

West Vincent CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter of West Vincent Township | Chester County, PA

Fall 2019



Board of Supervisors:

Meetings held on the 1st and 3rd Monday of Month at 7pm

Planning Commission:

3rd Thursday of Month at 7:30 pm

Environmental Advisory Council:

1st Thursday of Month at 7 pm

Parks and Recreation Commission:

1st Wed. of Month at 7:30 pm

Sustainability Committee:

3rd Tuesday of Month at 7:30 pm

Zoning Hearing Board:

Hearings scheduled as needed

Open Space Review Board:

4th Tuesday of Month at 7 pm

Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee:

Last Wed. of Month at 7:30 pm at Schuylkill Township Building

Historical Commission:

2nd Monday of Month at 7:00 pm

All meetings held at the West Vincent Township Building, unless noted otherwise.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Mike Schneider, Chairman
Bernie Couris, Vice Chairman
George Dulchinis, Member

westvincenttp.org



Follow West Vincent Township and the West Vincent Police Dept. on Facebook & Twitter

WEST VINCENT TOWNSHIP PARK AT BRYN COED SOFT OPENING



The long anticipated West Vincent Township Park at Bryn Coed located at 1422 St. Matthews Road is open to the public! Several residents, community members, staff, and volunteers, and the West Vincent Township Board of Supervisors celebrated the completion of our Bryn Coed Park nature trail on Saturday, September 7th, 2019. The Township purchased the 72 acre former Bryn Coed Farms property from Natural Lands in July of 2018 as part of a tremendous open space preservation project. The land was acquired with dedicated open space funding.

The Park is open under the

condition that existing farm buildings located on site, to be demolished, are fenced off and access is prohibited – we appreciate the public’s cooperation to respect this condition and not enter the buildings for your personal safety and security. Demolition of buildings is anticipated to take place this winter.

Made possible by the



The Parks & Recreation Commission is sponsoring our second annual Fall Festival

on Saturday, October 26, 2019 from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (no rain date) at the Township’s new Bryn Coed Park!

We will have family friendly events for all ages including a haunted walking trail, pumpkin toss, moon bounce and obstacle course, scarecrow contest, food, games, crafts, and so much more!

Please visit WVTFestival.com for more information.

SNAPSHOTS FROM 2018!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
2ND ANNUAL
Fall Festival

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 26
2-6:00PM
BRYN COED PARK

1422 ST. MATTHEWS ROAD

Join Us!

INVASIVE SPECIES IN OUR LOCAL REGION

Invasive plants are those that are not native to an area, spread quickly, and cause economic or environmental harm. They can be trees, shrubs, vines, grasses and flowers. Invasive plants have been brought into areas and this can happen accidentally or on purpose. In their natural range, these plants are limited by factors that keep them in balance including pests, herbivores, or diseases. However, when introduced into an area where these limitations are absent, some species can become invasive. Invasive plants reduce habitat for native wildlife. Invasive plants out – compete natives and can take over native plants' habitats. Other ecological impacts may include changes in availability of water, light, and nutrients, disruption of native plant pollinator relationships, serve as a host for plant pathogens, and may even kill trees or shrubs through girdling.

Learning to identify invasive plants is the first step in understanding and combatting the problem. They can be difficult to control. Taking some steps at home and in the wild can help spread the growth of these troublesome plants. By planting natives, minimizing ground disturbance on your property, using fertilizers wisely, cleaning boots and equipment, and monitoring your property closely for changes in the environment for early detection can all help.

