



Upper Oxford Township Newsletter

Summer 2009

Volume 1

Issue 1

Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first edition of the combined Upper Oxford Township and Historical Commission Newsletter! We plan to publish semi-annually to keep you updated on Township news and events as well as some of our fascinating history. In between issues you can stay up-to-date by checking our website at www.upperoxford.org.

We are always looking for volunteers for the various boards and commissions involved in township government, such as the parks commission, historical commission, planning commission, agricultural security area committee, and the proposed open space advisory committee. If you would like to get more involved contact the township secretary Jane Daggett at 610-932-9233 or upperoxford@hotmail.com.

You are welcome to attend the Supervisors meetings on the second Monday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Township Building. It is our privilege in a democracy to govern ourselves and you are invited to participate!

Betsy Huber, Chair
Upper Oxford Township Board of Supervisors

Preserving Ag Lands & Open Space



By Scott Rugen, Supervisor

Upper Oxford Township is blessed with an abundance of open space consisting of farmland, wooded areas, and streams. These natural habitats support a variety of animal and plant species. Our natural resources are worthy of protection and the Township has taken steps to ensure that much of Upper Oxford Township's open space remains open for generations to come.

Open space and farmland in our community are continually under threat from poorly managed growth resulting in changes to the land forever. The Township has adopted a comprehensive plan that emphasizes the need to preserve and protect prime agricultural soils. This comprehensive plan in conjunction with the "Multi-Municipal Compre-

hensive Plan" now being developed (see related article) will provide the Township with the necessary tools to manage growth and prevent urban sprawl in a prudent and responsible manner.

According to the Chester County *Landscapes 2 Public Opinion Survey* conducted in 2007, open space and farmland preservation continue to be a dominating issue for those surveyed. Results included:

- 77 percent of respondents cited managing new growth and development as the most important issue facing Chester County.
- 71 percent of respondents surveyed said they wanted to see more farmland retention.
- 84 percent said future development

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What is the Oxford Region Multi Municipal Comprehensive Planning Committee?

By Charles Fleischman, Supervisor

In June of 2007, the representatives of the municipalities of the Oxford Area School District (OASD) met to listen to a proposal by the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) to create a Multi Municipal Comprehensive Plan (MMCP) for the communities within the OASD. After several meetings, all municipalities in the OASD—East Nottingham, West Nottingham, Elk, Lower Oxford, Upper Oxford and the Borough of Oxford—agreed to form the Oxford Region Multi Municipal Comprehensive Planning Committee (MMCP) and contracted with the Chester County Planning Commission to act as their consultant.

The board of the MMCP Committee is made up of a Supervisor and Planning Com-

mission member from each Township as well as a Council member and Planning Commission member from the Borough.

The costs for the consultants are 90 percent paid for by a Vision Partnership grant and 10 percent paid for by the participating municipalities, with the contract running until 1/31/2011.

The end result of this effort will be a comprehensive plan that allows the cooperating municipalities to plan smarter and better for you. Currently, each municipality is required to zone for every possible land use within its borders. This has led to sprawling, isolated subdivisions and incompatible uses adjoining each other across municipal borders or within the municipality itself. A regional comprehensive plan involving all municipalities within a larger geographic area allows for a

cohesive land use plan with greater compatibility for the community as a whole.

For example, in the neighboring communities around Avondale, issues over a planned or existing composting business near planned or existing residential uses created conflict between the two parties. There are other reported conflicts in the area regarding land fills, industrial sites, smells, hours of operation, etc that also arise from trying to cram too many different uses within a given area.

With a Multi Municipal Comprehensive Plan in place, it will be possible to site land uses in areas within the School District that either already have the supporting infrastructure in place, are adjacent to other similar or compatible existing uses,

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Fall Clean-up Days

When: Friday, October 2, 7 am - 3:30 pm
& Saturday, October 3, 7 am - noon

Where: Upper Oxford Township Building,
1185 Limestone Road

What: Accepting all large items and appliances at no charge

Accepting at extra cost: car tires \$3.00 each, truck tires \$6.00 each, tractor tires \$16.00 each

Truck & tractor tires must be off the rims

We will not accept any oil based paint or other hazardous materials.

Preserving Agricultural Lands... (continued from page 1)

should be in existing urban areas.

