

FrancTalk

Newsletter of Franconia Township • Summer 2003

Regional Plan Undergoing Revisions

Local decision-making power to be preserved

Franconia's Board of Supervisors remains committed to regional planning, but they promise landowners that there won't be any radical zoning changes within the township.

In late April, the supervisors and other members of the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission reviewed new options from the Montgomery County Planning Commission to retain local decision-making power while still allowing for regional growth planning.

Although the supervisors support the concept of a coordinated approach to future land use, they rejected draft plans that would have changed the township's zoning plans substantially.

"I support the concept of the proposed plan because it may provide some long-term protection from suburban sprawl," says Supervisors' Chairman Grey R. Godshall.

The regional plan continues to be a topic of discussion at board work sessions and has been discussed at several special public meetings. Should any zoning changes be considered, the township will hold a special public meeting and notify any potentially affected landowners.

The Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission meets every third Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Franconia Township building. The meetings are open to the public. 🌹



W. Keith Freed

Supervisor Keith Freed Likes Planning Ahead

As the division manager at Souderton's Shelly & Fenstermacher lumber company — and as Franconia Township's newest supervisor — Keith Freed recognizes the value of a good plan.

In his business experience, knowing the goals of a project, seeing to the details, and using the right tools makes for a solid, safe, and beautiful product.

Now, as a township supervisor, Mr. Freed offers business background as well as nearly 10 years of service on the Planning Commission and the Act 537 Committee. The Planning Commission reviews new developments in detail and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Act 537 Committee is charged with planning to assure safe and legal operation of wastewater treatment and other infrastructure needs.

Now he's the one receiving recommendations from others, on behalf of township residents.

"Managing township growth is a balancing act for property rights and zoning to mesh well with the township's goals and the residents' needs," says Mr. Freed, whose appointment fills the unexpired term of Merrill Bergey.

The importance of being involved

A Franconia resident for 28 years, Mr. Freed spent nine of those years serving on the Planning Commission before his appointment to the Board of Supervisors in January. As a supervisor, he hopes to help residents see Franconia's big picture. "It's important for residents to know what's occurring in the whole township," he says. He encourages residents to attend municipal meetings, where decisions and recommendations are made that affect the township's future.

Mr. Freed's service benefits his family as well as our residents. He and his wife Karen have three daughters. In addition to township service, he has been a member of the Harleysville Jaycees for nearly 25 years and is a past president. 🌹

Merrill Bergey Retires, Remains in 'Garden Spot'

After 35 years of service to Franconia Township — 24 as a supervisor — Merrill Bergey retired from the Board of Supervisors last December.

Mr. Bergey became a member of the Planning Commission in 1967 and the Zoning Hearing Board in 1970. He was appointed to the Board of Supervisors in 1978, and served as chairman from 1980 to 1998.

In addition to his numerous contributions to the township, he is perhaps best remembered for describing Franconia Township as "The Garden Spot of Montgomery County."

The township honored him at its annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner in February with memories recounted from many who have worked with him through the years.

Although retired, Mr. Bergey still represents the township on the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission and the Indian Valley Public Library Funding Task Force. 🌹

Mow by the Rule-r

If abundant sun and rain this year make your weeds and grass grow tall, please remember to keep them mowed less than 12 inches high.

Known for its picturesque vistas, Franconia's beauty is no coincidence. For nearly 50 years, the township has regulated the appearance of residential properties.

Ordinance No. 12 requires all township property owners to prevent the uncultivated growth of weeds or harmful plants and to keep ground-cover vegetation under one-foot high.

Violations of these requirements may be deemed a nuisance, and owners may be asked to meet the ordinance's stipulations within 10 days of notification. Failure to comply with the ordinance could result in a \$600 fine or legal action.

For more information on township codes, please visit www.franconiatownship.org. 

Volley up at Franconia Community Park

Serve up your best at Franconia Community Park's two new tennis courts, located off Godshall Road.

Franconia Community Park's 50 acres also include:

- 2 Covered Pavilions
- 2 Baseball Fields
- 1 Soccer Field
- 1 Roller Hockey Rink
- 2 Sand Volleyball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Playground Equipment
- 1.65 Miles of Walking Trails with Exercise Stations

Partnering with the County to Preserve Our Farms

Franconia is nearing 50 percent of its goal to preserve open space, thanks to a partnership with the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program and the township's open space dollars.

