

THE FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

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Fall 2003



Open Space Referendum on Nov. 4 Is Opportunity for Worcester

On November 4, Election Day, Montgomery County voters will have the opportunity to voice their support for the continuation of the highly successful open space initiative that the county commissioners began 10 years ago. Over the next 10 years, the commissioners propose a \$150-million open space program to enable townships and boroughs to continue to acquire and protect land as open space. The bulk of this money will be spent to help townships like Worcester purchase the development rights to undeveloped land so that this land will remain open space forever.

With the county's help, over the past 5 years Worcester has been able to permanently protect over 200 acres of farm land from development. This has translated into at least 100 homes that will not be built in Worcester and tens of thousands of dollars in increased school taxes that will not have to be paid by Worcester residents. That's not even counting the cost of other services that are required by residential developments. When you "do the math," study after study shows that providing all the necessary services to a residential community costs more than the taxes paid by the people living there. More residential development also means increased local traffic, heavier dependence on increasingly scarce groundwater resources, and more problems with flooding on roads and in basements, not to mention the loss of our township's farm land. Open space, on the other hand, requires minimal infrastructure and services, so it is cheaper to preserve open space than to allow it to be developed.

We in Worcester are fortunate that we still have horse pastures, pumpkin fields, acres of hay and corn standing tall in the summer, quiet meadows, and stretches of woods that protect stream corridors. All these open areas are silently at work, every day, to clean the air we breathe and reduce the incidence of storm-driven flooding on our roads and yards. But what if all of Worcester were developed? What if all you could see as you drove along our township roads were housing developments? Our farms, fields and woods can remain open, the way they are today, if we protect them

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FOW would like to thank HAYES, Inc. and HAYES Plus for sponsoring this newsletter.

Township Appoints Supervisor and Open Space Coordinator

Following John Harris's successful bid as the Republican candidate for Worcester Township supervisor in the primary election last May, the supervisors appointed Harris as interim supervisor to serve out the late Jack Graham's term, which expires in January 2004. Since Graham's death last February, Worcester had been operating with only two supervisors, Frank Davey and Chase Kneeland. Formerly, Harris was the township's first Open Space Coordinator, having been appointed in 1999. As Open Space Coordinator, Harris was very successful in organizing the program and completing the acquisition of development rights on four parcels of land in the township, totaling approximately 220 acres.

Harris's win in the May primary election demonstrates township residents' strong support for open space in Worcester. Last fall, the Board of Supervisors announced a temporary halt to open space acquisition plans while the township determined how to streamline the process and reduce costs. With that process completed and a full complement of supervisors on board, open space issues in the township are once more moving forward. In July, to assure the continued momentum of the program, the supervisors appointed Susan Caughlan as the new Open Space Coordinator. Caughlan is a local attorney with a strong interest in conservation issues and a commitment to continuing to preserve open space in Worcester.

Caughlan's appointment comes at a time when the Montgomery County open space program is about to begin its second 10-year cycle of funding for the purchase of open space. "Worcester has been very successful in securing

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from development by using state and county open space funds to purchase those development rights.

The county's open space program is already in place; the commissioners are waiting only for a yes vote in November to activate the next 10 years of funding for Worcester and the other municipalities in Montgomery County. The county's open space program over the past 10 years has been an overwhelming success, and Worcester has benefited greatly from that program. Now voters need to ensure that the money will be available over the next 10 years to continue this success and preserve as much open space as possible, while it is still possible.

Below is the text of the ballot question as it will appear on November 4th.

2003 Montgomery County Open Space Ballot Question

"Shall debt in the sum of One Hundred and Fifty Million Dollars, to be incurred over a ten-year period for the purpose of financing open space preservation, parks, recreation areas, recreation trails, shade trees, farmland preservation, protection and preservation of historic resources, natural habitats, and natural resources such as water, and the expenses of the debt, be authorized to be incurred by Montgomery County as debt approved by the electors?"

VOTE!

