees and plants keeps water cool.

Contamination of our creeks and streams kills aquatic life, trees, and plants and may sicken others.



Here are some things that contribute to this:

1. Dumping of building materials and other synthetic materials such as plastic sheeting, carpeting, and household goods in or near a waterway.
2. Spreading salt on driveways and roads in winter ends up polluting our waters.
3. Spreading Invasive (non-native) plants (brought into the area from regions that support different types of wildlife) that encroach on species used by our native wildlife to survive.
4. Ensuring that Stormwater runoff from snow, storms, rain provides replenishment for the aquifer (ground water) that feeds our lush vegetation and is the base flow for springs and streams. NOTE: Stormwater should be kept on the landowner's property.
5. Flushing chemicals or pharmaceuticals down the toilet.
6. Using toxic chemicals, herbicides, and pesticides in your home or outdoors. Keep fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide use to a minimum, or convert to organic or permaculture methods.
7. Pouring household cleaners or automotive liquids onto the ground or into sewers.

Everyone can do their part to keep our water resources pristine. Here are a few things you can do:

1. If you see suspicious activity (such as dumping, large scale spraying, tree cutting etc.), speak up. Resources at the end of this article can help you determine who to contact.
2. If you are hiking or walking in the community, take a container with you and collect any trash you see.
3. Participate in Clean-Up day in your community.
4. Dispose of trash and recyclables properly.
5. Minimize or eliminate the use of salt on your driveway and sidewalk.
6. Minimize or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals in or around your home.
7. Plant native trees that help prevent erosion and flooding. Reduce your amount of lawn and replace with native plants. They improve your environment in so many ways!
8. If you are a landowner, keep stormwater and infiltrate (rain gardens, swales, beds) on your property to replenish the aquifer which contributes to replenishment and prevents erosion and sedimentation.

You are more impactful than you know!!!! Awareness is a great start.

RESOURCES

[PA Fish and Boat Commission](#) for dumping, anything that would kill fish

[PA Department of Environmental Protection](#) for water quality, pollution

[PA Conservation District](#) for erosion and conservation

Charlestown Day 2022

~ from your Charlestown Township Parks and Recreation Board

Charlestown Township celebrated another successful Charlestown Community Day on Saturday, September 24th. The event hosted over 1000 guests, making this year the highest attended Charlestown Day to date. Attendees enjoyed an absolutely beautiful day together celebrating this wonderful community.

A big thank you to One Man Dog-The Ray Adkins Band, The Mighty Manatees Band, Mermaid BBQ Company, Blue Wren Coffee Truck, Villanova Ice cream Truck, Bubbletopia, Fantastic Frankie, Charlestown Farm, Biodynamic Farmer Jasmine Richardson, Twin Valleys Garden Club, Capoeira Instructor Kyla McFadden, Don Bray of Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center, all of the nonprofit organization exhibitors, local business vendors, and most importantly, our volunteers and residents, who make Charlestown Township a great community to live and work!

Thank you to our gracious and committed event sponsors; THEURKAUF DESIGN & PLANNING, THOMAS COMITTA ASSOCIATES, INC, GO FOX LLC.- *Event Management*, MERMAID BBQ, KIMBERTON WALDORF SCHOOL, and GO FOX ADVENTURES, this event would not be possible without them.

Community events inspire people to come together. Helping us strengthen our community by connecting its residents with its businesses and building these relationships!

These relationships help the community and its businesses flourish together.

This event is hosted by the Members of the Charlestown Township Parks and Recreation Board, the Charlestown Day Event Planning committee, affiliated planning partners and volunteers. A big THANK YOU to these planners, the event would not happen without all of you!

In addition to this community event, the Charlestown Township Parks and Recreation Board works hard throughout the year for the community and takes an active stewardship role for Charlestown's Parks. This includes making recommendations on park development, long term planning initiatives for park needs, and recreation programs. The Township provides a balance of active and passive recreation areas and facilities for the use and enjoyment of families, groups, and individuals of all ages.

Other highlights from this year:

- Earth Day projects in April at Charlestown and Brightside Parks
- Wildflower walk on April 24th
- Tree identification walk on April 30th at Jenkins Park
- Weed Warrior events over the spring and summer
- Yoga at Brightside Farm and Charlestown Park in May
- Summer Concert Series in June/July at Charlestown Park and Wisner-Rapp House

Thank you everyone for attending this year's events!

LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN MAKE 2023 THE BEST YEAR YET!

Follow us on Facebook for updates, news, events, announcements and more!



Highlights from Board of Supervisors Public Meetings in 2022

January

- Addressed Reorganization Matters including Annual Appointments and Setting of Salaries
- Adopted Ordinance Amendment to the Neighborhood Commercial Districts
- Approved Open Space Easement Acquisition for Berry Property
- Approved Revised Parking Plan for Commons at Great Valley Lot #1
- Authorized Letter Offer to Purchase Easement – Alleva Property
- Approved Revised Design Manual for Devault Village at Spring Oak

February

- Adopted Revised Recycling Ordinance
- Reviewed Devault Basin Beautification Project
- Approved SMF Properties Land Development Plan for apartment in NC-1 District
- Approved Norr Proposal for Office Fit-out Design

March

- Approved Landscape Proposal for Charlestown Mill
- Approved Jenkins Park Master Site Development Plan
- Renewed Brightside Farmhouse Lease

April

- Approved Settlement Agreement for PA Turnpike Commission Conditional Use
- Approved application for DCED Funds for Sidewalk Improvements at Yellow Springs and Morehall Rds.

May

- Approved Waiver Request for property on Valley Beech Lane
- Accepted Brightside Farm Park Grassland Bird Sanctuary Proposal by RES
- Approved proposal to install Radar Detection for Whitehorse & Route 29 signal
- Executed Contract for Office Fit-Out Construction
- Awarded Annual Road Equipment & Labor Contract

June

- Appointed Chris Heleniak as Township Manager
- Heard Presentation by Victoria Robinson for Girl Scout Gold Project at Charlestown Park
- Approved Open Space Easement Acquisition for Rodgers property
- Approved Martellucci Minor Subdivision
- Adopted East Whiteland Township Act 537 Special Study Transfer of Sanitary Sewerage Facilities as a revision to the Charlestown Township “Official Plan”
- Heard Presentation of Devault Trail Action Plan
- Awarded Contract for the 2022 Road Improvement Project
- Renewed Annual Insurance Coverage

Highlights – Continued from p. 6

July

- Approved Philips Subdivision

August

- Approved Proposal for Design Services for upgrade of Phoenixville Pike/Yellow Springs/Sidley Road Signal
- Authorized Offer to University of Valley Forge for Property Purchase
- Authorized Investment of Maturing Open Space Funds

September

- Approved Agreement with the PA Turnpike Commission to Release Conservation Easement on Brooklands Parcels

October

- Conducted 2023 Budget Work Session
- Approved extension of Accessory Building in front yard for property on Howell Rd
- Heard Presentation from Great Valley Community Organization
- Approved Conditional Use Application for Malvern General Warren Owner LLC for lab use in the NC-2 District
- Approved McDevitt/Dougherty Partial Easement Dissolution Due to Turnpike Expansion
- Heard Engineer's Annual MS-4 Update
- Executed Letter of Support for Application to Name Stream - Mushpekat Run

Coming in November & December:

- Zoning Amendment: Conditional Use Procedures
- Zoning Amendment: Tree Protection
- Adoption of the 2023 Budget
- Website Agreement Renewal
- Signal Service Contract Renewal
- Application for Grant to Continue Steps of Devault Trail Activation Plan
- Resolution to Provide Tax Waiver of Penalties for First Year Residents
- Resolution Re-Adopting the Emergency Operations Plan [T. Hubbard]

Other Matters addressed at the meetings include:

- Approval of financial reports, budget amendments and all payment transactions
- Acceptance of reports from the various boards & commissions
- Overviews of applications to the Zoning Hearing Board
- Conditional Use Hearings for various applicants
- Approval of Developer Escrow Releases
- Review of special projects & projects in the Historic District requiring certificates of appropriateness
- Citizens' Forum – Matters brought forward by residents of the Township

