

# THE FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

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



Fall 2013

## President's Report

Friends of Worcester continues to flourish in both good economies and bad. We have been organized as a group supporting open space, intelligent land planning, and historic preservation for almost 20 years. In this time period we have seen an incredibly strong economy in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and worked hard to sustain the agricultural beauty and character of our township in light of a strong building boom. The intensity of this surge actually helped Friends of Worcester gain active members and supporters as well as build capital for future efforts.

Now we may face a greater challenge – the slow erosion of Worcester's rural character and the infringement on open space. Our residents are not witnessing the accelerated growth of the past and do not concern themselves with one more development here or there. Additionally, there were some recent changes in our zoning ordinances, such as the new sign ordinance, allowing for larger and more extensive signs that negatively affect our appearance. These modest and gradual degradations in our rural heritage are slowly compromising the character of our township. This is the fight we need to wage today.

### What can we do?

Immediately, we must take the steps necessary to preserve or formulate intelligent development plans for tracts of land located in our township that are on the verge of development. Both the Palmer tract, approximately 55 acres at the corner of 363 and 73, and the Worcester Golf Course on Green Hill Road face the possibility of development. These spaces will have a huge impact on how Worcester looks for years to come. Our Supervisors need to think outside the box and find creative ways to work with landowners to insure a result that perpetuates the character of our township as expressed in the township's Comprehensive Plan.

We must remain diligent in expressing the value of open space to fellow residents and our elected officials. We need you to continue to support Friends of Worcester so we remain a strong advocate for open space in our township. As stated in the report by the Green Space Alliance and the

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission titled 'The Economic Value of Protected Open Space,' it is imperative that all residents are aware of the cost savings and economic benefits that open space provides. We need to realize the importance open space plays in creating a healthy living community. It not only filters the air we breathe and water we drink, but creates a more stress-free living condition. By being knowledgeable about the value of open space preservation, actively expressing this point of view to fellow township residents and your supervisors, and supporting legislation such as 'Growing Greener' which promotes open space preservation, we can make a difference. Worcester can remain a healthy and beautiful place to live. Let's work on keeping it that way! 🌳



Aerial view of Center Point Village in Worcester at the intersection of Route 363 and Route 73.

## The Future of Center Point Village

Center Point is more than just one of Worcester's three villages; located at the intersection of Skipack Pike and Valley Forge Road, it is the geographic center of Montgomery County. Worcester Township is about to begin drafting a master plan for Center Point, with assistance from the Montgomery County Planning Commission and a private land planning firm, Kennedy & Associates, LLC, of Mainland, PA. The goal of this plan is to address future development in the Center Point area, including the types of zoning and land uses that will be permitted, the size and scale of new buildings, how traffic and pedestrians will circulate through and around the village, and how historic structures and green spaces may best be preserved.

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One of the reasons the township is embarking on a master plan for Center Point is that Worcester's Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2008, set a goal of concentrating the majority of new development within the areas of our three villages: Cedars, Center Point, and Fairview Village. A village planning ordinance has already been enacted for Cedars. Another reason for the Center Point master plan is that a sizeable amount of open land still exists in the village, especially at the northeast corner. Center Point is one of very few villages in central Montgomery County to have such a large acreage of undeveloped property. Some of this acreage will come up for subdivision and/or land development proceedings in the future. The township wants to be ready when this time comes, so that the people of Worcester, not developers, will have the guiding hand in the process of how Center Point Village can be developed.

Similar to Cedars and Fairview Village, Center Point consists of historic homes, barns, and other structures mixed with newer buildings and small commercial complexes. The Center Point Hotel, Allebach's General Store, the original Worcester School, and some other landmarks are now gone. It is important for new construction in the village to respect and complement the current small-scale buildings and not overwhelm them with oversized blank-walled edifices and vast parking lots, which unfortunately has been done in many other communities. The architecture should be of a human scale with detailing that reflects the surrounding rural vernacular context. Existing historic structures can be adaptively reused for commercial purposes with necessary parking either in the back or properly landscaped.

The safety of motorists and pedestrians alike is also important. It does not benefit residents or business owners to have cars speeding down the thoroughfares of Skippack Pike and Valley Forge Road. It is possible, through various road treatments, to calm the traffic that passes through Center Point, without causing congestion. This has been done in other villages and small towns in our area. People who live within walking distance of Center Point, as well as village patrons, should be able to safely access village businesses on foot.

