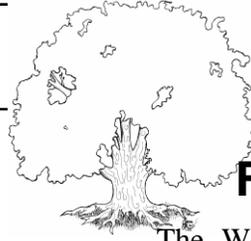


THE FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

P.O. Box 545, Worcester, PA 19490
www.friendsofworcester.org
email: info@friendsofworcester.org

Fall 2010



Friends of Worcester President's Report

For Friends of Worcester, the challenge of today's economy is twofold. Although Friends of Worcester still engages in its mission with the same intensity and dedication, the gains are tenuous. During the building boom of 2008, preserving open space was obviously a priority for us and many concerned Worcester Township residents. Now, with the stagnant economy and devalued housing market of 2010, the need is less clear to some.

In Worcester Township, as in the nation, housing construction and land development have slowed. We have an excess of housing units in the township, exemplified by the Stoney Creek Farm development at Township Line Road and North Wales Road. The developer, pressed by this hardship has just received a variance to reduce the zoning restrictions so that they can sell more units. However, they must see a rosy future since, at the same time, they are continuing to build more units. Unfortunately for Friends of Worcester the slowdown in land development lulls our residents into a more passive approach. The burning issue is not next door anymore. The bulldozer is not clearing the adjacent woodland. But developers are buying the land at reduced costs, planning for the turn in the economy and waiting to start up again.

Now is the time when we must act. It is essential to secure open space while it is available. Land prices are depressed and mortgage rates are low. But again it is 2010 and the funds are not there. The Growing Greener money has been spent or committed. The farmland preservation funds have been slashed from \$15 million in 2009 to \$3 million in 2010. Montgomery County has greatly reduced the money it sets aside for open space. **The township needs to hear from its residents that we are in favor of the township taking advantage of reduced land prices and continuing to preserve open space even in these difficult economic times.**

Friends of Worcester will persist. We will continue to raise awareness, educate the community about the value of open space and advocate for open space initiatives. It is essential we not lapse into a false sense of security. Now we must work harder to motivate Worcester residents to endorse the values of open space and leave a legacy for future generations.

- Kim David ☺

Fairview Village Planning

The Worcester Township Planning Commission, at the request of the Worcester Township supervisors, is in the process of planning for the future of Fairview Village. Assisting in this process is the Montgomery County Planning Commission's representative to Worcester Township. The planning process started over a year ago.

The Planning Commission has hosted several meetings focused on Village Planning in Fairview. Residents from Fairview Village and other township residents have met in an effort to exchange information, ideas, current and future needs and desires. To date, residents have participated in the planning process by providing verbal input and by notating on large maps ideas and suggestions for the future development of the village. These ideas have been consolidated into a single Fairview Village map for future planning. The map will be on view at future Planning Commission meetings.

Additional public meetings are anticipated as the process continues. Further planning and additional public meetings may result in draft ordinances and other recommendations to the supervisors. This could assist in positive and desired changes in the village through the passage of enabling legislation by our supervisors. ☺

FOW Invites You To Get Involved!

- **Open Space Committee:** Land preservation, village planning, Open Space Fund
- **Education & Outreach Committee:** Community activities, newsletter, website, community partnerships
- **Organizational Advancement Committee:** Membership recruitment and development, operational fundraising

Contact FOW at info@friendsofworcester.org
or call Wini Hayes at 610-584-0371

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Once it's gone, it's gone forever!

The Worcester Trail Vision and The Graham Farm Hub

Since 2004 Worcester has had a Greenway Plan that forms the basis of a multi-use trail system that will someday connect all corners of the township with recreational and shopping areas as well as surrounding townships and arterial trails throughout the county. Once implemented, such a trail system would allow walkers, bikers and horseback riders to have a transportation system of their own, separate from that of the cars and trucks that they must compete with today.

But before such a trail can be built, easements must be acquired in order to give the township the legal rights to one day build trails in all the places where they will be needed. As you might imagine, this is actually the biggest piece of the overall project.

Worcester has been quite conscious of the need for these easements ever since the 1980's when the first few parcels were acquired. And in recent years, most of the open space and farmland easements that the Township has purchased have also included trail easements. Many of the development projects that have been approved by Worcester Township in recent years have also included provisions for an off-road trail, allowing the public to get from one end of the development to the other.

