

Charlestown Township Newsletter

Spring 2019 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



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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MONTHLY 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.
at the Great Valley High School

Parks & Recreation

3rd Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

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

All meetings are open to the public, and we invite and encourage your participation.

Great Valley Nature Center Update

- by Kevin Kuhn, Supervisor



Charlestown Township has had numerous inquiries about the status of the Great Valley Nature Center. Many assume this was a Township related entity, which it is not. The Nature Center was founded back in 1974 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Nature Center property was donated along with initial start-up funds by Arnold Bartschi, the founder of Swiss Pines. At that time there was also a conservation easement placed on the property by the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

On March 2, 2017 the board of directors of the Nature Center held a public meeting and announced that the Nature Center had run out of funds and due to mounting debt were dissolving the organization. Both the conservation easement as well as the original articles of incorporation for the Nature Center provide that if it ceases operations as a “nature center” the property reverts back to the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

In 2017, when the Nature Center ceased active operations on the property, there was an outstanding mortgage on the property held by Phoenixville Federal Bank & Trust. Both the Township and the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust have made attempts to work with the bank to address the mortgage debt and the conservation easement with approval from the Attorney General of Pennsylvania.

The bank recently initiated a foreclosure action on the property with the intention of selling it to a private landowner. The Township continues to actively engage the parties with the goal of public ownership of this community resource.

It has been a long and complicated process, but we are hopeful that the many issues will be resolved in 2019.



Charlestown Township Meeting Location Moved for July and August

Due to renovations planned at the Middle School, all Township meetings for July and August have been relocated to the Great Valley High School. This includes the following meetings:

July 1	Board of Supervisors
July 9	Planning Commission
July 19	Historical Commission/HARB
July 21	Parks & Recreation Board
Aug 5	Board of Supervisors
Aug 13	Planning Commission
Aug 15	Parks & Recreation Board

Directions to the Great Valley High School Choral Room (Room 227):

For general access: Park in the back of the High School near Door #6, which will be open for visitors. Upon entering the building, turn right at the first hallway and the choral room is on the right.

For handicapped access: Park at the side of the High School near Door #1. Upon entering the building, turn left at the first hallway and go the length of the hall until you can turn left. The choral room is on the right.

Note: The Environmental Advisory Committee meetings, which are scheduled to meet in the Great Valley High School Library, are not affected.

Charlestown Township Parks and Recreation invite you to...

CommUNITY Yoga

Second Saturdays @ 9:00—10:00 am

April 13 • May 11 • June 8 • July 13 • August 10 • September 14 • October 12

CHARLESTOWN PARK

100 Academic Way, Phoenixville, PA 19460

- Gentle flow for all levels
- Bring a yoga mat, towel, and water
- Please arrive 15 minutes early to sign a waiver and get settled
- Donation-based to benefit local organizations
- Pre-registration is encouraged: <http://bit.ly/charlestownparkyoga>



Three Upcoming Events

May 27th: Memorial Day Commemorative Service Charlestown Presbyterian Cemetery



The Charlestown Historical Society will have a ceremony on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27th from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Charlestown Presbyterian Cemetery. This annual ceremony will honor over 250 soldiers buried there and all the men and women who have served our country in the military. All are invited to attend to honor these brave people.

The cemetery is located at 2475 Charlestown Road opposite the Charlestown Playhouse. People are welcome to park in the Playhouse parking lots.

June 20th: Free Concert at the Wisner-Rapp House Adjacent to Brightside Farm Park

The Charlestown Historical Society is sponsoring a FREE CONCERT being held at the Wisner-Rapp House (located on Yellow Springs Road between Hollow and Valley Hill Roads) on Thursday, June 20 between 7 and 9 pm featuring a James Taylor Tribute Band. Bring your lawn chairs and beach blankets.



Park in the Trail lot adjacent to the Rapp House.

Come and enjoy the music and one of the most beautiful views in the Township!

Sat. Aug. 24th: Butterfly Walk at Brightside Farm Park - 11:00 a.m.



Fritillary caterpillars eat violets.

Our walk will begin in the fields near the parking lot, walking mostly on the grass trails. Then we'll check out the Community Gardens, where there are many treats for both butterflies and birds. Last year's hike was on a cloudy rainy day, so we saw few butterflies. Butterflies seek cover at the first signs of rain.

Imagine the size of a rain drop and the size and weight of a butterfly and you'll understand why! We're hoping for sunshine this year so butterflies will be out soaking up energy from the sun to get their batteries charged.

Meet in the parking lot at 3040 Yellow Springs Road. As we will be in the sun wear a hat and sunscreen and bring water.

Esther Underhill, cell for day of walk:
267-615-1577

Spring Earth Day Event

Charlestown held its 15th annual Earth Day event on April 6th this year and once again we were impressed with the strong turnout. This year, in addition to roadside litter clean up, there were various maintenance projects completed at Charlestown Park, and birdhouses installed at Brightside Farm Park. The weather cooperated tremendously.

