

CHARLESTOWN TOWNSHIP 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NOTABLE EVENTS

Published by the Board of Supervisors:

Frank A. Piliero, Chairman
Michael J. Rodgers, Vice Chair
Kevin R. Kuhn, Member
Charles A. Philips, Member
Hugh D. Willig, Member

fpiliero@charlestown.pa.us
mrodgers@charlestown.pa.us
kkuhn@charlestown.pa.us
cphilips@charlestown.pa.us
hwillig@charlestown.pa.us

Linda M. Csete, Township Manager

manager@charlestown.pa.us

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
I. Organization & Administration.....	3
II. Advisory Boards & Commissions.....	5
III. Planning.....	12
IV. Zoning.....	13
V. Legislation.....	14
VI. Engineering	16
VII. Building & Code Enforcement	17
VIII. Parks, Open Space & Trails	18
IX. Roads & Public Works	19
X. Municipal Services	21
XI. 2014 Budget & Auditing.....	22
XII. Miscellaneous	24



Established 1737

INTRODUCTION

The information contained in the following pages is a summary of the municipal activity occurring in Charlestown Township in 2014. The purpose of this report is to highlight township accomplishments and noteworthy events during the past year. The details of the monthly business of the Board of Supervisors, its appointed boards, commissions and committees and the daily activities of the Township staff can be examined through the meeting minutes, annual budget, financial statements, codes and permit reports, subdivision & land development files, monthly financial reports and numerous other records available on our website at www.charlestown.pa.us.

I. ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION

Contact Information

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

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

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

Physical Location:
4030 Whitehorse Rd.
Malvern, PA 19355

Website: www.charlestown.pa.us

Charlestown Township Statistics

Total Area: 12.515 square miles (8,010 acres)

Charlestown is served by several post offices: Devault (19432), Chester Springs (19425), Malvern (19355) and Phoenixville (19460)

Land by Percentage:

Residential	16.7%
Non-residential	10.8%
Agricultural	30.4%
Wooded	39.3%
Vacant/Water	2.6%

Demographics (2010 Census):

Population: 5,671
Population Density: 453 per square mile
Households: 1,855

Roads:

26.7 miles of township roads
29.95 miles of state roads

School District: 866 students from Charlestown were enrolled in the Great Valley School District's schools, out of their total enrollment of approximately 4,000. 207 Charlestown students attended schools outside the GVSD.

Administrative Actions in 2014

The Board of Supervisors accepted Chester County's proposal to continue property tax billing and collection services for 2014 following a successful transition to their services in January 2012.

Upon the Township Manager's recommendation, the Board approved a Desk Top Capture Program with the PA Local Government Investment Trust (PLGIT) that scans checks to simplify the deposit process and eliminate bank fees.

The Township transitioned to a new website host and email provider in August 2014 and retained the services of Allen P. Underkofler as website designer.

The Township Office handled approximately 1,800 phone calls and received 1,080 visitors in 2014. An estimated 23,000 emails (not including spam) were received and 5,100 sent. 1,865 letters and other correspondence materials were received. 53,000 copies and 19,000 pages of scans were produced. 103 right to know requests were filed and the requested documents were all provided within the required deadlines. Notary services were provided for 92 documents. 791 PA One Call tickets were processed.

The following individuals comprised the Township Staff for 2014:

Linda M. Csete, Township Manager, Secretary/Treasurer
Jan C. Bird, Assistant Township Secretary
Lisa Gardner, Recording Secretary

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

The following consultants were appointed or re-appointed for 2014:

Lamb, McErlane, P.C., Legal Counsel-Firm
Mark Thompson, Esq., Legal Counsel-Lead Counselor
Gary Bender, Esq., Special Counsel
Thomas J. Comitta, Land Planner
Advanced Geo Services, Engineering Firm
Daniel T. Wright, P.E., Engineer & Zoning Officer
Anthony Merklinger, Building Code Official (BCO)
Ed Theurkauf, Open Space Monitoring
Barbacane, Thornton & Co., LLC, Auditor
Dale Frens, of Frens & Frens LLC, Historical Architectural Consultant
Chester County Treasurer, Collector of Real Estate Taxes
Keystone Collections, Collector of Earned Income and Local Services Taxes

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 2014:

