

**BIRMINGHAM  
TOWNSHIP**

**CHESTER COUNTY**

# Birmingham Bugle



Board of Supervisors:  
John L. Conklin-Chairman  
William Kirkpatrick -  
Vice-Chairman  
Al Bush - Member

Administrative:  
Quina Nelling-Secretary/  
Treasurer  
Gail Ayers-Office  
Assistant

Zoning Officer and  
Building Code Official:  
Rich Jensen

Township Solicitor:  
Joseph Brion, Esquire

Newsletter Editor:  
Judy Jensen

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Thomas Nelling -Chief of  
Police  
Phone: (610) 793-3333  
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Police, Fire, Ambulance  
Calls: 9-1-1  
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birminghampolice@  
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Township Committees:  
Board of Supervisors  
Planning Commission  
Zoning Hearing Board  
Historic Architectural  
Review Board  
Recreation, Parks, and  
Open Space  
Historic Commission

The Birmingham Town-  
ship Office is open Mon-  
day to Friday from 9:00  
AM to 3:00 PM.

1040 West Street Road, West Chester, PA. 19382-8012

Spring, 2010

## A Letter to Residents

by John L. Conklin, Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Dear Neighbors,

The year 2009 was a difficult year for most people and for our Township. We weathered the economic stresses of 2008-09 and did not have to borrow to cover current needs. Our financial reserves and the ability to hold expenses flat helped to overcome the significant drop in real estate transactions and the reduction of some assessed tax bases. To cover the loss of revenue that continues into 2010, the Board decided to raise property tax by 1/10 mil per thousand. This, for example, would be an additional \$30 on an assessed value of \$300,000. Also, we will be among the last municipalities in Chester County to enact a Local Services Tax (LST) of \$52 per year on those employed in the Township (see related article).

These reluctant decisions will be helpful given the record snowfalls that burdened both the 2009 and 2010 budgets.

Expenses were held flat even while adding some maintenance costs for our new trail at Birmingham Hill. Environmental mandates from both Harrisburg and Washington have continued to increase Township costs. We were able to absorb modest pay increases for employ-

ees. Savings from negotiations with most of our vendors to keep rates flat and the deferral of replacing a police vehicle until 2010 offset cost increases.

Our road program continues with minimum maintenance in odd years and a major bid for even years to attract more competition for our work. While some adjustments may be required due to the record snow storm season, the Board remains committed to regular road maintenance every year.

The record snow exceeded the estimates for plowing and salt in both the 2009 and 2010 budgets, but the Township had its reserve to carry us until new revenues can be secured. We also can defer some road maintenance, if we must, to next year.

While a financial reserve is in part a judgment call, expenses

at the start of the year are not covered until taxes are collected. Our continuing objective is to match our annual revenues to annual expenses.

All in all, we are fortunate to live in this Township with its history and traditions. We have inherited many benefits.

Thanks to all of our volunteers, employees and good neighbors.

The Township Board of Supervisors meet at 7:30 PM on the first and third Mondays of the month. These are public meetings. Residents are encouraged to attend and speak on any issue.

For more information, please visit our Web site at [www.birminghamtownship.org](http://www.birminghamtownship.org).

## Township Volunteers

We owe thanks to the many dedicated volunteers who work for their neighbors. They give their time to our Planning Commission; the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Committee (RPOS); the Zoning Hearing Board; the Historic Architectural Review Board; the new Historic Commission (see article); and projects during the year.

Welcome to these neighbors who joined in 2009:  
RPOS: Jay Monteith and Robert Main  
Planning Commission: Mary Beth McCarthy

These volunteers play an important role in our ability to offer services while keeping costs down. Please consider offering your help where you can. It can be rewarding and is basically helping your neighbors.

## Local Services Tax - Effective January 1, 2010

Effective January 1, 2010, Birmingham Township has enacted a Local Services Tax (LST) at the rate of \$52.

All persons who engage in an occupation, full or part time, must pay this tax, including self-employed individuals who perform services of any type or kind or engage in any occupation or profession within a primary place of employment within the Township. Self-employed individuals will need to notify the Township or the local taxing authority, Berkheimer Tax Administration, that they are self-employed and a tax collection package will be sent to you.

All employers located in Birmingham Township are required to deduct the LST from all employees at the rate of \$1 per week for a maximum annual

deduction of \$52. If you expect your earnings to be less than \$12,000, you would be exempt from the tax and must file an exemption form with your employer.

