

THE FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

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

Spring 2007



President's Report for 2006

The year 2006 proved to be a successful one for Friends of Worcester. We accomplished the goals we laid out in the beginning of the year. FOW's website has continued to grow and proves to be a valuable resource for township residents. Our newsletters are informative and well received. The township continues to preserve open space, which, along with historical structures preservation, is the mission of Friends of Worcester.

One means by which Friends of Worcester fulfills its mission to preserve open space in our township is to attend the monthly meetings of the Board of Supervisors and advocate for open space. Here resident support is essential. Attending these meetings and supporting open space initiatives can have great impact.

Our mission is not only to educate township residents about the value of open space, but to reach out to our elected officials with information regarding preservation of open space and the numerous strategies that are available to secure land from development. We then need to support their actions when they enact open space initiatives.

Worcester Township has the resources to secure open space, whether by outright purchase, obtaining grant money, working with developers, or tapping into state and county funds. The township can be very effective in preserving open space. More specifically, the actions of the supervisors are integral to making open space acquisition happen.

As we look ahead to the election of a new supervisor this year, it is critical that those of us who are interested in open space, historic preservation, and maintaining the rural character of our township closely examine the interests of the candidates who are running. Residents should test each candidate's commitment to rural preservation. Ask the questions and listen for answers: "What actions will you take to preserve open space? What have you done so far? Did you support the Growing Greener ordinances? What skills and experience do you bring to this position?"

By asking the right questions and electing a supervisor who truly wants to help open space preservation continue to move forward in Worcester, we can make a difference in our community. 🌱

Growing Greener Benefits Worcester

More than a year has passed since our supervisors enacted the ordinance known colloquially as Growing Greener -- Conservation by Design. This ordinance governs the development of land 8 acres or more in size. The township is now in the process of reviewing the first subdivision plan to use this new ordinance.

A significant benefit of development under Growing Greener is the amount of permanently preserved open space that can be leased for farming, developed for recreational use, or maintained as passive open space. Designing streets with homes on just one side gives each homeowner both front and rear vistas, since there are no homes across the street. As a result, residents feel like they live on a large tract of land.

However, there are a few misconceptions still being advanced about the ordinance which need to be addressed: (1) Will a landowner who sells property to a developer under the new ordinance lose some of the value of the land as compared with the previous ordinance? (2) Will new homes built under Growing Greener pay less in taxes because they are built on smaller lots, thus increasing the tax burden on everyone? (3) Should the supervisors have made the new ordinance optional, so a developer could choose either the new ordinance or the old one?

Here are the facts. Under the Growing Greener ordinance, developers will be using up to 50% of the buildable land to construct the same number of housing units as under the previous ordinance. Therefore, developers will not suffer any financial loss on the number of

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housing units they can develop. In addition, developers' infrastructure costs will be less, since they will have to excavate and build roads on only half the land. The developers' area of sewage and water placement is also lessened and, therefore, their costs are again reduced. Since there will be no financial burden on the developers, and in fact, a financial advantage, the price that a developer will offer the landowner will not suffer in any way. The property taxes on a new home are based predominantly on the value of the home, not the size of the lot. Growing Greener will have no adverse effect on the township's tax base.

Change is naturally difficult and often resisted. If the new ordinance were optional, some developers might choose the old ordinance. This, of course, would impact how our township develops. The landowner cannot make this choice, because the developer owns the option to buy the property and is the entity applying for development. The majority of township residents would prefer Worcester Township to control development, so that growth occurs in a manner that much better protects the township's rural character and preserves open vistas.

West Vincent Township enacted their Growing Greener ordinance in 1998. Since then, there have been a total of 15 developments in the township in which about 1100 houses have been built. These developments contain a total of 1429 acres, of which 904 acres have been preserved as open space. This is a preservation of 63.3% open space. According to Jim Wendelgass, manager of West Vincent Township, there has been no decrease in the value of the land being sold to developers due to the enactment of the Growing Greener ordinance. Mr. Wendelgass mentioned that developers do not complain, because their infrastructure costs are less. The developers, he said, market the smaller lot sizes and open space features that are desirable to more and more homeowners. Additionally, he said the pace of the re-sale is more brisk in the Growing Greener developments as compared to older developments, because more and more home buyers are looking for smaller lots with less maintenance.

