



Franklin Township Newsletter

Chester County, PA

Volume 3 Issue 2

Summer 2008

Message from the Chairman

Welcome. Thanks for checking out the latest Franklin Township newsletter. Please always feel free to make any suggestions for content in future issues.

A frequently cited expression concerning real estate is that the top three factors are location, location and location. Coincidentally, there are three top factors in achieving success in keeping an area as rural as legally achievable..... willing landowners, willing landowners and willing landowners. Pennsylvania state law is extremely biased in favor of subdivision and sprawl, so willing landowners are absolutely crucial to success in land preservation efforts. Here again, Franklin Township is blessed with many conservation oriented property owners who are working with Franklin's tireless Open Space Committee.

To put it mildly, the permanent preservation of property, by working with willing landowners and various funding sources, is a complex and lengthy process. This makes it crucial to not "count chickens before they are hatched." That said, within the next 3-6-9 months, for those wanting to see Franklin remain as rural as legally achievable, there will hopefully be numerous fabulous success stories to report—thanks to willing landowners.

We sincerely hope that you find these newsletters informative and helpful. Should you have any questions about information in the newsletter, or any other Township related matters, please always feel free to get in touch. My personal contact info is 610-255-4592 or rwwhipple1@aol.com.

Dick Whipple, Chairman FTBOS

Documenting FT's Plant Diversity

There were 850 different plant species found in Franklin Township as Janet Ebert and Jack Holt walked the roads, streams, and some properties of Franklin Township from February through October of 2007. This makes Franklin Township's plant diversity the second highest in the region (first place goes to Kennett Township with 862).

According to Phil Geoghegan, chairman of the Open Space Committee, the Township had the botanical survey done to guide the Open Space Committee in determining what properties had botanical resources that should be protected through in-fee or easement acquisition. The botanical survey also supports the larger effort spearheaded by the White Clay Creek Watershed Management Committee to document the botanical resources throughout the watershed.

Of the 850 species, 583 or 68.5 percent, were native species and 267, or 31.5 percent, were non-native plants. Sixteen plant species of special concern (e.g., Rare, Endangered, etc) were found at 42 sites. Over 20 Exceptional Natural Areas and Rare Plant Species Sites were documented. A number of promising sites, which were not surveyed because of lack of time or access, have been listed for further work.

One of the fascinating discoveries of the Survey was a white buttercup that hasn't been seen along the East Coast since the 1920s. This and a second site that was recently found in Fair Hill are the only two sites known. According to Ebert, this discovery would not have been made without the Township project.

The Open Space Committee and Township Supervisors will use the information to guide selection of sites for preservation (many of



This meadow along Church Hill Road was identified as an Exceptional Natural Area.

the Exceptional Natural Areas are already preserved or have plans for preservation), to plan trails to point out or avoid rare plants, and to design trails to educate the Township's and regional residents - especially the children - on the diversity and value of these resources and efforts to protect them.

The White Clay National Wild and Scenic Management Committee/National Park Service, a TreeVitalize grant, and Township Open Space Funds funded Franklin Township's Botanical Study. The Brandywine Conservancy and the Franklin Township Open Space Committee assisted Ebert and Holt with the survey.

Ebert and Holt's detailed report, Botanical Survey of Franklin Township: Including Identification of Exceptional Natural Areas and Rare Plant Species Sites. Fieldwork 2007, Report 2008 can be found from a link on Franklin Township's website: www.franklintownship.us.

The Scoop on Kemblesville Construction

Along Route 896 between the Kemblesville "elbow" and Route 841 are three construction projects. The former Kemblesville Elementary School is receiving a major renovation; the Kemblesville United Methodist Church is completing an addition; and the Cornerstone Presbyterian Church is just starting on its expansion project. Curious about what is involved with each of these projects? The details are below.

Former KES property

The Avon Grove Charter School purchased the former Kemblesville Elementary School from Avon Grove School District. It has embarked on an ambitious construction schedule to complete a major renovation for the start of the 2008-09 school year.

The building was completely gutted with asbestos removal and mold remediation a priority. All rooms will remain the same size and the entire building will be ADA compliant when complete. The roof and the kitchen are being replaced. New modular classrooms are replacing the older modulars in the middle of the building. The stage is being refurbished.

As of June, the project is on schedule and over 55 percent complete. In September, the school will house Avon Grove Charter School's approximately 475 kindergarten through second grade students.

According to Avon Grove Charter School's spokesperson Donna Archer, "We are excited for our families and looking forward to building a relationship with the community and the Township."

The name of the school is still undecided. Avon Grove Charter School is in the process of asking its school community to submit suggestions. The student body will

vote on a name in the near future.

