Manager’s Message:

A look back... a look ahead. 2014 in Westtown Township was a year of challenges and achievements and many more are expected in 2015. Following is a brief summary of noteworthy items:

Weather. Who can forget the winter of 2013/2014 followed by a severe hail storm? The Westtown road crew persevered through numerous winter storms big and small, and are prepared for the worst again, but the hope and expectations are that the cold, snow, and ice events will be not nearly as bad. How could they be? The early summer hail storm resulted in the need for many residents to complete repairs to roofs, siding, windows and shutters; requiring the Township Building Department to process numerous requests for contractor solicitations and construction permits.

Budget. Westtown continues to be financially strong. The 2015 budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors was balanced with no need to raise taxes. The total budget is $11.2M, with $2.8M allocated for Westtown’s share of the Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department budget. Westtown’s capital reserve accounts are well funded, and these resources will be used for needed road, sewer, building, and park improvements in 2015 and the years ahead. A copy of the 2015 budget is posted on the Westtown website under “Budget & Financial Info.”

Website. Westtown is in the process of completing a needed update to the township website. A website design vendor will soon be selected, and immense improvements will be live by mid-year, if not sooner.

Township Commissions. In 2014 there were many changes to Westtown’s Planning, Parks & Recreation, and Historical Commissions. The Planning Commission had a more progressive role in reviewing subdivisions and land developments and in developing new ordinances and ordinance updates. The Conditional Use Application for the Bozzuto Apartment Complex Development presented a unique and profound challenge that tested the Planning Commission like no project before. Their thoughtful and purposeful work will ensure a first-class project that will mitigate any impacts for this intense apartments use. The Parks & Recreation Commission continued to plan and execute community events at Oakbourne Park, and with several new members and new leadership, the Westtown community has much to look forward to in 2015. Finally, the Historical Commission has grown in membership and involvement with researching and documenting buildings and sites of historical significance. Throughout 2014, they have discovered numerous historic resources, and expect to complete a resource map in 2015 to enable Westtown’s residents to discover our forgotten past.

Developments. The PNC Bank project at the intersection of Routes 3 and 352 has been completed and is open for business, while the Rite Aid will be constructed in place of the old bank throughout 2015. The 50-lot residential development proposed at the Rustin High School property is proceeding through Westtown’s review process, with approval likely by mid-year. Finally, for the Bozzuto Apartment Complex the Planning Commission developed an extensive list of approval conditions for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. The final conditions are under development by the Board, as their decision process continues into 2015.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year. As always, please stop in at the township building for a visit; I welcome the opportunity to meet you and answer any of your questions about Westtown Township.

Regards,
Rob Pingar
Township Manager
CHESTER COUNTY USEFUL CONTACTS & PHONE NUMBERS

Government Services Center: 601 Westtown Road
Chester County Court House: 313 W. Market St, West Chester Borough
District Justice for Westtown: William Kraut
 (District Court 15-2-03) 610-436-5757
Chester County Court House & Government Services Center:
Information: 610-344-6000
Children, Youth & Families: 610-344-5800
Department of Emergency Services: 610-344-5000
Health Department: 610-344-6225
• Septic Systems: 610-344-6126
• Recycling/Hazardous Waste: 610-344-6692
License Bureau (Dog, Fishing, Hunting): 610-344-6370
Marriage License Bureau: 610-344-6335
Office of the Aging: 610-344-6009
Passports: 610-344-6050
Recorder of Deeds: 610-344-6330
Tax Assessment: 610-344-6105
Tax Claim/Lien Bureau: 610-344-6360
Voters Services: 610-344-6410