In the event that a person is engaged in more than one occupation or municipality at the same time, the priority of claim to collect such tax shall be the municipality in which a person is principally employed. Proof of deduction is required to be submitted to the secondary employer by the employee so that they can be exempt from having the LST deducted.

The total LST paid by an individual in a calendar year is limited to \$52, regardless of the number of taxing districts in which an individual works during the year. A refund can be re-

quested if employed in more than one taxing district and more than the annual maximum of \$52 was deducted from multiple employers. A copy of the LST refund request form and supporting documentation should be submitted to Berkheimer Tax Administration.

If it is determined that an employee or self-employed individual was obligated to pay the tax and failed to do so, for whatever reason, the tax will be collected in arrears with penalty and interest. Berkheimer Tax Administration has been assigned the authority for delinquent tax collection.

If you have any questions about the local services tax or its requirements, please contact the Township Office for additional information.

### What is the MS4 Stormwater Program?

**Untreated or uncontrolled stormwater runoff is the number one cause of pollution or impairment in our local waterways.** Polluted runoff is often transported through municipal stormwater systems, where it is eventually discharged into streams untreated. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a municipal stormwater management program known as the **MS4 Program** that is intended to improve our nation's waters by reducing the quantities of pollutants that stormwater picks up and carries into the storm sewer systems during a storm event. As part of the MS4 program, Birmingham Township holds a permit to discharge its stormwater into local waterways. This permit requires Birmingham to design a stormwater management program that reduces the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent possible, which protects water quality and which satisfies the water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act. In Pennsylvania, the MS4 program is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The MS4 stormwater management program has six elements, termed "minimum control measures," which, when implemented, are intended to result in significant reduction in pollutants discharged into receiving waters. The six minimum control measures, and the actions required by Birmingham Township, are outlined below.

1. **Public Education and Outreach:** Distribute educational materials and conduct outreach to inform citizens about the impacts that stormwater runoff has on water quality.
2. **Public Participation/Involvement:** Provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the stormwater management program, or other programs, which improve water quality.
3. **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination:** Develop and implement a plan to detect and eliminate non-stormwater discharges into the stormwater system.
4. **Construction Site Runoff Control:** Develop, implement, and enforce an erosion and sediment control program for construction site activities that disturb one acre or greater.
5. **Post-Construction Runoff Control:** Develop, implement, and enforce a program to address discharges of post-construction stormwater runoff from new development or redevelopment areas.
6. **Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping:** Develop and implement a program that reduces or prevents pollutant runoff from municipal operations.

Birmingham is committed to improving water quality within its watersheds through continued management of stormwater runoff. All residents and business owners can participate in the Township's municipal stormwater program by reducing or preventing pollutant runoff from their own properties and by reporting any non-stormwater discharges into their local waterways.

## A Good Time for Trail Planning

This is a good time for trail planning in Birmingham Township as we recently celebrated the successful completion of the parking area and trails at Birmingham Hill (former O'Dell Farm). To build upon our success, in March of this year the Recreation, Parks and Open Space (RPOS) committee formed a trails subcommittee to focus on new trail planning efforts in Birmingham Township. The subcommittee is assisted by Sheila Fleming from the Brandywine Conservancy's Environmental Management Center with funding from the George and Miriam Martin Foundation.

This trail planning project fits into a broader trail planning effort that is underway by the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force. With assistance from the Chester County Planning Commission, the Task Force is in the early stages of planning a "Battle Path Trail" that will provide a hiking route between the Brandywine Battlefield State Historic Site and Sandy Hollow. The

trail, an informal footpath, could also link to the Brandywine River Museum and the Chadds Ford Historical Society trails.

Several neighboring municipalities are actively involved in trail planning: Pennsbury Township is conducting trail easement outreach work along the Brandywine Creek; Pocopson Township is near completion of a Township-wide Trail Feasibility Study and Master Plan; East Bradford Township is constructing sections of trail and bridges along the Brandywine Creek; and Chadds Ford Township is planning the Harvey Run Trail between the Brandywine River Museum and the Brandywine Battlefield State Historic Site. Some day, Birmingham Township trails could fit nicely into a broader network of hiking trails.