It's clear that under Growing Greener our supervisors enacted a cutting-edge ordinance we can all be proud of. This is a win-win-win scenario -- a win for landowner values, a win for the developers, and a win for all residents of Worcester Township. 🌱

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

FOW — 10 Years and Going Strong!

What a milestone! As we recognize Friends of Worcester's 10th anniversary, it's time to reflect on our past and set goals for the future. We began in 1996 with only a handful of concerned citizens interested in what was happening in Worcester. We attended Planning Commission, Zoning, and Board of Supervisors meetings, speaking up when proposals weren't in the best interest of Worcester residents.

We opposed the proposed CVS (1996) and Amoco (1997) at North Wales and Township Line Roads, the CVS (2002) at Trooper Road and Germantown Pike, and the turnpike slip ramp (1999-2002) at Schultz Road, and succeeded in keeping all of them out of Worcester.

Last year, FOW supported the Growing Greener ordinances adopted by our supervisors. These ordinances will preserve at least 50% of each developed property as open space when parcels over 8 acres are developed. Where homes may have been built, we will be able to enjoy the interconnected open spaces that have been preserved by these ordinances without any cost to taxpayers or loss in value to landowners.

The increasing pressure of development continues to knock at our door. There are currently over 780 acres in Worcester which are in the process of development. More subdivisions are coming all the time. We cannot stop them, but we can try to minimize their impact on our township. We must all continue to oppose plans that request unnecessary variances for building size, lot area, setbacks, lighting, impervious coverage, and other aspects that will have a cumulative negative affect on our community.

Our goal has always been preserving Worcester's rural character and protecting its open spaces. Worcester is beautiful – we have working farms, woodlands, horse pastures, fields, and meadows. The Methacton ridge that runs through our township gives us unparalleled views of the region and a large share of headwater streams, which provide excellent fishing and wildlife habitat. It's up to us to safeguard these treasures for future generations to enjoy forever.

There is much more to be done. If Worcester is going to maintain its rural heritage, we need to work together to protect our most valuable assets by:

- * Supporting open space preservation techniques
- * Protecting our villages - Cedars, Center Point, and Fairview Village -- by supporting a village vision plan that allows a blend of homes and appropriate scale commercial buildings, shops, and offices
- * Protecting our historic buildings, which are often demolished as properties are developed

Last year FOW conducted a survey in our newsletter and on our website. You told us that your major concerns were loss of open space, overdevelopment, and loss of farmland and historic buildings. We hear you! Your support of our efforts is clear - these issues matter. We will continue to work on these issues and keep you informed.

By working together, we will continue to make a difference. What you think does matter. Just look at what a few people started a mere 10 years ago with a desire to influence how development occurs and to save open space in Worcester. We've only just begun. 🌱

Turnpike Widening Project

Recently the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission held two Open House meetings in our area in order to share with the public its plans for the proposed reconstruction and widening of the Northeastern Extension between the Mid-County and Lansdale interchanges. Worcester's supervisors attended the March 29th information session with turnpike representatives. According to supervisor John Harris, they will continue to work with turnpike officials to be sure that Worcester's concerns will be addressed.

This is a major project for the Turnpike Commission and will have a significant impact for residents along this 10.5-mile stretch of roadway in both the near term and long term. Local residents have already expressed concerns regarding the lack of sound barriers in Worcester; the size and number of stormwater drainage basins; the number of emergency access ramps; and the planned detour routes.

FOW will take an active role in lobbying for the satisfactory resolution of plans that would create troublesome noise pollution, stormwater runoff problems, and other negative, lasting consequences of the expansion project in Worcester Township. FOW will work with township residents and our local and state officials, just as we did when we challenged the proposed slip ramp, to get the best result for Worcester. Visit our website, friendsofworcester.org, to let us know your thoughts on this issue.

