

East Coventry Times

Spring 2014

FAST FACTS ABOUT EAST COVENTRY

Population*: 6,636
 Male 3,218 48.5%
 Female 3,418 51.5%
 Median Age: 40.1

No. of Households*: 2,624
 Owner occupied: 1,975
 Renter occupied: 501
 Vacant units: 148
 Average household size of owner occupied units: 2.72
 Average household size of renter-occupied units: 2.09
 Miles of Roadway

48.19 Township
 11.09 State

Number of Employees:
 7 Police
 4 Administration
 4 Public Works
 3 Seasonal/PT

Total 2014 Budget Expenditures: \$5,463,151.50

Real Estate Millage Rate: 3

*2010 Census

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Open Space Preservation in East Coventry

On January 10, 2011 the Board of Supervisors of East Coventry Township adopted Ordinance No. 175, titled, "Earned Income Tax Increase for Land Conservation" (the Open Space Ordinance). The Open Space Ordinance raised revenues to finance the acquisition of open space, agricultural and conservation easements, and recreation or historic lands. The Open Space Ordinance was made possible after a majority of voters in the November 2010 General Election approved a referendum in favor of imposing an additional earned income tax at the rate of one quarter of one per cent (0.25%) in accordance with the Open Space Lands Act.

On July 11, 2011 the Board adopted Resolution No. 2011-14, to establish procedures for reviewing open space lands for potential acquisition by the Township in accordance with the Open Space Land Acquisition and Preservation Act (The Act). On September 12, 2011, the Board adopted Resolution No. 2011-24 establishing and appointing an Open Space Committee for the purpose of making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors related to the acquisition of open space.

Township open space can be secured either through purchasing the property in fee simple ownership or purchasing a conservation/agricultural easement. Fee simple acquisition occurs when the Township takes legal title to the land. A conservation easement or agricultural easement is a recorded legal document between a landowner and the Township and/or a Land Trust (a private, non-profit conservation organization) which permanently restricts a property's uses to protect its value as open space or another use authorized under the Act.

Based on a recommendation from the Township Open Space Committee, the Board of Supervisors seeks to acquire open space on properties containing at least ten (10) acres.

The acquisition of a conservation easement or agricultural easement is generally more cost effective than the acquisition of fee simple ownership as a method of preserving open space. Easements can conserve scenic beauty and environmentally sensitive areas at a lower cost to the Township than fee simple ownership acquisition. As a result, the acquisition of a conservation easement or agricultural easement is generally the Township's preferred method of acquiring open space. However, because circumstances can differ in each acquisition, the acquisition of fee simple ownership will be considered by the Board of Supervisors in certain specific instances.

Acquisition of a conservation/agricultural easement is more complex than fee simple acquisition and is not as well understood. The following paragraphs are intended to provide a basic understanding of conservation easements.

Landowners own many rights associated with their property, such as the rights to harvest timber, build structures, and so on. Each of these rights has a monetary value that can be established by real estate appraisers and is recognized by the IRS. When property owners sell or donate an easement to the Township or a Land Trust, they continue to own the property and pay taxes on it, but they permanently give up certain, agreed upon rights.

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For example, the landowner might give up the right to build additional houses, while retaining the right to harvest crops. Perhaps the landowner has children who may want to live on the property in the future, and is therefore not willing to give up all future building rights on the property. In such a case, an agricultural/conservation easement could "carve out" from the development restrictions a limited number of building lots that could be built on in the future. Under this limited development scenario, easements would be placed on the most scenic and environmentally sensitive areas. Alternatively, the easement could be written to restrict only a portion of the property. The easement might also require the landowner or the easement holder to take certain actions, such as restoring a stream bank or removing invasive vegetation. Easements are flexible and can be written to achieve specific goals such as preserving scenic viewsheds, agricultural lands, riparian buffers, wildlife habitat or establishing trails, etc.

