



# CONNECTIONS

*Doing What's Right to Protect What's Left*

Fall 2021



**Board of Supervisors:**

Meetings held on the 1st (workshop meeting, if needed) and 3rd Monday (regular meeting) of Month at 7pm

**Historical Commission:**

2nd Monday of Month at 7pm

**Human Relations Commission**

4th Monday of month at 7pm

**Sustainability Committee:**

3rd Tuesday of Month at 7 pm

**Open Space Review Board:**

4th Tuesday of Month at 7 pm

**Parks and Recreation Commission:**

1st Wednesday of Month at 7pm

**Environmental Advisory Council:**

1st Thursday of Month at 7pm

**Planning Commission:**

3rd Thursday of Month at 7pm

**Zoning Hearing Board:**

Hearings scheduled as needed

**Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee:**

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

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

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Mike Schneider, *Chairman*  
Bernie Couris, *Vice Chairman*  
Sara Shick, *Member*  
[westvincentwp.org](http://westvincentwp.org)



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

## ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

In 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted a three-year strategic plan outlining the following goals:

- **Improve township infrastructure** - create a strategic and fiscally responsible capital improvement program to support improvements to our parks, trails, roads and equipment, and investing in environmentally-responsible facilities;
- **Strengthen township's financial condition** - foster a strong financial management system by improving internal processes and developing long-range planning;
- **Enhance quality of life** - providing attractive, unique and well-connected spaces to live, work and play;
- **Expand communications with the community** - develop and maintain a variety of medium to provide up-to-date communications on township matters to all residents
- **Respect and preserve the natural environment** - maintain the unique character of township land and its residents.

We are happy to share the many accomplishments that have taken place with gratitude to our township employees, advisory committees and residents.

Our infrastructure has undergone substantial improvements and developments. Deteriorated culverts have been replaced in Hilltop Road and Sheeder Mill Road in preparation for 2022 roadway improvements, and designs have been completed to begin work on minimizing stormwater overflows for Kimberton Road, Kimberton Road Bridge, Sheeder Mill Road, Hilltop Road, and the Buttonwood Bridge.

Grants have been received for work to begin on marking trails and connecting existing trails on the Trail Master Plan and connecting Fellowship Trail to the Weatherstone development. Grant applications have also been submitted for improvements to the Township's park in Bryn Coed Preserve (newly named, Opalanie Park).

Our financial condition has improved given new fiscal policies, a change in accounting method from cash to accrual method, and implementation of an updated payroll system.

Our commitment to maintain a high quality of life has been realized by conserving 77 acres of land through easements by our local property owners, installing an electric vehicle charger, and receipt of a grant to support our clean energy transition plan.

Communications have been redesigned with the introduction an upgraded township website, digital newsletter, and on-line access to promotional and educational videos.

Receipt of a grant from TreeVitalize funded the planting of native trees, shrubbery and plants at the township building. Planning has commenced to integrate watershed and wildlife protection, woodlands, and forestry regulations and updates have been made to our natural conservation requirements.

### WVPD IS GOING GREEN!



Thanks to the support of the West Vincent Township Sustainability Committee the Police Department has commissioned the first electric hybrid vehicle in the township and one of the first hybrid police vehicles in Chester County. The electric hybrid 2021 Ford Interceptor replaces one of our old police vehicles and is a huge step forward in the Township's transition to clean energy.

## Hurricane Ida's Impact on our Roads

Hurricane Ida caused significant flooding in many areas of West Vincent; and, in many of those cases, our Police and Public Works Departments were immediately on site to aid and remedy the damage.

In the middle of the night, on September 1, flooding along the 1900 block of French Creek Road placed one of our residents in danger. The homeowner was safely rescued as the flood waters continued to rise. West Vincent's Police Department, Public Works, and Emergency Coordinator worked together with Phoenixville Friendship 77 Water and Diving Rescue Unit and Kimberton Fire Company to safely rescue the homeowner.

Flooding caused significant damage to the culvert on Art School Road, undermined the Fellowship Road Bridge and caused one span of the Buttonwood Bridge to collapse.

The collapse of the Buttonwood Bridge was the most serious as it serves as the only access to the neighborhood. The Public Works Department rose to the challenge, working with a contractor to complete emergency repairs and re-open the bridge with 24 hours!