For helpful guidance regarding invasive species please visit the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Invasive Species webpage at: <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/InvasivePlants/Pages/default.aspx>

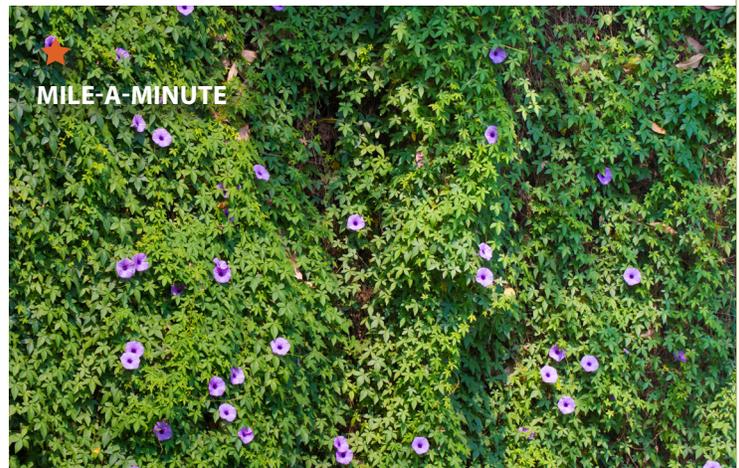
Examples of Invasive Species:

Purple Loosestrife: an attractive but aggressive plant that is invading our wetlands and replacing valuable wetland plants, eliminating food and shelter for wildlife, and choking Pennsylvania waterways. Look for the plant July through August when it is in bloom in shallow standing water such as wet meadows, pastures, cattail marshes, stream and river banks and stormwater retention basins.

Mile – a – minute is an invasive, noxious weed from eastern Asia that is rapidly colonizing non – crop areas in Pennsylvania. The heaviest infestations of this pest occur in the south – central and southeastern portions of the state where it grows along roadsides, river and stream banks, utility rights of way and disturbed forest sites. Mile – a – minute is recognized by its viny stems and light green, triangular leaves. Germination begins in mid – March and can last through October.



PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE



MILE-A-MINUTE

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

Spotted lantern flies are currently in their adult growth stage in our region and continue to pose a serious threat to our environment.

Do your part to terminate the bug on site and report the spotted lantern fly to the PA Department of Agriculture!

Call 1-888-4BAD-FLY and report sightings online at <https://extension.psu.edu/have-you-seen-a-spotted-lanternfly>.



The Environmental Advisory Council

is a seven-member advisory council appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

The EAC holds a public meeting on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

THE AMERICAN SYCAMORE: A TREE OF FOLKTALES, LEGEND AND LOCAL HISTORY



One of the most impressive native trees in our area is the American Sycamore.

Platanus occidentalis is also known as Eastern Sycamore, American Plane Tree, Plane Tree, Buttonwood and Button-ball Tree. Known for its longevity, at maturity it is a large wide-canopied deciduous tree, up to 100 feet tall with a canopy 100 feet across. The Sycamore grows to have a massive trunk with a diameter larger than any other native hardwood. The trunks will often become hollow with age providing a home for birds and wildlife. The bark of the mature tree peels off leaving the distinctive, smooth white inner bark with patches of gray and greenish brown.

Because the sycamore likes to live in a moist environment, the folk legend is that the tree was used by Native Americans and early settlers to find water sources as they traveled in the

wilderness. The distinctive white bark and large size made the tree easy to see in the forest and there would inevitably be a stream or spring nearby. Here in West Vincent, Sycamores are often found near a historic house, usually in the vicinity of a spring. This is the case for the largest Sycamore tree in West Vincent which is also the largest tree in Pennsylvania according to pabigtrees.com.

As impressive as this tree specimen is in size, it has an equally impressive history. The story, provided by Karen Fraley, is as follows...

In 1818 John and Esther Lewis married and moved to his father's farm in West Vincent Township. This sycamore tree was probably already here, shading the house, and signaling, according to American Indian lore, the presence of water. Indeed, water seeps up out of the ground within 40 feet of this tree today.

In 1827, Esther Lewis, recently widowed and the mother of 4 young girls, having successfully won a court case to retain the farm after her brother-in-law claimed that single woman could not manage substantial property and take care of 4 children, faced the prospect of sustaining herself and her family. Walking around the farm, Esther inadvertently kicked up a piece of earth, and stooping to look at it, she recognized its orange-yellow color from stones she had seen recently at an iron ore mine (Jensen, 1986). Curious, she sent it to Baltimore for analysis. The word came back that the rock contained hematite iron ore.