Landowners typically retain the right to engage in farming activities, build farm structures and expand existing residences but give up the right to additional signage, non-agricultural activities, new buildings if not negotiated in advance and any subdivision potential. Easements are perpetual. The restrictions will remain in force even when the property changes ownership or political leadership and zoning ordinances change in the Township. Landowners can continue to live on their property and may sell it or pass it on to their heirs.

Because eased property cannot be fully developed or used as zoning would allow, its market value is lessened (which may lower the assessed value of the property, with positive tax consequences for the property owner). Eased property remains on the tax rolls although property taxes may be lowered due to a decrease in the property's assessed valuation. An easement may lower estate taxes or provide federal income tax benefits if it is donated by the landowner.

Easements do not automatically open property for public use. Public access is granted only if the landowner and easement holder (Township and/or Land Trust) agree and it is provided for in the easement agreement. Public access could be permitted for a wide variety of recreational uses, or it could be limited to specific uses such as a hiking or equestrian trail or environmental education visits. Because the purpose of municipal conservation easements is generally open space protection rather than creation of recreational amenities (trail easements excepted), many do not provide for public access.

A trail easement allows public access in specified areas only. If users step outside the trail easement area they may be considered trespassers. Typically, Landowners are not required to keep the premises safe or warn of dangerous conditions on the property.

When establishing an easement the parties agree upon the terms and restrictions of the easement, and after the easement has been legally executed and recorded in the county courthouse, the easement holder will visit the property periodically – usually on an annual basis – to ensure that the landowner is complying with the terms of the easement. Typically, easement agreements provide for advance notice to property owners of the date and time of monitoring visits. If a violation is discovered the landowner will be asked to correct the violation. If the violation is not corrected, legal action may be taken to enforce the easement.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Township's open space program and/or the possibility of selling property or a conservation easement to the Township for open space purposes can call the Township Building for more information or attend a meeting of the Township's Open Space Committee. The Open Space Committee meetings are held at 7:00 P. M. at the Township Building on the first Wednesday of each month.

Stream Cleanup!

In support of Earth Day activities this April, the Board of Supervisors is sponsoring a cleanup of the Pigeon Creek between Route 724 to the Schuylkill River. Persons interested in keeping East Coventry clean and green are invited to volunteer a few hours of their time to participate in this 7th annual community stream cleanup initiative. Interested volunteers are to gather at the Schuylkill River Trail parking lot located at the intersection of Bethel Church Road and Route 724, at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 26, 2014. The rain date will be Saturday, May 3, 2014. For more information, please contact Gene Briggs, Township Planner, at 610-495-2114 or eugene.briggs@thearrogroup.com.

Road Projects

The following roads are scheduled to be paved this summer. Ebelhare Road (between Ellis Woods Road and Saylor's Mill Road, Saylor's Mill Road (between Ebelhare Road and Old Schuylkill Road and Old Schuylkill Road (between Saylor's Mill Road and Sanatoga Road)

East Coventry Historical Commission

The East Coventry Township Historical Commission (EHC) - Fricks Locks Volunteer Committee and Exelon will be hosting the Fricks Locks Village Tours for 2014.

Fricks Locks Village 2014 Tour Schedule

Tours Conducted at 10:00 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on the following dates

May 10, 2014 and May 24, 2014

June 14, 2014 and June 28, 2014

*July 17, 2014 (one tour only, see below)

August 9, 2014 and August 23, 2014

September 13, 2014 and September 27, 2014

October 11, 2014 and October 25, 2014

***Town Tour and Village Walks—5:30 p.m. with last Tour beginning at 7:00 p.m.
(Unless daylight allows for additional tours)**

Fricks Locks goes national! Fricks Locks Village has been selected as a tour destination for the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NACP) Forum 2014 to be held in Philadelphia in July. The NACP is a national network of local preservation, historic district, and landmark commissions and boards of architectural review.

The EHC is seeking volunteers for Fricks Locks Village Tours. Schedule is flexible; you will not be committed to every tour. It's a lot of fun to present our history and to interface with guests.