Kemblesville United Methodist Church

Construction is moving right along on a 10,000 sq. ft. addition to Kemblesville United Methodist Church. The project features a 4,500 sq. ft. multipurpose room and 5,500 sq. ft. divided into nine meeting rooms.

KUMC's pastor, Dave Bergstrom, said the reason for the expansion was the church was growing and needed more space. The new space will allow more room for scouting and community programs, as well as provide rooms dedicated to the church's day school. He is excited that the church will be able to accommodate more community groups at the same time with this new addition.

Cornerstone Presbyterian Church

At the beginning of the construction process, with site development and foundation work being completed now, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church expects to finish its 16,000 sq. ft. expansion within the next 18 months.

The project features a 3,600 sq. ft. Fellowship Hall, new nursery area, a two-story classroom section, expanded offices, and renovated entry. The expansion will also allow the Landenberg Christian Academy, which leases space from the church, to continue its expansion, too.

Pastor Mark VanGilst said there were a lot of things the church would like to do but was not able to because of space limitations. The expansion will allow the church to do more for the community. He said the church is happy to be part of the Township. The grounds are being used for community activities and events are going on all the time.

New WGFC Substation Coming Soon

West Grove Fire Company (WGFC) is planning to build a substation on Route 896 at Nichol Park, near Flint Hill Road. Although not officially within Franklin Township's borders, the new substation could positively affect the response time to emergencies for Franklin Township residents.

One benefit of a closer fire station is that this may lower premiums for homeowner's insurance policies.



The new fire station is progressing through the planning stages with London Britain Township. It is hoped that ground breaking will occur later this year.

Residents interested in joining the West Grove Fire Company as volunteers are encouraged to learn more at their website: www.wgfc.org. When the new station is complete, it is hoped that residents from this area will be willing to volunteer when a station is much closer to home.

News and Notes

SWIMMING POOLS: Any swimming pool over 24-inches in depth requires a permit. Franklin Township recently enacted Resolution No. 2007-07, which permits erection of prefabricated swimming pools greater than 24-inches deep for a \$30.00 permit fee. The permit is valid for two years, after which the permit will be renewed and the pool reinspected. These pools must be surrounded by a minimal 4-foot fence barrier.

MOWING: Grass, noxious plants, weeds and vegetation shall be maintained regularly. This does not apply to agricultural uses or wetland and woodland areas. Property owners with excessive vegetative growth may be subject to fines up to \$500.00. Call the Township Office for more details.

TRIM SHRUBS AND BUSHES: Residents should not plant flowers, trees, and shrubs in the right-of-way (up to 15 feet from the edge of the road) along roads. Taller plants and shrubs in the right-of-way can cause sight line and safety issues. If your property has plants and shrubs within the right-of-way, please keep them trimmed back for the safety of others.

COVER TRASH CONTAINERS: Please keep lids on trash containers to keep the contents protected from the wind and animals. When placing recycling at the curb side, make sure papers are weighed down or covered to keep papers from blowing out.

RECYCLING: Not sure what to recycle or when and where to take your household hazardous waste? Check out the Chester County Solid Waste Authority's website at www.chestercountyswa.org.

Volunteers Wanted!

Are you interested in preserving the history of Franklin Township or developing a trail network through the Township? The Franklin Township Historical Commission and the Trails Committee are both seeking volunteers.

The Historical Commission works to research, collect, document, and share the history of the Township, as well as report on the condition of the historic landscape throughout the Township. The meetings are held the third Tuesday of odd months at 7 pm.

The Trails Committee, which works closely with the Open Space Committee to identify and implement recreational trails, meets the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Both meetings are held at the Township building and are open to the public.

Before you dig – Call 811

Did you know there could be up to five separate underground utilities running through your property? To help keep you safe, and the power, cable, phone lines, gas lines, and pipelines of the community operating, it is mandatory to call 811 before you dig!

Pennsylvania One Call has joined all other states across the country in implementing the new 811 phone number. It is the only number you need to remember to call be-

fore digging into the ground with any type of power equipment, including posthole diggers and rototillers.

One caveat, if calling from out of state (i.e. at work in Delaware or Maryland) a call to 811 will take you to the state that you are calling from. The operator will be able to transfer the call to the appropriate state.

More information can be found online at www.pa1call.org.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Building and Zoning Permit Requirements

The Uniform Construction Code took effect in Pennsylvania on April 9, 2004. This Code mandates that both residential and non-residential construction projects be inspected by certified inspectors to ascertain code compliance. Franklin Township has opted to enlist the services of LTL Consultants to perform all plan reviews and inspection services.

