

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Winter 2017 Newsletter

www.charlestown.pa.us

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



Charlestown
T O W N S H I P

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Linda M. Csete

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.

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Great Valley Middle School, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern.

All meetings are open to the public.

Visit our Website at:

www.charlestown.pa.us

<https://www.facebook.com/>

Charlestown Park: Making the Most out of Ordinary Days

Is there really such a thing as quality time? In the span of our lives, admittedly we look back fondly on the vacations, big celebrations and the time our team won the big game.

Yet these don't make up the majority of our days.

Our vision for the now completed renovations at Charlestown Park was simple, because we know that most often the best times of our lives aren't planned. After all, we can't schedule rainbows. We have to be there.

We invite you to visit and enjoy the new pavilions, playgrounds and play areas as well as the popular walking trail that meanders through a beautiful section of our Township.



There are 3 different sizes of pavilions, with the capacity to host 18, 45 or 78 people. They are available to you on a first come, first served basis, but they can also be reserved for a special occasion by completing our reservation form on the Township Website at:

http://www.charlestown.pa.us/permits/CP_pavilion_reservation_form.pdf

Completing the park was a challenge, but now the wait is over. We invite you to take a walk, play a game, enjoy a picnic. Welcome to your park, Charlestown Park.

Tax Information for 2017

Real Estate Taxes: The millage rate for real estate taxes is .75 (3/4) mills, unchanged for 14 years.

Your real estate taxes for 2017 will be collected by the Chester County Treasurer Department.

Tax bills are mailed the week of February 1st to the property owner's address of record. For questions, call the County Treasurer's office at 610-344-6370 or email them at TreasurerDept@chesco.org.

Earned Income Tax and Local Services Tax: Both are collected by the Keystone Collections Group.

Charlestown Township's Earned Income Tax is 1% for residents. The rate for non-residents is 1/2%.

The **Local Services Tax** is \$52.00 per year, deducted by your Charlestown Township employer. Persons earning under \$12,000 per year are exempt from this tax.

Employers throughout Chester County are required to withhold all earned income and local services taxes quarterly. Forms and instructions, including e-filing, can be found at www.keystonecollects.com

*Important Note! If your address is incorrect, **you** are the only one authorized to correct it by sending a letter to: Chester County Assessment Office, P.O. Box 2748, West Chester, PA 19380-0991*

Earned Income Tax Return Due April 18

It's that time of year again. The 2016 local earned income tax return filing deadline is approaching. The due date is extended to Monday April 18 this year because April 15 falls on the weekend and April 17 is Emancipation Day.

Did you know the quickest way to get your refund is to file online? If you live and work in Pennsylvania, you can **e-file** on the tax administrator's secure website, which is available 24/7 at www.KeystoneCollects.com.

Keystone Collections Group's **e-file** is the easy, fast and secure way to file your 2016 tax return. It lets you file your tax return when it is most convenient for you. You will need your W-2, your Social Security Number and any other income documents that may apply (such as a PA-UE or a Schedule C).

Keystone redesigned **e-file** to make it even faster and more user-friendly.

If you have questions regarding local tax filing, visit Keystone's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or call Keystone's **Taxpayer Helpline** at 1-888-328-0565 to speak with a local, knowledgeable Taxpayer Service Agent. You can also email your questions 24/7 to [Taxpayer Support](#). Taxpayer Service Agents try to respond to all online inquiries within three business days.

Thompson Trail



The Entrance to the Thompson Trail from Union Hill is via the Horse Shoe Trail, which loops behind the old Stinson Markley house, and meets with the connector trail that comes up from Aldham Road.



This connector trail crosses Union Hill Road down the hill near the pipeline and leads to the Thompson Trail along the driveway to the Thompson's farm (look for the white blazes along the stone wall, leading to the sign beside the creek.)

The new owners of the Markley House, Peter and Katherine Melchiorre, welcome hikers on the Horse Shoe Trail and the connector trail, but ask that we be careful to stay on the trail! So many of our trails are by permission of private owners, so we ask that you please respect their generosity by observing the blazes and other trail markings and continue to be good stewards of our trail system.