Chester County Conservation District: 610-925-4920
West Chester Area School District:
829 Paoli Pike, West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380
Main Number: 484-266-1000 | School Tax: 484-266-1035
State Senate – 9th District:
Dominic F. Pileggi: Local: 610-358-5783 / State: 717-787-4712
Email: dpileggi@paspent.gov
State House - 168th District:
Tom Killion: Local: 610-325-1541 / State: 717-772-0855
Email: tkillion@pahousegov.com
U. S. Senator:
www.toomey.senate.gov
www.casey.senate.gov
Congressional District – 6th District:
James Gerlach: Local: 610-594-1415 / Federal: 202-225-4315
www.gerlach.house.gov

BULLETIN BOARD
Phase II On-Lot System Inspections Due. Residents in Phase II of the On-Lot Sewage Management Program are required to have their initial system inspection paperwork submitted to the Township by June 7, 2015. Please refer to the On-Lot Sewage Management Program Guide for more information.

Commission Opening. The Township is seeking a volunteer to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission. If you would like to become involved, please send your resume and letter of interest to the Township Manager, Rob Pingar, P.E. (rpingar@westtown.org).


Pay Sewer and Trash Bills Online. Westtown residents can use Visa, Master Card, and Discover to pay their utility bills online. There is no fee for residents who use this service. Simply go to our website and click on Pay Bills Online.

Email Alerts. To be added to our electronic notification of Township meetings, events, and other important news, please email mailist@westtown.org. Please put “Listserv” in the subject line.

Website. Consult the News and Information page of the Township website for notices of meeting cancellations, special events, press releases from the Westtown East Goshen Police, and other alerts.

Save paper! If you would like to receive the Westtown Gazette electronically, send an email to info@westtown.org and request to be put on the electronic delivery list.

FOR POLICE, FIRE, & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, DIAL 911.
FOR NON-EMERGENCIES, DIAL 610-692-5100.
Winter Festival Recap
by Jennifer Masiko, Parks & Recreation Commission

On Sunday December 7, Oakbourne Mansion opened her doors to the public to share in the holiday magic at the annual Westtown Township Winter Festival. The mansion was decorated and lit with holiday regalia, accentuating the architectural beauty of the home built in the late 1800’s.

Upon entering the grand hallway, visitors were greeted by volunteers of Rustin High School’s DECA Community Service Project and Parks and Recreation (P&R) Commissioner Seamus Lavin, and then directed to the Marble Room where a Victorian Holiday theme was hosted by the Westtown Township Historical Commission. Walter Pavelchek, P&R Commissioner and resident historian, created a display to demonstrate and discuss the history of our area. Guests continued into the adjacent Adam Room for a Winter Wilderness theme, hosted by the friends of Oakbourne. P&R Commissioner Jennifer Masiko oversaw volunteers helping guests create ornaments and pine cone bird feeders.

The Bridal Chamber housed one of the more popular destinations for our younger visitors: face painting. Our artist was not only very talented (and busy!), but also our youngest volunteer. Many thanks to Julia Leonard! The Breezeway was a gathering place for a photo booth employing “old time” Polaroid technology, a delight to those unfamiliar with it, and nostalgic to the ones who were. Instant photos were then placed in their own picture frame to decorate and take home.

The tour continued into the Dunning Room where P&R’s own Maria Klang hosted “Staying Healthy Through the Holidays” event. Healthy eating and exercise was discussed, guests created home-made chocolate cocoa to take home, and kids burned an abundance of energy with hula hoops, jump ropes, and the bean bag toss.

In the Kitchen, visitors received a personalized gingerbread man...cookies by Ida, which they enjoyed in the Dining Room with cocoa and other treats. Guests could also write a letter to Santa and received a parting goody bag.

Stuart Rich, P&R Commissioner, organized one of the more anticipated events of the day, live carolers! He joined the volunteer vocalists to delight the crowd in the Great Hall for all to hear throughout the mansion.

