



PENNSBURY TOWNSHIP NEWS

Winter 2016
Vol. 30, No. 1

www.pennsbury.pa.us

A NEW "TWIN BRIDGES"

On November 30, PennDOT hosted a public meeting at the Pennsbury Township Building to present a project design update and receive citizen feedback on plans to replace the "Twin Bridges" over the Brandywine and the old Wilmington & Northern railroad between Pennsbury and Chadds Ford Townships. The improvement project is planned to replace the existing reinforced concrete arch bridge, which was built in 1927, replacing the original "Twin Bridges" at Pyles Ford.

Because of the eligibility of both the bridge and the rural historic district for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act required PennDOT to undertake extensive study of the bridge to determine the viability of rehabilitation of the current bridge rather than replacement. Not surprising to anyone familiar with the bridge, those studies concluded that rehabilitation is not viable.



Twin Bridges 1927. The bridge and the location derived its name from two original covered bridges which spanned the Brandywine.
Photo Courtesy Chadds Ford Historical Society

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

An updated Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) was adopted at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. The previous ordinance was dated 2006.

A grant was received from Chester County Vision Partnerships program to help fund this project. Consultant for the Township was Brandywine Conservancy Senior Planner, John Snook, as well as the Township Engineer Matt Houtmann.

The Township Planning Commission started work with the Conservancy on this update in January, 2014. A final draft of the document was submitted to the supervisors for their consideration. It was advertised for comment and adoption on December 16, 2015. This document sets forth the rules and regulations for any type of subdivision and land development in the Township.

It should be noted that in addition to structural deficiency, the bridge is also substandard relative to a number of modern highway design criteria, including width, radius of curvature of approach lanes and clearance elevation over the railroad tracks.

PennDOT's design team indicated clear recognition that conformity with Section 106 standards was paramount and that correction of all substandard highway design issues was not likely. They presented project plans illustrating three bridge reconstruction alternatives.

Alternative 1 - would replace the bridge in its current location and alignment, including the sloping profile crossing the railroad.

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PENNSBURY TOWNSHIP

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8:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Monday — Thursday

Kathleen Howley, Twp. Manager

SUPERVISORS

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❖ 2016 BUDGET AND TAX BILLS

The Board of Supervisors passed a balanced budget of \$1,616,625 on December 16, 2015. There will be **no** tax increase for 2016.

The Township tax bills for 2016 will be delivered by February 1. The Chester County tax bill will be mailed in January. The school tax bill is delivered by July 1.

Please be aware there is an Earned Income Tax of .312% in Pennsbury Township. It is your responsibility to make sure your employer is deducting this tax. If you have questions, contact Keystone Collections at 888-328-0565

❖ ROADMASTER'S WINTER REMINDERS

• **DO NOT PARK ON THE STREET DURING STORMS.** If our drivers do not think they can salt, cinder or plow a street or cul-de-sac safely, they will SKIP it or plow it last. If vehicles are still on the street, the Township will have them towed at the owner's expense.

• **Do not put leaves in the street or gutter.** It is dangerous for cars and impedes water run-off.

Trim trees and shrubs along roads. Make sure they do not impede visibility or make passage difficult.

The Township does not own any trees or shrubs. It is the responsibility of property owners to cut back limbs that prohibit safe vehicle traffic. You will be notified if there is a problem and be requested to trim. We will be happy to work with you on this and if you have any questions, call Road Master, Dave Allen at 610-388-9180.

• **Secure your mailbox.** The Township is NOT responsible for damage to mailboxes. The box and base should be strong enough to withstand flying snow and slush from traffic and snowplows. To prevent damage, the front should be at least 12" and the supporting post at least 3' from the edge of the road.

• **Keep the right-of-way clear.** Any installation of plants, mailboxes, etc, is done at the owner's risk.

• **Do not push snow into the street.** It is in violation of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code and also it is a danger to passing motorists.