The entire *Landscapes 2 Public Opinion Survey* can be found online at www.landscapes2.org.

There are county and state grants available for open space and farmland preservation. The Township has had some success with conservation easements and the sale of development rights for open space and farmland preservation through partnering with willing landowners and supporting them through the land conservation process.

By placing conservation easements on private lands, it protects the natural resources on the property in perpetuity, but keeps the land privately owned. Selling the development rights on a parcel of land is one method of farmland preservation that gives landowners monetary compensation for agreeing to never sell the prime agricultural lands for development.

Landowners interested in more information about preserving their farmlands and/or the natural resources on their properties

What is the MMCP... (continued from page 1)

or that are best suited for a particular use. Possibly, miles of roads to maintain, water and sewer lines to repair will not need to be installed to accommodate more isolated subdivisions.

Concentrating high demand electrical transmission distances and shortening commuting times could help the national priority on energy savings and efficiency. Acres of the best non-irrigated agricultural soil in the United States could be kept in production and business opportunities from Lincoln through Oxford to Nottingham along the rail line could be enhanced. Through a possible regional Transfer of Development Rights program, landowners could sell their development rights to builders in areas

where higher density is required. The benefits to the region could be huge.

MMCP meetings started in January of 2008 and are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The proposed agenda items are as follows: Regional Policies and Coordination, Natural Resources Plan, Scenic Resources Plan, Historic Resources Plan, Open Space and Ag Resources Plan, Transportation and Circulation plan, Recreational Resources Plan, Community Facilities and Services Plan, Land Use Plan, Housing Plan, Economic Development Plan, Energy Conservation Plan, Introduction, Community Profile and Demographics, and Implementation Strategy.

The meetings are open to the public.

About UOC Park

The Upper Oxford Community Park is open from 8 a.m. to sunset from April 1 through November 30.

To reserve the pavilion or ball field, fill out an application and contact the Township Office at least 10 days in advance.

Complete rules for use of the Park, are online at www.upperoxfordtownship.org (click on the link at right for Community Park) or stop in at the Township Office for a copy.

are encouraged to contact the Township.

We are currently reviewing the need within the Township for an Open Space Committee that would be tasked with several important initiatives, including:

- Assist with the planning and vision for a comprehensive open space program within the Township;
- Study land preservation programs and options in neighboring townships;
- Educate and assist interested landowners; and
- Monitor open space initiatives at the state, county, and federal levels.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving as an appointed member of an Open Space Committee in Upper Oxford Township, please contact Jane Daggett (Township Secretary) at 610.932.9233. Additionally, if you are unable to serve as a committee member but have information, suggestions, or comments, please feel free to either call the Township or send the information via electronic mail to upperoxford@hotmail.com.

Zoning Office Information

Building permits are required for all construction activities except minor repairs. Sheds, gazebos, above ground pools containing 24 inches of water, hot tubs, spas and in-ground swimming pools also require building permits. Above ground pools are required to have removable ladders or lockable ladders. A 48-inch fence with inside locking gate is required for all in-ground pools.

If you should have any questions as to whether a building permit is required for the work that is to be undertaken, please contact the Upper Oxford Township Zoning Officer and Building Code Official William Beers at 610-857-1285, by fax at 610-857-4331, or email at wbeers@verizon.net. Appointments can be made to meet with Mr. Beers by calling the above phone number to review the construction issues.

Any questions regarding set back requirements for new structures can also be obtained from Mr. Beers. Changes in use of a building should also be reviewed with the Zoning Office to insure that the use is allowed in the Zoning District in which you reside. The number of horses or large animals allowed on less than 4 acres should also be reviewed with the Zoning Office.

Effective 1 January 2010, the building code requirements will change and we follow the IRC 2009 and IBC 2009. If your building plans are approved before 1 January 2010 you will follow the IRC 2006 and IBC 2006.

Building permits are valid for up to one (1) year and can be renewed up to 2 times in 6 month renewals for an additional 12 months.

Emergency Management Notice

Upper Oxford is participating in a Regional Emergency Management (OXREM) effort with the other municipalities within the Oxford Area School District in order to plan and prepare for emergency related situations. Questions or interest in this effort can be directed to our Emergency Management Coordinator, Chuck Freese, by calling 610-869-3307.