In October a very important piece was added to our list of trail easements – the Graham Property near Valley Forge, Township Line and Stump Hall Roads. This trail is a critical link because it will ultimately provide trail access to all four corners of Worcester at that intersection. It will effectively be the hub of Worcester's future trail system.

Heading northwest from the Graham farm, the Worcester Trail will cross the McGrane and Schierenbeck preserved horse farms, Willow Creek Orchard, follow Hollow Road, access Heebner Park and the township building, pass the pioneer house, then parallel the Zacharias Creek along Greenhill Road and enter Evansburg State Park in Skippack Township. (Skippack's trails currently lead to the county's Perkiomen Trail with access to Green Lane and the Schuylkill Trail all the way to Center City Philadelphia.)

Going northeast, the trail will cross the Westrum development, Techni-tool, Nike Park and enter the Army Reserve Base (soon to become a township park). To the southwest, the trail will provide access to The D'Lauro Preserve, operated by Natural Lands Trust. Finally, to the southeast, riders and hikers will access a loop road around the Stables development and Ballard-Wollfe Park in East Norriton Township, on to Norristown and beyond.

Another trail easement, crossing the Moran (former SGF) property in the southwest corner of the township, is under agreement with the county and will connect Methacton High School with Evansburg State Park. Settlement is expected this fall.

A few segments of the Worcester Trail System are already in place and in use. These include segments in Heebner Park, the section between Greenhill and Hollow Road., and a portion along North Wales Road.



Mary Louise Graham at settlement for her property. Also pictured is Elizabeth Emlen, Farmland Preservation Administrator (standing), and Kate Harper, Esq. (right).

Most of the easements needed have already been acquired and trails can be built when funding is available. The township has a county allocation of over \$400,000 that has already been approved for the construction of the unbuilt portion of the trail between Evansburg State Park and the Graham Farm with a 20% township match. Montgomery County's current financial situation has led to a temporary freeze on open space funds being disbursed.

In 2008, the Worcester Park and Recreation Committee sent out a questionnaire to township residents, asking what recreational facilities they would most like the township to expand. Multi-purpose trails were by far the most requested feature, so we know that when funding allows the completion of the Worcester Trail System, there will be plenty of people ready to go out and make use of it on a regular basis.

For more information or questions, call John Harris at (610) 584-8395.

Preserved Properties in Worcester Oct 2010

Harris Farm	54 acres
Markley Farm	38 acres
Scarlett Farm	50 acres
Heebner Park	46 acres
Gerstemeier Farm	32 acres
Markel Farm	62 acres
Walnut Creek Farm	88 acres
Schlotterer Property	17 acres
Zacharias Creek	22 acres
Willow Creek Orchards	100 acres
Schierenbeck Farm	46 acres
O. Smith Farm	23 acres
D'Lauro Property	103 acres
Cold Spring Farm	14 acres
Heyser Field	7 acres
McGrane Farm	16 acres
Cuce Farm	38 acres
Graham Farm	<u>16 acres</u>
Total	772 acres

FOW's Land Preservation Committee – How can we help you?

For years, FOW has been sounding the alarm “Once it’s gone, it’s gone forever!” Where there were once farms and large woodlands, there are now many developments throughout our township. Worcester is fortunate to still have many sizable undeveloped properties. The open fields, pastures, stream corridors, scenic views, and wooded areas that remain today create the beautiful landscape we all enjoy. Will the views we take for granted today be there tomorrow?

Worcester has taken many steps over the years to preserve its farming heritage and keep its rural character. Many landowners have joined that effort by preserving their properties. Often financial needs, health changes, or just downsizing prompts the sale of a cherished family farm or acreage. Life happens and it is not always as we plan. We are the stewards of our land while it is ours but who will take care of it when we move on? Must it be sold for development? No.

One method many families have used to preserve their land has been through a legal document called a conservation easement. This is an agreement between the landowner and the easement holder (usually a land trust) to sell or donate the development rights of a property. A deed restriction is placed on the property to prohibit development in perpetuity. When the landowner eventually sells his/her property, the terms of the conservation easement will be transferred to the new owner, ensuring no future land development.