Alix Coleman, Brightside Farm Manager
Andre von Hoyer, Planning Commission
Bill Westhafer, Planning Commission
Hugh Willig, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
Rick Reis, Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission
John Pittock, Historical Commission
Rosemary Philips, Historical Commission
Dale Frens, Historical Commission
Chris Lawrence, Parks & Recreation Board
Russ Hanscom, Vacancy Board
Tom Babacz, 9 Member Board of the Valley Forge Sewer Authority
Michael Howell, Zoning Hearing Board
Bob Cottone, Uniform Construction Code Board of Appeals
John Pickering, Open Space Commission
Bill Andersen, Open Space Commission

The Board of Supervisors commissioned a Devault Rails-to-Trails Study Committee with Michael Churchill as Chairman and re-commissioned the following committees:

Agricultural Security Area Advisory Committee
Transportation Advisory Committee
Parks and Recreation Board Trails Sub-Committee

Sidney and Marguerite Buck continued to serve as coordinators for the Brightside Farm Community Gardens.

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 additions/alterations to the Township's inventoried Historical Resources with professional support from consultant Dale Frens, Frens & Frens LLC.

Projects addressed in 2014 included:

- Mothballing of the Cornog-Suplee House and Spring House in anticipation of its future sale along with a small subdivided portion of the original tract.
- Proposed renovations and structural repairs to the Brightside Farmhouse.

- Communications with the developers of Spring Oak to preserve the barn and locate the date marker.
- Re-installation of the surviving equipment at the Charlestown Mill by Richard Frunzi and creation of a sub-committee to work with consultant Peter Dajevskis on developing a self-guided tour at the site through the creation and installation of an interpretative historical display.
- Participation in Chester County Day on October 4, 2014 with Co-Chair Rosemary Philips hosting at the Charlestown Mill.
- Participation in Charlestown Community Day, also held on October 4, 2014.



Above: the ongoing re-installation of equipment at the Charlestown Mill

Below: The Cornog-Suplee House ca. 2005



PLANNING COMMISSION

The Commission re-elected Wendy Leland as Chair and Bill Westhafer as Vice Chair.

On February 8, 2014, with the guidance of land planner Tom Comitta, the Commission held a strategic planning session that started with a detailed initial exercise to identify areas of the Township each member found most desirable in order to determine common elements and practices that lead to these results. They reviewed elements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to identify items to be updated in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and discussed best practices from other municipalities concerning planning, and considered future planning needs. A prioritization of items called "Take-Aways" was created to act as an implementation guide.

The Commission drafted a proposed ordinance to update submission requirements for subdivision and land development applications for review, to include depiction of the neighboring properties on aerial maps, cross-sections of sloped areas, electronic submission of applications, and where warranted, 3-D renderings.

The Planning Commission began preliminary work to update the Comprehensive Plan in 2015 and will seek a Visions Partnership Grant from the County, which, if approved, would cover the majority of the cost.

The Planning Commission accepted a stormwater basin design proposal from Theurkauf Design & Planning to improve the aesthetics and function of the PennDOT right-of-way areas adjacent to the PA Turnpike in Devault. The proposal is to design landscaping treatments for the PennDOT basins and surroundings at Phoenixville Pike and Morehall Road in Charlestown Township. The plan will include considerations of ecological fitness, aesthetics, maintenance and potential uses of the area in the context of proposed and in-progress TND District developments and a future Devault to Phoenixville rail trail. Landscaping cost estimates will be provided.

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 in the construction process. The TND District was created in 2004 as a proactive means of mitigating the 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 2014, the Design Review Committee oversaw the installation of upgraded fixtures that were part of PennDOT's Route 29 Improvement project. Upgrades included enhanced materials for traffic signal masts, street light posts and luminaires, and street sign posts. The Township paid the difference between the standard and upgraded fixtures, with a portion of those costs reimbursed by several developers who have projects underway in the TND District.

The DRC undertook lighting studies to create specifications for the TND District with respect to color tone, intensity and spillage in order to provide an integrated character to the area.

The DRC advised the Board of Supervisors on their execution of an agreement with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to allow the Township to install two lighting fixtures along the sidewalk inside the tunnel along Route 29 to enhance the walkability and safety of that area.

The DRC reviewed and approved a request by JP Orleans for a substitution in their Design Manual to allow for manufactured stone rather than natural stone for monuments and walls.

In early 2015, a commercial TND development including a Marriott Residence Inn will begin construction at the corner of Route 29 and Warner Lane across from the Office Bar & Grill.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) continued working with planning and transportation consultants on conducting a roadway sufficiency analysis study and preparing a Transportation Capital Improvements Plan based on a completed Land Use Assumptions report. These studies and documents are required by Act 209 to enable a municipality to provide for transportation capital improvements through the imposition of impact fees upon new development following enactment of an appropriate impact fee ordinance, which was adopted on July 7, 2014.