Responsible planning will allow for both growth and the preservation of open space in Center Point Village. Scenic views, such as those along Skippack Pike, can be retained while still allowing for future development. Limiting the amount of impervious coverage (paved surfaces) and sizes of new buildings can help lessen the effects of water runoff and street flooding. Any increase in the number of new residential units or commercial space to be built in the

Center Point area should occur only through the use of transferable development rights (TDRs). In a TDR program, the development rights of one property (the sending parcel) are transferred to another property (the receiving parcel). The sending parcel is preserved, and those residential or commercial units are relocated to the receiving parcel set up by the township. Using TDRs achieves the preservation of open space in conjunction with new development.

As with any new ordinance or planning measure, the Worcester Township Planning Commission is critical to the process of generating a master plan for Center Point. They have an intimate knowledge of the community and experience with which to make sound planning decisions, having the best interests of the township at the forefront of everything they do.

Two information sessions have been hosted by Worcester Township to solicit residents' ideas and feedback. Now it is up to the Planning Commission, with help from their consultants, to come up with proposals for a Center Point master plan. All Worcester residents, whether they live in Center Point or not, are encouraged to voice their suggestions for responsible growth that does not compromise our heritage or environment. The people of Worcester, not outside powers, developers, or corporations, should guide the future of the Center Point of Montgomery County. Together, we have the opportunity to ensure that this small locale remains a unique crossroads village set in a rural atmosphere. Please visit the township website at [www.worcestertwp.com](http://www.worcestertwp.com) for meeting dates, agendas, minutes, and other pertinent information related to the Center Point master plan to learn how these changes may affect you. 🗺️

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## TDRs — Another Way to Preserve Worcester Golf Club

Located on the peak of Green Hill Road, Worcester Golf Club offers enticing views of the rolling topography of Montgomery County. From the expansive grounds of Evansburg State Park at the very edge of the golf course to the tranquil beauty of the surrounding farmland, the golf course abounds with wildlife. The three ponds on the property are home to many species of fish, frogs, turtles, and birds. On an early morning trip around the golf course, you may see deer, fox, and other animal visitors from the park. The 55-acre property is usable open space for humans and wildlife alike.

Worcester Golf Club opened in 1997 with the objective of providing reasonable golf rates for local families, allowing everyone who would like to learn or play golf the opportunity to do so, no matter their skill level or economic ability. To assure that the golf course remains a recreational and open space area in the township forever, TDRs can be used to preserve this beautiful resource.

### What are TDRs?

Transferable development rights (TDRs) are a tool that townships can use within their zoning ordinances to guide growth and development from one area of the township to another. Under a TDR program, a landowner can sell the development rights to a property while continuing to own the land. These TDRs can be used only in a TDR receiving area designated by the township.

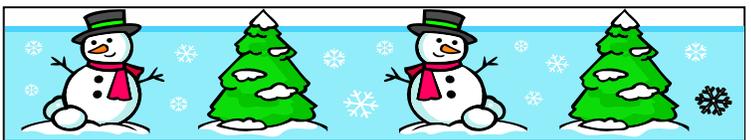
The land from which the TDRs are sold (the sending area) will be permanently protected from development, thus creating open space. The Worcester Golf Club is within the sending area of the TDR ordinance established by the township. The property also falls within an area designated as “high priority” for rural preservation in the township’s Comprehensive Plan.

### Why use TDRs in Worcester Township?

1. Lower the cost of acquiring open space
2. Maintain the rural character of our community
3. Provide for protection of wildlife habitat, water recharge and rural resources
4. Allow for planned growth and development within the township
5. Insure that farming and recreational areas remain unspoiled in the township
6. Create additional tax revenue for the school district without the burden of increased student enrollment in commercial receiving areas
7. Reduce traffic on rural roads

As the economy strengthens, development pressure in the township will also increase. The use of TDRs will help relieve some of this pressure by allowing owners of larger properties to realize some of the value of their land while directing development to more appropriate areas of the township. The township first introduced the TDR method of preserving open space in 2006 in the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. Worcester Golf Club has been involved in trying to preserve their property as open space since the ordinance was first introduced and has 20 TDRs registered with the township.

