



The Solebury Messenger

A Quarterly Publication of Solebury Township

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Winter Issue

December 2019

2020 Budget Continues Long-Term Projects, Holds Taxes Steady

Next year's budget provides funding for several ongoing projects in Solebury, from replacing trees in Aquetong Spring Park to purchasing two hybrid vehicles for the Police Department. Taxes will hold steady at 2019 rates.

More than 900 Ash and Walnut trees were felled by damage inflicted by the Emerald Ash Borer and Thousand Cankers Disease. Contractors removed the trees this spring and summer; replacement trees, not susceptible to invasive pests, will be planted in-season.

The budget includes increased funding for the Township's Deer Management Program, which matches dedicated, qualified hunters with homeowners to conduct the ethical harvest of white-tailed deer. Deer management is a long-standing concern in Solebury. In addition to the damage to agriculture and property, and the harm to human health and safety, overpopulation causes severe problems to the health and safety of the deer.

The Township is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services to coordinate this effort. USDA Wildlife Technician Nate Spence is overseeing the implementation and monitoring the success of the program.

Municipal facilities will see

some improvements next year. The Laurel Park parking lot is set for paving in 2020, and a sound system will be installed in the Township Meeting Room.

As part of the Police Department's ongoing fleet management program, the Township will purchase two new patrol cars – this year, they will be environment-friendly hybrid vehicles.

The budget continues Solebury's contribution to the Free Library of New Hope and

Solebury at 2019 levels, funding that was increased last year at the library's request.

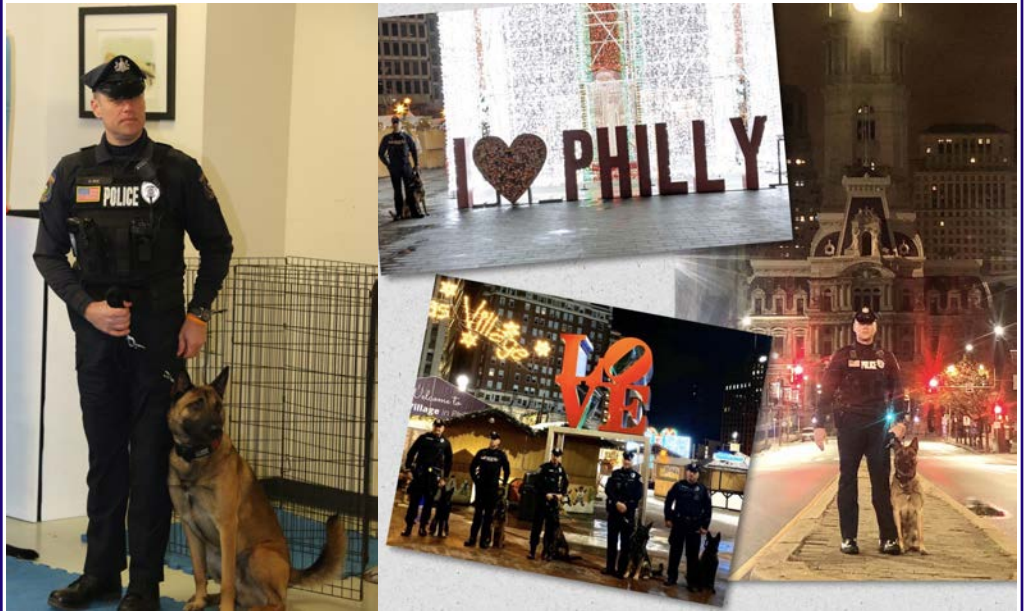
The Board is weighing the library's ongoing request for additional funds, and supervisors are collecting public input through an upcoming public forum and online survey of residents that was completed in December. The public forum will be held at the High School auditorium on Jan. 14 at 6 p.m.

K-9 Blitz Graduates, Joins the Force

The final exam was daunting: Navigate Center City Philadelphia during the holiday shopping season without losing one's cool. Blitz and his handler, Officer Matt Rice, aced the test and graduated from patrol school at the PennVet Working Dog Center.

Blitz now begins his duties in community relations, officer and citizen safety, tracking and evidence collection.

Solebury's K-9 program benefits from community support. To learn how you can assist with Blitz's ongoing expenses, visit the Township website at www.soleburytwp.org/police/pages/k9-fundraiser.



Open Space Funding Wins Big Majority at Ballot Box

Solebury voters gave strong support to continued funding for the Township's Land Preservation Program, approving additional bond issues by a margin of 3-1 at the Nov. 5 general election. The referendum authorizes up to \$12 million of additional borrowing over the long term, with a \$5 million issue anticipated sometime in 2020.