We had approximately 110 volunteers and collected over 250 bags of trash. Here's the day in pictures:



Coldstream Road

Residents and members of the Environmental Advisory Committee tackled the enormous amount of litter along Coldstream Road. Benburb Road resident Jill Williams initiated the effort to tackle this long-neglected area.

Due to the dangerous curve, high speed, and traffic on this road, we obtained a permit from PennDOT to close the road from 7 am to 9 am in order to make it safe for our volunteers. Fire Marshal Tim Hubbard and Paul Jorgensen handled traffic control.

Roadmaster Jim Thompson collected two truck loads of bags, plus Tim's additional trailer load, adding up to over 100 bags of litter! Car parts and a lawn chair were among the items found.

Thanks go to: Jill Williams, Veda Maany, Carol Armstrong, Glenn Bromley, Lillian, Jaime, James and Julia Cook, Rachel Durrell, Andrea and Nicole Hajnik, Amy Kokas, Jane and Martin Lintott, Veda Maany, Phil McLeod, Pete and Laura Prell, Bill Sauerteig, and Paul Jorgensen.

Brightside Farm Park

EAC and Planning Commission member Dan Walker brought his own equipment and son Carter to install a kestrel house on an existing pole, and two Eastern Screech Owl houses along the wood line, all of which need to be at a higher elevation than other bird houses.

Planning Commissioner Andy Motel and former P.C. member Mike Allen put up 10 Blue Bird Houses.

We thank Edie Parnum, from "Backyards for Birds" and the Valley Forge Audubon Society for recommendations on siting the boxes.



Dan and Carter Walker below the Kestrel house.

Other volunteers working throughout the Township include: Supervisors Kevin Kuhn and Charlie Philips, John Pickering, Dough & Wendy Leland, the Mount family, Jerry Moore, Carol Craig, Kalyn Thies, Peter Hall, the Stahl family, George & Linda Csete, Hugh Trexler, Martina Vozarova & family, Cahd Sidaco, and students from the Great Valley High School Environmental Enthusiasts Club.



Pickering Dam Trail

Safer areas are available for families with young children and are a great opportunity to learn about the environment while having some fun.

The Longuas, with daughters Margot on the left, and Calla on the right, cleaned up an area along the Pickering Creek frequented by fishermen.

They stand next to the state bridge on Pickering Dam Road that was constructed in 1918 and is slated for replacement in 2022.

Charlestown Park

Parks & Recreation Board Chairman Chris Lawrence headed the efforts at the Park, which included mulching for 40 young trees and general park cleanup.

Litter crews also worked along Township Line Road adjacent to the Park. They picked up 10 bags of trash including 2 tires, installed a rain water control bar on the nature trail, and killed lanternfly eggs.

A subgroup headed off to the Pickering Trail to collect trash and take pictures for future trail repair.

Troop 440

Below: Girl Scout Troop 440 with Scout Leader Jeannine Espenshade have taken care of clean up at Brightside Farm Park since 2013.



Charlestown Meadows Community

With coordination from HOA President Frank Pafumi, residents of the Charlestown Meadows community have been holding an annual clean up event for their open space areas for 11 years.

Our thanks go to all these groups featured above, and all the individuals who donated their time to our Township, with apologies to anyone we've overlooked!

A Discourse on Litter: From Pet Peeve to Grave Concern

by Veda Maany, Environmental Advisory Committee

While traveling through a third world country in my more youthful days, I was impressed by the close family units, the commitment to tradition and culture, and the beautiful backdrop of the colorful saris amid the city smog. But I also felt disheartened by the litter, the trash strewn everywhere on the streets and along the countryside observed on the long train rides to other cities. One day, feeling emboldened by youthful hubris, I confronted a man for throwing his trash out the window while on the train ride. This, of course, ended in an unpleasant confrontation between foreign tourist versus native as you might imagine. In my mind, I was just speaking up for the one without a voice; our environment.

Fast forward 15 years. I experience those same sentiments as I drive in my own neighborhood in a country that created the concept of “Keep America Beautiful”. Since when did Cold Stream Road become a designated trash can? What has happened? Is it our increased use of plastics that overflow our small recycling bins placed on the curb for a little wind to blow them into the local stream? Or is it a teenager carelessly throwing the trash out the window thinking, well why not, there’s trash all over the place.



How is it that on my own little country road, less than a mile long, I pick up at least a grocery bag full of trash on my weekly leisurely walks? What is going on here? By the way, have you heard of plogging? It’s the newest exercise-jogging while picking up trash. I

recommend it!

Regardless of the root cause, which is multi-factorial, we need to take action. We all need to be concerned about the plastic trash contaminating and clogging



our local streams, leaching plastic by-products into the soil, into our groundwater, and ultimately depositing into our own bodies.