## Township "Puts Rubber to the Road" Program

As part of the three-year budget plan, the Board of Supervisors established the framework for significant investments to the township road system.

Improvements to Kimberton Road, Sheeder Mill Road, and Hilltop Road will include substantial drainage improvements, paving, and rebuilding the stone arch bridge on Kimberton Road, all to be constructed in early 2022.

The Board of Supervisors approved the conceptual design for the replacement of the Buttonwood Bridge. The new bridge, designed by McMahon Associates, will be constructed immediately adjacent to the existing bridge. The lane of travel will be constructed first, then opened to traffic, followed by the demolition of the existing bridge.

The final design and permitting requirements will take approximately 18 months while the Administration will seek funding assistance from PennDOT to support the investment.

The last portion of the project to repair deteriorated storm drainage piping along Houndstooth Lane will be completed later this year.

Storm drainage improvements on Hilltop Road, Sheeder Mill Road, and Shady Lane, and roadway improvements to all roads in the Weatherstone subdivision, will be completed in 2022.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE



The Fellowship Community Garden reached full capacity this season with 63 gardens growing!

Our gardeners gathered their surpluses and donated over 400 lbs of fresh, healthy produce to the Phoenixville Area Community Services and Phoenixville Women's Outreach. The garden yielded another season of oregano, mint, lemon balm and sage grown in the community herb garden plot.

Gardeners gathered together in May to swap seeds and again in October to enjoy recipes made with the rewards of their harvests.

Plans are in place for this spring to mount and install a Little Free Library outside the garden gates to swap and share gardening books. The container was assembled and painted by local Girl Scout Troop 4082 with the help of Dan Rich of Kennett Square (thelatheofheaven.com).

Refer to the township website in late winter to register for the 2022 season. Current gardeners and West Vincent Township residents are given first priority in garden assignments.

## Township Trail and Park Projects Improvements Underway



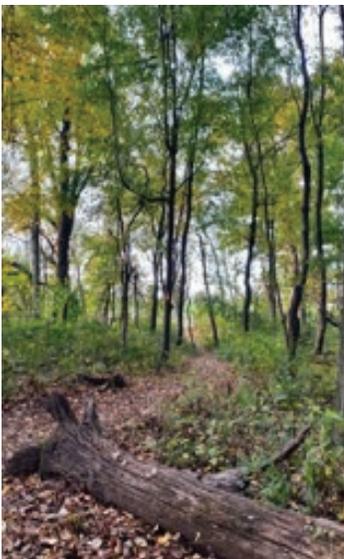
Long-awaited improvements at Opalanie Park (West Vincent's 72 acres on St. Matthews Road adjacent to the Bryn Coed Preserve) have taken shape. While the demolition of the buildings at Opalanie Park was completed last November, the contract remains open until later this year when the fence and the storm water management facilities will be removed.

The Public Works Department has been making many improvements at the park. The trail has been widened, wood chips have been placed and a new bridge has been constructed. An additional oval trail was constructed along an existing roadbed, a horse trailer parking lot has been constructed, and the maintenance building has been secured.

The Parks & Recreation Commission has been developing the next set of improvements to Opalanie Park, which include the construction of additional trails, linkages to Natural Lands Trail System, the construction of a handicapped trail and parking spaces, and the construction of a handicapped fishing pier at the pond. Other related improvements include the partial dredging of the pond, creating wetlands areas, and, of course, stocking the pond with fish, as well as benches and picnic tables throughout the park.

County and State grants have been sought, which, if awarded, will represent approximately 25% of the total cost of the improvements.

## Working with Natural Lands to Expand Trail System



Natural Lands (NL) has been a valuable partner in preserving land and developing a trail system in West Vincent. These trails will eventually connect to the Bryn Coed Preserve trails.

Next year, NL plans to construct three boardwalks over wetlands to complete a trail loop from Flint Road to the Opalanie Park, funded by a grant from Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. NL is also preparing to build a ten-space parking lot on Beaver Hill Road, accessing the northern portion of the preserve. NL has applied to PennDOT for two crossings of St. Matthews Road and one of Flowing Springs Road. A fourth crossing of Beaver Hill Road will complete the Preserve and Opalanie Park connections.