FOW's Land Preservation Committee can provide information to those interested in preserving their land. Since everyone's situation is different, a conservation easement can be tailored to each property owner's needs. Once an easement is in place, the landowner can be assured his/her land can never be developed, regardless of whether he/she chooses to hold or sell the property.

In Worcester, funding for the purchase of conservation easements has come from a combination of sources: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnership Program, Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program, Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program, Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Open Space Program, and Worcester Township.

How do landowners find out more about these programs? Contact a member of Friends of Worcester's Land Preservation Committee: Barb McMonagle (215-257-1436), Al Cuce (215-901-9750) and Dee Dee McGrane (610-584-6196). 🌱

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Environmental Restoration in Worcester

FOW's mission is clearly focused on preserving open space and conserving Worcester's agricultural, natural and historical heritage. Did you know that FOW actively supports the environmental restoration of Worcester's woodlands, creeks and streams? Over the years our woodlands have been cleared and the water quality of our creeks and streams has been significantly degraded. Consistent with our mission to conserve Worcester's natural heritage, FOW has partnered with local groups and landowners to support the following environmental restoration projects.

Worcester Elementary Environmental Club and Methacton School District – The school environmental club received a grant to restore approximately 200 feet of the stream corridor behind the school by planting native trees and a meadow of native grasses and wildflowers. The project eliminated approximately 1/2 acre of existing mowed turf grass and is intended to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater on the stream.

Worcester Township – The township recently received a grant to collect stormwater from a portion of the township's administrative building roof and reroute the stormwater to a rain garden where the water can slowly infiltrate into the ground and recharge the groundwater supply instead of being discharged to the nearby Zacharias Creek.

Meadowood Retirement Community – Meadowood recently received a grant to explore the possibility of utilizing an ecologically rich portion of the retirement community as a nature center to provide opportunities for intergenerational learning, volunteerism, and outdoor activities that strengthen the environmental stewardship commitment within the greater Worcester community and throughout Montgomery County.

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy and Natural Lands Trust – Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy is seeking a grant to remove invasive plants and plant native trees along a stream corridor on the Natural Lands Trust D'Lauro Preserve near the intersection of Valley Forge and Stump Hall Roads.

Partnering with local groups and landowners enables FOW to demonstrate what can be done to restore our local environment and encourage further restoration efforts throughout the township and beyond. If you are interested in partnering with FOW on an environmental restoration project or are interested in volunteering to work on an upcoming project, please contact [Ciro Tornambe](mailto:Ciro.Tornambe@verizon.net), by telephone, (610)584-1009, or by email, ciro.tornambe@verizon.net. 🌱

The Growing Greener II/Marcellus Shale Connection

Growing Greener II - In 2005, a statewide voter referendum was overwhelmingly approved to invest an additional \$625 million over 5 years towards the protection of the environment by preserving open space and farmland, cleaning up our watersheds, and revitalizing our communities.

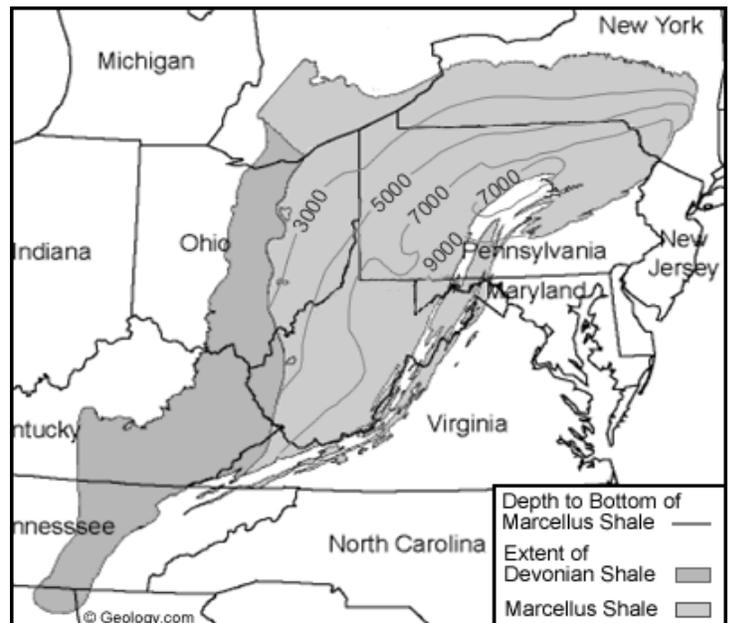
According to the PA DEP website, this money was to be distributed as follows:

- \$230 million to the Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP) to clean up rivers and streams; rectify serious environmental problems at abandoned mines and contaminated industrial sites; and finance the development and deployment of advanced energy projects.
- \$217.5 million to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to preserve natural areas and open spaces; improve state parks; and enhance local recreational needs.
- \$80 million to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) to protect working farms.
- \$50 million to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to revitalize communities through investments in housing and mixed-use redevelopment projects.
- \$27.5 million to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) to repair fish hatcheries and aging dams.
- \$20 million to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) for habitat-related facility upgrades and repairs.

The Growing Greener program has been a huge success. According to the website RenewGrowingGreener.org, since 1995, Growing Greener has:

- Helped secure our food supply by preserving more than 33,700 acres of working farms;
- Conserved more than 42,300 acres of threatened natural areas and community treasures;
- Enhanced access to outdoor recreation through 234 community park projects and another 132 projects in state parks forest infrastructures;
- Reduced flooding and pollution of our waters through 400 watershed protection projects and more than 100 drinking/wastewater improvements;
- Restored more than 1,600 acres of abandoned mine land
- The County Environmental Initiative Program has provided \$66 million to help counties address their local environmental priorities.

Our Worcester Supervisors have leveraged township money with funding from the State and/or Montgomery County to save many Worcester properties (See p. 2) from development. Much of our local funding for open space preservation and farmland preservation has come from Growing Greener II, Montgomery County Green Fields/Green Towns Program and



This map shows the approximate depth to the base of the Marcellus Shale. It was prepared using the map by Robert Milici and Christopher Swezey above and adding depth-to-Marcellus contours published by Wallace de Witt and others, 1993, United States Department of Energy report: The Atlas of Major Appalachian Gas Plays. Geology.com.

Worcester Township. The Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program, which has preserved 9 Worcester farms (over 383 acres), received part of their funding from the Growing Greener Program.

Pennsylvania's Growing Greener II program is winding down and will be out of money by next year. Unless funding is renewed, these programs will not be able to continue. Andrew Heath, Executive Director of the Renew Growing Greener Coalition (www.RenewGrowingGreener.org) states "the Commonwealth faces a variety of pressing problems that threaten our rich natural heritage, our quality of life, our health and our prosperity." It is imperative that these programs continue and a long-term dedicated source of funding be found. A tax on the Marcellus Shale offers an opportunity to fund Growing Greener III.

What is the Marcellus Shale? Throughout much of Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio is a rock formation known as the Marcellus Shale. This area holds one of the world's largest supplies of natural gas, 500 trillion cubic feet, enough to meet natural gas requirements for the eastern United States for 50 years.

Companies are rushing into Pennsylvania because of the Marcellus reserves. John Hanger, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), said, "so far 5,000 permits have been issued, 2,200 wells have already been drilled and 1,000 are producing natural gas." "Pennsylvania has huge amounts of high quality gas" and there is a low cost to produce it here. Part of the attraction is our location close to the major markets of Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington D.C.

On the plus side will be the creation of new jobs and economic stimulus for Pennsylvania. Kathryn Klaber, President and Executive Director of the Marcellus Shale Coalition said, "In an otherwise bleak economy, Marcellus Shale development will create nearly 90,000 jobs in Pennsylvania by the end of this year, according to researchers at Penn State, with nearly 211,000 jobs projected through the next decade. And these aren't just drilling rig jobs — railroads, engineers, building contractors, supply stores, diners, hotels, steel manufacturers and several other industries, small and medium-size businesses involved in our growing and robust supply chain are all experiencing a significant expansion of growth directly tied to Marcellus production." This influx will have a huge effect on local communities where gas drilling is taking place.

