

Franklin Township Newsletter

Chester County, PA

Volume 4 Issue 1

February 2010

Former Miller Property Becomes Franklin Township Preserve Not Town Homes

The destiny of the former Miller property on Parsons Road (bordering Crossan Park) is now and forever permanently preserved open space instead of the proposed 239 town home development. On December 30, 2009 settlement on the property transferred the lands from the developer into Township-controlled conserved lands via a combination of federal, state, county and township open space/conservation funds.

Before conservation, the subdivision plans on file for this property showed 239 new town homes on the 91-acre tract. If the project had gone forward, the already challenging intersections of Parsons Road with both Route 896 and Good Hope Rd. and Good Hope Road with Route 896 would have been hugely impacted by the traffic of the estimated 478 additional automobiles (two cars per town home) that would use these roads daily. The developer also wanted to use stream discharge directly into the West Branch of the White Clay Creek for the development's treated sewage.

"Of the three branches of the White Clay Creek, the only one that's unimpaired (water quality wise) is the West Branch," says Dick Whipple, Chairman of Franklin Township's Board of Supervisors. "Hiking trails, picnic sites and, fishing spots, instead of 239 town home, will go a long way in maintaining the good health of the West Branch."

The newly acquired 91 acres of public land will be formally known as Franklin Township Preserve. It is an important natural resource for the community as it connects to Crossan Park and creates a larger greenway and wildlife biodiversity

corridor in the area. The land is part of Franklin Township's largest tract of maple and beech woodlands and it lies adjacent to or in close proximity to about 1,400 linear feet of the West Branch of the White Clay Creek.

Franklin Township Preserve will remain in its natural state. Access to the property for hiking, biking, and horseback riding will be through Crossan Park after a Master Site Plan is completed and the trails are constructed. Abandoned and dilapidated structures needed to be removed as a condition of the grants that helped to fund the acquisition. This work was performed at the expense of the seller/developer.

To purchase this land, the Township received a \$1 million federal Land Water Conservation Fund Grant/Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnership Program Grant, and a \$440,000 Chester County Natural Resources Grant. The remaining funds were from Franklin Township's Open Space Fund.

"Franklin's Open Space funds were a key component of the purchase that allowed us to preserve this sensitive piece of land," says Teddy Price, Franklin Township's Open Space Chairman. "The Township's ability to contribute a part of the funding enables us to supplement, and qualify for, these generous grants."

Preserving this remarkable natural resource is an important accomplishment for our community. For perpetuity our citizens will enjoy the land in its natural glory as the area's wildlife and plants continue to flourish.



Message from the Chairman

Franklin residents (via the survey process), Franklin taxpayers (via the referendum process), and Franklin voters (via elections), have continued to demonstrate quite a strong majority support for keeping Franklin as rural as legally achievable, by working with willing property owners. From my perspective, this makes wonderful sense with Franklin being beautifully nestled between about 7,000 acres of the White Clay Preserve and about 7,000 acres at Fair Hill. North of Franklin Township, in the Route 1 growth corridor, there's substantial development occurring but, unlike in Franklin, infrastructure (public sewer, public water, Route 1) exists in that area to better support such development.

Since 2004, a majority of the volunteer elected representatives in Franklin have been paying very close attention to what a large majority of Franklin residents, taxpayers and voters have requested. Very nice progress has been made in working with willing property owners to keep numerous Franklin properties growing hay or trees, rather than houses. In fact, another tremendous conservation success story is highlighted in this issue of the Newsletter.

Note: The "Willing Property Owners" aspect of Franklin's preservation effort cannot be stressed enough. There is NEVER even the slightest effort to try to force ANY property owner to participate, but the willingness of those who do is certainly GREATLY appreciated.

Even with the remarkable preservation success that has occurred to date in Franklin, there's still much work to be done, with willing property owners, if residents, taxpayers, and voters continue to support the conservation effort. There's still probably enough unpreserved property in Franklin for 1,000 - 1,500 new houses to be built (the Township currently has about 1,500 residences). The volunteer elected representatives currently in place in Franklin are certainly willing to keep pursuing and chalking up preservation success stories but, with our wonderful democratic process, Franklin's residents, taxpayers and voters will be the ultimate decision makers as to whether Franklin eventually ends up with 1,000 - 1,500 new houses or numerous additional preservation success stories.

As always, if any property owner has even the slightest interest in learning about whether conservation could potentially work for them, please contact Jeff Eastburn at the Township Office. Also, as always, please make it known if there are any topics that you'd like to see covered in future Newsletters.