More information about this project can be found on the Turnpike Commission's website, <http://www.paturnpike.com/ConstructionProjects/mpA20toA30/index.htm>.

What Is a Historic Resource Survey?

Worcester Township's Historical Structures Preservation Committee is continuing its work to preserve our community's architectural heritage. As reported in FOW's fall newsletter, the committee is recommending that a historic preservation ordinance be enacted by the township to effectively protect historic resources and encourage their continued use. An inventory of the historic buildings in the township is an important part of such an ordinance.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has developed guidelines for historic resource surveys. Some Montgomery County municipalities that have recently completed these surveys include East Norriton, Upper Dublin, Springfield, Hatfield, Ambler, North Wales, and Trappe. Worcester has consulted with PHMC and the Conservancy of Montgomery County to learn more about these surveys and to help plan for our own.

The purpose of the survey is to gather basic information about a structure, to provide an accurate record of the historic buildings on the property. It will be specific, so that what otherwise might be called "an old house" can be more accurately described as an "1870s Gothic Revival five-bay brick farmhouse."

The information collected for each structure will include building type, approximate date and method of construction, architectural style, and historical significance. Some of the properties are documented in the Worcester Historical Society's book, *A History Of Worcester Township*, published in 1978, but many are not. A photograph of each building's exterior is part of the survey. Usually, this can be accomplished from the road. At no point will it be necessary to go inside any buildings, since the ordinance does not apply to interiors.

The Historic Structures Preservation Committee members have been volunteering their time and energy for the benefit of all residents of Worcester, so that we can have a future filled with a beautiful and diverse array of buildings gracing the landscapes we cherish so much. Completing this historic survey is an important step in preserving our historic buildings. If you see these committee members conducting this survey work sometime in the future, please say "hello" and thank them for their efforts at improving our quality of life in Worcester.

Farmers' Union Continues a Tradition in Worcester

Worcester Township is home to an institution that has endured from the 19th century into the 21st century. The Farmers Union Horse Company for the Recovery of Stolen Horse and Detecting the Thieves was chartered in Pennsylvania in 1834 as a farmers' cooperative insurance company. For 70 years, members rode or drove their horses to Fairview Village once a year to register them. For a nominal fee, the organization's Pursuit Committee would guarantee to seek out missing or stolen horses. Early in the 20th century, the horse company disbanded with the advent of modern farming machinery such as tractors and trucks. The Farmers Union Horse Company still has all the early records of this organization, except for a few years that are lost.

In 1940, a group of Worcester residents decided to revive the "old days" and reinstated the annual parade of horses and horse-drawn carriages to Fairview Village on the first Saturday in June. The Farmers Union Horse Company parade and horse show became a new tradition for Fairview Village. For 60 years the parade proceeded eastward on Germantown Pike to Heyser Field, behind Worcester Township Community Hall, where a horse show ran all day. However, times continued to change, and horse owners began to sell their land and move away. In June 2000, the parade made its way down Germantown Pike for the last time. Thanks to the generosity of landowner John Heyser, the annual horse show on the first Saturday in June continues. With enough community interest, the parade could be revived.

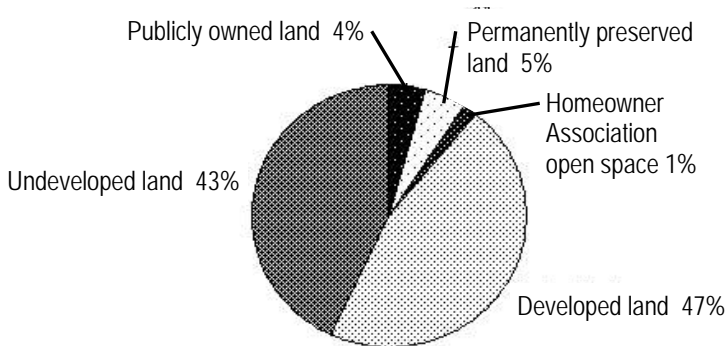
Today, the Farmers Union Horse Company has been re-organized as a nonprofit organization whose purposes

include maintaining a master list of horses and owners for the Pursuit Committee and promoting equine trails in the township and surrounding area. The organization also monitors legislation, ordinances, and regulations that affect the area's equestrian population, and supports horse-related organizations such as the Large Animal Protection Society, Ryers, Lost and Found Horse Rescue, and Last Chance Horse Rescue.