## RESPONDING TO THE CALL

### Supplemental Support to Fire Companies



The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected the fire companies servicing our residents, forcing the companies to postpone fairs, close halls, and cancel other fundraising events, resulting in combined lost revenue in excess of \$150,000.

To partially offset those losses and reflect our immense appreciation to the volunteer companies, West Vincent Board of Supervisors approved individual supplemental appropriations to be made to the Kimberton Fire Company, Ludwigs Fire Company, and The Ridge Fire Company, totaling \$50,000.

## Release of New Township Website

Our address is the same, but our look is different! The township website has undergone many changes to provide our residents with an up-to-date resource that promotes the Township's achievements, showcases the dedicated work of our advisory committees, and connects our community.

### We have made it easier...

**...to find information** – We have reduced the menu options and drop-down menus and added home page highlights, such as the **Township Calendar**, **Upcoming Events**, and **Township News & Notices** by topic.

**...to receive updates** – **Join Our Email List** to receive updates on your areas of interest. Sign up to receive the latest Township and local news, events, and public meetings with our monthly **eNewsletter**. **Please note: once you elect to receive the eNewsletter, you will no longer receive the summarized printed version.** The next printed newsletter will be distributed in the first quarter of 2022.

**...to communicate** – If you can't find an answer to your question in our **How Do I?** section, then **Let's Chat!** Use our live chat, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We will answer your question or direct you to the right resource.

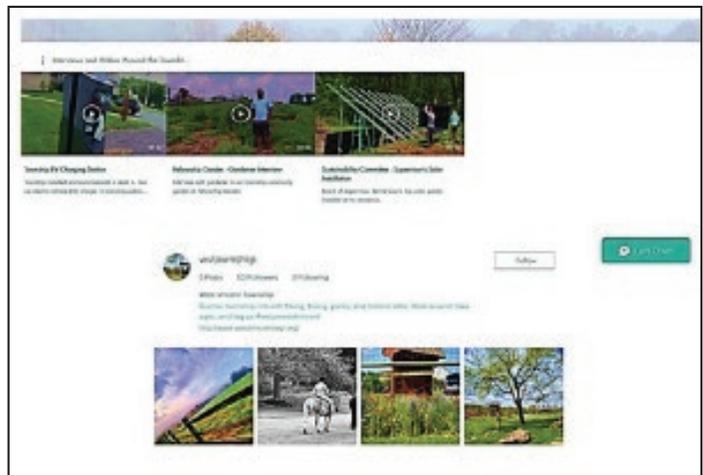
**...to share interests and accomplishments** -- Township promotional and advisory committee educational videos are located on the home page. Hike a trail, bike a path, visit a West Vincent business, or relax with friends in one of our parks and take pic! Label your pic: [#welovewestvincent](https://www.instagram.com/welovewestvincent) and post to our township **Instagram** account: wvtownship!

Our Resources section contains Community information and links to all **News & Notices**, **Right to Know**, **Election Information**, and **Employment and Volunteer Applications**. **Maps** provides our zoning areas, historical sites, streams, voting, and fire support zones. Learn about our **Township History** and engage in our legacy. Our township ordinances are now on-line under **Township Code**.

We have also transferred the following forms on-line: Gazebo Rental Form, Report a Road Concern, Bed and Breakfast Registration Form, Tenant Registration Form, Volunteer Application Form, and Employment Application Form.

Our most innovative feature makes working as an employee or volunteering as an advisory committee member more flexible and within reach of any device. Our **Employee HR Site** contains non-personal human resources and benefits information accessible to our employees whether at home or the office. The **Committee-ONLY** page is a virtual workstation containing a blog for each advisory committee and password-protected drives, removing the burden of multiple email lists and files being stored on personal devices. Access to both areas is password protected.

Visit our site and stay connected - remember to **Join Our Email List** and subscribe to the monthly **eNewsletter!**



## **Parks & Recreation Facilities Survey Underway**

The last assessment of our park and recreation facilities took place approximately 15 years ago. According to 2020 census data, our township population has grown 46%, welcoming approximately 2,100 new residents, including our youngest residents. As a result, the Parks & Recreation Commission has begun an inventory survey of all Township parks.

The facilities assessment will include reviewing type and age of facilities, recommending items appropriate for each park, review of new/additional facilities, and removal of invasive species and/or planting of new plants and trees.