With regards to action, we just had Charlestown Township Earth Day clean-up this past April 6th, where a number of motivated

volunteers spent hours picking up trash covering a small area in our neighborhoods. The township had applied for PennDOT approval to close Coldstream for 2 hours that morning, and we accomplished a thorough clean-up job! It is quite involved to close off state roads, such as Charlestown Road, even for a few hours, requiring planning and coordinating with the Fire Marshal and PennDOT while ensuring we have enough volunteers to make it worthwhile.



What is the long-term solution you may ask? I am not sure. But every little bit counts. Pick up trash when you can; don’t just walk by it. You may have to take a small trash bag with you on your leisurely walks. Make sure you don’t overfill your trash and recycling receptacles.

Advocate for your neighborhood by calling your trash company to use a receptacle with a lid. Use reusable bags. Use less plastic, even if you avidly recycle. Forgo the plastic water bottle and buy a reusable food grade stainless steel water bottle. Let’s even give it a marketable trendy name: **“mindful material management”**.

Rabies Prevention

Each summer there are instances of residents who are exposed to sick or injured animals that show symptoms of rabies, which is prevalent in Chester County.

Prevention

1. The best protection against rabies is to get your pets vaccinated. PA Law requires that all dogs and non-feral cats 16 weeks of age and older be vaccinated and boosters administered as proscribed.
2. Avoid wild animals with symptoms of rabies. Do not approach or touch unfamiliar animals.
3. Check your back yard before allowing your children or pets outside.
4. Block any openings into your house that an animal may get in through.
5. Keep tamper-proof lids on outside garbage cans so animals are not attracted to your property.
6. Don't leave water bowls outside for your pets! If a rabid animal drinks from one, your pet will be exposed!

If you have been Bitten or Scratched by an Animal

1. **Wash** the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
2. Call your doctor immediately for treatment.
3. **Contact** the Chester County Health Department Division of Communicable Diseases at 610-344-6452.

If you have Concerns about an Animal being Exposed

If the animal is wild:

- Keep an eye on the animal so that it can be captured. Call the Township's Animal Control Officer: Mark Cabot at (610) 909-6403 (cell)
- If the animal was not captured, it is assumed that the animal was rabid and you will need to be vaccinated as soon as possible if you were bitten or scratched.

If the animal is domestic (Pet or livestock):

- Contact the PA Dept of Agriculture at 717-443-1199
- If you know the owner, determine if the animal is currently vaccinated.
- If the animal shows signs of rabies, it will be euthanized and you need to be vaccinated as soon as possible if you were bitten or scratched.

Coming Soon: Environmental Educational Series

The Charlestown Township Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) has designed a series of educational events to support the community's interest in a cleaner, sustainable and healthier environment. The first was held in April on the Spotted Lanternfly threat to our neighborhood's beautiful woodlands and the wider damage to Pennsylvania's agricultural economy.

At Right: The invasive Spotted Lanternfly.

Although it has two pairs of wings, it jumps more than it flies.



The EAC is planning to hold further events in the early and late Fall on "Staying healthy in the Countryside" and "Trees our best Neighbors". Please watch the Township website and weekly news for specific dates, times and place as these are finalized.

Devault Quarry

Many residents, including new arrivals at Spring Oak and Pickering Crossing, live close to the Devault Quarry, owned by Allan Myers.

The quarry produces granite aggregate products.

If you'd like to receive a phone call prior to blasting, call them at 610-296-1793 and ask to be placed on the call list.

Preserved Open Space

Thank you to Karen Beam and Jane Dugdale, for placing their 10.4 acre property on Buckwalter Road under easement with the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust.

The placement of two additional easements on Union Hill Road properties is being finalized and we hope to see them completed later this year.

Reminder on Septic System Spring Cleaning

- by R. Findlay, Environmental Advisory Committee

January 2020, the deadline to avoid penalty for not maintaining your septic system, is approaching fast. Just a reminder to check your records to confirm you have pumped your septic system in the past three years **and** that your vendor has recorded that with the Township. Now with the spring thaw it is the perfect time to have your system inspected and pumped. If you want to check the township records please call Linda Csete, Township Manager, at 610-240-0326. For further useful information on maintaining your system and a list of Chester County licensed liquid waste haulers please use the link www.chesco.org/365/Sewage-Water.

Below is an excerpt from our Code of Ordinances on septic maintenance requirements:

Section 18-205 Maintenance of On-Lot Sewage Systems [Ord. 150-2008, 11/3/2008, Sec. 5]

Individual On-Lot Sewage Disposal Systems. The owner of a lot, which uses an individual on-lot sewage disposal system as a means of sanitary sewage disposal, must have the treatment tank(s) pumped out by a liquid waste hauler and the contents disposed of at a licensed sewage disposal facility at least once every three years or whenever an inspection of the treatment tank reveals that it is filled with solids or liquid in excess of one-third the liquid depth of the tank. Every owner of a treatment tank system existing on any lot on the effective date of this Part shall submit proof of the required pumping and disposal to the Township's Code Enforcement Officer or to the Chester County Septage management Data System, not later than 90 days from the date of enactment.

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