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members include the Townships of Charlestown, Schuylkill, East Pikeland, West Vincent, and 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 similar to that of the Chester County Planning Commission, and the review period runs concurrently with the CCPC's review.

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, the future Jenkins Park on Valley Hill Road, the Pickering Trail between Charlestown Road and Route 29, and other recreational and open space throughout the Township. The Parks and Recreation Board's activities in 2014 included:

- Adding one new member and reorganizing in order to become more active and engaged. Two members, Marylou Forcine and Karen Schlichter volunteered to be co-captains for Charlestown Park checking on maintenance issues to report to the Property Coordinator for action.
- Overseeing park and field use permits for various individuals and groups, including the University of Valley Forge, the Renaissance Academy, the Kilometers for Kevin 5K Fundraiser and several area church events and private events.
- Coordinating with the Phoenixville Marian Youth Club (PMYC) and Phoenixville Area Soccer Club (PMYC), which 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.
- Overseeing maintenance at Charlestown Park and the more extensive storm damage related repairs needed following the harsh winter, including fence replacement and tree removal.
- Working along with the Supervisors to initiate the first phase of the improvement plan for Charlestown Park, including replacement of the pavilions, addition of restroom facilities and parking lot construction. JD Bravo Company has been engaged to develop the project plan into 2015-16 along with engineering consulting firm E.B. Walsh and landscape planner Ed Theurkauf.



Above: Brownie Troop #440 taking a well deserved break after planting 7 trees at Charlestown Park

Below: The Walking Trail at Charlestown Park remains a popular destination for area residents



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 their 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 to pass on matters pertaining to building construction. This includes licensure as an architect or engineer, experience in the construction industry, or training or experience as an inspector or plan reviewer.

No appeals were filed in 2014.

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.

CHARLESTOWN DAY COMMITTEE



- Organized the second annual Charlestown Day held on October 4, 2014
- Achieved a high turnout and positive feedback demonstrating the success of the event
- Added a 5K Run/Walk Event to the Day's activities
- Initiated a facebook page to facilitate accurate, timely information to our residents on the Day
- Contributed a series of articles on Charlestown Day to the Township newsletter

TRAILS COMMITTEE

Volunteers continued to be the core of trail maintenance. In 2014 they held a mile-a-minute vine cleanup on June 14th on the Brightside and Pickering Trails. Throughout the year they pulled invasive plants, weed-whacked, and cleaned up deadfalls.



Above: a View from the Pickering Trail

Hikes were conducted throughout the Spring and Fall seasons. Notice of the hikes were published in the newsletters and on the website.

The Committee oversaw the repairs to the bridge walkway to Pickering Dam Road, which sustained major damage in the April 2014 rainstorm. The area was evaluated to determine if preventive measures are needed to avoid a recurrence.

The Thompson Farm Trail was constructed for hiking and horseback riding, largely with donated time and labor from family member Jim Thompson.

Chris Galbraith and Betsy Pilgrim worked on the layout, which features entrances on Tinkerhill and Union Hill Roads, and signage was installed.

Trail Committee members met with representatives from Charlestown Oaks to explore blocking ATV's from harming the trail and allowing access for hikers and horseback riders as the trails committee develops a trail to connect with Valley Hill Road and the future Jenkins "Pocket" Park.

Trail Committee members met with the Turnpike Commission to seek access to the right of way bordering the Turnpike. Action by the Turnpike Commission is anticipated in 2015.

DEVAULT LINE RAIL STUDY COMMITTEE

In 2014, Charlestown Township obtained funding from the County's Vision Partnership Program and PECO's Green Region Program to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of a trail connecting Devault and Phoenixville along the Norfolk & Southern rail line, which is currently out of service. Campbell Thomas & Company, working along with Ray Ott & Associates, was selected as the consultant for the study. Committee members include two members of the Board of Supervisors, two Planning Commissioners, one member of the Parks & Recreation Board and of the Trail Committee, along with the Township Manager.

The Study Committee held public workshops in June and October to solicit feedback on how to best identify a multi-use pathway between Devault and Phoenixville. The Trail would ideally connect with the

Schuylkill River Trail in Phoenixville, and with the proposed Warner Loop in Devault. The study includes examining the possible use of the rail line running from Devault to Phoenixville.

The study will continue into 2015 at which time the Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, taking into account how to acquire the land, fund the acquisition and the cost of ongoing maintenance.