Snow Reminders

The first objective is to have the roadways open for emergency vehicles. This is basically one lane with anti-skid and road salt applied only to areas that require extra traction such as hills and major intersections. The other roads are then opened.

After the snow has ended, the cleanup begins, that is, trying to get the roadways opened "curb-to-curb" and clearing snow and ice from the intersections, fire hydrants, storm water drains and inlets. We ask for your continued patience and understanding during these snow events.

When a plow operator is pushing back the snow and slush from a roadway, the plow must be run at a speed that throws the snow and slush off the road and over what has previously been plowed. This precludes the plow operator from stopping at each driveway and mailbox. If a plow is lifted at a driveway or mailbox, all of the snow and ice in the plow would be dropped on the road causing additional problems.

Which Roads in Charlestown are State Roads?

For Snow Removal and other Maintenance Issues on State Roads listed below, call PennDOT 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		

And When Winter Ends: Join us for Trail Walks!

Wildflower Walk on the Pickering Trail Sunday, April 23, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

- by Esther Underhill



Saturday, April 22 is Earth Day. Let's all do our part to make the earth a better place. Then, on Sunday, April 23, we will take a walk along the Pickering Creek to see what the earth has done for us.

We'll meet at 1:00 at the Charlestown Woolen Mill, on the West side of Charlestown Road, where the road crosses Pickering Creek. The mill will be open and someone will be there to guide us and answer our questions. Then, about 1:30, we'll cross the street to see what wild flowers are blooming. It's different every year, depending on the weather. We'll wander and identify as many flowers as we can, until about 3:00.

McDevitt Trail Walk - Saturday, May 20, 10:00 a.m.

Meet at the Longwood School, Valley Hill and Bodine Roads. We may identify a few plants along the way, but this will just be a walk in the woods. Bring the kids along! The trail is blazed, and a good place for them to learn to follow a trail. We will let them lead us. This is a short trail, so we expect to finish before noon.

Charlestown Township Directory 2017

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Meetings: 1st Monday of each Month, 7:00 P.M., at the Great Valley Middle School

Frank A. Piliero, Chairman	fpiliero@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 458-4180
Charles A. Philips, Vice Chairman	cphilips@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 933-4154
Kevin R. Kuhn, Member	kkuhn@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 917-9960
Michael J. Rodgers, Member	mrodgers@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 827-7817
Hugh D. Willig, Member	hwillig@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 935-3539

ADMINISTRATION: Office Hours are Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Linda M. Csete, Manager/Secretary-Treasurer	manager@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 240-0326
Jan C. Bird, Assistant Township Secretary	admin2@charlestown.pa.us	(610) 240-0326

BUILDING INSPECTOR/CODES: Anthony Merklinger – amerklinger@cornerstoneis.comcast.biz.net (610) 451-5200

PROPERTY & PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATOR: Timothy J. Hubbard – thubbard@charlestown.pa.us (610) 614-6119

ROADS AND PUBLIC WORKS: Roadmaster/Project Manager: Jim Thompson (610) 656-9315

TOWNSHIP ENGINEER/ZONING OFFICER: Daniel T. Wright, P.E. – dwright@advancedgeoservices.com (610) 840-9100

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

Pennsylvania State Police (610) 486-6280

PennDOT Maintenance for State Roads (484) 340-3200

For Township & County Real Estate Taxes: Chester County Treasurer (610) 344-6370

For Great Valley School District Real Estate Taxes: Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100

For Earned Income & Local Services Taxes: Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100

SPCA (610) 692-6113

2017 Tentative Dates for Chester County Household Hazardous Waste Events

Charlestown Township is a 2017 Participant in the Chester County Hazardous Household Waste Event Program. Bring unwanted hazardous household, automotive products, home maintenance, lawn and pest control products to the next Collection event. There are six events as listed below, all from 9 am – 3 pm. For a list of items Accepted and Not Accepted, go to: www.chestercountyswa.org/DocumentCenter/View/1475

Saturday, April 8, 2017
Technical College High School (formerly CAT Pickering)
1580 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Saturday, April 11, 2017
Octorara High School
226 Highland Road
Atglen, PA 19310
(Proof of County Residency May be Required)