It was a festive and fun two hours for the nearly 100 guests who journeyed the halls, and the many volunteers who made the event possible. Deborah Litman-Goch, Chair of P&R, was the driving force behind the event and deserves the thanks of not only her fellow commissioners for her leadership and organization, but from everyone who attended. She was in nearly every room at some point Sunday and was the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Many thanks to the Rustin High School DECA students who volunteered their time to this event: Trey Swanson, Anna Steinmetz, Jill Stout, Holly Dion, Brittney Hamon, Andrew Coleman, Jimmy Killoran, Andrew Patterson, Brooke Morgan, Kylee Dorean, Gillian Kling, Julia McCarrick, Nate Davis, Bailey Weimer, Ryan Davis, Courtney Warley, and Jay Balch. Additional volunteers included friends and relatives of P&R Commissioners. Thank you for your continued support of Westtown Township events, both on site and at home.

Speaking of the Red Cross, we are always looking for local volunteers. Every day, Red Cross volunteers – your neighbors – provide a broad array of vital services to people in need in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Volunteers are a part of everything we do, and there’s a volunteer opportunity for everyone.

Red Cross “everyday heroes” came from all walks of life. Everyone has something special to offer...including you. Voluntary service is a fundamental principle of the Red Cross, and we are grateful for your interest in helping us to serve the people of your very own community.

Are You Prepared for a Winter Emergency?

Over the last few years, we have experienced several very severe winter weather events, snow, wind, ice...I’m sure everyone remembers. Many of these events were accompanied by power failures. PECO is getting better at recovering from these, but they still happen. During the big ice storm, 80% of Chester County was without power. We were pretty lucky compared to some, but there were Westtown residents without power for several days.

What might have happened if the power went out and stayed out, or the roads could not be reopened quickly? Were you prepared to stay at home for up to three days, perhaps without power? Do you have a plan? You ought to, so here are some tips to get you started:

1. Get informed. What are the risks we might be exposed to? Certainly ice/snow storms, maybe flooding, power failures are winter time problems. How will you know what’s coming? Know where weather information can be found, and have at least one battery-powered radio (with good batteries) so you can keep informed even if the power/cable/internet is unavailable.

2. Make a plan. What will you do in a winter emergency? What if you can’t get home from work, or no one can pick up the kids at school? Plan out what you might do, and make sure everyone knows their part.

3. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit. You should have a Disaster Supplies Kit in your home, and maybe a smaller version in your car or place of business. Think about what you would need for three days without power or heat. Key items will be water, non-perishable food (and a manual can opener), radio and batteries, first aid kit, prescriptions, infant care needs, and don’t forget Fido and Fluffy’s needs. For a winter emergency, warm clothing and bedding, like a sleeping bag, would be good ideas as well.

4. Maintain your plan. Even if you already have a plan, review it. Try it out on a regular basis. Check the expiration dates on foods and medicines.

If you want to learn more about disaster preparedness, you can go to www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org for more information.

Don Verdiani
Emergency Management Coordinator
Westtown Township
Friends of Oakbourne News  
Tom Bare, President, Friends of Oakbourne

With the arrival of cold weather, the Friends of Oakbourne (FoO) have curtailed most of our outside work in Oakbourne Park, but we are already planning for a busy Spring and Summer in 2015. To date we so far have requests for three commemorative trees that will be planted in early Spring. Additionally, we recently received two beautiful commemorative park benches that will be assembled over the winter and then permanently placed in Oakbourne Park in the Spring. We are currently having small plaques made for each of the benches that will signify to whom the benches were dedicated. Plans are for one of the benches to be placed near a dedicated tree in the playground area and the other to be located along the park trail in the soccer field area. Further details regarding the benches, their specific locations and to whom they are dedicated will follow once the benches are installed.

Another project FoO is working on is the renovation of the garden area around Oakbourne Park’s water tower. FoO received a monetary donation from the Oakbourne Garden Club with the provision that the money be used to improve gardens in Oakbourne Park. The garden area around the water tower has degraded over the years, so we decided to design a low maintenance pollinator friendly garden consisting of deer resistant native shrubs and flowers. The initial phase of the garden renovation will focus on the areas adjacent to the brick walkway leading to the front entrance of the water tower as indicated in the garden diagram. Spring bulbs were planted along the brick walkway to start the garden and the remainder of the garden will be planted in the Spring.