• Main subdivisions will be plowed first. Less populated areas next.

❖ NEW STOP SIGN

There is a new 4-way stop intersection at Cossart and Fairville Roads. Previously the stop signs were only on Cossart Road, but

because of increased potential for accidents, a traffic study was performed by the Road Master, an ordinance advertised and adopted to erect the 4-way stop.

❖ CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The Pennsbury Land Trust is working with the Township on a conservation easement for the 23 acres of the former Pennsbury Village property located near the Township Building and Park which was purchased by the Township. The Brandywine Conservancy will administer the easement which will guarantee the land will be conserved.

❖ TOWNSHIP REORGANIZATION

The Board of Supervisors annual reorganization meeting will be held on Monday, January 4 at 7 pm.

The Planning Commission organizational meeting will be held Wednesday, January 13 at 5 pm.

The Board of Auditors organizational meeting will be on Tuesday, January 5 at 7 pm.

All meetings will be held in the Township Building.

❖ SPCA

The Chester County SPCA is the Township's animal control officer. They are always in need of leashes, animal treats, washable animal toys, bleach and cleaning supplies, towels/

blankets, rawhide chews and peanut butter. They would appreciate any of these items you would be willing to donate. They can be reached at 610-692-6113.

❖ UNDERSTAND STORMWATER RUNOFF AND CONTAMINATION

When it rains, surfaces like driveways, sidewalks and streets prevent storm water runoff from naturally soaking into the ground.

The first inch of rainfall is responsible for the bulk of pollutants in stormwater runoff.

Runoff picks up: pet waste, fertilizer, motor oil, detergents, chemicals and trash.

YOU can prevent water contamination:

• Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the toilet or the trash.

• Wash your car in the grass or at a car wash that utilizes a water reclamation system.

• Dispose of hazardous home chemicals, unused medications and oil based paint products at your local hazardous waste site.

• Use pesticides and other lawn chemicals sparingly.

• Plant trees and plants that serve as natural filters.

• Always use a trash can to dispose of waste and recycle reusable materials.



PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Since our last update, the activities of the Planning Commission (PC) have included:

The conclusion of our active work with Ms. Ann Hutchinson of Natural Lands Trust regarding proposed changes to strengthen our Zoning Ordinance's Riparian Buffer section. After a review by the Township's Engineer, Matt Houtman, the recommended changes will be sent on to the Board of Supervisors. This project was also supported by The Brandywine Conservancy .

The PC reviewed Zoning Variance Applications for relief to an accessory structure building's size and for relief in impervious coverage for a pool and deck and also reviewed an application for a reverse subdivision.

The PC concluded its work on recommended amendments to the Village Residential and Village Commercial Zoning and sent both to the Board. Our work on the Accessory Structure Ordinance amendments was concluded and was forwarded to the Board shortly.

The PC is currently working on a cooperative project related to possible zoning changes for Longwood Gardens' property.

All Township residents are welcome at Planning Commission meetings which are scheduled for the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 5:00 PM in the Township Building.

Dennis Smith, Chair

A New "Twin Bridges"

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Alternative 2 - would closely follow the current alignment but bring the bridge down to a nearly flat profile crossing the railroad at grade.

Alternative 3 - would bring the profile down to cross the railroad at grade, but would be aligned at a slight angle southward on the western approach. This would soften the curves on each end of the bridge, allow greater sight distance for the railroad crossing, and eliminate the heavy cut into the bank that Alternative 2 would require to bring the roadbed down some 20 feet on the western end.

None of the alternatives would alter the intersection of Creek and Rocky Hill Roads. Both Alternatives 2 and 3 raise potential issues of right-of-way acquisition and impact to lands subject to conservation easement.

There seemed to be some consensus at the meeting that Alternative 3, while on paper represented the greatest degree of change and disturbance, engendered certain safety and aesthetic benefits, and also would permit a shorter disruption to traffic patterns, as much of it could be constructed while the current bridge remained in service.