The township has made some significant strides with regard to TDRs. Using the TDR program to preserve the Worcester Golf Course and other large tracts of land in the township is a win-win situation. If open space, controlled growth, and putting the lid on taxes appeal to you, please contact your supervisors and let them know you would like to see more TDR receiving areas established as soon as possible. 🌲



### **Arrowhead Kids Craft Night**

Arrowhead Elementary School Cafeteria  
Friday, November 22, 6:00-9:00 pm

***Free Admission for all!***

Come out for a FUN night of crafting!  
Crafts are from \$1-\$5.

*Please note:* Children must be accompanied by an adult for the evening. Thank you!

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## Rich & Amy Scarlett - Gwyn Meadows Farm: It's All About the Horses

After moving his family from Wyoming, Lindley Scarlett, Richard Scarlett's father, began selling horses all over the Philadelphia area from the family farm in Wyncote (near Chestnut Hill and Philadelphia). When Richard was only 14 years old, he ran his own stable in Wyncote. At 16, he began offering a riding day camp.

Trudy Donnon lived on Swedesford Road in Lower Gwynedd. She rode in shows for Miss Violet Haines at Evergreen Farm on North Wales Road in Lower Gwynedd. It was no accident that Richard and Trudy would meet in this close-knit horse community. In 1971, Richard Scarlett and Trudy Donnon were married. That was just the beginning...

The search for the best property to meet their needs led Richard and Trudy to Worcester. Worcester was a perfect fit and full of promise. With horses in their blood, they longed for a place of their own close to their families who lived in Lower Gwynedd and Wyncote. They purchased their 54-acre Worcester property on Shearer Road, formerly a chicken farm, in November 1972. They had looked elsewhere but settled here because of Worcester's open space.

They started Gwyn Meadows Farm with 50 horses in 1973. Richard and Trudy's dream was to provide riding lessons, board horses, and show horses. They created an environment for children to learn how to ride horses, take care of and respect the horses, run around and have fun "just being themselves."

When they started their family, they shared their love for horses with their daughter Amy. Amy Scarlett Haskins was born and raised in Worcester on Gwyn Meadows Farm. She shares the same love of riding as her dad. They have both won numerous awards at the Devon Horse Show and other horse shows in our area.

Something special about the farm drew Amy back to her Worcester roots from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1999. Worcester is where she wanted to raise her family. With Richard's encouragement, Amy agreed to take over the day-to-day operations of their farm in 2001, but not without her father's help. Richard remains very much involved in the farm, sometimes getting up at 2 or 3 a.m. to start the day. Together Richard and Amy have grown their unique program to suit horse lovers of all ages. They offer a summer camp program in addition to riding lessons and many special events throughout the year. Richard enjoys taking *friends* to paper chases, fox hunts, local trail rides, and destinations around the world on horseback. Amy enjoys teaching, working with the children, going to horse shows and spending time with the

horses. She is proud to continue her parents' legacy.

Gwyn Meadows Farm is very child friendly and family oriented. Over the years, they have created wonderful memories for their students and themselves. They are seeing some former students return with their own children because they had so much fun at the farm when they were young. They often hear that it's hard to get to Worcester with all of the traffic, but "it's so worth it, when you get here!"

Today three generations of the Scarlett family share their love for horses at Gwyn Meadows Farm. Amy and her husband Chris and their two children, Addison and Brooks, live in half of the home where she was raised, while Richard lives in the other half. Pictures adorn their home, showing the pride they share from riding at the horse shows. Their family passion for horses continues. In 2012, both Addison and Brooks rode and placed in lead-line at the Devon Horse Show.



*Addison Haskins with Serendipity at Gwyn Meadows Farm.*

Richard learned about the Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Program (Farm Preservation Program) and decided to "keep the farm in the family" forever. Their 54-acre property qualified due to their equine business. Richard, with help from his sister, F. Louise Scarlett, applied to the Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Board (Farm Preservation Board), which ranks each applicant based on a variety of criteria. The Farm Preservation Board made an offer to purchase the development rights of the farm, which Richard accepted. In 2004, a permanent deed restriction, called an agricultural conservation easement, was placed on his property. An agricultural conservation easement ensures that the property will never be developed and some form of farming will continue in perpetuity. The Scarletts must still comply with the requirements of the Farm Preservation Program. All preserved farms are inspected

annually for compliance with the program. Selling the easement on the farm gives Richard peace of mind that their property will never be developed. He says there is nothing he can think of that is negative about the program. He is such a believer in the program that he has preserved his other farm in Unionville, Chester County, PA. He has also spoken to friends and neighbors about preserving their properties.