On the downside is the unknown impact that hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" (the process by which gas is extracted from the Marcellus Shale) will have on the environment. It takes several million gallons of water to drill each well. Add sand and chemicals used in fracking and there is an enormous potential exposure to contamination of ground water, streams and rivers. Many times the "frack fluid" can be reused from site to site before it is stored, treated and ultimately released back to rivers and streams. The DEP has increased their efforts to minimize risks and protect the environment. New regulations effective 8/21/10 have been put in place to ensure that water discharge into streams and rivers must be treated to safe drinking water standards. That does not stop the risk for gas migration, leaks or surface spills.

With new environmental risks and impacts from fracking expected, funding for Growing Greener II ending and increased costs for local governments being impacted by drilling, state legislators have been debating the passage of a gas extraction tax from the Marcellus Shale. This is one way a guaranteed source of funding can be obtained to protect the environment. Pennsylvania is the only major gas producing state that does not have a gas extraction tax. In September 2010, the PA House passed a gas severance tax allocating 60% for environmental purposes and 40% for the general fund. The Senate is still working on their version of it. The debate goes on in Harrisburg.

Much more needs to be done. According to GreenSpaceAlliance.org, "Pennsylvania cannot stand to lose Growing Greener." Growing Greener "has provided investments in farmland preservation, conservation of open space, stream restoration, and improved outdoor recreation. With resources running out, now is the time to develop a new source of funding to continue those critical projects originally made possible through Growing Greener grants." A severance tax will ensure funding is available for this vital work to continue and to help local communities with money for roads, water cleanup and other environmental issues. 🌱

Keep Worcester Clean & Green

Please join us

Saturday, December 3

8:30 - 10:00 am

Help keep our township roads "Clean and Green" — Skippack Pike between North Wales and Bethel Roads

Interested residents may contact

FOW Outreach Coordinator

Maeve Vogan

mcvogan@gmail.com or 610-584-4161

Eyes on the Issues



FOW keeps an eye on the issues in the township which can affect open space and our rural heritage. Many of these issues are updated regularly on our website, www.friendsofworchester.org. Proposals for most subdivisions and land development activities (both commercial and residential) are shown on the "Township Maps" page of our website.

Pennsylvania Turnpike Expansion

Proposal: Widen the 10.5-mi section of the Northeast Extension between Lansdale and the Mid-County Interchange from 4 to 6 lanes, plus a 26-ft median strip.

Completion of the Morris Rd. bridge is scheduled for late November or early December. Traffic is being detoured along Valley Forge Road, Skippack Pike, and Berks Road. Temporary traffic signals and left-turn lanes were installed along Skippack Pike. The township expects to install additional traffic controls as needed.

North Wales Road Realignment

Proposal: Realign North Wales Rd. to West Walnut St. (in Upper Gwynedd Township), crossing Morris Rd.

The realignment will create a more direct route and ease congestion in the area.

Did you know?



You can now make your tax-deductible contribution to Friends of Worcester using PayPal. Go to www.friendsofworchester.org and click on the Donate link on the front page. Thank you!

A Preservation to Remember – The Cuce Farm

Al and Jean Cuce moved to Worcester in 1998 with the dream of having a “natural” farm. Over the next several years they purchased a total of 38 acres by putting portions of three farms back together. The Cuce Farm consists of 10 parcels, the largest being 7 acres. This is a very unusual farmland preservation because most farms are already large parcels, whereas this farm has been assembled piece by piece. Because of its complexity, this preservation took almost 8 years.

Before the Cuce family even thought of moving to Worcester, they longed to have a farm some day. Farming has been in their blood for generations. Jean grew up on a farm and Al’s family from Italy were all farmers. More than 20 years ago, Al read an article about land preservation and its advantages. He thought that when they got their farm, they would like to preserve it for their family and the community they would live in.

The Cuce’s farm has a little bit of everything with something for everyone. There are woods that have not been touched in years, acres of wheat, and grapes for making wine. There are fruit trees, berries and vegetables as well as many types of domesticated animals. Al and Jean feel the most important features of their farm are its biodiversity and that it is a chemical free farm.