At Right: Portion of the out-of-service Norfolk Southern Rail Line being studied as a potential future trail



III. PLANNING

Subdivisions & Land Developments

The following subdivision/land development applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2014. Review comments were prepared by the Township Planner, Engineer and Solicitor.

SD #404 Whitehorse Estates: Preliminary subdivision plan for 19 new lots on 58 acres located at Whitehorse and Ashenfelter Road in the Farm Residential (FR) District. The plan showed three existing houses on the Homestead parcel and a fourth in single ownership in addition to the new parcels. The Planning Commission (PC) recommended approval with conditions in May 2014. The Supervisors denied the application in June 2014 based on failure to comply with four cited provisions of the Township Code.

SD #406 Charlestown Playhouse: Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for expansion of the parking lot in the Historic District. The Planning Commission recommended approval in January 2014 and the Supervisors granted final land development approval in March 2014.

SD #407 Motel-McGowan: Preliminary/Final Minor Subdivision plan for a lot line change between two properties along Whitehorse Road in the FR District. Upon recommendation from the PC in January 2014, the Supervisors approved the lot line change in February 2014.

SD #408 Devault Village @ Spring Oak: Preliminary Subdivision plan for 72 lots on 26 acres in the Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) along Whitehorse and Rees Roads. Review is ongoing and will continue in 2015.

SD #409 General Warren Village (to be renamed): Preliminary Land Development Plan for construction of a 128 room Marriott Residence Inn and associated retail space along General Warren Boulevard and Route 29 in the TND District. The PC recommended approval in July 2014 and the Supervisors granted final land development approval in October 2014.

SD #410 Whitehorse Estates – Resubmission of a preliminary subdivision plan for 19 new lots on 58 acres located at Whitehorse and Ashenfelter Road in the FR District. The plan shows three existing houses on the Homestead parcel and a fourth in single ownership in addition to the new parcels. Review commenced in December 2014 and will continue in 2015.

Sketch Plans

SK #01 SMF Properties – Sketch plan for proposed improvements to the twin unit building across Route 29 from the Office Bar & Grille to convert the two units to professional offices and to expand the parking area to provide 38 parking spaces in the rear. The Planning Commission provided comments in March 2014.

SK #02 Joseph Keough - Sketch plan for proposed land development and improvements to the existing Stables Bar located at Coldstream and Charlestown Roads in the R-1 Zoning District. The Planning Commission provided comments in July 2014. The Applicant withdrew the application in October 2014.

Conditional Uses

The following conditional use applications were reviewed in 2014:

2013-01 Charlestown Playhouse: A conditional use application was submitted in 2013 to permit development of less than 500 square feet of steep slopes for construction of a new driveway to allow access to the student drop off area on the school's property. The Supervisors granted the use with conditions in March 2014.

2013-02 Paul Marshall: The applicant filed a conditional use application in 2013 to permit use of an existing bank barn as an adaptive reuse for an educational and cultural facility to teach sustainable agricultural, nutrition, and culinary arts for school children, families and adults including Farm-to-Table dining 6 days per week. The hearing was held over six dates in 2014 and is continuing into 2015 prior to the issuance of a decision.

2014-01 Devault Village @ Spring Oak: Fillippo Developers filed an application for conditional use approval in 2014 to permit development in Steep Slopes and Very Steep Slopes related to the proposed Devault Village at Spring Oak (TND), consisting of approximately 26 acres at 401 Rees Road. The Supervisors granted the use with conditions in August 2014.

IV. ZONING

The following Zoning Hearing Board applications were considered in 2014:

2014-01 Joseph Keough, Jr., Charlestown & Coldstream Roads: The applicant requested a special exception for the expansion of a lawful nonconforming use of the existing Stables Bar. The applicant withdrew the application in October 2014.

2014-02 Dharam Sachar, 39 Sagewood Drive: The applicant requested a variance to allow the extension of a deck that would encroach on an area designated for open space. The variance was granted following the hearing on 10/16/14.

2014-03 Scott Faulkingham, 91 Sagewood Drive: The applicant requested a variance to allow the extension of a deck that would encroach on an area designated for open space. The variance was granted following the hearing on 12/2/14.

V. LEGISLATION

Ordinances

The following ordinances were adopted in 2014:

In July, the Supervisors adopted ordinance #184-2014 enacting a transportation impact fee upon new development to ensure that the transportation system is available and adequate to support new growth and development.