The Township has long been a leader in land preservation, with a standing committee tasked with open space and agricultural conservation since 1987. Roughly 38 percent of the Township's total acreage is under some form of protection against further development.

Preservation in Solebury is primarily by easement, a binding legal contract that restricts the use and development of an individual property forever. With a preservation easement, the property does not change hands, but the rights to alter its natural environment are

purchased for conservation. The Township usually partners with The Land Trust of Bucks County to co-hold conservation easements.

Solebury also preserves agricultural land through easement, permanently protecting farm soils and prohibiting future non-agricultural use. These easements are often co-held with the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Counties and municipalities have preferred the easement approach for many decades. Outright purchase for preservation is unwieldy, expensive and carries great liability; restrictive preservation zoning was struck down by the courts in the 1970s; deed restrictions are often broken and usually lack an enforcement mechanism. Easements have stood up to state and national court challenges, and are jointly enforced by the Township and its co-holders.

Land preservation funds are primarily used to acquire easements – to purchase the development rights of a preserved property. The 2020 budget authorizes \$1.55 million for easements, and \$30,000 in soft costs covering appraisals, legal counsel, and engineering services.

All Solebury residents benefit from the Land Preservation Program, which helps protect and maintain the natural beauty of the Township, its watersheds and wetlands, as well as preserving our agricultural community. Limiting the land available for development reduces the burden on infrastructure and the costs associated with boom-and-bust population cycles.

In the long run, the Township enjoys steadily increasing property values and stable property taxes as a result of the Land Preservation Program.

Bond Rating Upgrade Yields Savings for Taxpayers

Moody's Investor Services upgraded Solebury Township's bond rating to Aa1 in November, citing a stable tax base and the Township's strong and improving fiscal condition. The Aa1 rating indicates a high quality investment subject to very low risk, according to Moody's.

With the upgraded rating in hand and an eye on market

conditions, the Township refinanced some existing debt from 2015 and issued new Land Preservation bonds at an historically low interest rate of 1.59 percent. Solebury taxpayers will see roughly \$200,000 in savings on debt service over the life of these bonds.

Moody's cited the Township's actions to increase its reserve funds as a strong factor in preserving financial stability. The agency also took note of Solebury's Land

Preservation Program and its role in maintaining the stability of the Township's tax base in current and future years.

"The Township's fiscal management is strong," Moody's analysts wrote in the agency's credit opinion, "as illustrated by its history of conservative budgeting and careful management of expenditures, which often result in positive budget-to-actual results."

What's in Your Inbox?

Meeting agendas, police alerts, weather bulletins and more are available by email. Visit SoleburyTwp.org and click "Email Notices."

Stream Restoration Project in Aquetong Spring

Aquetong Spring Park development will take another step forward this spring as work gets under way to stabilize the bed and banks of the newly-established stream.

In the years since the old lake was drained and the dam removed, engineers and hydrologists have carefully monitored the stream from Aquetong Spring as it found its way back to a natural path. But the bed of the man-made lake, with its century of accumulated silt and packed mud, will require some skilled intervention to help the stream along.

Starting in early spring, the restoration project will begin bracing sections of the stream to prevent erosion and reduce sediment in the water and along the stream bed.

Plantings along the banks will help stabilize the riparian buffer, and native trees and shrubs will be added to provide shade and help maintain the water temperature at a level suitable for local trout.

In addition to the cooling canopy, the project includes building underwater structures to enhance the natural brook trout habitat, providing overhead cover and resting areas for the fish while helping to stabilize the bank.

The stream restoration project has secured all necessary approvals from the

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project is funded by a \$250,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, with an equal match from the Township.



The erosion of the stream bank in some areas, evident in this recent photo from Aquetong Spring Park, will be repaired and stabilized through this spring's stream restoration project.

Spotlight on Agriculture: Pennsylvania's First Farm Bill

Pennsylvania's first-ever farm bill will invest \$23.1 million to help farmers better cope with the challenges threatening their livelihoods while creating opportunities for future generations.

Pennsylvania's farms not only provide food, clothing, and other goods for people around the world, but they're also important to the economic vitality of townships of all sizes and all regions, urban, suburban, and rural.

A major hurdle facing the industry, however, is that the average age of farmers is increasing. Under the farm bill, landowners who rent or sell to young farmers will be eligible for a tax credit.

The farm bill also promises

to develop new resources for agriculture business development and succession planning, increase opportunities for the state's agricultural workforce, remove regulatory burdens, increase market opportunities and expand the organic farming sector.