Saturday, May 20, 2017
Owen J. Roberts Middle School
881 Ridge Road
Pottstown, PA 19465

Friday, June 23, 2017
Coatesville Learning Center
1425 East Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320
(Stone Wall Entrance – Veterans' Drive - same entrance as CAT Brandywine- Rt. 30 across from Dairy Queen)

Saturday, Sept. 9, 2017
Oxford School District Admin. Building
125 Bell Tower Lane
Oxford, PA 19363
(Proof of County Residency May be Required)

Saturday, October 7, 2017
Government Services Center
601 Westtown Rd, West Chester, PA 19380

Progress Update on the Devault Rail Trail

Consultants Campbell Thomas & Co are working with our Devault Trail Committee to plan the next steps for the Devault Rail Trail. Meetings were held this past fall with Chester County to gain a better understanding of how the Devault Branch fits into the entire strategy for rail-trails on Norfolk Southern lines throughout Chester County and the regional trail network. Here is what's happened so far:



*Most people have never had the opportunity to see the beauty of the Potential Devault Trail.
- Photo by Bob Thomas*

- The Devault Rail Trail Feasibility Study was completed in October 2015 and was adopted by Charlestown Township and Chester County.
- Campbell Thompson & Co. (CTC) is working with Charlestown Township to gain municipal support, initiate negotiations for right-of-way acquisition, seek additional funding opportunities and make overall progress in the development of the Devault Rail Trail.
- Since completion of the Study, CTC has set up an initial project schedule detailing required negotiations, stakeholder meetings and a deadline checklist. CTC has also developed a trail funding spreadsheet and is tracking funding opportunities for future acquisition and implementation.
- CTC met with the Patriots Path Task Force in Tredyffrin Township on 4/12/16 to discuss the Trail and coordinate with other ongoing projects. Funding opportunities were discussed for all projects.
- On 7/7/16, CTC discussed the project with Chester County to coordinate with other County priorities and Norfolk Southern negotiations and to determine appropriate next steps for the Devault Line ROW acquisition.
- Since the 7/7/16 meeting, Bob Thomas initiated discussion with Rudy Husband at Norfolk Southern to understand future operations of the Devault Line and communicate interest in ROW acquisition for the trail corridor.
- On 10/5/16, Mr. Thomas attended the Chester County Planners Forum. He participated in a discussion about the County's involvement in all the unused Norfolk Southern lines in Chester County with potential for trail use, including the Devault Trail.
- To further progress negotiations and support of adjacent communities and impacted stakeholders, CTC is acquiring letters of support for the Trail. This includes contacting Tredyffrin Township, Phoenixville Borough, Schuylkill Township and East Whiteland Township.
- CTC met with Tredyffrin Township on 8/1/16 to discuss the Devault Rail Trail and the Valley Forge to Heinz Refuge Trail, as well as the future possibility of connecting the Devault Trail to the Chester Valley Trail via the Warner Spur Trail.
- On 10/12/16, CTC attended a Chester County Trail Status Meeting to discuss County trail priorities and potential funding for all Chester County Circuit Trails.
- Mr. Thomas has attended several monthly meetings of The Circuit, our regional trail network, and assures that planning for the Devault Trail is coordinated with other connecting Circuit Trails.

Organic Community Gardening at Brightside Farm Park

The Brightside Farm Community Gardens are made available each year to interested local gardeners who are able and willing to make a full season commitment to managing a plot.

These 20' x 20' plots (400 sq. ft.) go quickly, so we anticipate a waiting list for the 2017 season. However, the Garden operates on a rolling enrollment basis should plots become available.

If you are a returning gardener or a new one, complete the form below and return it to the Township Office by March 15th to reserve a plot.



At right: Brightside Farm, photo by A. Motel

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BRIGHTSIDE FARM PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Please Check One:

- I am a returning gardener and would like to keep my plot # ____.
- I am a returning gardener and would like to be assigned a new plot #.
- I am a new gardener and would like to be assigned a plot.
- I gardened in the past but won't be renewing my plot this season.