In October, the Supervisors adopted ordinance #185-2014 adding a new section 709 to the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance setting forth compliance requirements.

In November, the Supervisors adopted ordinance #186-2014 authorizing and directing the incurrence of a non-electoral debt through the issuance of a series of general obligation bonds in the aggregate principal amount currently estimated not to exceed \$12,975,000 to advance refund a portion of the Township's general Obligation Bonds Series of 2010 and to pay the costs of issuing the bonds. Further action has been postponed until interest rates are within the parameters set by the ordinance.

The Ordinances were codified by Keystate Publishing in 2010 and the document is updated annually and made available through a link on the Township website.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were adopted in 2014:

821-14 Appointing the CPA firm of Barbacane, Thornton & Co. for the 2013 Audit

822-14 Re-appointment of Michael Bowell to Zoning Hearing Board

823-14 Re-appointment of Robert Cottone to UCC Board of Appeals

824-14 Naming the Township Depositories for 2014

825-14 Update to the authorization of use and issuance of credit cards

826-14 Describing the emergency service providers and first response boundaries for the Township for 2014

827-14 Purposing of earned income taxes for open space acquisitions, improvements & maintenance for 2014

828-14 Adopting the Roadway Sufficiency Analysis and Transportation Capital Improvements Plan and setting the peak hour trip fee pursuant to Act 209

- 829-14 Executing an agreement of sale with the PA Turnpike Commission for a 9.1 acre portion of the Volpi parcel to be used for stormwater management by the Turnpike Commission.
- 830-14 Authorizing the Manager to submit application for a traffic signal for the relocation of the school flashing light at the Charlestown Playhouse
- 831-14 Adopting budget amendments for the 2014 budget
- 832-14 Approving the General Warren Village sewage facilities planning module
- 833-14 Filing of the Municipal Continuing Disclosure Initiative of Securities & Exchange Commission
- 834-14 Re-Adopting the Emergency Operations Plan of Charlestown Township
- 835-14 Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development – Bartholdson Planning Module
- 836-14 Resolution to Enter into Tax Collection Agreement with Chester County for Township Tax Collection 2015
- 837-14 Resolution for Tax Levy 2015
- 838-14 Resolution to Adopt Budget 2015

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 construction and E & S permit inspection.

ACT 167 – STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Township Engineer, Daniel Wright, P.E. prepared the Annual MS-4 Report (Municipal Separate Storm System) for Year 11 ending March 9, 2014 and continues the township program to monitor outfalls as previously mapped. PA Act 167 mandates that municipalities adopt the stormwater management standards proscribed by it, also entitled the Stormwater Management Planning Act.

CHARLESTOWN PARK: F STREET PARCEL SURVEY

The Engineer provided a base plan setting the boundaries for F Street at Charlestown Park for use in implementing the park improvement plan 2015-2017.

CORNOG-SUPPLEE (VOLPI) PROPERTY PLAN

The Engineer prepared a subdivision plan for the Township Owned Volpi Property in anticipation of sale of one parcel in 2015 which will preserve the historic house and spring house.

QUARRY ACTIVITIES

The Engineer monitored Independence Construction Materials blasting reports and discussed vibration issues with management. It is anticipated that quarry blasting will conclude in 2015.

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Engineer provided the cost estimates and bid documents through PennBID, and performed bid evaluation, coordination and inspection of the 2014 Road Improvement Project. The improvements are detailed in Section 9, page 20 of this report.

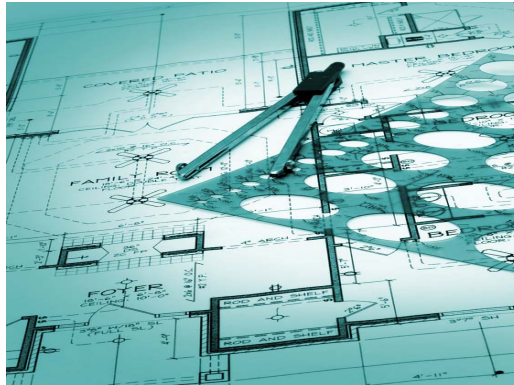
ROUTE 29 PENNDOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Engineer reviewed the lighting plan for the Route 29 bridge which has been submitted to PennDOT's Bridge Engineer Manager for District 6.

YELLOW SPRINGS ROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT BY PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION

The Engineer reviewed the PA Turnpike Commission's Replacement Plan and stormwater management design for the Yellow Springs Road bridge replacement and realignment proposed for Yellow Springs Road. Construction is scheduled to go out to bid in Fall 2015 with a detour in place by Spring 2016 and completion in Fall 2016.