Sincerely,
Dick Whipple,
Chairman Franklin Township BOS

News and Notes

Reforestation Workshop March 6, 2010

It's not too late to register for the White Clay Reforestation Workshop on March 6. Learn how reforestation can benefit the community as well as techniques for planting and maintaining trees on private property. The first 50 participants to register will receive a free native tree of good size.

The workshop will be held at the London Grove Township Building, 372 Rose Hill Road, in West Grove, beginning at 9 a.m. You must register by calling Franklin Township at 610-255-5212.

Workshop sponsors include Franklin Township, London Grove Township, White Clay Wild & Scenic Management Committee, Brandywine Conservancy, Taproot Native Design, and Stroud Water Research Center.

This free workshop has been partially funded by the National Park Service, Dockstader Foundation, and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund, through a Section 319 Federal Clean Water Act grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Goodwin Preserve Tree Planting March 20, 2010, Rain or Shine (Major weather event, March 27)

In the neighborhood of 2,400 tree saplings are being planted as part of a riparian buffer restoration project along a section of the White Clay Creek at the Goodwin Preserve (Route 841 at the intersection with Schoolhouse Road and Church Hill Road) on March 20. More details are on the enclosed flyer.

Franklin Township's Open Space Committee is seeking volunteers to help with the effort. Not only are volunteers needed for the physical planting of the trees, but a group of individuals interested in a longer term volunteer commitment is needed to care for the trees once they are planted.

Please call the Township at 610-255-5212 or email volunteer@franklintownship.us with "Goodwin Preserve Tree Project" in the subject line to register or for additional information.

Volunteer List

Add your name to Franklin Township's Community Volunteer list with one phone

call (610-255-5212) or email (volunteer@franklintownship.us). Just let us know the types of volunteer work you might be able to perform, from clerical to trail blazing, to trail maintenance, to any other interests, and we'll call you when opportunities arise.

Winter Roads—Plowing and Potholes

Thank you to Franklin Township's residents for their cooperation during the first half of this year's winter weather. As a result of this cooperation, Franklin's snow plowing contractor was able to keep up with what Mother Nature was dishing out. As the winter is only half over, please remember to keep cars and other items out of the street during any snow event.

Potholes are the result of water seeping into cracks of the asphalt, then freezing and expanding, then melting and contracting in warmer weather. Please report major potholes on the local roads to the Franklin Township Office at 610-255-5212.

Township-level Tax Questions

Franklin Township uses Berkheimer and Associates to collect its local real estate and earned income tax. Berkheimer's website at www.hab-inc.com has a wealth of information to share, including downloadable tax forms. Questions can also be answered by calling 610-588-0965.

Important tax dates to remember are:

- April 1: Real estate taxes paid before this date receive a 2% discount.
- April 15: Earned income taxes are due.
- June 1: Real estate taxes are due.

Building Permits are required

Duane Brady, the Township's Building Inspector and Zoning Officer suggests you give him a call at the Township Office, 610-255-5212, before beginning home improvement projects to determine if permits are required. Not having the correct permits could cause delays in construction or fines for improvements such as driveways, sheds, finishing basements, patios, decks, and swimming pools.

Also, by State law, residents with open permits on file must close out the permit and receive a Certificate of Occupancy from the Township. Again, by State law, failure to comply could result in legal proceedings being filed for a court appearance. Call Duane to complete this important process.

Franklin's Open Space Initiative: An Update

Big Elk Creek Section of the White Clay Creek Preserve

The property, formerly owned by Mr. George Strawbridge is now owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of State Parks. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania settled on this property January 28, 2010. This land was conserved by The Conservation Fund with the financial assistance from: Mt. Cuba Center, Inc., The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation; The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Capitol Project – DGS 192-41; Preservation Partnership Program, Commissioners of Chester County, Pennsylvania, Carol Aichele, Terence Farrell, and Kathi Cozzone.

The property consists of approximately 739 acres and the Bureau of State Parks looks forward to managing one of the few remaining publicly owned unbroken tracts of open space in southeastern Pennsylvania. This property will be managed from the White Clay Creek Preserve office

and is referred to as the Big Elk Creek section of White Clay Creek Preserve. It will take the bureau some time to develop a management strategy that will support the Bureau of State Parks mission. Questions about this property can be referred to the White Clay Creek Preserve office (www.dcnr.state.pa.us, navigate the links to Find a Park; call 610-274-2900).