Farmers Union welcomes new members, whether they own horses or are just interested in being part of a historical group with increasingly strong community ties and awareness of local open space, trail planning, and trail maintenance. If you are interested in joining, or for more information, call Marty Cahill at 610-584-5348 or visit our website at www.farmersunionhorsecompany.org.

Open Space Opportunities

Last year was a banner year for open space preservation in Worcester, with the Montgomery County Farm Board preserving two working farms (a total of 146 acres) and Montgomery County offering to purchase a third farm (19 acres) to expand Peter Wentz Farmstead. Our township now has over 1100 acres of land that is permanently preserved or protected from development through ownership by the state, county, or township. The chart shows the approximate distribution of land uses in Worcester.



We have made admirable progress, but many opportunities for land preservation remain.

Working farms larger than 35 acres are eligible to apply for preservation through Montgomery County's Farmland Preservation Program. Commonly, the program offers farmers the appraised value of the development rights to their land, which often enables them to remain on the land and continue farming it. This benefits the community in numerous ways. Not only are these acres forever preserved from residential or commercial development, but the local economy is bolstered and consumers are able to buy fresh, locally grown food. The application deadline for the 2008 program is December 31, 2007.

Property owners can also donate a conservation easement on their land, insuring that the land will never be devel-

oped while allowing the landowner to continue to own the land. This land will become permanently protected from residential or commercial development, but otherwise it will remain in the landowner's control. The property can be sold, leased, or left to heirs. Significant tax deductions can be available as a result of a landowner's donation of a conservation easement. Often it is financially more attractive for a landowner to donate a conservation easement, take the tax deduction, and then sell the eased property or leave it to heirs, rather than to pay significant capital gains or estate taxes on the sale or inheritance of appreciated real estate. Expanded tax deductions are available to landowners who donate easements through the end of 2007, and Congress could extend these benefits beyond the end of this year.

For more information:

Elizabeth Emlen
Montgomery County Farmland
Preservation Administrator
610-278-3754

Susan Caughlan
Worcester Township Open
Space Coordinator
sgc@dca.net
610-584-5619

Frank D'Lauro — An Appreciation

Frank D'Lauro, a member of the Worcester Planning Commission and its chairman for many years, passed away on February 10, 2007. As an architect with land development experience, Frank was ideally suited to the work of the Planning Commission. He had a strong sense of appropriate, context-sensitive design, and he knew the business end of development. He challenged developers to understand Worcester's character, make maximum use of the natural landscape to visually buffer new development, and make the extra effort to create "quality design." He was adamant about maintaining large setbacks from major township roads, particularly Valley Forge Road, always pushing to protect the "long, scenic views" along this key corridor in our township.

Frank grew up on Valley Forge Road and later made his home there. His accomplishments included taking over and greatly expanding his father's building company; serving our country in Vietnam, earning several medals for heroism; and dedicating many years of volunteer assistance to the Big Brother/Big Sister Association of Philadelphia. Frank was an early proponent of the township's open space preservation planning, as well as a consistent and generous supporter of Friends of Worcester. He practiced what he preached, installing native plantings along his own property frontage on Valley Forge Road in loose clusters to insure the wonderful western views across his agricultural fields. His dedication to the work of the Planning Commission, and his conscientious stewardship of his land, are his special legacy to Worcester, for which he will be remembered. He will be greatly missed.