Instructions:

Please return this form with your annual \$25.00 garden fee to the Township Office with checks made payable to Charlestown Township by March 15th to reserve your garden plot for the upcoming season. Mail to: Charlestown Township, P.O. Box 507, Devault, PA 19432.

Please Note:

1. Returning Gardeners are given priority but must return this form with their payment by March 15th to keep their plot from the previous year.
2. After March 15th, plots will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Charlestown residents will be given priority.
3. Only one plot per gardener will be assigned, in order to provide them to more people.
4. If there are vacant plots after April 15th, we will then allow gardeners to have more than one plot. We'll notify you if there are any available.
5. Garden Plot Registration is handled by the administrative office (610) 240-0326 or admin1@charlestown.pa.us
6. The Garden Coordinator is Charles Buck, who can be contacted at buck.charles.a@gmail.com

Acknowledgement: I, _____ hereby acknowledge that I will maintain my plot as an organic space, with no synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.



PennDOT Updates

New Law affecting the Vehicle Registration Process

Act 89, which became law on November 25, 2013, provided for several changes that take effect beginning in 2017. Below are details to those changes.

Elimination of Registration Stickers, 2-Year Registration, & On-line Printing of Registration Cards

Act 89 provided for the elimination of vehicle registration stickers and for a two-year registration renewal effective December 31, 2016. For information related to the elimination of the registration sticker, please visit PennDOT's website and review the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers page for customers.

As a convenience, the link to the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers is:

<http://www.dmv.pa.gov/Pages/FAQ%20Pages/Elimination-of-Stickers.aspx>.

During this transition, PennDOT is providing customer information with the registration card that informs customers that as a result of ACT 89, PennDOT will no longer issue registration expiry stickers effective December 31, 2016.

Enhanced Online Registration Renewal Process

As a result of the elimination of registration stickers, PennDOT was able to continue its efforts to modernize processes. One such modernization is the new enhancement to the online registration renewal process where a customer will print his or her own registration credential.

PennDOT will no longer issue registration cards to customers who renew online. About 40% of PennDOT's customers renew their registration online through the PennDOT website.

Please note effective December 31, 2016, this permanent registration which is printed by the customer through the Department's website will not be printed on Department issued paper. These customer-printed registrations will be seen on plain paper and serve as a valid permanent registration credential. These website printed registrations will maintain the Department's barcode for scanning.

Increases the Period of Time that a Pennsylvania Intransit Registration Plate is Valid

Effective January 3, 2017, cardboard temporary intransit plates will be issued for a 60 day period rather than a 30 day period. The cardboard temporary intransit registration plates and cards are issued to a vehicle acquired in the Commonwealth for transportation to another jurisdiction for the purposes of titling and registering in that jurisdiction.

It is important to note that during the transition period, PennDOT will be exhausting all inventory stock which currently contains the words "Pennsylvania 30 Day Temporary Intransit" printed at the top of the in transit registration plate. This means you will see intransit registration plates that have a 30-day notice printed at the top, however, the intransit registration plate will have the 60-day expiration date recorded in the expiration date fields.

In addition, the system-generated credential provided to the customer will reflect the 60-day validity period.

Charlestown Township Meeting Schedule 2017

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Board of Supervisors Room 154, 7:00 p.m.	3	6 *	6	3	1	5	3	7	5 **	2	6	4
Planning Commission Room 154, 7:30 p.m.	10	14 *	14	11	9	13	11	8	12	10	14	12
Historical Commission Guidance Office, 4:00 p.m.	17	None	21	None	16	None	18	None	19	None	21	None
Parks & Recreation Room 154, 7:30 p.m.	19	16	16	20	18	15	20	17	21	19	16	21

*meeting to be held in Library

** Meeting to be held on a day other than the usual meeting day

All Boards and Commissions meet at the Great Valley Middle School, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern, Pa. Room 154 unless otherwise noted by an asterisk.

Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change. All meetings are advertised in the Daily Local News and posted on our website at www.charlestown.pa.us Additional meetings are scheduled as needed. Call the Township Office if you'd like to confirm a particular meeting. (610) 240-0326.

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