The Cuce’s feel there are three advantages of having a preserved farm, including leaving a legacy for family and the community. They also like the ability to plan long term for farm improvements and new crops/animals. Finally, they enjoy the farm lifestyle of eating what you produce. The only disadvantage of acquiring the land was the financial burden while going through the preservation process. Preservation of the farm is something the Cuce’s have done for future generations of their family. They feel it is more important for their family to have the farm than the money in the future.

Several people were crucial to this preservation: John Harris, when he was Worcester’s Open Space Coordinator in 2003; Susan Caughlan, who followed John as Open Space Coordinator for Worcester Township and is now a Township Supervisor; the people who sold the properties because they shared Al and Jean’s vision; all of the neighbors who provided unwavering support; the Worcester Township past and present Board of Supervisor as well as the office staff.

Worcester has benefited from this preservation in many ways. Increases in your property taxes have been minimized, because many homes were not built. The Cuce’s farm provides a new local source for natural farm products. Water quality is maintained when chemicals are not used in the farming process.

Thank you Al and Jean Cuce for preserving your property and thinking out of the box to get it done! ☺

Farmers’ Union Horse Show Celebrates 70 Years

The 70th Annual Farmers Union Horse Show was held Saturday June 5th, 2010 at Heyser Field. Members of the Friends of Worcester were there to show support by sponsoring their annual Food Tent. Did you know the Farmers Union Company for the Recovery of Stolen Horses and Detecting the Thieves was established in 1834? For more information please visit www.farmersunionhorsecompany.com

If you have not yet attended the Annual Horse Show be sure to mark your calendars for the first Saturday of every June. Come hungry as well, because the Friends of Worcester are ready to serve up a hot cup of coffee, a breakfast sandwich, refreshing lemon stick or to answer any question you may have about our organization’s mission. We look forward to seeing you in June 2011. All proceeds from the sale of food at our Food Tent support Friends of Worcester activities consistent with our mission statement.

The Friends of Worcester wants to thank Troxel Cemetery Services for the donation of the large tent, Michelle Romano, President of Farmers Union, Maeve Vogan and Jen Strouse, FOW members who coordinate the Food Tent, all other members of Friends of Worcester who volunteered their time or supplies and for all those who stopped by for a bite to eat. See you next year! ☺

Jean M Cuce, Accountant

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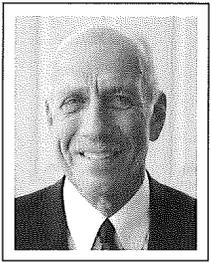
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***SUPPORT* FRIENDS OF WORCESTER**

FRIENDS OF WORCESTER is a non-profit organization made up of new and long-time residents of the township. All involved residents share an appreciation for the rural quality of Worcester and a common concern for its future. FOW seeks to influence that future. All funds received are used to support our efforts to preserve open space, maintain the rural lifestyle of the community and keep our neighbors informed through our minutes and newsletters. All contributors receive our monthly agenda and minutes as well as notification of important township events by either email or US mail.

- Friend - \$30
 Partner - \$50
 Benefactor - \$100
 Other

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

All residents, contributing or not, are always welcome at FOW monthly meetings. Check www.friendsofworcester.org for dates.

Please send your tax-deductible contributions to:

**FRIENDS OF WORCESTER
P.O. Box 545
WORCESTER, PA 19490**

(or use the PayPal donation button on our website)

The official registration and financial information of The Friends of Worcester may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. F10

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Friends of Worcester Officers

Kim David - President (610-584-1805)
Rob Hayes - Vice President (610-584-0371)
Wini Hayes - Treasurer (610-584-0371)
Barbara McMonagle - Secretary (215-257-1436)

Join us at these upcoming meetings and events

Meetings: **Wednesdays, 7:30 pm**
January 12, 2011; February 9,
March 9; April 13; May 11
Check friendsofworchester.org for locations

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Worcester Township Public Meetings

Community Hall, 1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village

Board of Supervisors

1st Monday of the month, 8:00 am
3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:30 pm

Planning Commission

2nd & 4th Thursday, 7:30 pm

Zoning Hearing Board

4th Tuesday, 6:30 pm

Supervisors/Planning Commission Joint Meeting

Monday, 9:30 am: Dec 6