The assessment will also catalog the recreation facilities that our township homeowner’s associations provide to ensure duplication of facilities and equipment is minimized.

## **A Rippling Effect – Keeping Our Township Clean**

### **The Litter Lifters of West Vincent – a subcommittee of the Environmental Advisory Council**

– Carys Egan



The Litter Lifters have held nine events this year removing over 500 bags of litter from our area roads, woods and streams. These volunteers are not only building relationships within our own community and neighboring townships, but also creating a cleaner northern Chester County.

The most recent event was held on the 9/11 National Day of Service, on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, in Phoenixville to clean up French Creek and the Schuylkill River Trail.

Over forty volunteers from surrounding municipalities joined the Litter Lifters and removed 100 bags of debris and over 15 tires from French Creek and the woods near the Schuylkill River Trail.



“It was an incredible event! People had fun on a beautiful day and connections were made. The Fish and Boat Commissioner Bob Bonney, volunteers from the Dame Juliana League of Fly Fishers, and Green Valleys Watershed were instrumental”, Beth Intoccia, lead volunteer, Litter Lifters.

The impact this team has made on the environment has received recognition beyond our township, being recently awarded an Ocean Conservancy Award.

Removing litter from our roads, streams, and woods improves the overall water supply, as our watersheds lead directly to the Atlantic Ocean. The Schuylkill River alone supplies drinking water to 15 million people. We are proud to help keep it clean.

Litter Lifter events have been successful due to the efforts of many caring residents and the support of the West Vincent Township Police Department, the West Vincent Public Works Department, PennDOT, and numerous businesses like the new WAWA at Ludwigs Corner.

We can continue to maintain West Vincent Township’s beautiful landscape and keep Chester County clean by working together. If you would like to learn how you can support the Litter Lifters or would like to take part in a future clean-up, please contact Beth Intoccia at [litterliftersofwestvincent@gmail.com](mailto:litterliftersofwestvincent@gmail.com) or Carys Egan at [carys.levin@gmail.com](mailto:carys.levin@gmail.com)

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

If you are interested in a volunteer position on a committee or to help at township events please complete the Volunteer Application Form on our website.

Descriptions of each committee, their responsibilities, and events are located under **Government**.

## MORE FLOWERS, LESS LAWN...

**...happy people, happy pollinators! Environmental Advisory Council – Donna Delany**

Would you like to add more flowers to your home and learn more about gardening? Then please join our new

### **Pollinator PitStop Program!**

**What's a pollinator pitstop?** Butterflies, hummingbirds, and other native pollinators don't stay put – they move around. Monarchs and hummingbirds migrate large distances spring and fall, but they also move around during the summer. One garden full of flowers isn't enough – they need flowers everywhere!

Pollinator pitstops are small, easy-to-care-for gardens planted with native flowers chosen for their beauty and their ability to help our struggling species of native pollinators. Native pollinators are declining at an alarming rate. Eastern monarch butterfly populations have declined by more than 80% over the past two decades. While Monarchs are the face of the wildlife extinction crisis - where even once common species could now disappear – the fuzzy American bumblebee is also in trouble. It has disappeared completely from 8 states, including our New England states; in New York, bumblebee populations are down by over 90%.

If enough people begin to plant native flowers while limiting pesticide use, we can reverse this negative trend.

The WV Environmental Advisory Council, (EAC) will be growing hundreds of native flowers over the winter to provide to interested residents next spring.

To make your spring planting a breeze, start this fall! Easy prep in the fall leads to easy planting in the spring. View our garden demonstration video, "Lasagna Garden" on the Environmental Advisory Council's web page and join the Pollinator PitStop Program.

Contact, Donna Delany at [d.delany@comcast.net](mailto:d.delany@comcast.net) or visit the **EAC page** on our website regarding the Pollinator PitStop Program and other EAC projects and events.



## **Battery Recycling and Paper Shredding Event**

### **Sustainability Committee, Jim Goeke**

On Saturday, Oct 2nd, the Township and WV Sustainability Committee hosted a well-attended shredding and battery recycling event. Committee member, Jim Goeke, and volunteer, Dana Alan, worked together to collect various types of household batteries, cell phones, assorted rechargeable batteries, and other portable electronics.