A final winter project will be the construction of a detailed map of Oakbourne Park showing the location of all FoO dedicated trees and benches (with GPS coordinates) along with a list of the individuals to whom the trees and benches are dedicated. This map will be placed in the recently constructed park kiosk so visitors to the park will be able to easily locate all dedicated trees and benches.

Contact Tom Bare (tmbare@hotmail.com or 610-399-1572) if you are interested in donating a park bench or tree to be planted in Oakbourne Park to honor a special person or loved one or to commemorate an important occasion.

Citizen’s Police Academy Graduation

On November 20, 2014, the Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department conducted a graduation ceremony for its Citizens Police Academy class. The ceremony was the culmination of a 12-week community policing program that enables citizens to have a better understanding of the operations of the police department and its officers. Additionally, the program seeks to give citizens a greater awareness and appreciation of the daily challenges and decisions faced by police officers.

The program included the following topics:
- Police Patrol Operations
- Criminal Investigations
- CPR and First Aid
- The Court System
- Traffic Enforcement/Accident Investigation and Reconstruction
- Community Policing
- 911 Operations Center
- Terrorism Awareness

This year, 20 citizens participated in the 12-week program: 12 from East Goshen Township, 6 from Westtown Township, and 2 from West Goshen Township.

Neighborhood University 2014

This fall, 46 greater West Chester area residents, including eight from Westtown Township, participated in the Neighborhood University of Greater West Chester. Neighborhood University (NU) was created by the West Chester Area Council of Governments (WCACOG) to educate citizens on local government and increase awareness of available municipal services and resources in order to provide them the tools to be better advocates for their community. The free program consisted of twelve 2-hour sessions facilitated by local, county, and state government officials, and area business professionals. The sessions were held at WCACOG municipalities throughout the Greater West Chester Area - West Chester Borough and West Goshen, East Goshen, East Bradford, Thornbury, West Whiteland, and Westtown Townships, while the session on Public Safety/Fire-WMS-911 Center was held at the Chester County Government Services Center. Go to www.nugwc.org for general information on Neighborhood University.

WEGO Police Department hosted the session on Public Safety/Policing, whereas Westtown Township hosted the session on Traffic, Transportation, and Roadways, with presenters Township Manager Rob Pingar, Roadmaster Mark Gross and Traffic Engineer Al Federico, with assistance from Director of Planning and Zoning Chris Patriarca. All sessions were lively and interactive and educational for students and presenters as well!

Congratulations to the five Westtown NU graduates who received their diplomas at the WCACOG meeting on November 20 - Robert Borden, Leonard Flanagan, Kelly Keller, Mike Rody, and John Winther. Thanks to all NU participants; your interest in local government was impressive. Plans are already under way for NU 2015; please look for enrollment information in the summer edition of Westown Gazette.
Oakbourne Station and its Environs
by Jonathan L. Hoppe, Historical Commission

In the spring of 1848, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania granted a charter for the construction of a railroad from Philadelphia to the borough of West Chester via Media. It was a time of railroad fever in Chester County. The first railroads in the county had not yet been in operation even twenty years yet, but the symbolic possibilities of trade, prosperity, and a brighter future embodied by these ribbons of steel (to come to full realization as part of a Manifest Destiny in the 1870s) made the railroad a hot commodity.

In 1851, the Philadelphia & West Chester Railroad was officially organized, in part as competition to the West Chester Railroad that ran from West Chester to the Main Line of Public Works at West Chester Intersection (now Malvern) and the whole of the line surveyed and placed under contract in 1852. Construction began in earnest, and much of the heavy grading and construction was finished by 1854, though the section from Media to West Chester would not be opened until 1858.