YES

While you're in the voting booth, don't forget to vote for Worcester Township Supervisor. John Harris won the Republican nomination in the May primary and is running unopposed. 🌳

(Township Appoints Supervisor, continued from page 1)

county and state money for the purchase of open space," Caughlan noted, "and we intend to keep up this progress in the new funding cycle." Worcester has valuable farm land, beautiful stretches of woods, and many streams and wetlands that can and should be preserved as open space. Our supervisors have demonstrated their commitment to open space by passing a resolution in support of the referendum, and also by continually devoting time and energy to the success of open space projects in Worcester. We commend them for their vision and their commitment to keeping Worcester green. 🌳

Fairview Village Sewer Update

The Doli Construction Company of Chalfont, Inc., completed construction of the pump station on Adair Drive in early August and has proceeded with the sanitary sewer system construction in this same area. Mr. Dennis Work is the project engineer. He has been very helpful in answering questions and offering advice. Anyone having concerns regarding the sanitary sewer construction can contact him on his cell phone at 267-784-0103.

There has been a lot of drilling and blasting during this construction period, but the inconvenience to the neighbors has been kept to a minimum. Thanks to the skillful workers of the construction company, drivers of trucks and other equipment yield to cars, trash trucks, school buses, and mail delivery. This has made it easier to get through to area homes. The streets have also been cleaned and brushed at the end of each work day.

The residents will be financially responsible for the costs of installing laterals, recapture costs, tapping fees, on-site system abandonment costs, and home-to-lateral plumbing costs. As a result of grants from the state and the township, the remaining estimated total costs to residents are: East Area \$9,700; West Area \$8,500; and Valley Forge Road \$8,400. Some residents are still waiting to hear whether additional grant money from HUD has been approved.

Public water lines will also be installed. Water service will be provided by the Pennsylvania American Water Company. It is estimated that the entire project will be completed by spring 2004. 🌳

**Worcester Township Meetings
Worcester Township Community Hall
(1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village)**

Board of Supervisors – Wednesday 7:30 p.m. November 19, December 17

Zoning Hearing Board – Tuesday 6:30 p.m. October 28, November 25, December 16

Planning Commission – Thursday 7:30 p.m. November 6, November 20, December 4, December 18

Greenway Study Public Meetings – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 22 & Thursday, December 11

CVS Abandons Trooper Road Corner

Last fall, Worcester residents were horrified to learn that a developer for drug giant CVS was planning to build a megapharmacy on the northwest corner of Trooper Road and Germantown Pike, just across the street from the tiny, historic Norriton Presbyterian Church and the converted Old Landmark Restaurant. One year and many meetings later, CVS appears to have gone away.

We can't help but think that the "NO CVS" signs, and the 221 residents who took the time to post their comments on the petition at FOW's website (www.friendsofworchester.org), had more than a little to do with this. We want to say THANK YOU to everyone who took the time to sign the petition, put up a sign on the lawn, or attend meetings. Your involvement made a difference, and together we, the residents of Worcester, achieved a good result for our township. 🌳

Growth Accelerates in Worcester!!!

Over the last 10 years, approximately 1500 new residential units have been approved for construction and/or completed. Since March 2002, these additional development plans have been presented to the township:

<u>Name & Location</u>	<u>Units & Total Acres</u>
Bethel Knoll (Bethel Rd)	9 lots on 15 acres
Cane (Artmar Rd)	15 lots on 10 acres
Great Valley Woods (Skiptack Pike/Whitehall Rd)	14 lots on 45 acres
Homsher Hill (AQRC) (N. Wales Rd/Township Line Rd)	209 units on 113 acres
Kumpf/Bell (Trooper Rd/Woodland Rd)	47 lots on 95 acres
Kyung (Berks Rd)	6 lots on 13 acres
Maple Glen (Skiptack Pike)	8 lots on 24 acres
Reserve at Center Point (Highmeadow Farm; Trooper Rd)	25 lots on 55 acres
Thompson/Scott (Berks Rd/Skiptack Pike)	23 lots on 52 acres
All subdivisions smaller than 5 lots	28 lots
TOTAL	384 units

This total represents 25 percent of all the development approved in the last 10 years! Development is at an all-time high!! The time to preserve open space is now!!! 🌳

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

Building a Greenway in Worcester

On September 18, 2003, while Hurricane Isabel was raging outside, residents were also raging inside the Worcester Township Community Hall as Simone, Jaffe, Collins, a Berwyn landscape architect firm, presented initial alignments for a proposed greenway in Worcester Township. Some residents objected to a proposed trail that would connect preserved open space areas by crossing through the back of their properties. The first presentation was intended to gauge residents' opinions about the proposed alignments. It is our understanding that the township supervisors will not require any resident to accept a trail crossing their property.