VII. BUILDING & CODE ENFORCEMENT



A summary of building permit activity in 2014 is provided below:

	NO. OF PERMITS	CONSTRUCTION COST	PERMIT COST
CELL TOWERS & ANTENNAS	4	45,000	2,358
COMMERCIAL: NEW BUILDING	1	30,000	1,704
COMMERCIAL: ACCESSORY	10	635,129	26,977
COMMERCIAL: ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS	6	432,927	28,716
CONSTRUCTION TRAILERS	3	5,556	2,254
DEMOLITION	4	9,000	1,218
EROSION & SEDIMENTATION CONTROL	5	0	800
RESIDENTIAL: ACCESSORY	3	72,307	3,381
RESIDENTIAL: ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS	18	764,643	16,378
RESIDENTIAL: BARNs	2	26,100	814
RESIDENTIAL: BASEMENTS	9	364,868	18,024
RESIDENTIAL: DECKs	12	177,970	3,806
RESIDENTIAL: ELECTRICAL	41	518,691	16,352
RESIDENTIAL: GARAGES	4	483,578	3,762
RESIDENTIAL: HVAC	14	212,507	3,499
RESIDENTIAL: PATIOS	2	50,000	664
RESIDENTIAL: PLUMBING	3	40,500	1,708
RESIDENTIAL: POOLs	2	81,024	1,378
RESIDENTIAL: ROOFs	15	483,837	7,400
RESIDENTIAL: SHEDs	5	19,293	1,008
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED	19	3,167,522	46,217
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED	12	3,476,359	27,057
RESIDENTIAL: STUCCO REMEDIATION	6	618,925	12,603
RETAINING WALLs	2	129,895	5,005
SIGNs	6	10,075	1,460
TOTALs	208	11,855,706	234,543

VIII. PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

Trails - The Trails Committee worked with Boy Scout Troop #67 Eagle Scout candidates to construct the following improvements to our trail system:

- Jack Kesti developed and constructed the Pickering Ice Dam Trail.
- Andy Hunt built and anchored benches placed on strategic locations along the Pickering Trail.
- Mitchell Warner built stairs at the Charlestown Road end point of the Pickering Trail.
- Michael Miller built a wooden walkway spanning a troublesome area of the Pickering Trail at a marshy point.
- Ian Riley created maps, installed map boxes and signage and restored a bench along the Brightside Farm Trail



Above: A Scene along the Pickering Trail

Brightside Farm – The Township completed window installation at the Brightside Farmhouse. A bid proposal was accepted from J.D. Bravo Company for the next phase of improvements, including replacement of the beams on one side of the house and pouring a floor in the basement, which will be scheduled in 2015. The farmhouse lease with the current renters was renewed for an additional year, and 60 garden plots available for lease at the community gardens continue to be very successful, with a waiting list for 2015.

Charlestown Park – The Township engaged the services of J.D. Bravo Company to prepare Phase I of the Park Master Plan Improvements from concept through municipal approvals for land planning, zoning, and construction permitting. Fencing damaged during the winter storms was replaced by Long Fence.

Cornog-Suplee (Volpi) Property – The Township advertised the sale of approximately 5 acres with the existing historic structures that will be adjacent to 40 acres of open space. An auction sale is anticipated for 2015. The Roadmaster arranged for the stabilization and mothballing of the historic house. The preservation/restoration of the house and spring house will be a condition of the sale.

Jenkins Property – The Township has advertised the sale of 4 lots on Valley Hill Road that will be adjacent to an 8 acre “pocket park”. Township owned property must be sold at auction, planned to take place in 2015.

Open Space Monitoring and Enforcement Program - The Township continues its program with consultant Ed Theurkauf to perform stormwater management inspections semi-annually for Homeowners Association 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.

IX. ROADS & PUBLIC WORKS

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

The Five-Year Road Improvement Plan was reviewed and updated.

2014 Road Improvements included:

- Valley Hill Road west of Route 401 was milled, resurfaced and line painted
- Blackberry Lane was milled and resurfaced
- Buckwalter Road had base repair and was milled, resurfaced and line painted
- Yellow Springs Road was milled, resurfaced and line painted from Phoenixville Pike to the Turnpike bridge.

Innovative Construction Services was awarded the contract for the road improvement project and Guidemark Inc. performed the line painting.