Recognizing Worcester Township's Planning Commission

Volunteers all, Worcester Township's Planning Commission consists of Chairman Gordon Todd, Pat Quigley, Rob Hayes, and Bill Fox. Gordon brings substantial experience to his role as chairman, with over 30 years as an architect with extensive township and municipal planning expertise. Under the capable leadership of Gordon Todd, and the late Frank D'Lauro before him, our Planning Commission has contributed to our township in substantial ways over the years. Some of their accomplishments include:

- Developing the Growing Greener ordinance
- Updating our Comprehensive Plan
- Creating ordinances to protect our natural resources, such as steep slopes and stream corridors

Our Planning Commission meets twice monthly on the second and fourth Thursdays. They review land development plans to insure compliance with township zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances, among other things. Their approach is to enhance plans in ways that would improve the design from the township's perspective. These enhancements might result in preserving a grove of mature trees, more attractive housing set-backs, or adding a trail and recreational area within a development, to name just a few.

Thank you Gordon, Pat, Rob, and Bill for all your hard work. Our township has been more successful than most in preserving our rural heritage because of your efforts and those of your predecessors. 🍄

Army Reserve Base Reuse Planning

Visit our website, friendsofworcester.org, for the latest news on the reuse planning process for the North Penn U.S. Army Reserve base on Berks Road.

Worcester Day Saturday, June 2nd

Enjoy the things that make Worcester a special place to live!



Farmers' Union Horse Show

Heyser Field, Fairview Village

FOW Food Tent for Lunch

RAFFLE and FLEA MARKET

Worcester Township Community Hall

Info: 610-222-0171

Starts at
8 a.m.

Worcester Historical Society Open House

Farmers Union Hall, Center Point

9 to noon Tour WHS's collection of domestic items and farm tools from 100+ years ago in Worcester

Info: 610-584-5619



Willow Creek Orchards Strawberry Festival

Stump Hall Rd at Kriebel Mill Rd, 10 to 3
Info at willowcreekorchards.com or 610-222-0975



Peter Wentz Farmstead



Colonial treats with Martha Washington
Shearer Road 10 to 3

Info: 610-584-5104



Worcester Township Square Dance



Community Hall, Fairview Village, 7 to 10 p.m.
Join your Neighbors for an Evening of Fun!

Info: 610-584-1410

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.

Friend - \$30

Partner - \$50

Benefactor - \$100

Other

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

Please send your tax-deductible contributions to:

FRIENDS OF WORCESTER

P.O. Box 545

WORCESTER, PA 19490


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.

S07

please support our ad-

Wednesday, MAY 23
COMMUNITY STORMWATER PROGRAM
Join Friends of Worcester and Friends of Lower Providence for an informative presentation
7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
Worcester Township Community Hall
1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village
For more information: friendsofworcester.org

Welcome Back to the Farm
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138 acre ORGANIC Family Farm
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•Check out our new Barn Market
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67th Annual Farmers' Union Horse Show
Saturday, June 2nd
All Day ~ Heyser Field
Valley Forge Road, Fairview Village
behind Worcester Township Community Hall
Featuring FOW's fabulous Food Tent!
Info for Horse Show/Flea Market 610-222-0171


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(RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED)

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\$2.00 Any Automatic OFF Car Wash
Not to be combined with other offers
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Sat. 8 am — 5 pm, Sun 9 am — 4 pm

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ENTER NOW!
Friends of Worcester
2007 PHOTO CONTEST

Theme: *Water in Worcester*

Open to adult residents of Worcester Township (amateurs only) and all Methacton High School students

Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place in Adult and Student divisions

***Two categories: Traditional
Digital or digitally enhanced
Black & White or Color***

Winning entries will be on display at the

Farmers' Union Horse Show
Heyser Field, Fairview Village
Saturday, June 2

Details and entry form at friendsofworcester.org

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: Wednesday, May 9
7:30 p.m., Bean Road Nursery (corner of
Bean & Whitehall Rds.)

Horse Show: Saturday, June 2, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Heyser Field, Fairview Village

Worcester Township Public Meetings

Community Hall, 1031 Valley Forge Rd, Fairview Village

Board of Supervisors

Monday 8 am: May 7, June 4, July 2
Wednesday 7:30 pm: May 16, June 20, July 18

Planning Commission

Thursday 7:30 pm: May 10 & 24, June 14 & 28

Zoning Hearing Board

Tuesday 6:30 pm: May 22, June 26, July 24

Supervisors/Planning Commission Joint Meeting

Monday 9:30 am: June 4