

Little Britain Township Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 2

Fall 2020

As we prepare to usher out a year that has been trying, uncertain and at times maddening, be it from instantly becoming teachers as well as parents, shortages on items at grocery stores, the forced postponement of trips or vacation plans, or the difficulty in scheduling routine dentist and doctor appointments, recent memory shows all too well the challenges to which we have risen. As this is the time of year when many reflect on the numerous things we are thankful for, may we all try to find some bright spots in the months we've survived. For some, that may have meant having more family time than you ever imagined possible, and hopefully still liking that family. For others, this may have included the flexibility you have had to work from home or the decrease in traffic if you were still commuting to work. It is the desire of the Board that each of you are able to include good health in your list of blessings.



The Township is pleased that the services it provides have continued uninterrupted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While the doors to the municipal building may have been locked, work continued behind the scenes as always. The roadcrew was in each and every day ensuring the roads and park were maintained. The office staff continued to respond to residential questions and concerns and meetings necessary for the continuation of township business were conducted in compliance with all Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Yes, that did mean many of you were dropping off and picking up paperwork and that many of your questions were answered via the phone or e-mail instead of in person. If attendance at a meeting or hearing was expected to exceed those allowable within the meeting room, residents were asked to wait outside until the item of interest for which they were attending was being discussed. Obviously, these unusual times called for some

unusual solutions, and the Board of Supervisors and employees of the Township are grateful to the residents for their understanding and cooperation during these challenging circumstances.

Please note that CDC guidelines remain in force and anyone visiting the township office will be required to wear a face mask to obtain entrance into the building. Anyone entering the building is requested to remain in the hallway until the employee you are there to see is available. These requests are for the health and safety of our residents as well as the employees of the Township.

On a lighter note, the Board would like to acknowledge and thank Joan Deen and Jim Bullitt for their years of dedicated service to the Township. Ms. Deen served on the Zoning Hearing Board from January 1998 through July 2020, serving as the Chairperson for a majority of those years. Mr. Bullitt served as a member of the Township Planning Commission from January 2004 to August 2020. He was actively involved in the drafting of the Township Sub-division and Land Development Ordinance as well as the updating of the Zoning Ordinance. They will be missed.

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Shawn Reimold (717-548-0491)
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NEWSLETTER
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Jeff Wood, Alternate
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Christine J. Jackson (717-529-2373 ext. 2)



Looking Ahead to 2021

It is with great pride that the Township adopted its 2021 budget while once again maintaining the current tax rate of .301 mills. Thanks to years of financial planning and savings the Township was able to successfully endure the unexpected expenses incurred by the COVID pandemic (increased cleaning cost, supplies, etc.).

Sadly, not all Townships fared as well. Based on a survey of 430 Pennsylvania municipalities conducted by the Pennsylvania Economy League, 38 municipalities indicated they would likely be forced to participate in a state program that provides tools and consultant services to struggling municipalities, while 23 municipalities indicated they were likely to request entry into the Act 47 program, which is essentially municipal bankruptcy.

As each of you is probably aware from your own home budgeting, care must be taken to ensure needs are met without overspending. Ideally, additionally funding should be set aside for those unexpected maintenance issues or the replacement of items that can no longer be repaired. The Township also takes this approach when preparing its annual budget. Funding is allocated for building, road, park and equipment maintenance, wages, supplies and materials, services rendered by others such as engineers and attorneys as well as basic items such as electricity and phone service.

The most impactful item affecting recent budgets has been the legal fees being incurred to ensure that the rules and regulations established for the betterment of all residents are being upheld fairly and equally for all. The Board strives to ensure that all rules and regulations passed are done so with the best interests of its residents in mind. The township currently has approximately 4,300 residing within its boundaries. Some of those residents are fairly new to the township, while others have resided here for generations. Many residents have spent their lives working our beautiful farmlands while others commute for work but enjoy the peaceful, quiet splendor of residing in this rural area.