Additional Improvements in 2014 performed by Melchiorre Construction Co. included:

- Culvert and inlet repairs and a new crosspipe and curbing installed on Dickson Drive
- Inlet box replacement on Blackberry Road
- Inlet box replacement on Marian Road
- Line painting on Howell Road
- Cross pipe repair on Wells Road
- Blacktop swale added on Aldham Road
- Curbing replaced on Union Hill Road



Snow removal and de-icing of Township Roads, including the application of brine, was performed throughout the challenging winter season. Spring clean-up and repairs included road sweeping, culvert and inlet clean outs, and pothole patching.

Tree removal was performed along many of the Township roads and at Charlestown Park and other open space properties, including an unusually high number of downed trees resulting from the harsh winter.

The Roadmaster was in contact with PennDOT for tree trimming and sight distance clearing along state roads, and communicated numerous problems with trees and limbs on wires to PECO.

The Township Manager attended PennDOT's regular project management meetings for the now completed Route 29 Improvement Project.

The Township followed through on their approved application with the PUC to mark the Warner Road crossing as exempt so school buses are no longer required to stop at the tracks.

The Township coordinated with the PA Turnpike Commission to organize a public meeting displaying maps of the proposed right of way acquisitions needed for their project to widen the turnpike to 6 lanes between mileposts 312-319.

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*.



Charlestown Township is responsible for 26.7 miles of roads

X. MUNICIPAL SERVICES

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Police Services:** Charlestown Township is served by the Pennsylvania State Police, from the Embreeville Barracks.
- **Fire Companies and Ambulance Services:** Charlestown Township is served by two separate fire departments, the East Whiteland Fire Company and the Kimberton Fire Company (fire) /West End Fire Company (ambulance). Kimberton/West End covers the northern portion of the township while East Whiteland covers the southern area.



- **Emergency Operations Center:** Charlestown re-adopted its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in November 2014. 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.
- **Animal Control:** Charlestown Township renewed its annual contract with the SPCA to enforce our Dog Ordinance (dogs running at large) and Noise Ordinance (barking).

RECYCLING PROGRAM

- **Waste Hauler Private Subscription:** Charlestown Township vetted six area haulers who are licensed to collect trash and recyclables for residents and businesses in 2014. Property owners contract privately with their hauler for these services.
- **Shredding Events:** Charlestown Township teamed with East Pikeland Township, Schuylkill Township and Phoenixville Borough to hold shredding events in April and October at the CAT Pickering Campus.
- **Participation in Chester County Household Hazardous Waste and E-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 and electronics to any of six collection events held throughout 2014.
- **Yard Waste Disposal Drop-Off:** Charlestown arranged 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 one of six municipalities that belong to the Valley Forge Sewer Authority.

XI. 2014 BUDGET & AUDITING

AUDITING

The Board of Supervisors appointed Barbacane, Thornton & Co. to perform the Annual Audit for 2013-2015 with options for 2016 and 2017. 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 March 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).

BUDGETING

The Charlestown Township Board of Supervisors approved the 2014 budget package at its December 2, 2013 meeting. The 2014 budget consists of four distinct funds: General, Liquid Fuels, Open Space and Bond.

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 2014 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 gas 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.

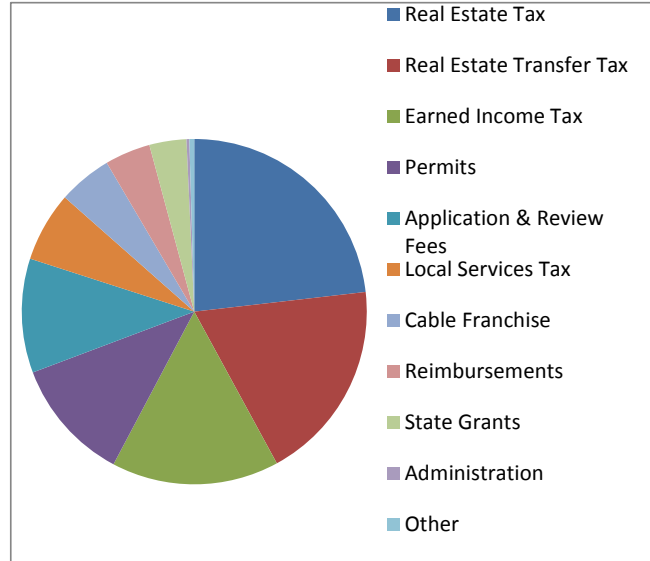
The **Open Space Fund** is funded from the open space tax (1/2 of 1% on earned income) pursuant to PA Act 153 (Open Space Preservation Act) and from the general earned income tax (1/2 of 1% on earned income). The open space tax revenue may only be expended on the acquisition of interests in real property and costs associated with those acquisitions. For 2014, as with previous years, the Supervisors voted to restrict the receipts from the general earned income tax to open space, historic preservation and property maintenance and improvements along with a portion for road improvements.