The Township is now preparing to invite land owners to voluntarily donate trail easements on their property in order to continue the Birmingham Hill trail down Meetinghouse Road to

the Brandywine Creek. Many land owners in surrounding Townships have donated trail easements in favor of their municipality and at least six land owners in Birmingham Township have already voluntarily donated trail easements for public use along Meetinghouse Road and Brinton Run creek. The RPOS hopes that more residents will voluntarily provide trail easements so that neighbors can have access to the important scenic, historic and natural features in our community.

If you are interested in learning more about trail planning or trail easements, please contact Michael Langer at [Tentines@aol.com](mailto:Tentines@aol.com).

by Sheila Fleming, Sr. Planner  
Brandywine Conservancy  
and  
Michael Langer, Chairman  
RPOS

## Historic Commission

The newly formed Historic Commission completed its first year of operation in 2009. The mission of the Commission is to promote and support the preservation of the historical heritage of the Township. The Commission is responsible for:

- Identifying and documenting the historical resources in the Township.
- Encouraging the preservation and continued use of historic structures.
- Reviewing plans for the renovation of historic structures and advising the Board of Supervisors on a course of action.
- Encouraging the preservation of historic settings and landscapes.

During 2009, the Commission developed and prioritized objectives and began work on several projects.

In 2010, the primary project is to develop an inventory of the Township's historic resources. To ensure accuracy, Commission members will contact residents living in historic properties to learn more of the history of their homes. Other projects for the year are to:

by Al Bush, Member, Board of Supervisors

- Work with the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Committee (RPOS) to develop signage for Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill.
- Investigate new wireless audio and video technology as a way of improving the educational experience at Sandy Hollow, Birmingham Hill and the Birmingham Road corridor.
- Work with RPOS on the 325th anniversary celebration of the Township planned for next year.
- Develop a "Speaker Series" featuring experts on local history.

The Commission consists of Chairman Will Snook and Vice-Chairman Mark Gross, as well as Members Matt Bedwell, Scott Garrison, Betty Organt, Lloyd Roach, and Ed Zaloga. The Historic Commission meets at 7 PM on the fourth Tuesday of the month. The meetings are open to all those interested in attending.





**Birmingham Township**  
**1040 W. Street Road**  
**West Chester, PA 19382-8012**

## **Birmingham Township Sewer Operations**

Our Township has 1,522 homes of which only 425 are connected to our sewer plant. In addition to these private residences, most of the businesses located along the 0.8 mile Route 202 commercial corridor in Birmingham are also connected to this sewer plant. Located behind the Mercedes Benz dealership on Rte. 202, the plant treats and discharges an average flow of approximately 70 GPM into the nearby stream that eventually discharges into the Brandywine. The Township has a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination) permit to operate this plant and is held to rigorous operational, monitoring and reporting standards. Our long-time operator of this plant is Applied Water Management division of American Water.

The year 2009 was an interesting year for the sewer plant in that we undertook one of the very few large capital maintenance projects that have been required by this plant. In addition to the normal maintenance and repair that we always conduct, we chose to replace the two original equalization pumps. These pumps continuously circulate the water being treated so the primary and secondary treatment of the sewage can be completed. We chose to replace the original progressive cavity pumps equipped with variable frequency drives with simpler, more reliable, fixed speed centrifugal pumps. This capital project cost \$118,000 for engineering, equipment and construction and was paid out of the ample capital reserves of the sewer system.

The Township residents connected to this sewer treatment facility are billed at a rate that is more than 30 percent lower than the adjoining Townships.

by William Kirkpatrick, Vice-Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

## **2010 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection**

Bring unwanted hazardous household automotive products, home maintenance, and lawn and pest control products to the next Regional Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Collection. Collection sites are open from 9 AM to 3 PM. Collection dates for 2010 are:

**April 10** - CAT Pickering Campus  
1580 Charlestown Road, Phoenixville, PA

**May 15** - Owen J. Roberts Middle School  
981 Ridge Road, Pottstown, PA

**June 25** - CAT Brandywine Campus  
1635 E. Lincoln Hwy, Coatesville, PA

**September 11** - New Garden Township  
8934 Gap Newport Rd, Landenberg, PA

**October 9** - Government Services Center  
601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA

Please note that computers are only accepted on April 10 (CAT Pickering Campus); June 25 (CAT Brandywine Campus); and October 9 (Government Services Center).

For a link to materials accepted, please visit the Township Web site at [www.birminghamtownship.org](http://www.birminghamtownship.org)