As our community continues to grow and evolve, it has become more challenging to establish guidelines that protect our agricultural community while allowing residents the freedom to utilize their properties in the manner they wish. These two considerations are matched with the need for all rules and regulations to ensure the decisions made on one property do not infringe on its neighboring land. Regulations are a necessity for the collective good. Residents are strongly encouraged to remember everyone's efforts are needed to create a successful and harmonious community.

From the Zoning Office

Where has 2020 gone? I find it hard to believe that despite the fact that we had to cancel our vacations, family picnics, weddings and sadly could not even gather to mourn the loss of our loved ones, the year has passed with lightning speed. We are only a few short days away from quietly celebrating the incoming New Year at home with our immediate family. This year has clearly reminded us what is truly important. It has made us take stock of all the small, but precious things we take for granted. It is my hope that we will all remember, long after Covid-19 is a distant bad memory, what is truly important and treasure every day. With that being said, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those front-line workers, the doctors, nurses, aides, and emergency services personnel, who put the needs of their community and fellow man above their personal safety. You are all true heroes, THANK YOU!

As stated above, Covid-19 has kept people at home, pent up and looking for an outlet. Many people enjoyed the down time and spent the first few months working at those projects that had been put on the back burner during their previously over scheduled lives. There was a tremendous amount of painting, redecorating, planting, and tree trimming. Next the projects grew into storage sheds, swimming pools, additions, decks, and porches in an attempt to create a "staycation." Permitting was a bit different, most of the process being completed by telephone, email and drop box verses that in person office visit we all prefer. Yet, the office remained open and permits continued to be issued. As time passed people started feeling trapped, the frustration grew into irritation and the Township started receiving a record number of complaints. The complaints ranged from lawn height, to trees overgrowing property lines, barking dogs, to wrecked cars and junk. First let me say, it is my job to enforce the Ordinances of Little Britain Township and should a resident call and file a complaint, which falls under the scope of my authority, I will investigate and act when necessary. If it does not fall under the scope of my authority, I will provide them with contact information to the appropriate individual who can offer assistance. But, let it be known if you desire to preserve your relationship with said neighbor, I strongly suggest you simply go next door and talk it over. In most instances it can be settled without involving this office, because we all know a violation notice and enforcement action is a surefire way to kill a friendship. If you can't come to an agreement,

call my office and I will be happy to help. This is not an attempt to get out of work, it is simply advice provided by a Zoning Officer who over the last twenty years has witnessed a sad, but steady deterioration in the true meaning of neighborhood. Growing up in this community, everyone knew each other by name, children, and adults. When someone was in need, the community knew, and assistance was on the way. If your child went for a bike ride or run you felt safe, because the neighborhood was watching and if something didn't look right, you knew they would step in. Neighbors respected each other and were true friends, gathering for picnics and exchanging holiday gifts. Today, many residents live next to people they have never met. The sense of community is slipping away. It is my wish that maybe something positive can come from Covid-19, a newfound sense of community. A desire to get to know your neighbors, lend a helping hand. Who knows, you may be living next door to your new best friend. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

Questions of the Month

"I want to construct a detached garage. My building will not meet the setback requirements from the adjoining property line. My neighbor does not care, can he submit a signed document granting me a permission?"

No, only the Zoning Hearing Board can grant a variance following a public hearing that has been properly advertised as required by the appropriate municipal code, for an adjustment to some regulations which, if strictly adhered to, would result in an unnecessary hardship, and where the permission granted would not be contrary to the public interest, and would maintain the spirit and original intent of the Ordinance.

"If I apply for and receive a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board does it expire?"

Yes. Unless otherwise specified by the Board or by law, a variance shall expire if the applicant fails to obtain a zoning permit within three (3) months from the date of authorization or fails to complete any erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration or change in use authorized within one (1) year from the date of authorization. The Board, upon written application and for reasonable cause shown, may extend the approval for an additional period of up to one (1) year.

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 US POSTAGE PAID
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The Board of Supervisors Wish Each of You A
 Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year

2021 Calendar for Little Britain Township

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Dates in BLUE are Supervisor Meetings.

Dates in GREEN are Planning Commission Meetings.

Dates in RED are Holidays.