The township-county partnership shares the cost of purchase of development rights and helps to save farms that are sized less than 50 acres, which the county cannot purchase with state funds. Few remaining farms in Franconia are larger than 50 acres.

When the township and the county buy development rights from a farmer, the landowner is paid the difference in value of the land for agricultural uses and what would be paid for it if it were to be developed. Once development rights are sold, the landowners agree that they and all future property owners will continue to farm the property.

"Partnering efforts to purchase development rights help stretch the limited amount of resources we have," says Supervisor Curtis N. Kratz.

With a contribution this year of \$311,433 toward the development rights of two feed-crop farms — Blaine and Linda Souder's 43.7-acre parcel off Hunsicker Road and Paul Nyce's 56.7-acre property off Keller Road — the township now has five farms totaling 250 acres preserved.

Now the township is working with Montgomery County to preserve three more farms totaling 140 acres. If these additional farms are preserved, the township will near 50 percent of its preservation goal — 800 acres — as set forth when voters approved a 2001 referendum for a tax dedicated to open space preservation. 



Discount Amusement Tickets Available

The township offers discounted tickets to regional attractions, such as the Camden Aquarium, Dorney Park, and the Philadelphia Zoo. For a list of options and fees, visit www.franconiatownship.org. To purchase tickets, stop by the township building between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Cash only, please.

Police Department Welcomes Officers Cronin and Anirina

With the addition of part-time Patrol Officers Steven Cronin and August “Gus” Anirina, the Franconia Police Department’s ranks can maintain full strength.

Both officers have two years of prior experience in other police departments — with the University of Pennsylvania and the Borough of Bridgeport, respectively. “Officers Cronin and Anirina are extremely energetic and they each received rave reviews for their work ethics from their former departments. We’re happy to have them along,” says Police Chief Joseph Kozeniewski.

Officer Cronin is a Harleysville resident who is also a surveyor with the Army Corps of Engineers. Officer Anirina, a Norristown resident, also works as a deputy sheriff in the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Department.

Part-time officers fill in for other officers in the event of an injury, training opportunity, or vacation. “Now we’ll be able to maintain a full complement of officers around the clock,” says Chief Kozeniewski.

Officially hired in April, both officers will undergo the two-month Field Training Officers Program under the guidance of Franconia’s more experienced officers. Throughout training, they will acclimate themselves to the township’s methods and protocols. After training, they will begin crime deterrence work, investigations, and responding to accidents, crimes, and traffic needs. 🌹



Patrol Officer Steven Cronin



Patrol Officer Gus Anirina

New Sumneytown Pike/Route 309 Connector Planning Nearly Complete

As the Preliminary Plan for the Sumneytown Pike/Route 309 Connector nears completion, PennDOT will next seek the state and federal approvals required to secure final design and construction funding for the project.

At a public open house April 3, PennDOT presented revised design concepts, based in part on public comment from an open house held on early design concepts in 2002.

The project, estimated for completion in 2005 or 2006, includes a new two-lane roadway from Wambold and Allentown Roads to Cowpath and Township Line Road in Franconia and Hatfield Townships, multiple intersection improvements, and the widening of shoulders along the way.

Additional proposed traffic solutions include:

- **Relocation of Sumneytown Pike/Wambold Road.** Sumneytown Pike would be shifted east, starting at Freed Road in Lower Salford and extending south past Old Forty Foot Road in Towamencin Township. By moving the roadway, planners would avoid disrupting historic property and the graveyards at the “twin churches” on Route 63. This section of Sumneytown Pike would be designed as four lanes.
- **Direct Connect to Southbound 309,** Improving on an earlier design that created a series of jug handle turns, the new design proposed a direct southbound connection to the Connector from Southbound 309.
- **Limited Driveway Access.** If new development occurs along the corridor, traffic could be slowed as more intersections are created. To preserve the benefits of the Connector project, PennDOT is encouraging the municipalities located along the Connector to consider ordinances that would limit new access points and create alternatives on nearby roads. 🌹

West Broad/Godshall/Cowpath Intersection to be Improved

The intersection of three increasingly busy roads has prompted safety concerns among residents and township officials. After nearly four years of work, the township will soon hire a traffic consultant to conduct environmental studies, propose designs, and begin construction at the intersection of W. Broad Street, Godshall, and Cowpath roads.