The Upper Oxford Township Newsletter is published by the UOT Board of Supervisors and produced by Lucas Communications and Publications. The sketch of Oak Grove Schoolhouse is by Hazel Duncan and used with permission.

Floss, the Mare

By An Anonymous UOT Resident

It's a cold brisk sunny day in March. The farmer has just finished milking the cows and is doing the morning feeding of the animals and will soon head to the house for breakfast. I wonder what work we will be doing today. Yesterday we plowed the field behind the farmhouse. I guess we will continue working on the same field as yesterday.

Ah! The farmer is letting us out to go the water barrel to drink and Joe decides to take a roll in the grass by the barn door. The farmer puts the harness on us, leads us to the field behind the farmhouse, and hooks us to the disk, which breaks the large clods of soil into smaller ones.

Off we go walking back and forth disking the plowed field. Lunch time comes and the farmer unhitches us and takes us back to the barn for a drink and rest while he eats.

After lunch, we pull the peg-tooth harrow, which breaks the ground further into smaller clods. A roller is attached to the harrow to smooth the worked soil. Then it's evening milking time and we head to the barn for the day.

The next day, our field prepared, we go through the field pulling the grain drill to plant peas.

It is now early June and time to harvest the peas. The field is cut into rows with the grass cutter; the cut grass is then loaded onto a wagon with the hay loader. The vines need to be forked to the front of the wagon to make room for upcoming vines on the loader. The loaded wagon will be taken to a pea vinery where the kernels of peas will be removed from the vines.

Out on to the public road we go. What? We don't turn into the pea vinery across the road from the farm! Instead, up the hill we go and turn left and proceed about two miles to the next vinery where we get in line with the other wagons and trucks and wait for our turn to be unloaded. Two men stand on the wagon of peas and fork the vines onto a conveyor belt, which moves vines through the machines that remove the pods from the vines and shells the pods. The peas fall into wooden boxes. The boxes of shelled peas will be taken to the cannery where the peas will be processed for sale to the public.

The ride home is easier and faster with an empty wagon.

Back to the field to load the wagon with

the rest of the vines. After drink and rest, we take another load of vines to the vinery after the farmer has finished milking and had his supper. It is now early evening and darkness is starting to descend. Again, we get in line and wait. This time, the line seems longer and slower. At last, it's our turn. When we finally return home, it is late - sometime after 10 p.m., maybe as late as midnight. I hope we have an easy day tomorrow.

Note: During the 1930s and 1940s, farmers of Chester and Lancaster Counties would raise acres of peas as a cash crop under contract with local canneries. The author grew up on a dairy farm in southern Lancaster County and remembers helping Floss and Joe plant and harvest peas. The author's husband remembers a pea vinery being located on what is now the Beiler farm on Route 896 in Upper Oxford.

Send us your memories of local history for the Upper Oxford newsletter! Email stories to sbarky13@hotmail.com or mail them to Upper Oxford Township.

Post Office and Country Store... (continued from page 4)

According to memories written by Richard Roth, who lived there with his family from 1941-1957, "The store front had two large windows to the left of the entrance and a single large display window to the right. The two to the left were always shuttered at night. Upon entering, three rows of counters stretched from front to about the middle of the selling space. Those to the left displayed dry goods, clothing, etc. On the left wall footwear was displayed. The counter to the right on entering displayed notions, toiletries and threads. The wall shelves to the right had lineaments."

"In the center, from front to back, was an office area and to the right a "penny" candy case facing the outside wall," Roth's memories continue. "This was a favorite of children. To the left was a public telephone and the exit door leading to the house. A stairway was also located here leading to the second floor. This was a storage area. Dad had woodworking tools on the second floor where he spent many hours."

Roth further wrote, "From center to back was the grocery area with shelves to the right. A meat cabinet and counter were straight ahead. Paints and hardware were to the left. The counters were arranged in an open "U" that one walked

Attention Alumni of Upper Oxford Schools!

The Upper Oxford Township Historical Commission is planning the fourth reunion for alumni of the township's one room schoolhouses. The reunion will be held on September 12, 2009, at noon, at the Upper Oxford Township Park on Catamount Road (rain location is the Russellville Grange on Route 896). Invitations with further details will be mailed soon. All alumni are welcome to attend and bring mementos and memories to share. Volunteers are still needed. For more information, please contact Philip Edwards at 610-869-2655.