In 1859, the railroad company established a small station on the Chester Creek, about two miles south of the Borough of West Chester, near the home of R. Coleman Hemphill, son of six-term Congressmen Joseph Hemphill and Chester, one of the paroles, wrote in a letter to his father: “We have moved camp since I wrote you last; we are now about a mile and a half from the town, on the West Chester and Phila. Railway; the cars run about as often as they do at West Cambridge, and I can lay in my tent and see them pass by — the prospect is quite pleasant.”

In 1868, a young man named Chalkley Speakman, Jr. was appointed the station agent. Ten years later he married Ellen Van Winkle. One senses a story here — Ellen Jane was a member of the illustrious Van Winkle family (the same Van Winkle family that had come over to the New World when New York was still New Amsterdam). But love, or so it would seem, conquered all, and together with her husband and two young children moved to the small station house in Westtown Township. It was to be a happy life — although it was set off to an inauspicious start. Soon after his appointment, Chalkley Speakman’s father paid a visit to his son. Waiting on the porch for his train, he promptly dropped dead from a sudden and massive heart attack.

By the early 1870s, the station was handling the fewest passengers of any on the line — but that did not stop the company from investing in a number of improvements to the building and grounds.

For the next five years their family settled into a nice routine; Chalkley worked as a carpenter and as the station agent, while Ellen tended to the children. But that year two benefactors would come into their lives. Wealthy Philadelphia industrialist James C. Smith and his wife Heloise Drexel Smith bought John Hulme’s palatial country home after his death in 1874, and began to convert it and its grounds into a fashionable Victorian mansionhouse, complete with manicured grounds, artificial lake, lookout and waterfowers, which they named “Oakbourne.” They had no children of their own, and so they bestowed kindness upon the local community, including the Speakman family, for whom they provided for renovation and landscaping of their stationhouse.

Later that year, after petitioning from the surrounding community, the government established a post office at the station, with Mrs. Speakman appointed as postmistress on December 12, 1883. Before the days of rural free delivery, one can understand how beneficial such a stop would be. In 1885, the post office was officially named “Oakbourne,” after the Smith’s mansion.

The Smiths died in the 1890s, leaving their mansion to the Episcopal City Mission as a convalescent home for women. Shortly thereafter, an Epileptic Hospital and Colony Farm was established next door. Epilepsy was poorly understood at the time, and, thinking it a mental defect, and before the advent of medication for its control, those afflicted were often placed in such institutions. With the increased business brought on by these institutions, the station saw its headiest days.

Of course, the Speakmans faced their own trials and travails during these years. One notable instance was in 1897, when Mrs. Speakman boldly faced an armed robber. A young man came into the station asking for change for a $20 bill, which she refused to do. She did however have change for a $5, which he handed to her. But as he did so he pulled out a revolver and demanded the contents of her cash drawer. Unfazed, she faced him down. “Shoot if you dare,” she said stonily, and that his revolver was not loaded. The man balked, and Mrs. Speakman shouted to her daughter to grab the rifle. With that, the man took off down the track, Mrs. Speakman chasing after him. He was eventually caught in Willistown, and hauled off to prison.

The family lived in the station for the next thirty years. Chalkley Speakman died in 1926 at age 77. Ellen remained on, on the cusp of great changes. The Philadelphia Electric Company was building a series of pylons for a high-tension electric line directly along the railroad across from the station, and the railroad itself was in the process of electrifying the line. Electric commuter service began on December 2, 1928.

Just 10 days later, Ellen Jane Speakman officially resigned as the postmistress of the Station, having served in that capacity for 40 years exactly. Upon her retirement, the office was closed — its proximity to West Chester having rendered its services obsolete. Thus, Ellen Jane has the notable distinction of being the first and only postmistress of Oakbourne. Ellen suffered a stroke that year, and moved in with her daughter in West Chester. She died six years later at a ripe old age and was buried next to her husband in Greenmount Cemetery.