The greenway was originally proposed as a walking trail linking Peter Wentz Farm to Evansburg State Park. The greenway concept has been expanded to include a system of interconnected trails and greenways that would link recreational, residential, and open space destinations both inside and outside Worcester. The greenway will provide much needed outdoor hiking, biking, and other non-motorized recreational opportunities for all township residents to enjoy.

The township already has acquired open space that can be used for public access between a variety of destinations. Public participation is vital as the plan moves forward. Township residents are encouraged to attend the next public meeting on October 22, 2003, at 7 p.m. at the Worcester Township Community Hall, when a draft plan will be presented. 🌳


Join us at these upcoming meetings and events WE WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT

- November 18 7:30 p.m. Kim & Chris David
1704 Berks Road, 610-584-1805
- December 28 5:00 p.m. Holiday Party at the Hayes'
3033 Fisher Road, 610-584-0371
Potluck—RSVP by December 21
- January 13 7:30 p.m. Jeannie & George Steigerwalt
1028 Grange Avenue, 610-489-7904
- February 10 7:30 p.m. Wini & Rob Hayes
3033 Fisher Road, 610-584-0371

Traffic Impact Fee Approved

At their August meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved the Roadway Sufficiency Analysis and Capital Improvement Plan that was presented by the Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee in May. This approval paved the way for the adoption of the Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance by the Board of Supervisors at their September meeting.

With the influx of many new developments in the township, the Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance allows Worcester Township to legally collect fees from developers for traffic increases caused by their developments. This money will be used for the road improvements proposed in the Capital Improvement Plan. The need for these improvements was based on projections of future traffic in the township. The fees collected will cover only a portion of the actual cost of these improvements; the balance will be paid by PennDOT and Worcester Township.

One of the recommendations in the Capital Improvement Plan is to widen the intersection of Skippack Pike and Valley Forge Road to five lanes in each direction and then merge these lanes back to the current two-lane roads beyond the intersection. The township has the option to revisit this Plan in the future to update it as actual growth occurs instead of relying on the current analysis and 10-year traffic projections, which may prove to be inaccurate. We suggest that the Board of Supervisors closely monitor the needs of the township before allocating funds for this massive change, as well as others as shown in the plan, which may be unnecessary or unwise. 

Interview with Andrew & Melissa Smith of Willow Creek Orchards Farm

Willow Creek Orchards Farm Market and pick-your-own orchard is coming to a township near you! Located right here in Worcester, the market and orchard will be situated on Stump Hall Road between Hollow and Kriebel Mill Roads. The property being farmed has a rich history in Worcester Township, having been in the Heebner family and in continuous agricultural production since the 1750s. The inclusion of a farm market and orchard will preserve valuable farmland and continue active farming in a rapidly diminishing rural landscape.

FOW: *Tell us about Willow Creek Orchards Farm*

The Smiths: Our goals are to produce high quality, organically grown fruits and vegetables for local consumption and to offer them at the peak of freshness. Much of the produce in grocery stores travels hundreds, if not thousands, of miles before reaching your home. As houses are planted instead of crops, society loses unrecoverable resources and people become disconnected from their food source. Today, only 1 percent of the population lives on farms. The focus of Willow Creek Orchards will also be one of education and community involvement. Many of our children may grow up never setting foot on a farm or knowing where much of their food is produced. It is a privilege to be able to share our land with the community and to enable others

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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 share 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 Friends are involved on a strictly volunteer basis. Friends receive our monthly agenda and minutes as well as phone chain notification of important township events.

Supporter - \$30

Contributor - \$50

Benefactor - \$75 or more

All residents, contributing or not, are always welcome at FOW monthly meetings.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

You may include my name as a contributor in your newsletter.

Please send your tax deductible contributions to:

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WORCESTER, PA 19490**

(Interview, continued from page 4)

to enjoy the fruitfulness and open space the land provides, which may not be available to them otherwise. In addition to the farm market and pick-your-own orchard, we plan to coordinate a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. This will allow people to have a more intimate relationship with the land and the people who produce their food. This program will include voluntary workdays, when people can get their hands dirty, and a children's garden that kids can observe throughout the growing season.

FOW: *What crops are you growing and when will they be available to the public?*

The Smiths: We presently are transitioning the farm to organic (a three-year certification process; we are in year two), and we use only natural growing techniques, no synthetic pesticides. In March of this year, we established an orchard consisting of apples, peaches, pears, nectarines, plums, cherries, blueberries and raspberries. Strawberries and raspberries will be ready for pick-your-own in 2004, and the majority of the fruit will be ready in 2005. We will also be growing an array of fruits and vegetables that will be available at our farm market throughout the growing season.