The township will contribute approximately 15 percent of the \$2.3 million project. As part of the Pennsylvania Transportation Improvement Program, supported by federal, state, and local resources, the project requires design approval from PennDOT and a variety of impact studies before construction, which could be scheduled for early 2005.

The township has already installed streetlights to give drivers better visibility. 🌹

Supervisors to Consider Act 537 Revisions June 9

The Board of Supervisors on June 9 will consider the adoption of the township's Act 537 plan revision, which addresses wastewater and sewer management issues in Franconia.

The township's Act 537 Committee has drafted the plan revisions, which identify growth areas in the township, and suggest ways to assure public health by providing adequate wastewater facilities and sewer management. Members of the committee include:

- **Grey R. Godshall**, Supervisor's Chairman
- **W. Keith Freed**, Supervisor
- **K. Leigh Getty**, Authority Member
- **Barry L. Wert**, P.E.
- **Alfred S. Ciottoni**, P.E.
- **Kevin D. Baver**, Township Manager

Once approved by the Board of Supervisors, the plan is forwarded to the Department of Environmental Protection for review and approval. Residents may view the plan at the township office during business hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 🌹

Need a Ride?

If you've got places to go, hop on the Community Coaster — the Indian Valley's shuttle service. Sponsored by the Partnership Transportation Management Association, two shuttles run through Franconia, stopping at Trave's Family Heritage Restaurant and the Peter Becker Community, and various places in Lower Salford, Telford, and Souderton.

The base fare is \$2; discounts available for seniors, students, and individuals with disabilities. For a schedule, stop by the township building, call 215-699-2733, or view www.ptma-mc.org



Tax Collector Jerry DeLong can be reached at 215-723-2024.

Tax Collector Jerry DeLong Wears Many Hats

As Planning Commission Chairman, Open Space Advisory Board member, and a former 20-year member of the Parks and Recreation Board, Jerry DeLong has served Franconia's residents behind-the-scenes for years. Now as the township's tax collector, Mr. DeLong will get to know some of the residents he's served for so long.

Appointed tax collector in January, Mr. DeLong had recently retired from a 30-year career in manufacturing. Now his focus is local. "I like to contribute to the township," he says. His appointment fills an unexpired term; his name will be on the ballot this year for election to the post for 2004.

As a convenience to residents, Mr. DeLong works at the Franconia Township building. If you have any questions about your tax bills, you may stop in or call 215-723-2024 for an appointment. 🌹

Approved for Construction

New business, community, and elementary school facilities will soon join the township's landscape. Here's a look at the township's development projects approved for construction.

Residential projects

- **Leidy Road:** Harrington Village, a 120-unit age-qualified community by W. B. Homes.
- **Bergey Road:** Indian Valley Greeneries, a 96-unit age-qualified community by Ken Grosse.

Institutional and industrial projects

- **Godshall Road:** Penn View Christian School, a 137,700 square-foot new K-8 private school.
- **Route 113:** Indian Valley YMCA, a full-service 38,000 square-foot community facility with day care and an Olympic-sized pool.
- **Maple Avenue:** Peter Becker Community, 25 independent living cottages. Trail improvements will also be made to connect to the Lower Salford trail system.
- **Route 113 and Godshall Road:** Bergey's Chrysler/Jeep, a new 7,800 square-foot car dealership.
- **Lower and Allentown roads:** Moyer Packing Company, a 78,000 square-foot distribution center.
- **Long Mill Road:** Vernfield Elementary, an 85,400 square-foot K-6 public school.

All plans that come before the Board of Supervisors for final approval must first be reviewed by the township Planning Commission. If you are interested in learning more about plans submitted to the township for development, you are welcome to attend any of the monthly Planning Commission meetings. The Planning Commission meets on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the township building. 🌹

Saturday, June 7 — rain or shine

Cure PD 5K Run/Walk

Join Souderton Area High School Junior Karen Pellak in her quest to cure Parkinson's disease. Registration fees from 5K Run/Walk and the Kids' Fun Run will be donated to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, which funds Parkinson's Disease research.

Time: 7 to 8:15 a.m., registration;
8:30 a.m., 5K; 9:30 a.m., Fun Run

Location: Franconia Community Park

Cost: Adults: \$18 before May 31 and
\$20 starting June 1
Kids: \$5

Saturday, June 14

Indian Creek Foundation's 12th Annual Roll and Stroll

Get in step to help the Indian Creek Foundation at its 12th Annual Roll and Stroll, featuring walking and biking routes for all levels, prizes for individuals and teams, live music, and a picnic lunch. For more information, please call 215-256-1500 or visit www.rollandstroll.com.