The preliminary alignment alternatives will all have to go through review by both the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection and the PA Historical and Museum Commission, prior to any finalization of design, which will require further review by both agencies. The project is expected to go to bid for construction in the spring of 2019 at the earliest, with an intended 18-month construction timeline.

KENNETT AREA SENIOR CENTER NEWS

The Kennett Area Senior Center sponsors **Zumba!** classes on **Tuesdays** 5:30pm to 6:30pm with professional instructor Kim Malone. The class is open to all ages: teens through seniors. Come check out a class (\$8 drop in fee) or just sign up for a 10 class session (\$59/adult, \$49/age 15 and younger).

Come to the Center for **Scrapbooking with Charlotte** on **Wednesdays, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm**. The class includes rubber stamping, embossing and other fun methods in addition to traditional scrapbooking and crafts. Cost is \$2 per person per class to cover some materials and supplies.

Gentle Yoga is offered in a class led by Alexis Donahue on **Thursdays from 1:00pm to 2:00pm**. Ten class session is \$35.00, or just drop in and check it out for \$8.00. All are welcome!

Free Blood Pressure Screening is offered on the second Thursday of each month. This service is provided by Neighborhood Health. In addition to KASC members, all seniors in the general public age 60 and up are invited to receive this important medical service. No appointment is necessary.

The Kennett Area Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. For more information, call 610-444-4819 or visit their website at www.kennettseniorcenter.org.

A PENNSBURY HISTORIC BUILDING — The John Hope House

The original 300-year-old John Hope House stands on the west side of Hickory Hill Road, a little south of the Baltimore Pike. The two story stone and frame residence is named after a Quaker settler who built the home for his family on a 200 acre Penn Land Grant bought in 1702. The original farm land included the present site of Pennsbury's Municipal Building, the Township Park, and land recently purchased by the Township for Open Space preservation. Due to its location and age, the house is one of the most important historical resources in Pennsbury Township.

In 1712, John Hope married Elizabeth Hobson. With his farm flourishing, Hope purchased an adjoining 150 acres in 1714, located east of his Penn Land Grant. When John Hope died in 1749, he left the bulk of his 350 acre estate to his son Amos, the youngest of six children, designating Elizabeth guardian and manager of the farm until Amos came of age.

Unfortunately, the farm did not prosper after John Hope's death. Although Amos Hope married Ann Marshall in 1760 and had two daughters, he was in failing health and poor financial circumstances by 1769. After Amos' death that year, the Hickory Hill property was sold in order to pay the family's debts. Joshua Pierce bought 170 acres from Ann Hope, which included the original house. The Pierce family owned the house until 1926. Since then the property has changed ownership many times and the acreage has been subdivided.

The early eighteenth century Colonial structure's original fieldstone core was a rectangular two story building with a corner spiral staircase and an enclosed chimney on the east side. Two windows flanked the south facing front door and two windows were aligned above them in the second story. Three bays were on the north side first floor as well, with two windows above. Small, four paned windows were on the east gable end of the house on each floor. There were dormers in the third floor attic, one on each side of the steeply pitched roof.

By 1720, John had doubled the size of his home to accommodate his expanding family, building a two story



stone addition on the structure's west gabled end that repeated the core structure's basic design. The result was a large, impressive pre Revolutionary farmhouse.

Although modernizations and porches occurred during the Pierce family's ownership, it was not until the late 1900's that a third one story frame section was added to the western stone addition. A front porch roof was built to protect the north entry door of the western section and an enclosed porch covered the stone addition's south side, which now looked over the back lawn. The last renovation occurred in this century, when the one story frame portion was increased to two stories and extended further west, providing modern living space. A breezeway now connects the house to a garage. Other outbuildings have been renovated and preserved also to update the old farmstead's appearance.