The **Bond Fund** represents the small balance remaining from the \$1.495M Series 2010 Bond Issue that has yet to be expended on open space acquisitions. This Issue is the only source of Township debt at this time, and in December 2014 the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance authorizing the advance refunding of a portion of the bonds to achieve cost savings on future interest payments. This refunding plan was postponed when interest rates rose following the passage of the ordinance and will move forward in 2015 only if warranted by a fall in rates.

General Fund Income and Expenditures 2014

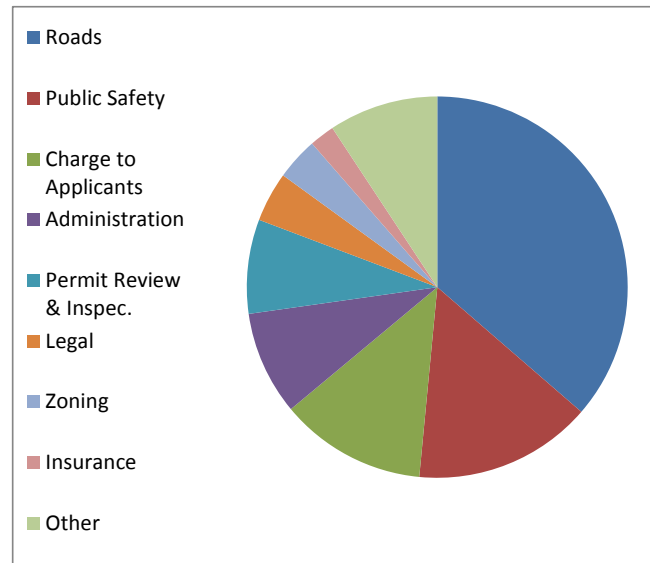
General Fund Income 2014

Real Estate Tax	454,391.53	23.18%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	370,099.74	18.88%
Earned Income Tax	307,763.03	15.70%
Permits	225,823.57	11.52%
Application & Review Fees	209,553.30	10.69%
Local Services Tax	128,005.90	6.53%
Cable Franchise	98,601.79	5.03%
Reimbursements	83,703.70	4.27%
State Grants	68,021.51	3.47%
Administration	5,292.74	0.27%
Other	9,017.26	0.46%
Total:	1,960,274.06	100%



General Fund Expenditures 2014

Roads	649,714.11	36.35%
Public Safety	270,967.43	15.16%
Charge to Applicants	222,350.58	12.44%
Administration	157,468.54	8.81%
Permit Review & Inspec.	142,633.25	7.98%
Legal	75,785.08	4.24%
Zoning	64,345.83	3.60%
Insurance	38,250.02	2.14%
Other	165,869.24	9.28%
Total:	1,621,514.83	100.00%



XII. MISCELLANEOUS

EARTH DAY



Above: Planning Commission's efforts to naturalize the areas along the Rt. 29 Turnpike abutment in Devault

At Right: Scouts helping with litter clean-up at the Brightside Farm

The Township held its 9th annual Earth Day event on April 26th, which was a great success with five scout troops involved at the Brightside Farm, Charlestown Park, Pickering Preserve and Horseshoe Trail. Many residents, including members of our boards, commissions and committees as well as township employees volunteered their time. There were over 125 people involved in the clean-up and beautification efforts.



FILM SHOOT

In January, the Township staff began working with representatives for movie director M. Night Shayamalan to use Desfor Farm on Merlin Road for a film shoot (Sundowning, later renamed The Visit) that took place during February – March.

GENERATORS

In August, the Township Manager obtained six generators at no cost to the Township that were made available by Chester County Emergency Services. These generators will be available to power all the traffic signals in the Township in the event of a wide-range power outage.

STREAM NAMING FOR THE BRANCH OF THE PICKERING CREEK WHICH PARALLELS HOLLOW ROAD PAST THE GREAT VALLEY NATURE CENTER

In April, the Board of Supervisors adopted the stream name proposed by students from the Kids Leadership Academy. The suggested name is "Mushpekat" because the Lenni Lenape Native Americans once inhabited the area, and the Lenape word translates to *Clear Water Run*.