This was her ticket to keeping the farm, and, as Joan Jensen writes (1986 p 129): "She became the owner of a successful iron ore mine, used her farm as a refuge for runaway slaves, and educated her four daughters, launching one of them on a career that would bring her fame as an outstanding nineteenth-century naturalist." This daughter was Graceanna Lewis.

In 1938, my grandmother, Effie Fraley, purchased the farm. In 1940, recently widowed, she moved here, with her daughters and 2 grand-daughters, bucking the advice of family and friends urging her to stay in Philadelphia as the US entered into war. She was sure she would be safer here in West Vincent than in the city. The sycamore tree was a significant size then, and continued shading her outside terrace, spreading its branches toward the house.

Perhaps the tree gained strength from these two extraordinary women, or perhaps our family gained strength from the sycamore. In any case, we continue living under the sycamore tree, watching the changing hues of the white and brown bark, and the greening of its leaves. In the spring, a pair of wood ducks returned for nesting, alighting first on the broad branches of the sycamore to survey the landscape. Her trunk and crown are full of wildlife, including Baltimore Orioles racing through the top branches as they build their nest. As far as we can tell, the sycamore keeps growing and when the wind blows hard from the north, she seems to dance in delight, swinging and swaying with the forces around her.

This article is provided by the West Vincent Township Heritage Tree Recognition Program, a sub-committee of the Environmental Advisory Council.



TREE HUGGER

The Fraley Sycamore is on private property and cannot be viewed by the public. However, there is an outstanding Sycamore nearby in Valley Forge National Park that the general public can visit free of charge. Go to the Pawling Farm on Pawlings Road between Route 23 and Route 422. A short walk takes you past the remains of the Pawling-Wetherill estate house. Continue walking down the path and you will see the Pawling Sycamore near the old spring house, so large that its branches touch the ground. The best estimate is that this massive Sycamore is more than 250 years old. That's right, this tree was there during the Continental Army's Valley Forge encampment in the winter of 1777. It is a truly amazing specimen and makes for a lovely short hike on a fall afternoon.



Do you have an awesome tree in your yard or neighborhood you'd like to nominate for the Heritage Tree Recognition Program?



SEND AN EMAIL TO office@westvincentwp.org

Please put EAC in the subject line.

OPEN SPACE REVIEW BOARD SURVEY

Protected open space provides many benefits to a community.

West Vincent Township has dedicated tax revenue that can only be used for the purpose of preserving open space. By figuring out why we want to preserve open space, we can figure out which properties will best meet our needs and the best methods used to protect them. The Open Space Review Board of the Township is a committee charged with prioritizing open space projects and will use information collected through our survey (link below) to form recommendations to the West Vincent Township Board of Supervisors.

We appreciate your input!

Take the survey here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9KBCDL>

WEATHERSTONE TOWN CENTER UPDATE



In 2018 the Hankin Group received Township approval to build the Weatherstone Town Center development, a mixed used development located in the heart of Ludwig’s Corner, the village of West Vincent Township. The 24 acre property bounded by Rt. 100, Rt. 401, Birchrun Road, and Lexington Boulevard, implements a traditional neighborhood development design practice featuring a mix of housing and commercial uses, green space, and recreational amenities, allowing for walkability and a streetscape that is conducive to community interaction.

The site is currently under construction with the Phase I development of WaWa aimed for completion by year end. The Phase II portion of the project includes construction of multi family housing and retail/commercial units which is actively underway.

VOLUNTEER!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

If you are interested in a volunteer position on a committee please send your resume and a letter of interest to the Township office at office@westvincentwp.org.

Descriptions of each committee and their responsibilities are on the Township website.

