



WEST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP NEWS

16 45 Art School Road, Chester Springs, PA 19425
www.westpikeland.com Phone: 610-827-7660

Fall 2008

*~ Committee Vacancies ~
members needed!
Volunteer applications are
downloadable from the website.*

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Environmental Advisory Council – The purpose of the Environmental Advisory Council shall be to advise local governmental agencies including, but not limited to, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission on matters dealing with the protection, conservation, management, promotion, acquisition and use of natural resources, including air, land, water and open space resources located within or affecting West Pikeland Township. From five to seven (5 – 7) members are required with one (1) member each representing the Planning Commission and the Open Space Committee, respectively.

Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force – Task Force members will be comprised of one member as a representative from each of the current Township committees and three (3) West Pikeland Township residents at large. We anticipate 12 meetings to occur over a span of one (1) year to eighteen (18) months. Please contact the Township Secretary at 610-827-7660 if you would be interested in serving on the Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force. Copies of the existing Comprehensive Plan to be updated may be found on the website – www.westpikeland.com

VERIZON FIOS TV UPDATE

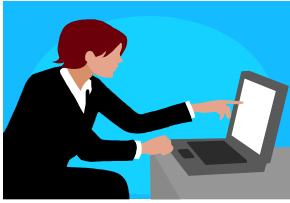
While Verizon first began to offer FiOS TV service in West Pikeland Township in November 2006, the service is not yet available to every residence. The franchise agreement provides for a timeline of up to five years from the November 30, 2006 service date for Verizon to complete their construction of the network and all the other necessary preparations required in order for Verizon to be able to offer FiOS TV to 100 percent of the residents in West Pikeland Township. In addition to deploying the fiber in the streets, Verizon must build every residential address into all of their systems and databases as the outside work is completed. This work is ongoing and updates occur daily.

According to representatives from Verizon’s Engineering Department, the status of the initial overlay fiber “build” throughout the four (4) Video Serving Offices (VSOs) that serve West Pikeland Township (and Phoenixville, Exton, Chester Springs, Eagle), is approximately 90 percent complete. That does not mean that the FiOS TV service is available to 90 percent of the residents as there is still internal address validation work to complete.

Verizon’s Franchise Service Manager recommends that residents periodically check online at www.verizon.com or call Customer Service at 1-888-GET FiOS (1-888-438-3467) to see if the service is available in your area.

30th Annual HYS Antiques Show

Friday, October 17th Preview
Saturday, October 18th - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, October 19th - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
\$60 non-members
\$50 members



Township Manager's Corner

by Jeri L. Diesinger, P.G.

This summer the Township building was filled with happy, smiling faces when the Sara Rose Academy conducted two weeks of performing arts camp for children ages 8 to 16. In addition, the HYS summer performing arts camp staged their final camp production for family and friends in the Cultural Center theatre.

Act 537 Plan Update - In late July the Township met with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to present a draft of our proposed Act 537 Sewage Management Plan expansion proposal. A public presentation on the Act 537 Plan Update has been scheduled for October 30, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Building. Please check the website periodically for more information about the Act 537 Plan at www.westpikeland.com.

Pine Creek Park - A full-size soccer/lacrosse field was approved to be built on the bluff at Pine Creek Park and has been designed by Carroll Engineering with offices in Collegeville. The initial field design was presented to the Planning Commission on September 8th. The Planners had concerns regarding encroachment of the field into the stand of trees on the south-east side of the field. On September 9th the Board of Supervisors received a letter from LYA suspending West Pikeland Township children from playing Spring 2009 sports unless LYA sees significant progress toward construction of the new field. The engineer revised the plan based on the Planning Commission's comments in time for presentation at the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 15th and the Supervisors unanimously approved the revised plan. A special meeting of the Park and Recreation Board was conducted on Thursday,

September 18th and a special meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, September 22. The Township Manager presented the revised field design to each group as a courtesy. The plan was submitted to the Chester County agencies during the week of September 22nd. The engineer is preparing specifications prior to soliciting contractor bids to do the work. If the weather holds and agency approvals are received in a timely manner, we will have the field graded and seeded this year.

Budget and Finances - The Financial Review Committee (FRC) presented a report to the Supervisors at a public meeting on August 18 which (based on the committee's calculations) indicated that the Township would end the year in significant debt. The legality of our present methods of accounting was challenged and a recommendation made that any additional spending should be suspended. Board Chairman Shemonsky convened a meeting on August 27th comprised of Jim Rowan, Joe Loughran, Wayne Freese, Bill Cracas (2007 Treasurer) and the Township Manager. We reviewed the FRC report and agreed that funding is available and identified which services the Township could defer until next year to make sure we end the year in the black.

We determined that there would be sufficient funds available to pay for the new playing field. Based on our August 27th conversation, the FRC submitted an analysis showing an \$87,000 positive variance by year end.

I am glad to have had this opportunity to carefully review Township finances with the committee. While the FRC and I had met on several occasions prior to their initial report presented to the Board in August, there were still some questions. I look forward to working with the FRC on the 2009 budget currently being prepared and would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of all our volunteer committees for their commitment to serving West Pikeland Township.