The stationhouse itself survived until 1960, when declining revenue necessitated its closure. The building was demolished shortly thereafter. Today, little serves to attest to it ever having been there, except a telephone pole, a retaining wall, and an overgrown driveway. In its honor, the West Chester Railroad has affixed a small sign to a nearby catarary pole, and “Oakbourne” once again graces the railroad.

The stationhouse has been there, except a telephone pole, a retaining wall, and an overgrown driveway. In its honor, the West Chester Railroad has affixed a small sign to a nearby catarary pole, and “Oakbourne” once again graces the railroad.

Oakbourne Station, ca. 1907, photograph by Philip P. Chase
Township Meetings & Events

PORTABLE Generator Safety Tips

Never Use a Generator Inside:
- Garages
- Crawl Spaces
- Sheds
- Basements
- Carports

Exhaust gases can cause Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning even in vented areas.

Install home CO alarms with battery back-up.

Proper Outdoor Use:
- Place in a dry location outside.
- Keep 20 feet away from buildings.
- Do not touch a generator with wet hands.

Use and Store Fuel Safely:
- Shut down generator before refueling.
- Store fuel in an approved safely can outside of living areas.
- Use only fuel recommended on the label or in the instructions.

Connect your Generator Properly:
- Turn off or disconnect all devices before operating the generator.
- Devices should be turned on one at a time to avoid overloading the generator.
- Use proper extension cords.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet.

Shut Down Procedures:
- Turn off and unplug all devices being powered by the unit before shut down.
- Drain fuel from generator while it is in storage.
- Check fuel and oil before restarting.

How to Prepare Items for Recycling

Glass - Green, Brown & Clear:
- Bottles or Jars only
- Rinse Clean. Remove lids and rings
- Labels may be left on
- NO plate glass, ceramics, drinking glasses, etc.

Plastic:
- Must be marked with #1 through #7 inside triangle on bottom. Rinse clean. Remove lids and discard. Labels may be left on. NO unmarked containers or containers marked with other than #1 through #7 inside the triangle on bottom. No antifreeze or motor oil containers.

Aluminum Beverage Cans:
- Rinse clean. Cans may be flattened. No bottle or jar lids, no pie plates or aluminum foil. No other aluminum items.

Bi-Metal Cans:
- Rinse clean. Cans may be flattened. Examples include pet food cans, soup cans, vegetable cans. NO cans with plastic parts. NO paint or aerosol cans.

Paper:
- Newspaper, Magazines, Phone Books, Junk Mail, small cardboard boxes (cereal, crackers, etc) & Office Paper: must be in paper bags or in a container

Bi-Metal Cans:
- Rinse clean. Cans may be flattened. Examples include pet food cans, soup cans, vegetable cans. NO cans with plastic parts. NO paint or aerosol cans.

Paper:
- Newspaper, Magazines, Phone Books, Junk Mail, small cardboard boxes (cereal, crackers, etc) & Office Paper: must be in paper bags or in a container

Cardboard Boxes:
- Must be cut in 3 foot squares, tied and placed next to the recycling bin. This is necessary because of the compacting system of the recycling truck. Unfortunately if the cardboard is not prepared this way it will be taken with the regular trash. Cereal boxes and similar cardboard items may be combined with newspaper.

SAVE THE DATE: Spring Yard Sale
Saturday, April 25, 2015 | Oakbourne Park

2015 Trash & Recycling Info

Holiday Pickup Schedule: Trash will not be collected on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For Monday pickups, trash and recycling will be collected the Saturday before the holiday; Thursday pickups will be collected the Saturday after the holiday.

*Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste Collection:
Pennsylvania law prohibits the disposal of electronic waste in the regular trash.

Large Item Collection: Bulk items will be picked up on the last collection date of the month. You are allowed to put out three large items, such as furniture and appliances without Freon. Construction debris (shingles, drywall, lumber, etc.) will not be collected. If you are not sure about the disposal of a bulk item please contact the Township.

*Visit www.chestercountyswa.org for e-waste collection events scheduled throughout the county.