In addition to the farm bill, the recently passed 2019-2020 state budget includes additional funding to support agriculture.

State lawmakers approved at least \$7 million for such initiatives as the Agricultural Business and Workforce Investment Program, the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission, and the Livestock and Consumer Health

Protection Program. Research and cooperative extension programs also received funding increases.

The Solebury Township Farm Committee sponsored a special forum entitled "Cultivating a Sustainable Community: Agriculture's Role in Achieving Solebury Township's Community Goal" in October. This was the third of several forums focused on topics of special interest to Solebury residents, designed to bring the community together to discuss a single issue in depth.

An audio recording of the Farm Committee forum is available on the Township website.

Stormwater Runoff — Simple Steps to Keep Our Water Safe

Solebury is one of the few municipalities in the region where all of its water resources — spring heads, watersheds, outlets — lie completely within its boundaries. This gives the Township a unique ability to manage and protect our watersheds and wetlands, and stormwater management is an area where we can all help keep our water clean.

During a storm, asphalt parking lots, concrete pavements and ordinary grass lawns allow rain water to move quickly, eroding soil and hardscaping as it rushes to the river. Stormwater runoff carries oil, litter, chemicals and debris into our waterways, and is the source of many problems for homeowners, like lawn ponding and basement flooding.

Here are a few additions homeowners can make to help control stormwater runoff. You can read much more about these at the US Environmental Protection Agency website, www.epa.gov/soakuptherain.

Rain gardens are depressions in the lawn planted with native wildflowers, rushes, ferns, shrubs and small trees that can help capture, filter and return rain water to the ground.

Dry wells are covered, porous containers buried underground to capture runoff so it can be slowly absorbed

into the ground.

Vegetated swales are open, shallow channels with natural plantings along the sides and bottom that collect stormwater, help filter it, and channel the runoff slowly to a discharge point.

that allow rain water to be absorbed and filtered back into the ground.

All residents are urged to contact Solebury Township to report any stormwater runoff or other pollution issues, whether from construction

Practice these healthy household habits:

- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and only when necessary
- Do not blow grass clippings or leaves into the street or inlets
- Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down paved areas
- Compost or recycle yard waste
- Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on an unpaved area
- Service your car regularly to prevent leaks onto paved areas
- Dispose of household hazardous waste at designated collection locations
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled or recyclable products whenever possible

Rain barrels capture the water from roof gutters and save it for watering your lawn, garden and indoor plants.

Permeable pavement is a good choice if you're designing a new driveway, walkway or garden path. Consider using hardscaping materials



sites, businesses, or other locations throughout the Township.

Volunteering with your local watershed association is a good way to help the environment. Watershed associations help organize neighborhood pollution watches, stream and creek cleanups, and plant trees along waterways. In Solebury, there are watershed associations for Aquetong Creek, Pidcock Creek, Pannacussing Creek, and Primrose Creek.

Storm Outage Contacts

PECO 1-800-841-4141 or www.peco.com/Outages/CheckOutageStatus/Pages/OutageMap.aspx

Verizon 1-800-837-4966 or www.verizon.com/support/residential/service-outage

XFINITY (Comcast) 1-800-934-6489 or www.xfinity.com/support/status

Winter Festival 2020 — January 18–26

OLDIES DANCE NIGHT

Spend Saturday night rockin' and rollin' to those Oldies but Goodies as New Jersey's #1 Oldies Dance Band performs those hits from the 50's and 60's along with some of the latest pop and uptown funk dance tunes! Your ticket includes a spectacular night of music and dancing and a trip back in time with our oldies photo booth. Light fare food from 7:30-8:30 p.m. Door Prizes and Ultimate Dance Contest! This is one event you will not want to miss. BYOB



Lambertville • New Hope

Winter Festival

Oldies Dance Night

Saturday January 18th
7pm - 11pm

Location: The Event Center by Cornerstone
(Eagle Firehouse)
46 North Sugan Rd New Hope, PA 18938
Tickets: \$25 Advance \$35 at the Door

TICKETS ONLINE
WWW.WINTERFESTIVAL.NET




ABBEY ROAD LIVE

Master of Ceremonies
WMMR's RAY KOOB

It's one of rock's most iconic album covers, boasting some of the Beatles' most legendary songs. Abbey Road is the final recorded studio album of the Beatles as a group. At its release in 1969, Abbey Road's breakthrough use of new instruments and techniques rocketed it to the top of the charts in both the U.S. and U.K. Abbey Road is one of The Beatles' four multi-platinum albums. For its seminal influence on music, Abbey Road was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1995 and holds 14th place on Rolling Stone's "500 Greatest Albums of All Time" list.