The EHC is seeking volunteers for the Oral History Committee. Although much of our history comes from research of various historical archives such as government records and newspapers, Oral Histories make our records come alive! Oral Histories record local resident's memories of everyday family life and special events. The EHC is seeking volunteers for the Oral History Committee to volunteer to assist in recording Oral Histories.

If you're interested in volunteering for one of the above mentioned Committees or wish further information, call the Township Office at (610) 495-5443.

Getting to know your Township Manager—Bernie Rodgers by Cathy Carney Horner

I was curious, what exactly does a Township Manager do? What do you do when you have a question? You Google it! A. Bondigas, eHow Contributor states, *"Although cities and towns may adjust the job to suit their own needs, the town manager serves as chief executive officer to his municipality. Unlike the elected mayor and council members, he is a professional manager. Whether the position is called town manager, town administrator or city manager; he directs the town's multiple departments and sets the tone to how the town operates. In a sense, he is hired to run a multimillion-dollar business."*

I sat down with Bernie Rodgers to ask him about his job. I realized that the job of Township Manager is all encompassing, and very similar to a CEO. You have the day to day activities, and the job of implementing policy. The Manager oversees all activities, offers financial oversight, and is considered "The Man in the Know". Bernie took the job of Township Manager in August 2007. The position presented interesting opportunities. At the time the sewer project was ongoing, financially the township was operating in the red, and Ellis Woods Park was a "work in progress".

I asked Bernie what the most rewarding part of the job has been. At the top of the list was being a part of getting the township on a positive financial track and being involved with the rehabilitation of Fricks Locks Village. Townships need to have a balanced budget. Often times that means that you raise the revenue (i.e. taxes) or there is a cut in services. East Coventry saw growth in the township with no cuts in services.

Getting to know your Township Manager—Bernie Rodgers (cont'd)

There is a new township website in the works. The goal is for the website to be an easy to use, informative and useful resource for township residents.

Bernie's goal: Continue to make East Coventry Township an enjoyable place to live.

Bernie resides in the Saucon Valley area and has a daughter who is currently studying at Penn State, majoring in Biology.

Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee News

DID YOU KNOW?????

You don't have to go much further than out your front door to enjoy the beauty of Mother Nature in East Coventry Township!!

ELLIS WOODS PARK - East Coventry Township Building, 855 Ellis Woods Road

- Fenced in playground
- Nature Trail—1/2 mile loop along Pigeon creek with additional 1 mile rough trail around open space
- Great spot for seeing and listening to the birds
- Gravel track and, opening this Spring, a 1/2 court basketball/pickleball court

TOW PATH PARK - 1598 New Schuylkill Road

- Pavilion for picnics and playground
- Boat launch

MAACK/WINEBERRY TRACT ON MAACK PROPERTY - Parking lot on Maack Road between Kulp and Fulmer Roads

- Trail runs perimeter of farm field and along Pigeon Creek with benches to sit down and view the scenery

If you are interested in nature walks, volunteering in your community or attending a Parks and Recreation meeting, please contact the township office at 610-495-5443 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PICKLEBALL!

Pickleball is coming this Spring to Ellis Woods Park! This exciting game can be played single or doubles style. Equipment will be available to try the game. Contact Anne Sage at 610-326-0725 for more information.

Volunteers Needed!

Do you enjoy being outdoors?
Consider joining us to help clear local trails .

Do you have organizational skills? Help at Community Day

Are you creative? Help with preparing for Community Day

Are you interested in history?
Volunteer to be a member of the Historical Commission.

Are you interested in land preservation? Volunteer to be a member of the Open Space Committee.

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections twice a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

- Author unknown

Recycling

MATERIALS TO BE RECYCLED

Township Ordinance No. 193 "Municipal Waste Collection and Recycling Ordinance", adopted by the Board of Supervisors to comply with Act 101—The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988, as amended, makes recycling a requirement for everyone.

Occupants of residential units are required to separate and recycle clear glass, colored glass, high-grade office paper, newsprint (including newspaper inserts, junk mail and telephone books), aluminum cans, bimetallic cans, No. 1 PET plastics, No. 2 HDPE plastics, No. 4 LDPE plastics and No. 5 PP plastics.