• *Sign up for Smart911*

Excerpts from: smart911.com



- Smart911 allows citizens to provide the additional details that 9-1-1 call takers may need in order to assist them during an emergency. When you dial 9-1-1 today the information received by the 9-1-1 call center can be limited based on the type of phone you are calling on. With Smart911, anytime you make an emergency call from a phone registered with your Safety Profile, the 9-1-1 systems recognizes your phone number and automatically displays your profile on the screen of the call taker who receives your call.
- At a time when you may be panicked, or unable to communicate, or it could be unsafe to communicate, Smart911 ensures that the details you would need to tell 9-1-1 are immediately available in the event you cannot verbally provide them. Smart911 is free, private and secure.
- Although Smart911 is a nationwide service, it is not available everywhere, but it **IS** available to all Chester County residents. Your Safety Profile will only be displayed to a 9-1-1 call taker if you place a 9-1-1 call from a phone confirmed with your Smart911 account, and the 9-1-1 center receiving your call participates in the Smart911 program. You are in full control of the information you enter and the phone numbers you choose to associate with your Safety Profile.
- Your information is made available **ONLY** to 9-1-1 call takers and responders **ONLY** in the event you call 9-1-1. You can choose to allow Smart911 to share your profile with Emergency Managers as they prepare for and respond to emergencies. This allows your local emergency officials to better plan for and respond to disasters. (e.g. hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, power outages). Having knowledge of specific community needs, such as disabilities and special medical considerations, gives Emergency Management the opportunity to identify and better help individuals who will need the most assistance during an incident. Even if no member of your household has significant medical conditions, there are numerous pieces of information that can be useful to these emergency planners. For example, did you know that pets (other than service animals) are not allowed in an emergency shelter? By knowing the number of animals that may require emergency sheltering, emergency management can be better prepared to accommodate pets. We encourage you to share your information with both 9-1-1 and Emergency Management so you can be protected both during a 9-1-1 call and in the event of a disaster.
- Smart911 users decide what information they want to include in their Safety Profile. This allows you to protect your family in the way that best meets your needs. You may change, add, and remove information whenever you choose to do so. It is your responsibility to keep the information up-to-date.
- Smart911 service is free to all citizens. Services are paid for by public agencies ensuring free and equal access to all citizens of the community.
- For more information or to sign up for Smart 9-1-1, go to <https://www.smart911.com/>

Tree I.D. - What's that Tree?

Photos & Article by Frank Beyer



Tall trees and small trees, all shrubs that cover the underground, deciduous and coniferous, sun lovers and shade seekers within the forest abound.

Early spring a group of local 'green' residents embarked on a guided walkabout through Jenkins Park along Valley Hill Road in search of some of our region's common and rare woodland species. The rough, unimproved forest provided the perfect backdrop for an educational journey led by Will Ryan, PhD, ecosystem ecologist.

Will shared insightful information to help identify the trees and shrubs in our backyards. Characteristics including various barks, (scaly, ridges, smooth) leaves (size, shape, texture, arrangement) branches (opposing, alternating, whorling), fruits and flowers were fundamental to our exploration.

Often mistaken as the elders, Will explained that the tallest trees are not necessarily the oldest but instead, the light seekers actively branching upwards. Diffused light radiates through these tree canopies and helps manage nutrients for shade tolerant vegetation with varying requirements.

Some of the plant life identified in a relatively small, quarter acre space were:

Various species of oak, (pin, black, red and white), black cherry, black walnut, tulip poplar, sassafras, ash, ivy

hickory, beech, maple and red maple. We also learned that the poison vine that wraps around your trees is native and produces a berry that is a popular staple for our critical bird population. These naturally occurring native species enrich the woodland's ability to support the greatest biodiversity, producing food for insects, birds and local wildlife. Wildlife depends on the shelter and nutrients that a regional 'home' forest offers.

Contrary, non-native species reduce opportunities for native plants to support environmental sustainability. Some of what we saw were tree-of-heaven, (sadly the favorite of the invasive lantern fly), stiltgrass, multiflora rose, and mile a minute vine.

Our woodlands provide crucial environmental, recreational, and health benefits like clean air and water. Conserving our forests is essential for life sustaining features that balance ecosystems for both humans and for wildlife.

Will Ryan holds a PhD in Entomology and Wildlife Ecology and an MS in Physical Geography with a focus on ecohydrology. His career in the ecological sciences has spanned over 20 years, previously as a Restoration Ecologist and Research Botanist at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

The Environmental Advisory Committee of Charlestown presented the Tree I.D. program.

The Waters Of Charlestown: What is a Headwater?