The Historic Resources Survey Form lists the property as the Daniel Pierce House. Further information on the Hope and Pierce families can be found in Pennsbury's Historic Resource Survey files.



**Recycle your Undecorated Christmas Tree at the
Township Building between December 26 and January 30**

PENNSBURY TOWNSHIP EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

Rob Maxwell Pennsbury Mill



Rob Maxwell, Life Scout with Troop 31, completed his Eagle Scout Project for the Pennsbury Historic Preservation at the site of the Historic Hydro-electric Mill in Pennsbury Township. The project involved removing existing wire fencing around the property of the Mill and replacing it with a split rail fence comprised of locust posts and spruce rails. He also replaced two 8-ft cattle-gates at the entrance of the Mill with two new 10-ft catlegates. The project took place over two weekends in June, 2015. Several Scouts and other community friends helped with his project.

The Historic Hydro-electric Mill is located on Fairville Road. The Mill was built in 1918 by the Fitz Water Wheel Company. The Hydro-electric Mill uses water from the creek, which flows from the dam to the wheel, which is connected to an original Edison Electric Company generator. Fourth-grade students of the school district visit the Mill each year when they study electricity. The new fencing adds to the historic "back to nature" preservation of the property and allows for easier access for school busses.

Rob thanks Mr. Matthew Ochs and the Pennsbury Historic Preservation for outlining the specifics of the Project. The Pennsbury Historic Preservation covered 50% of the cost of the fencing and materials, and Rob Maxwell used earnings from his Service work with Troop 31 and family contributions to cover the other half of the expenses. He also thanks all the Scouts, family members and friends who helped.

Bradley Heacock Pennsbury Park



Bradley Heacock, who is also a Life Scout with Troop 31, completed his Eagle Project at the Pennsbury Township Park. Bradley led a crew of Boy Scouts in building a 38' footbridge over the pond tributary and creating a new walking path at the southwest corner of the pond. This allows hikers to walk 360 degrees around the pond. It also now gives the park maintenance crew the ability to take equipment to that end of the park. The park is located on the property behind the Township Building and is open for hikers and walkers Tuesday through Sunday during daylight hours.

Bradley would like to thank all of the parents and Scouts of Troop 31 who helped with completing the project during the summer and fall. A special thank you to Mr. Dave Allen and Ms. Kathleen Howley at the Pennsbury Township office for their help, and to Mr. Rob King from Chadds Ford Tree for his donation of time and materials for the footbridge.



Pennsbury Township Calendar

COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

Supervisors meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm in the Harris Room of the Township Building except in January, February and March.

Planning Commission meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at the Township Building.

SCHOOL BOARD

Unionville-Chadds Ford School Board usually meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:30 pm. Locations and more info at: www.ucfsd.org

DECEMBER 2015

26 Saturday — **Christmas Tree Recycling Begins** at the Township Building. Drop off undecorated trees.

JANUARY 2016

4 Monday, 7:00 pm — **Board of Supervisors Organizational Meeting** at the Township Building.

4 Monday, 7:30 pm — **Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting** at the Township Building.

5 Tuesday, 7:00 pm — **Board of Auditors Organizational Meeting** at the Township Building.

13 Wednesday, 5 pm — **Planning Commission Organizational Meeting** at the Township Building.

30 Saturday — **Christmas Tree Recycling Ends.**

FEBRUARY

6 Saturday, 5 - 8 pm — **Plein Air Exhibit Opening** at the Chadds Ford Historical Society. Works by invited artists of the local scene. (fee). Exhibit will continue .

10 Wednesday, 7:00 pm — **Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting** at the Township Building.

MARCH

23 Wednesday, 7:00 pm — **Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting** at the Township Building.

30 Wednesday, — **Townwatch Annual Meeting** time and place to be announced.



Remember to recycle your undecorated Christmas tree at the Township Building

sara.corbiskley, editor

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Pennsbury Township
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702 Baltimore Pike
Chadds Ford, PA 19317