Building permits are required for any type of construction other than ordinary repairs. Repairs are defined as the reconstruction or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance. Such things as replacing shingles, siding, doors, or windows does not require a permit.

Examples of projects that do require permits include:

- Garages, sheds, horse barns, and storage buildings
- Both in-ground and above-ground swimming pools (including inflatable pools)
- Decks, patios, porches, and porch roofs
- Additions, new homes, renovations and remodeling that result in structural changes to a building

The following are answers to more common building-related questions:

- You do not need sealed drawings for

residential projects

- Agricultural buildings (structures used to store hay, feed, grain, or other agricultural or horticultural products or to house poultry, livestock, or other farm animals, and milk houses) are exempt from building permit requirements
- Stair requirements are 8 1/4" riser height maximum and 9" tread minimum
- The frost footing depth is 36" minimum
- Most new non-residential structures must be ADA compliant

Zoning Ordinances are land use regulations created as a means of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the general public. Zoning is a method of separating dissimilar land uses by establishing zones, which permit comparable uses to be located adjacent to one another. Any change in use of a property, new construction or demolition requires a Zoning Permit.

Applications for permits are available at the Township Municipal Building, 20 Municipal Lane, Kemblesville. Questions regarding building and zoning can be directed to Duane Brady, Township Building Inspector and Zoning Officer, at 610.255.5212. His office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:15 to 11:30 am.

Township Directory

Board of Supervisors

Dick Whipple, Chairman
Paul Overton, Vice Chairman
Eric Brindle, Member
Norman Hughes, Member
Nan Latimer, Member

Administration

Stephen Ross, Interim Township Manager/Secretary
Jeffrey Eastburn, Assistant Township Manager
Joan McVaugh, Treasurer
Sharon Norris, Secretary
Duane Brady, Building Inspector and Zoning Officer

Contact Information

In person:

20 Municipal Lane
Kemblesville, Pa. 19347
Office Hours: M-F, 8 am-4 pm

By Phone: 610-255-5212

By Fax: 610-255-0659

By Mail:

P. O. Box 118
Kemblesville, PA 19347

Email:

franklin-twp@verizon.net

On the web:

www.franklintownship.us

Township Meetings

All meetings are held in the meeting room at the Township Office.

Work Session-

2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm

Board Meeting-

3rd Wednesday of the month, 7pm

Planning Commission-

1st Thursday of the month, 7pm

Historical Architectural Review Board and Historic Commission-

3rd Tuesday, odd months, 7pm

Open Space Committee-

2nd Monday of the month, 6:30pm

Want more info? The Township's website is being continuously updated!

www.franklintownship.us

The Franklin Township Newsletter is published by the Franklin Township Board of Supervisors and produced by Lucas Communications and Publications.

Fish Really Do Grow on Trees

That is, they need trees to grow.

Trees along a stream bank maintain the health of the stream and the fish population in it and become a forested riparian zone.

Benefits of a forested riparian buffer are:

- Maintains the stream bank. The root systems of large woody plants keep the banks from eroding. Eroding banks clog streams with sediment.
- Prevents pollution of the stream by lawn fertilizers or run-off from roads.
- Supplies food for many of the critters that live in the stream, including fish.

- Shades the stream, allowing fish, such as trout that need cold water, to survive.
- Improves wildlife habitat.
- Provides a natural corridor for wildlife.
- Enhances water quality.

If you have a streamside area on or near your property, please try to maintain it as a riparian buffer. Remove only invasive species and replace them with natives. A healthy stream system is dependent on your help.

Used with the permission of the Brandywine Valley Association



Elk Creek near Strickersviller Road

Commissioner visits FT



(L to R) Supervisor Eric Brindle, Chester County Commissioner Kathi Cozzone, Supervisor Nan Latimer, and Open Space Chairman Phil Geoghegan met at the Franklin Township Building this spring. Commissioner Cozzone then toured Franklin Township and learned about its Open Space initiatives and plans. Thanks Commissioner Cozzone for spending time with us!

Service to our Community

Crossan Park received some much needed sprucing up this spring with the help of over 30 volunteers from the New London Presbyterian Church.

According to Debbie Gebauer, who coordinated the outreach between her church and the Township, this was an opportunity to do something special for the community.

The group managed to mulch the walking trails, trim shrubs, do some weeding, pick up trash, and plant flowers in the four raised beds by the comfort station.

"They did a great job," said Assistant Township Manager Jeff Eastburn. "We thank them for helping to make Crossan Park look great."



The walking trails in Crossan Park are a great place to explore this summer. Give it a try!



**Prst First Class
US POSTAGE
Southeastern, PA
Permit No. 50**

*Franklin Township Newsletter
P. O. Box 118
Kembsville, PA 19347*