Commercial establishments are required to separate and recycle corrugated paper, high-grade office paper, aluminum cans, bimetallic cans, No. 1 PET plastics, No. 2 HDPE plastics, No. 4 LDPE plastics and No. 5 PP plastics. Hospitality establishments which include restaurants are required to separate and recycle cardboard, high-grade office paper, newspaper (including newspaper inserts, junk mail and telephone books), aluminum cans, bimetallic cans, No. 1 PET plastics, No. 2 HDPE plastics, No. 4 LDPE plastics and No. 5 PP plastics. All Community events attended by 200 or more people are required to have recycling containers.

Grass clippings that are not permitted to lay on the lawn or disposed of at an appropriate composting facility may be commingled with other municipal waste and collected curbside. Household hazardous waste and leaf waste must be separated from recyclable material and other municipal waste. Leaf Waste is defined as, "Leaves, garden residues, shrubbery and tree trimmings and similar material, but does not include grass clippings." **The burning of leaf waste is prohibited.**

Municipal Waste collectors shall provide for the curbside collection of leaf waste at least twice per year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall but may schedule collection of leaf waste more frequently. **Please check with your collector to learn when your curbside collection dates are scheduled.**

Leaf waste may be dropped off at **Arborganic Acres**, an On-Farm Organic Composting Facility located at 901 Cherry Hill Lane, Pottstown, Pa. 19465, www.arborganicacres.com, pursuant to its rules and regulations.

Burning is no longer allowed except for recreational purposes, such as barbecues, campfires, chimineas and similar activities.

Stormwater Management Education Information

Environmentally Deice!

Ice build-up on sidewalks and driveways caused by ice storms and melting snow is extremely common this winter. There are many alternatives to using traditional rock salt as a deicer, as rock salt carried by snow and ice melt pollutes our streams and waterways. To help minimize rock salt pollution, consider using more environmentally friendly deicers, such as calcium magnesium acetate, magnesium chloride or non-chloride deicing products.

Save the Date

East Coventry Community Day and Flea Market
June 14, 2014 12:00 PM—4:00 PM
 to be held at Ellis Woods Park
 There will be music, a magician, pony rides, inflatable climbing wall, bounce and more. **New this year: Flea Market—\$5/table registration form available on website or at the township office. See you there!**

64th Annual Easter Egg Hunt
April 12, 2014 10:00 AM sharp
 to be held at the East Coventry Township Elementary School
 All children of East Coventry Township are invited to the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. Bring your own basket or bag for your share of the goodies. Many prizes are awarded!
 Rain date is Friday April 18.

Tax Collector Dates and Times
Payments can be made at the Township Building on:

April 5, 12, 26
 (9:00 AM to 12:00 PM)
April 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29
 (12:00 PM to 4:00 PM)
April 30 (2:00 PM to 7:00 PM)



East Coventry Township

855 Ellis Woods Road
Pottstown, PA 19465

Phone: 610-495-5443
Fax: 610-495-9925

Website: www.eastcoventry-pa.gov
E-mail: info@eastcoventry-pa.gov

Board of Supervisors

Ray Kolb, Chair

Mariea Geho, Vice Chair

W. Atlee Rinehart, Member

Michael Albert Moyer, Member

Karen Nocella, Member

Dates to Remember

UPCOMING EVENTS

Easter Egg Hunt

East Coventry Elementary School

April 12 at 10:00 AM

Rain date: April 18

Community Day

Ellis Woods Park (Rain or shine)

June 14 at 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Ridge Fire Company Community Day

September 13 at 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

TOWNSHIP MEETINGS

Board of Supervisors

2nd Monday at 7:00 PM

Planning Commission

3rd Wednesday at 7:00 PM

Historical Commission

2nd Wednesday at 7:00 PM

Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee

4th Tuesday at 7:30 PM

Open Space Committee

1st Wednesday at 7:00 PM

All township meetings are held at the Township Building