Proposed Home Rule Charter Features Improved Financial Procedures for Township

Editor's Note: This article was written and submitted to West Pikeland Township by members of the Government Study Commission. Information presented herein may not necessarily represent the views of the individual members of the Board of Supervisors.

“Fiscal responsibility is a necessary component of healthy government. Simply put, money matters.”

Thus begins the preamble to the Financial Procedures section of the proposed West Pikeland Home Rule Charter, a constitution for West Pikeland Township that will be submitted to voters for approval on November 4. The Charter contains numerous improvements over current law, including more timely resident communications; stronger ethics rules; greater fiscal transparency; greater opportunities for citizen participation; more open ordinance adoption process; better administrative practices; and so on.

Significantly, fully 8 pages of the 38-page document are dedicated to outlining a comprehensive set of financial procedures, guidelines, planning tools, and notice requirements, all with an eye toward fiscal accountability and transparency. This focus was considered necessary because citizens have a right to be kept abreast of how, when and why Township funds are being spent. Additionally, elected and appointed officials are rarely accountants, and often are not familiar with the intricacies of budgeting and the principles of formal accounting.

Key provisions of the Charter's Financial Procedures section require:

- Voter approval for tax rate increases or new taxes;
- Voter approval for debt (other than self-funding debt and tax- and revenue-anticipation notes);
- Multi-stage budget planning process and timely notice to citizens;
- Improved planning and reporting processes, including 3-year budgets and capital plans;
- Competitive bids on contracts;
- Citizen notification and ordinance adoption for purchase, sale or lease of real estate or capital improvements.

“West Pikeland's current law gives Township supervisors wide latitude in financial decisions without public notice or voter involvement,” said Wayne Freese, Chairman of the West Pikeland Financial Review Committee. “The proposed Home Rule Charter will improve visibility into supervisors' financial decisions and commitments. It makes taxpayers partners in the financial planning process in a way they haven't been before.”

The West Pikeland Home Rule Charter along with summaries, facts and endorsements, may be found at www.westpikeland-gsc.org.



HOME COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

**Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 7:00
p.m.**

*Location: West Pikeland Township Meeting Room
1645 Art School Road*

Learn the basics of home composting at the West Pikeland Township Compost Bin Workshop. Registration deadline is Thursday, October 9th, 2008. There are only 35 Earth Machine backyard composters available to

give away to registered attendees on a first

come/first serve basis. Please call the Office at 610-827-7660 to register.

West Pikeland Reveals Steep Budget Deficit for 2008

Editor's Note: The following article was submitted by Supervisor Chairman Robert Shemonsky. Information presented herein may not necessarily represent the views of the individual members of the Board of Supervisors. The Township accountant (CPA) does not support the beginning cash balance as indicated in the Finance Review Committee (FRC) report to the Board of Supervisors on August 18, 2008. The Township CPA reported in the 2007 Audit (available on the website) that the beginning cash (unreserved funds) on Jan 1, 2008 was \$891,061 versus the FRC report which states a beginning cash balance of \$414,000.

Situation: At a public presentation by the Financial Review Committee to the Board of Supervisors in August, residents learned that the Township is facing a large projected deficit in 2008. Current law requires a balanced budget, so dramatic measures must be taken to balance the budget before year end.

Background: A July comparison of the 2008 budget to the newly available 2007 audited financials revealed a previously undisclosed projected budget deficit of \$341,000. This deficit was due primarily to the treatment of the proceeds from the sale of the old township building in December 2007. The asset sale proceeds of \$320,000—earmarked to pay down bank debt of \$300,000—were recognized as revenue in 2007 along with several other small asset sales, with the result that \$341,000 was erroneously shown on the 2008 Budget Summary as available to balance the 2008 budget.

Additionally, the Financial Review Committee analyzed income-timing over the past four years to project income for the remainder of 2008 and reviewed all expenses projected to have a variance greater than \$5,000 at year end. This analysis uncovered an *additional* projected year-end budget deficit.

~ PUBLIC MEETING ~
PRESENTATION OF
ACT 537 DRAFT (SEWER) PLAN

Thursday, October 30th 7:00 p.m.

1645 Art School Road
West Pikeland Twp. Cultural Center Theatre

How did this happen? The primary reasons for the additional deficit projections are:

- A dramatic shortfall in real estate transfer tax revenues in 2008;
- Planned pay-down of remaining \$130,000 in bank debt;
- \$100,000 for a new LYA athletic field in Pine Creek Park;
- Engineering expense overages, attributable in part to the new sewer project; and
- Other capital expenses, such as a \$60,000 overage on the Horseshoe Trail East bridge.

What is the solution? With Township reserves already severely reduced, Supervisors will need to make difficult decisions regarding (1) which capital projects to cut or postpone until next year; (2) whether to borrow additional funds; and (3) how to address this situation over the long term.

“The expense cuts discussed by the supervisors to date involve delaying capital projects until the second quarter of 2009, to help us get through a seasonal cash shortage in the first quarter without additional bank borrowing,” said Bob Shemonsky, Chairman of the Township Board of Supervisors. “We’re working to find a solution that weighs the financial requirements for a balanced budget against the need for public safety and sound infrastructure.”