Our paper shredding collected 8 bins, weighing 2,400 lbs, translating to 20 trees saved, 4,800kWh energy saved, and 8,000 gallons of water saved.

The battery collection yielded 130 lbs of batteries and 45 lbs of other electronic waste ready to be shipped to a reclamation center.

Thank you to all residents who submitted their stock piles of batteries and paper! These materials would have otherwise been destined to be buried in a landfill.

Best Buy and Staples offer extensive in-store programs for printer cartridge and electronic waste reclamation. Lowes and Home Depot offer in-store drop-off for compact fluorescent light bulbs and rechargeable power tool batteries. Visit your local store for details about the different programs.

The township building has receptacles for recycling eyeglasses and unused medications (remember to remove all labels with personal information). Needles or EpiPens are NOT accepted.

The Sustainability Committee will hold similar events throughout the year, including responsible disposal of electronic waste. Check out the township website for more details.



## ***Township's First Electric Vehicle Charger***

### ***Sustainability Committee, Kirk Reinbold***

In May of this year, the Township installed and commissioned a two-car electric vehicle (EV) charger in the township public parking lot.

This charger is ideal for residents visiting Evans Park, the township campus, or for visitors to our township needing a full charge before heading home.

This Level 2 charger is capable of providing a 7.7 kW charge at 240V/40A through a J1772 plug and can provide approximately 24 miles of range per hour for most EV cars. Its location can be found and mapped through various mobile location applications or EV navigation systems.

The Township does not provide adapters. Tesla drivers should bring their own adapters.

To raise awareness and encourage usage, the Township is currently permitting residents to charge their cars for free. Residents will be notified when payment will be required and the price per charge.

The WV Clean Energy Transition Team (CETT) spearheaded this project and received a majority of funding through a \$9,000 PA-DEP Driving PA Forward grant and a \$500 rebate from PECO. Renewable Energy Integration, a local company, is the system integrator and will monitor it remotely for updates, health, and EV location services.

The EV charger installation is just the beginning of the Township and CETT's plan to create a healthier, cleaner community by transitioning to renewable and fossil fuel-free energy sources for electricity, heat, and transportation. It is anticipated that additional EV chargers will be installed at other township properties, local businesses, and institutions in the future.

Visit the CETT page on the township website for more information regarding EV chargers, the Township's energy transition plans and projects, and other clean energy programs for the community.



## ***Vision Partnership Plan Grant Awarded – Clean Energy Transition Team – Kathy McDevitt***

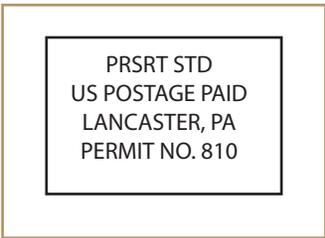
West West Vincent Township, West Pikeland, East Pikeland, and Schuylkill Township have selected Practical Energy Solutions (PES) to work with them on the Vision Partnership Plan (VPP) grant, awarded in April by the Chester County Planning Commission.

Starting in November, the four municipalities will be working with PES on plans to reduce fossil fuel consumption, focusing on efficiency improvements and use of renewable energy. Actions will include assessments of current energy use, recommendations for improvements in efficiency, exploring on-site renewable energy production technologies and procurement options, and developing community engagement and education programs.

The long-term plans to transition to renewable energy by 2050 will be created and updated based on advances in renewable energy technologies, project progress, township priorities, and regional changes. Municipal teams will encourage and assist their communities with energy conservation and transition by providing opportunities for participation, education, and feedback.

The four participating townships, along with Charlestown Township and Phoenixville Borough, form the Phoenixville Area Clean Energy Alliance (PACEA). While the VPP grant serves to directly advance the clean energy goals of the four participating townships, the energy and community engagement plans will serve as models to assist other townships across the county and region, leveraging associated costs and savings. The VPP grant program promotes cooperation between the county and local governments to implement Chester County's comprehensive policy plan, Landscapes3 and will help create a roadmap consistent with the Chester County's Climate Action Plan and the Phoenixville Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) comprehensive plan.

Visit the CETT page on the township website to learn more about this exciting project and how to become involved!



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# 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 are rare.



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 Public Works Department page of our website.

**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.