



The Solebury Messenger

A Quarterly Publication of Solebury Township

Vol. 27, No. 1

Winter Issue

March 2021

Supervisors Set Solebury Township Policy Priorities for 2021

At its first Work Session of the new year, the Solebury Board of Supervisors reviewed planned objectives for 2021, including recommendations from the most recent Comprehensive Plan and other topics the Supervisors felt should be included. More than two dozen projects and policy goals were considered.

COVID-19 remains an immediate and ongoing concern. Township Administration will continue to research and take all reasonable Covid-19 safety measures to protect citizens while doing business in the Township Building, as well as staff.

The impact of the pandemic on the local economy, and any follow-on effects to the Township budget, will also be a top concern in 2021.

The sweeping review of the Route 202 Corridor will continue this year. The board recently received a transportation study from Township consultants outlining several options to improve the walking, biking and driving experience on the busy highway. The Supervisors anticipate a community-driven consensus building process to identify the best improvements for 2021, including possible uses for the recently acquired Flea Market property.

Continued on page 2...

Drones to Conduct Aerial Deer Survey March 1–15

Aerial photography drones will be hovering in the early night sky over Solebury during the first two weeks of March, to help the Township get an accurate count of deer herds and their locations. The drones, carrying infrared cameras, will be operated by FAA-certified staff scientists from the Raritan Valley Community College Center for Environmental Studies.

Beginning March 1, weather permitting, and running through the following two weeks, the drone team will be operating from positions on Township-owned land, at the end of cul-de-sacs, and along roads with wide shoulders. The flights will take place at night, many between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. The team will be wearing reflective jackets and will mark out their takeoff and landing point with safety cones.

An accurate deer population count is an important part of Solebury's Deer Management Program. The data from the deer survey are used to determine whether the Township is meeting its goals, if additional control measures are necessary, and to identify any "hot spots" where deer density is high.

Infrared drone surveys provide additional clarity to existing survey data, giving the Township a more robust picture of the deer population. The Raritan Valley Community College program has been conducting wildlife surveys for municipalities in central New Jersey for over 13 years and operates as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.



The DJI Inspire drone in flight, the same model that will be used for the deer survey.

Supervisors Set Solebury Township Policy Priorities for 2021

...continued from Page 1

Land Preservation, for decades a hallmark of Solebury's commitment to protecting the environment, will continue to be a major focus of the Township. The research and evaluation of water resources in Solebury is also a critical component of the Township's work to preserve its natural heritage.

Deer overpopulation, and the increasing damage to agriculture and danger to car traffic posed by the expanding herds, will be a significant policy concern this year. In addition to the Deer Management Program managed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Township will conduct additional surveys of the size and location of the herds to better guide any future decision on herd reduction.

Parks & Recreation improvements are planned for 2021, with continued work on softball fields, new pickleball courts ready for the spring, and expanded opportunities for seniors.

Aquetong Spring Park continues to take shape and prosper after a busy 2020. The Board will continue to evaluate the best possible future role for the Aquetong Spring Advisory Committee as the Park continues to mature.

The Township's trail system will see improvements and expansion. Depending on the approval of grant requests, which fund a large share of trail system improvements, the PECO right-of-way trail along Route 202 could begin construction this year.

Many Township projects, from the trail system to public works improvements, are funded through grants from a myriad of federal, state and county agencies. Grant

funding helps reduce the burden on Solebury taxpayers for these improvements, with the Township match often less than half of the total cost. Solebury will continue to pursue all appropriate grant opportunities in 2021.

The advisory boards and committees, all composed of resident volunteers, will continue to receive care and attention from the Board. In addition to proactively recruiting new members, the Supervisors are encouraging greater coordination between boards and committees, and setting up an annual meeting for the various chairs to exchange views with the full Board of Supervisors. The potential addition of a committee on the arts is also under consideration.

Several areas that have required the Board's attention over the last several years will continue to be monitored. The wind-down of New Hope Crushed Stone quarry and its impact on Primrose Creek remains a concern, and the Supervisors are committed to ensuring that the Township has input in the eventual disposition of the quarry property.

Supervisors will continue to work closely with Chief Dominick Bellizzie to ensure that the Solebury Township Police Department continues to lead the way in the region with its commitment to best practices for effective, respectful policing.

Solebury will continue to maintain and improve the Township's relationship with the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury, to help with the improvement and funding of its many services and continued Township representation on the library's board of trustees.

Verizon Upgrading Phone and Internet Service in Solebury

Verizon crews are upgrading their equipment in Solebury Township this winter and spring, replacing copper wire with fiber optic cable. The main trunk lines are being replaced first, followed by branch lines and hubs that carry the signal to individual neighborhoods.

The utility says that the new fiber optic equipment,

when fully replaced this summer, should offer faster and more reliable internet and telephone service for its customers.

Please note that this upgrade will not provide Verizon Fios service, which includes television, to Solebury. Township Supervisors and Administration have met repeatedly with the utility over

the last decade to encourage them to bring Fios to Solebury, but they have always declined, citing the cost of bringing a fiber optic cable into each individual home.

Verizon will be mailing marketing materials to Township residents when the upgrade is complete, so they can decide whether to order the improved service.