This one-night-only event will feature a group of local musicians playing Abbey Road in its entirety. Performers for the evening include Andrew Lipke, Essie, Nate Graham, Todd Mecaughey, Andrew Napoli, Rory Geoghorgan, Ryan Lutz and several more who have sold this sold out in 50th Anniversary of Abbey Road performances in 2019.

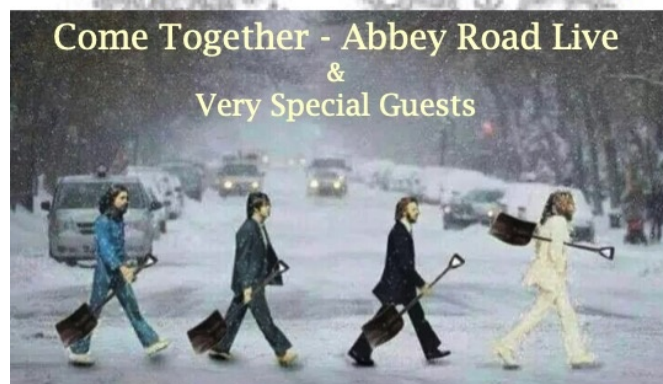
The band will be joined by notable Special Guests who will play a handful of specially selected and arranged Beatles' classics.

We invite you to attend what will surely be a nostalgic and exhilarating evening of Beatles music!

Winter Festival Concert 2020

Presents

Abbey Road 50th Anniversary



Master of Ceremonies
WMMR's Ray Koob

Tickets/Concert Information
www.winterfestival.net
215-862-5067
267-987-7855

Friday, January 24
8 PM

Doors open 7 PM

New Hope Winery

6123 Lower York Road/ Rt. 202
New Hope, PA 18938



Check out the complete line-up at the Winter Festival webpage ~ www.winterfestival.net

K-9 Blitz, Training in the Big City

To test all his training around crowds, bright lights, and busy traffic, the PennVet Working Dog Center brought all its students to Center City during the holiday shopping season.

Happy Holidays from K-9 Blitz, Officer Matt Rice, and everyone at the Township and its Police Department!



Township Directory

Police:

Emergency? Dial: 9-1-1. Nonemergency? Call: 215-297-8201.
General Inquiries: Police2@soleburytpd.org

Administration:

Township Number: 215-297-5656
General Inquiries: soleburytownship@soleburytpd.org

Township Manager Dennis H. Carney:
soleburymanager@soleburytpd.org

HARB Administrator, Environmental Advisory Council Secretary
Christine Terranova: cterranova@soleburytpd.org

LPC Administrator, Planning Commission Administrator
Jean Weiss: jweiss@soleburytpd.org

Parks & Recreation Director Dudley Rice:
soleburyparks@soleburytpd.org

Right-To-Know Officers

Administrative Records: Jean Weiss,
soleburymanager@soleburytpd.org
Police Records: Police Chief Dominick Bellizzie,
police@soleburytpd.org

Board of Supervisors

Chair Mark Baum Baicker mbaumbaicker@soleburytpd.org **Vice-Chair John Francis** jfrancis@soleburytpd.org

Supervisor Noel Barrett nbarrett@soleburytpd.org **Supervisor Robert A. McEwan** rmcewan@soleburytpd.org

Supervisor Kevin Morrissey
kmorrissey@soleburytpd.org

Township Calendar

*Calendar information is subject to changes.
Confirm all dates and times with the Township office.
All meetings are held at Solebury Township Hall.
Meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.*

January

- 1/6 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors Reorganization
- 1/8 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 1/9 10 a.m. Board of Supervisors Work Session
- 1/13 Planning Commission ~ Historical Architectural Review Board
- 1/14 Environmental Advisory Council
- 1/16 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 1/21 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 1/27 Aquetong Spring Advisory Committee
- 1/28 Solebury Farm Committee
- 1/30 Parks & Recreation Board

February

- 2/3 Historical Architectural Review Board
- 2/4 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 2/10 Planning Commission
- 2/11 Environmental Advisory Council
- 2/12 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 2/18 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 2/20 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 2/27 Parks & Recreation Board

March

- 3/2 Historical Architectural Review Board
- 3/3 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 3/9 Planning Commission
- 3/10 Environmental Advisory Council
- 3/11 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 3/17 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 3/19 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 3/26 Parks & Recreation Board
- 3/31 Solebury Farm Committee

*Stay on top of meeting times with email alerts!
Visit: SoleburyTwp.org and click "Email Notices."*