FOW: *Where are you selling now?*


The Smiths: This year marks our first full year of production, and it has proved to be a tremendous period of growth and learning in all aspects of our business. Some of you may have visited us at the Skippack Farmers' market on Sundays, or perhaps you joined our "Farm Fresh Club" and had a weekly taste of our freshly picked produce delivered right to your doorstep. As you can imagine, this involved a tremendous amount of time and effort, from setting up for the market and assembling orders to managing e-mails and executing deliveries.

FOW: *When will the market at the farm be open?*

The Smiths: This year has illustrated very clearly to us the tremendous necessity for a farm market to be located on-site. It has been almost a year now since we began seeking approval for the farm market, and we are still in this phase of the project. The entire process has been more lengthy and costly than we had anticipated. How-

ever, we are painstakingly attempting to have all requirements completed soon so that Worcester and the local community can enjoy what our farm has to offer by this coming spring.

FOW: *Is there anything else you would like us to know?*

The Smiths: We want to thank the many supporters we have had during our first year. You have made a challenging year a successful one. For more information about Willow Creek Orchards and what is happening at the farm, please visit us at www.willowcreekorchards.com or call 610.222.0975. 

The Horse Show Goes On

The 63rd Farmer's Union Horse Show was held on its traditional date, the first Saturday in June, at Heyser's Field in Fairview Village. Despite another cold wet day during a spring of constant rain, the show went on. Friends of Worcester provided the food tent and photo contest as planned.

This year, Farmer's Union Horse Company also hosted the Montgomery County Horse Show at Heyser's Field on September 21st. As dreary as June 7th was, September gave us a gorgeous day. FOW was there grilling those favorites – kielbasa sandwiches, hotdogs and veggie burgers. The raffle was a great success, thanks to the generous donations by many area businesses. The flea market, which was started by FOW in 2002, took place in the Community Hall parking lot adjacent to Heyser Field.

Farmer's Union consists of a small group dedicated to continuing a historic country tradition going on here in Worcester Township. If you would like information about the history of the horse show or membership in Farmer's Union, please call Marty Cahill at 610-584-5348. You don't need a farm or a horse to join and have fun. Mark your calendars now for the first Saturday in June and join us for the 2004 spring flea market and horse show.

Each year local businesses donate items for our raffle. FOW would like to thank the following businesses that donated items for this year's raffle. We appreciate their generous support.

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**FOW Would Like to Thank the Following Local Businesses For
Their Generous Support and Donation of Raffle Items**

Allen Antiques, Center Point
Applewood Designs, Cedars
Asher's Florist, Fairview Village
Café at Cedars, Cedars
Center Point Pond, Center Point
David Brothers Nursery, Worcester
His & Hers Hair Salon, West Point
Iron Master's House, Center Point
Looks Salon, Cedars

O & F Farms, Center Point
Posh Pet, Cedars
Ravenna, Center Point
Risher Van Horn Florist, Colledgeville
Second Glance Salon, Center Point
Slim & Tone, Fairview Village
Southern Living at Home, Worcester
Williams & Co. Jewelers, Center Point

Congratulations to the winners of the 2003 FOW Photo Contest for Methacton High School students. The theme was "Worcester Township's Historic and Rural Roots." We would like to thank Mr. Bosler at Methacton High School for his help in organizing this event.

Photo Contest Winners

Unretouched

First Place, \$50—Janet Giese, Audubon
Second Place, \$25—Gwen Priestman, Worcester
Third Place, \$15—Scott Smith, Lower Providence
Fourth Place, \$10—Daniel Doyle, Audubon

Digital or Digitally Enhanced

First Place, \$50—Gwen Priestman, Worcester
Second Place, \$25—James Hoopes, Worcester
Third Place, \$15—Daniel Doyle, Audubon
Fourth Place, \$10—Joanna Corby, Worcester

ATTENTION LOCAL BUSINESSES!

This space could be yours! Reach every household in Worcester. Advertise your business and Support Friends of Worcester.

Contact Marie Amato at 610-630-0254

FRIENDS OF WORCESTER OFFICERS

Kim David - President (610/584-1805)
Michael Simeone - Vice President (610/584-2075)
Wini Hayes - Treasurer (610/584-0371)
Barbara McMonagle - Secretary (215/699-8225)
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