Township Manager, Jeri Diesinger, provided examples of possible project cuts. “We expect that the Horseshoe Trail East bridge repair will be completed, but other capital projects likely to be deferred are a new salt shed (\$150,000), a badly needed new Township roof (\$60,000), and some repairs to the Pine Creek Park bridge (\$40,000),” she said. “We’ll also probably need to defer the pay-down of the remaining \$130,000 in outstanding bank debt.” Supervisors are expected to announce their plans for balancing the budget in the near future.

To view the 2008 Budget Summary and 2007 Financial Audit, please visit www.westpikeland.com.

SAVE THE DATES!

October 30 – HYS - Floral Watercolors, talk by

October 11 - Harvest Time at the Mill! - The Anselma Mill's monthly flour milling demonstration will feature applesauce making and a "mock" archaeological dig for kids. Hrs. 10 am – 4 pm

October 11 - Binky Lee Preserve – (rain date October 18) - Join the West Pikeland Land Trust and the Natural Lands Trust for a guided walk around the trails of West Pikeland's beautiful 89-acre Binky Lee Preserve as you learn what it takes to manage and restore land. Darin Groff, Preserve Manager, will discuss meadows, woodlands, invasive plants, and much more. This event is FREE, but pre-registration is required by Wednesday, October 8. Location -1445 Pikeland Road, Chester Springs. For information or to register for this event, contact the Natural Lands Trust at 610-353-5587 ext. 266 or e-mail to members@natlands.org. (10 a.m. to noon)

October 14 – Home Composting Workshop – Learn how the natural process of decomposition can save time, energy, money and the environment! Free compost bin to the first 35 attendees. West Pikeland Township's municipal meeting room at 7:00 p.m.

October 15 – HYS presents “Revolutionary War Burial Ground in Bethlehem”, Lecture by Mark Shaffer, 7 p.m. FREE

October 17 - 19 - Annual Antiques Show at Historic Yellow Springs – Preview on 17th \$60 non-members, \$50 members. Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Sunday 11 am - 4 pm. Gen'l admission \$10

October 18 (rain date October 19) – WPT Fall Festival at the Pine Creek Park Pavilion - Join your WPT neighbors for entertainment, refreshments, and fun! Hrs from 1 to 4 p.m. Call the township office at 610-827-7660 for more information or to volunteer.

October 22 and 23 – HYS Halloween Walk at 6:30 p.m. on the 22nd and 11 a.m. on the 23rd Nominal fee for non-members

Sara Steele - 7 pm, \$10 contribution is appreciated

October 30 – Presentation of West Pikeland Township’s Act 537 Draft (Sewer) Plan – Join your neighbors for a public presentation of the Draft Plan in the Cultural Center Theatre 7:00 p.m.

November 1 – HYS - Project Portal, an exhibition partnership with FLUXspace of Philadelphia. Free, exhibit runs through November 22nd.

Nov 8 – Mill at Anselma Baking through the Centuries - Flour Milling Demo (10 am – 4 pm)

November 12 – HYS – History of the Academy through its Archives by Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archivist Cheryl Leibold - Noon – Event is free

November 15 and 16 – Chester County Craft Guild Craft Show – West Pikeland Township Cultural Center – Following the success of their Spring Craft Show, the CCCG will return to the West Pikeland Cultural Center for a Holiday Craft Show. This is a juried show with a variety of local artisan craftsmen exhibiting and selling their handmade work in clay, jewelry, fiber, leather, wood, glass, photography and soap.

Take an opportunity to shop in a leisurely atmosphere before the holidays for gifts you won't find anywhere else. Hours are 10-5 both days. Light refreshments will be available. A nominal fee of \$3 will be collected at the door. Bring in this newsletter and receive a \$1 discount on admission. For more information call: 610-269-8032.

November 21 – Chester Springs Studio Holiday Fine Arts and Crafts Sale Opening - 6 – 9 pm FREE. Runs through December 14th.

December 4 – HYS Holiday Art Sale - Preview 6 to 8 pm Admission: FREE Runs through December 14th

December 5 – Holiday Stroll in the Village – 6 to 8:30 pm Admission: FREE

Dec 6 - Holiday Wonderland at the Anselma Mill – Will feature a milling demonstration, candle making demonstration, and holiday crafts for kids to make and take home (10 am – 4 pm).

West Pikeland Township
1645 Art School Road
Chester Springs, PA

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West Pikeland Fall Festival



Pine Creek Park Pavilion

Saturday, October 18th, 2008

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



(Rain Date: Sunday, October 19th same time)

JOIN US FOR WEST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP'S FUN FILLED FALL FESTIVAL, A COMMUNITY
EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Bring your family, friends and neighbors! There will be entertainment, refreshments, community helpers,
and games and crafts for the kids. It's an event you won't want to miss!

Costume Contest at 2 pm!

To volunteer to run a game or help with crafts, please call the Township Office at (610) 827-7660.