All property in this settlement is south of Strickersville Road to Maryland's Fair Hill Natural Resource Area. The open space and farm land north of Strickersville Road remains privately owned.

Goodwin Preserve

The construction of a small parking lot at Goodwin Preserve is included in this year's roadway maintenance bid package. It is expected the construction will begin shortly after the bid for this year's road paving is awarded in early spring. The parking lot will provide access to the White Clay Creek for fishing.

Peacedale Preserve

The parking lot, entrance on Peacedale Road, is completed and may be used by the public from dawn to dusk.

Descriptions of Franklin Township's historic resources (pictured on page 4)

Left column, top to bottom:

The **Joseph Stackhouse Barn** on Auburn Road was built in 1850. It is an example of a Pennsylvania Bank Barn, which utilizes the side of a hill so that there are ramps to entrances on all levels of the barn.

This **1915 Greek Cross Plan** on Strickersville Road is an example of early 20th architectural style. Other historic resources on the property include a springhouse and a chicken house.

The **Plough and Harrow Inn** was the first operating inn for weary travelers in Franklin Township. It is located at the intersection of Routes 896 and 841. The original inn (stone) was built in 1758. The brick addition was completed in the early 1800s. Other historic resources on this property include the barn, stone shed, and an outbuilding.

Right column, top to bottom:

The **McMillan Farmhouse**, on Route 841 (Chesterville Road), south of Route 896 is an example of a Victorian farmhouse. It was built in 1894. Other historic resources on the property include a barn, springhouse, wagon house, and long shed.

Franklin School, on Route 896, was one of four one-room schoolhouses operating in Franklin Township until 1956, when Kemblesville Elementary School opened and the one-room schoolhouses in the area were closed. It was built in 1875.

The **Theodore Bye House**, on Strickersville Road, was built in 1800 and is an example of a Federal-style farmhouse. At one time, Bye raised champion Guernsey cows on this property.

Note: A new feature of future issues of the Franklin Township newsletter is the "Historic Corner," which will highlight a different historic resource each issue. If you are an owner of one of Franklin Township's historic resources and would like to share its history, please call the Township Office at 610-255-5212.

Township Directory

Board of Supervisors

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

Administration

Jeffrey Eastburn, Assistant Township Manager
Joan McVaugh, Treasurer
Sharon Norris, Secretary
Eileen Rembecki, Secretary (part time)
Mauareen Zdun, Secretary (part time)
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: info@franklintownship.us
On the web: www.franklintownship.us

Township Meetings

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

Supervisors' Work Session-

2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm

Supervisors' Board Meeting-

3rd Wednesday of the month, 7pm

Planning Commission-

1st Thursday of the month, 7pm

Historical Architectural Review Board and Historic Commission-

1st Tuesday of the month, 7pm

Open Space Committee-

2nd Tuesday of the month, 7 pm

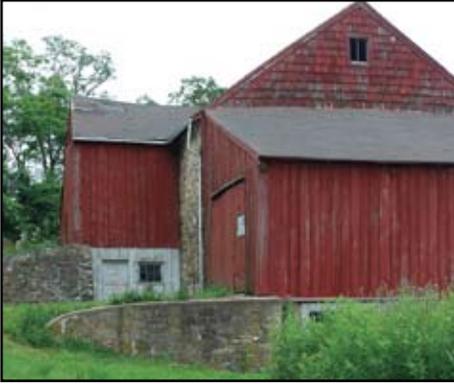
Want more info?

The Township's website is 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.

Franklin Township's Historical Survey



Franklin Township's history and culture and how the community lived can be traced through the architecture that survives.

In October of 2004, the Township completed *The Historic Resources Survey, Franklin Township, Chester County*. The purpose of the project was to create an intensive-level survey including resource documentation, master inventory, database, methodology report, and mapping of all properties in Franklin Township containing historic resources fifty years old and older.

The survey found 177 properties, containing 409 resources. Of the 409 resources, the survey identifies 339 of them as historically significant. The 2004 survey found that since a similar survey of Chester County properties over 100 years old was completed in 1982, 11 of the original survey's 100 historic resources in Franklin Township were demolished. Since the 2004 survey was completed, three additional resources were demolished.

On this page are examples of just a few of Franklin Township's 177 historic architectural treasures. Descriptions of the resources are on page 3.

The complete historical survey is available for reading at the Township Office during business hours.



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P. O. Box 118
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