FINANCE UPDATE

2019, like the previous three years is on track to becoming another great year financially for West Vincent Township with no expected tax increase for the foreseeable future. As you review our financial reports you may have noticed that engineering and legal expenses for the past three years have been higher on average. This is due to years of neglected roads, bridges, litigation, and some major projects like the acquisition of Bryn Coed and the sale of our sewer systems. As of this report, engineering and legal expenses are under budget and are expected to remain under budget for the year. We are confident that as these issues are resolved, these costs will return to amounts expected by a well-run township. We are also pleased to report that we are working diligently to rearrange our Chart of Accounts to match the state required DCED Audit. These changes are currently reflected in our financial reports and our 2020 Budget. We are expecting substantial cost and time savings with this new, more efficient update to our software. Please visit the Township website under the Finance page to review these new reports.

Please contact the Township Treasurer, Michele Hogrelius, with any questions at treasurer@westvincentwp.org.

Year to Date Financial Summary

	General Operating	Capital Reserve	Open Space	All Funds Except Escrow
Beginning balance 01/01/2019	1,746,207	6,503,915	1,321,753	9,571,875
Revenues	4,012,859	76,352	738,689	4,827,900
Expenses	(2,744,696)	(81,938)	(55,203)	(2,881,837)
Ending balance 09/30/2019	3,014,370	6,498,329	2,005,239	11,517,938

Notes: General Fund includes Sewer & Liquid Fuels Fund
 Total expected yearend balance based on projected budget is \$9,714,955
 *Unaudited Information

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan Update is complete!

In September of 2019 the Plan was adopted by the participating municipalities of:

- Charlestown
- East Pikeland
- Schuylkill
- West Vincent Townships and
- Phoenixville Borough

The Plan serves as the Township's official Comprehensive Plan and serves as a guide to manage growth and protect shared resources in our region. The Plan is available for review on our Township website under "Plans and Studies."

SAFETY 1ST! POLICE NEWS

West Vincent Township Police Department is excited to announce that we have a Safe Kids Worldwide certified car seat technician, Officer Fritz.

Throughout a 4-day class, put on by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), he learned about several different types of car seats, restraints, and belts. With this knowledge, he had to properly and safely install several child car seats and have them inspected by the instructors. He has since used his skills and experience to install several child car seats for some of our residents.

If you wish to have Officer Fritz help install your child's car seat or just want him to look over the seat you already have installed, please call the station to set up an appointment **610-458-3205**.

You can also search for certified child seat technicians and car seat installation events on Safekids.org website.

Officer Fritz will be holding events in the township in the near future. Information about upcoming events will be posted on our Facebook page.



Whether you schedule an appointment or attend an event, please do the following:

- Try to install the child seat before you arrive (it helps to try it first!)
- Read over, and bring with you, your vehicle's owner's manual and your child seat owner's manual.
- Have your child's height, weight, and age available as different car seats have different limits.
- If possible, bring your child along to properly show how the belts should be placed.





729 St. Matthews Road, Chester Springs, PA 19425

Call: 610.458.1601

Fax: 610.458.1603

email: office@westvincentwp.org

web: www.westvincentwp.org

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TOWNSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Fall 2019

PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

The winter storm season will return before we know it. Snow plowing and salting of Township roads is difficult work that is usually conducted in tough environmental circumstances.

Township employees and contractors take pride in their work and accidents due to the direct contact with a plow is rare.



★
WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION TO KEEP OUR ROADS SAFE AND WELL-MAINTAINED!

However, if you do experience an incident with your property, claims for damage must be issued in writing to the Township Manager's office within (48) hours of the snow event for review. The complete policy can be found on the Township website on the Public Works Department page.

Reminder regarding Township Right of Ways: It is important the Township residents realize that trees and objects such as boulders and stones should not be put in the road right of way. These items are a potential hazard to motorists both on the road and to Township road equipment used to maintain the roadways. Generally, the right of way is the edge of your property along the roadway. Measured from the center of the road its width varies from 33 to 50 feet wide. Township employees have the right to enter, use, maintain, and improve the right of way.