Time: 7 a.m.

Location: 573 Yoder Road, Harleysville

Cost: **Bikers:** Minimum pledge of \$25 before May 23,
\$40 starting May 24
Walkers: Minimum pledge of \$20 before May 23,
\$30 starting May 24

Saturday, June 21

Rabies Clinic

Help your pet stay healthy. The Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) requires all cats and dogs to be vaccinated against rabies. To make this task easy, the MCHD provides shots that give three-year protection at locations throughout Montgomery



The Mango Men will be back to add songs to your summer on July 23.

County. This year, you can take your pet to Harleysville for the \$8 shot. For more information, please call 610-278-5117.

Time: 9 to 11 a.m.

Location: Roth Park Pavilion on Alumni Avenue (off Main Street) in Harleysville

Cost: \$8

Saturday, July 12

Montgomery County Household Hazardous Waste Collection

When not disposed of properly, some household items can harm the environment. You can save these materials for the annual Montgomery County Household Hazardous Waste Collection days, when you can drop them off for safe disposal. Acceptable items include:

- Auto products (not tires)
- Household cleaners
- Paint products (not latex)
- Pool cleaners
- Lighter Fluid

Please bring the products in their original containers, keeping all lids tight. Wrap leaky containers in newspaper and a plastic bag. For more information, please call 610-278-3618.

Time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: North Penn High School in Towamencin Township

Wednesday, July 23

Mango Men Summer Concert

Back by popular demand, the Mango Men will return to Franconia Community Park to entertain residents with their island sounds. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to this high-quality show at the height of summer.

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Franconia Community Park Pavilion

Tuesday, August 5

National Night Out Against Crime

Learn about crime prevention and get an insider's look at how fire companies and the Police Department keep our township safe. Meet members of the police force and pick up some free giveaways, children's gifts, and hot dogs.

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Franconia Community Park

You Can Help Ward off West Nile Virus

Summer is mosquito season, and the Montgomery County Health Department has already begun its efforts to detect and control the West Nile Virus in our area.

The West Nile Virus is contracted through infected mosquitoes and can sometimes lead to serious illness or death. Here are some tips to protect you and your family:

- Avoid stagnant water, where mosquitoes breed.
- Keep gutters and drainpipes clean and clear.
- Secure windows and screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Remove containers that collect standing water, such as old tires, buckets, kiddie pools, bird baths, and flowerpots.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants; keep feet and ankles covered.
- Use repellent sparingly, as directed on the label or by your doctor.

While dead birds do not spread the West Nile Virus, they may indicate the presence of infected mosquitoes. To report a dead bird, or for more information, please call 610-278-5117 or visit www.westnile.state.pa.us. 

Roadwork Slated for Improvement This Summer

Godshall Road detour expected to begin June 23

Residents can anticipate smoother travel on Franconia roads by fall. This list details the Public Works Department's summer plans.

- **Godshall Road** will be completely rebuilt with a new storm water management system, in conjunction with Penn View Christian School. Anticipate a road detour starting June 23 that will continue for 8 to 10 weeks.
- The intersection at **Godshall Road and Route 113** will be widened in conjunction with construction of a new Bergery's Chrysler/Jeep dealership, with completion scheduled for late summer.
- A new traffic signal is set for installation this summer at **Morwood and Allentown roads**.
- **Beck Road** will be completely overlaid for a smoother commute.

FRANCONIA TOWNSHIP
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Franconia PA 18924-0128
215-723-1137
www.franconiatownship.org

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Steven P. Barndt, *1st Vice Chairman*
W. Keith Freed, *2nd Vice Chairman*
Drew Darrah
Curtis N. Kratz

TOWNSHIP MANAGER

Kevin D. Bayer

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Administration 215-723-6778
Emergency 9-1-1 or 215-723-6777

Joseph S. Kozeniewski, *Chief*
Jeffrey C. Gower, *Sergeant/Patrol*
David J. Shaner,
D.A.R.E./School Resource Officer

BUILDING/PLUMBING INSPECTION

215-723-1137
Roger M. Koffel

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

215-723-1153
Paul R. Nice,
Superintendent of Highways

TAX COLLECTOR

215-723-2024
Jerry DeLong

Plan now for Summer events.
See inside.

Franconia PA 18924-0128
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Franconia Township



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