- by Carol Armstrong, EAC Chair

May was the last month of the year-long study by the Academy of Natural Sciences to learn if and how our enhanced riparian buffer at Brightside Farm Park will improve water quality. The data collection was detailed, and measured insects, fish, stream flow, various nutrients, and chemical water quality in **Pigeon Run** at Brightside in Charlestown. This is baseline data that will be compared with measurements again when the trees mature.

As the chemical, nutrient, and flow data collector for Brightside, I enjoyed the beautiful roughness of the beginnings of Pigeon Run in the forest, flowing from the many seeps and springs at Brightside. While being out there under all conditions of weather was challenging at times, on the last day my final memories were hearing 15 bird species as I stood by Pigeon Run: Song Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat (below), American Robin, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Brown Thrasher, Common Grackle, House Wren, Northern Cardinal, White-eyed Vireo, Carolina Chickadee (below), Yellow Warbler, Barn Swallow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Great Crested Flycatcher. Some of these birds will only breed in very healthy environments that include a high proportion of native plants such as we have at Brightside.



Photo: © Ed Schneider



Photo: Jacob Dingel, PA Game Commission

During the year, I also discovered a Dobsonfly – a harbinger of a healthy stream, and many toads and frogs including a juvenile Green Frog still with part of his tail - see photos (photos: Armstrong).

This site was selected for study by Green Valleys Watershed Association because the streamside woodlands were much enlarged there by plantings during 2019-21 to protect this headwater of Pickering Creek and the Delaware River watershed.



Why does a headwater matter? Headwaters supply food and critical nutrients for the entire river system, and help to sustain aquatic life, like insects, fish and birds downstream. Thus it is important for headwaters to be clean and naturally healthy in connection with the surrounding landscape. Headwaters also are a natural flood control and prevent significant downhill flood damage, trap sediment from clogging aquatic habitat, and provide habitat for many species.

Headwaters are small streams, and they differ widely in their physical, geological, and biological attributes, so that they provide habitats for a range of unique species. The springs and seeps at Brightside contain small fish species that contribute to the diversity of fish species downstream and thus are important for those who enjoy fishing. In addition to permanent wildlife residents, migrants travel to headwaters at particular seasons or life stages. Headwaters are places where insects, birds, and animals find refuge from introduced species, predators and competitors, as well as extremes of temperature and fast moving water. The slower flow and types of organic material that make up the gentle nature of headwaters allow them to be the nurseries of many species. Headwater areas contain a rich source of food, thus provide spawning and rearing sites (such as for the juvenile Green frog and Great Crested Flycatcher), more diverse species colonies (such as the Dobsonfly), and migration corridors throughout the landscape.

There is a close relationship between forests and water quality because of the services that trees provide: filtering pollutants and helping other trees remain healthy. The extended streamside woodlands at Brightside mean we can look forward to maintaining or improving water quality, upon which well-users like I and downstream users rely. Trees are keystones for many life forms and future generations will benefit from increasing wildlife habitat that can support those species who rely on wetlands.

Although it might seem surprising, loss, or degrading of headwaters and their continuity with downstream ecosystems threatens the integrity of the entire river network. Fragmentation of not only forests, but streams as well, are a cause of major modern problems from development. In fact, in Pennsylvania, the degradation of forests has become unsustainable, according to the most recent [forest report](#) of the PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (PA DCNR). We are losing more forest than we are creating. The first rule of health is prevention. Pennsylvania, and Chester County, rank very high in the importance they place on prioritizing water conservation, and we should be aware and vigilant to prevent the loss of water quality by protecting headwaters and forested streams.

Pennsylvania Forest Action Plan 2020, pages 30-34:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/ForestsAndTrees/StateForestManagement/ForestActionPlan/Pages/default.aspx>

Winter's Not Far Behind – Suggestions for Preparing for the Next Season

This fall, check your property near the road and particularly in the road right of way. 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. Perhaps you could offer to help neighbors who aren't able to do this work themselves.

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. Often its not the snow plow itself that causes the problem, but pressure from the displaced snow.

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 Rt. 401)	Yellow Springs Rd (east of Morehall/Rt. 29)
Conestoga Rd (Rt. 401)	Phoenixville Pike	Whitehorse Road	
Foster Road	Pickering Dam Road		

Charlestown Township
P.O. Box 507
Devault, PA 19432