Volunteers wanted!

The Upper Oxford Township Historical Commission is looking for volunteers to help compile a calendar featuring photographs of Upper Oxford Township. Please tell us what you would like to see in a calendar, share your ideas with us, or send us photographs that we can use in the calendar. Contact Frances Reyburn at 610-932-9239 to help.

into. The back wall had an ice cream cabinet and nuts and bolts. Behind this area was the "back" room, which was a storage area for groceries and pop."

In addition, Roth said, "The store had a full basement, much being dirt floor. There were access doors to the basement from the old abandoned road to the right of the building. Prior to the Roth's purchase of the store there had been plows and serious hardware stored there. "A rope driven elevator was at the back of the store in the hardware area. It serviced all three floors. It was capable of a huge load."

Some local Homeville Area residents who frequented the Store in the 1940s remember mail slots in the storeroom area. The property was sold to Bill Swift in 1965.

The Homeville Store served as more than a store and post office throughout its history from before 1829 to 1996. It was a meeting hall for a Lyceum, a Millinery and Dress Shop, an Ice Cream Parlor as well as a Country Store. It was an educational center, with its monthly Lyceum meeting being well attended with a wide variety of topics discussed, from poetry to forming a new county with the lower parts of Chester and Lancaster Counties. The lovely old house remains, but the store part on the East has been removed.

A History of the Post Office and Country Store at Collamer and Homeville

By Hazel Gray Duncan

On October 18, 1943, the Daily Local News printed an account of the founding of the Collamer post office:

"One hundred years ago people who lived in Homeville, in Upper Oxford Township had to go to Penningtonville, five miles away for their mail. This didn't please farmer Thomas Baker, so he wrote to President Zachery Taylor's Post Master General that if a post office would be established for Homeville, he would be willing to act as Post Master without charge and give the post office free rent on his own place. He suggested the name of the post office be called Collamer, the name of the then Post Master General in Washington, D.C." [Editor's note: Penningtonville is near south Atglen]

"The request was granted," continued the article, "and Thomas Baker was given his commission October 11, 1849, as Post Master of Collamer, which was over a mile northeast of the town of Homeville in



A photograph, estimated to have been taken in the early 1900s, shows the Homeville Store at the intersection of Homeville Road and (what is now) Route 896. Photograph courtesy of Tom Foulk, who lived there as a child. His father was one of the post masters.

West Fallowfield township. Baker built a house and store for his son-in-law, Thomas Scanlon and the post office was located there. He held the Post Master position for nearly 20 years." Baker was succeeded as post master by David Hastings on July 29, 1868. He moved the post office into the town of Homeville after the original location was burned. Hastings purchased the Store House and lot of 1 rood 36 perches

at the northwest corner of Route 896 in 1867. (At that time Route 896 traveled between the current 'Homeville Store House' and what is now Stanley Reyburn's house. Hastings purchased it from Frances Pennock and it is listed on deeds as 'Store House' from 1856 until 1996.

The post office is also shown on the Beous Farm Map 1883. Collamer P.O. closed April 30, 1935. Post Masters at Collamer were:

- Thomas Baker- 1849 to 1868 - 19 years
- David Hastings- 1868 to 1870 - <2 years
- Thomas Black- 1870 - < 1 year
- Alexander Martin- 1870 to 1872 - < 2 years
- Thomas Foulk- 1872 to 1886 - 14 years
- H. J. Miller- 1886 to 1888 - 2 years
- Thomas Foulk- 1888 to 1914 - 26 years
- William Foulk- 1914 to 1935 - 21 years

At the time Alex Martin served as postmaster, he also operated the store owned by Abner Davis. The Foulkes also owned and operated the store at the time they were postmasters.

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UPPER OXFORD TOWNSHIP

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email: upperoxford@hotmail.com
Website: www.upperoxford.org

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays & Tuesdays
8:00 AM TO 2:30 PM

MEETINGS

• Board of Supervisors
2nd Monday at 7PM
• Planning Commission
1st Monday at 7:30 PM
(except September - 1st Tuesday)
• Historical Commission
2nd Tuesday at 7 PM



*Upper Oxford Township
1185 Limestone Road
Oxford, PA 19363*