Both Richard and Amy encourage other landowners interested in land preservation to just **“DO IT!”** Neither wants to see Worcester change. They feel “lucky to be here.” Worcester to them is a “nice family area – a good place to raise your children and grandchildren.” *For more information about the farm, please visit [GwynMeadowsFarm.com](http://www.gwynmeadowsfarm.com).* For information about the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program contact Dee Dee McGrane (610) 584-6196 or Barbara McMonagle (215) 257-1436. Additional information can be found at the following website: <http://www.montcopa.org/index.aspx?nid=690> 

## Remembering What Makes Worcester the Beautiful Place We Call Home

*By Lynne Edwards*

Sometimes, when you live somewhere long enough, you forget the things that make it important and the things that drew you there in the beginning. And sometimes it helps to be reminded.

When we moved here from north central Pennsylvania, I wasn't sure that I could find the same beauty in the suburbs of Philadelphia. And then we found Worcester Township. Up there we had state game lands with forests, wildlife, and peace. Down here there is open space, wildlife, and peace.

Friends of Worcester is an important part of helping to keep Worcester what it is. “Once it's gone, it's gone forever” is a reminder that the best change is through thoughtful planning.

Conservation subdivision requires developers to maintain open space for wildlife to share the land with us. Although our property is relatively small for Worcester, I have enjoyed watching wildlife. Our backyard has been home to, or a travel route for, groundhogs, rabbits, deer, foxes, geese, and a duck. Groundhogs lived under our shed, and last year I watched a family of babies grow up. One year

the rabbit population was growing quickly, and some foxes moved in briefly and cleaned up. For a while there were no rabbits, but they are back.

Watching wildlife is peaceful, but there are also harsh realities. A few years ago, a duck built her nest under our picnic table. I watched her nurture her eggs for weeks, and then one day another of nature's creatures found lunch.

Geese are the symbol for Meadowood. A quick search shows the importance of the V formation geese use when flying and how they support each other. Part of what makes the Meadowood community is the support everyone shows for others. The symbol of the goose is what drew me to work at Meadowood, and I was employed there long enough to get my goose pin. Sure, geese have left little green piles of fertilizer in my backyard, but the reminder of community is more important. And my grass is ultimately greener from their visits.

Development threatens the beauty and peace of Worcester. More homes and fences mean less land for wildlife and more noise from traffic. The key is remembering what is important and working together.

Some of our neighbors were born in Worcester and have lived here all their lives. Some of us were drawn here from other places. But all of us, if we stop to think about it, love Worcester for the open space, the wildlife, and the peace. Once it's gone, it's gone forever - all of it, open space, wildlife, and peace. 

### **FWO Fall Trail Walk at Heebner Park**

A group of enthusiastic supporters walked the trails on October 19th at Heebner Park and had a great time! Heebner Park is a great place to walk the trails, play tennis, soccer, baseball, flag football, or just play in the park. The park has many different trails and activities to get involved in.

Please look for us in the spring of 2014 as we continue exploring the many trails of Worcester Township. In the meantime, come out and enjoy all of the open space of the parks and trails in the township today!

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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.

- Friend - \$35     Family - \$50     Benefactor - \$100     Advocate - \$250     Other

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**All residents, contributing or not, are always welcome at FOW monthly meetings. Check [www.friendsofworcester.org](http://www.friendsofworcester.org) for dates.**

**Please send your tax-deductible contributions to:**  
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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.

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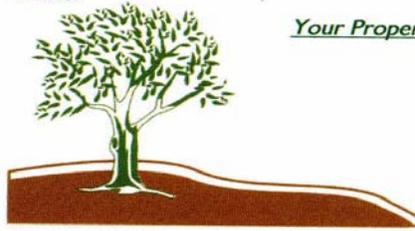
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Check [friendsofworcester.org](http://friendsofworcester.org) for details.

### Worcester Township Public Meetings

**Community Hall, 1031 Valley Forge Rd,  
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#### Board of Supervisors

1st Monday of the month, 9:00 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

Check [worcestertwp.com](http://worcestertwp.com) for any changes or cancellations.