2020 in Review: Board Outlines Last Year's Accomplishments

A “Declaration of State of Emergency” was announced in Solebury Township on March 17, 2020. Despite this situation, the Board of Supervisors, Administration, Township staff, contractors and over 50 resident volunteers who comprise Township committees have endeavored to ensure that the Township government remains a foundation for the entire community. The Board of Supervisors believes this has been accomplished and is very thankful for all of these efforts during one of the most difficult years in recent history of this Country.

During 2020, the Solebury Board of Supervisors addressed over 150 issues. Many of these topics required extensive additional meetings and analysis. The Board of Supervisors met together a minimum of 33 times during the year. In addition, all Supervisors are liaison to one or more Township Committees which in total met at least 70 times a year. Lastly, the Township Administration provides the valuable service of addressing many community matters daily as well as coordinating the decisions made by the Board of Supervisors.

All this was accomplished during a pandemic.

Financial Overview / Bond Rating

- Moody's has rated the Township at Aa1 due to its strong financial position that consistently has been improving in recent years.
- The pandemic created an uncertain economic situation for the Township. Consequently, expenditures were reduced, eliminated, or deferred. Balanced budgets were set for both 2020 and 2021.

Police Department

- The Solebury Township Police Department began to transition to hybrid police vehicles, a process that will continue by purchasing new hybrid vehicles until the entire fleet is hybrid.
- The Police Department became fully operational with their K9 unit. Blitz and Officer Rice are fully trained in Patrol and Narcotic Operations and are being utilized for these services.
- A comprehensive review of the SPD was conducted this year. The evaluation confirms that the SPD is keeping Solebury residents safe in a professional and respectful manner.

Roads, Bridges & Trails

- The Township continued the roadway upgrade schedule for 2020 and the following roads were treated: Stovers Mill Road; Paxson Hill Road; Reeder Road; Sугan Road between RT 202 and Kitchens Lane; Estates Drive; Blenheim Drive; Bedford Drive; and Yorkshire Road.
- Safe, paved parking was installed at Laurel Park allowing organized parking of more vehicles.
- The shared-use path of the Solebury Gateway Trail on Route 202 from Sугan Road to Kitchens Lane project has been initiated. Engineering is expected to be completed in 2021. The Township hopes to begin construction in 2022.

Aquetong Spring Park

- Extensive stream restoration was completed.
- A timber harvest, consisting of removal of invasive/dead/dying species. Numerous trees/vegetation have been re-planted to better support wildlife and to help secure a sustainable habitat.
- Mowed trails within the site have been maintained and mapped and several additional trails are being designed/permitted for construction in 2021.
- Construction of the parking and trail has been approved by Penn Dot and will begin in the spring 2021.

Deer Management

- The Township, EAC and the Deer subcommittee are continuing the effort to reduce the overpopulation of deer in the Solebury. The Deer Management Program, under the direction of the USDA, recorded a 44 percent increase in the Red Tag harvests this year. Efforts are continuing to contact farmers whose yields have been affected by deer damage and encouraged to apply for an agricultural damage depredation permit through the state Game Commission.
- A deer population census via drone will take place in 2021.

Township Administration

- Township Administration has continued to make changes in staff schedules and work procedures, to meet safety requirements and to allow the Township to operate efficiently throughout the pandemic.
- Solebury Township hired two full time employees and recruited thirteen volunteers to its various boards and committees.
- A 4-year contract has been signed with PECO for 100% Renewable Energy reducing rates at the same time.
- The Township has installed video cameras in the main meeting room whereby meetings can be recorded and uploaded to the website, for use when in-person meetings resume.
- The Township is paying more vendors electronically to eliminate the need for paper checks.
- Permit applications are available on Solebury's website and are being accepted electronically.

Land Preservation

- There was a bond issue in the amount of \$4,850,000 to facilitate ongoing preservation, in accordance with the 2019 voter referendum that authorized \$12 million in new open space borrowing. The Township took advantage of historically low interest rates, locking into a rate under 1.10%.
- 81 acres were preserved this year. Among the properties preserved this year is the 35 acre Manoff Farm on Comfort Rd, 18 acre Scannapieco property along the Delaware River, and the 12 acre “Flea Market” properties along route 202.

Parks & Recreation

- Coordinated and participated in January's Annual Winter Festival with 32 events over 10 days with over 5,000 participants.
- While following CDC and PA State guidelines for social distancing and non-contact, P&R conducted a 4-week summer camp session, coordinated a fall sports program as well as the annual Halloween Community Safety night event on October 31st.
- Park Improvements: Construction of two pickle ball courts.

202 Corridor

- Solebury Township acquired two properties in the 202 Corridor. One property is located at Reeder Road and Route 202 and the other is located on Route 202. A focused effort will commence in 2021 to obtain community consensus as to how this property will best support the community. These acquisitions will enable the continuance of the trail connection planned to link Aquetong Spring Park with the canal walk.
- Solebury Township Administration has continued the 202 Corridor study. A traffic presentation was presented at the 1/19/2021 BOS meeting.
- The Township continues to work with Bucks County Water and Sewer, North Wales Water Authority, and UHL Associates to execute the Ground Water Study.
- The Township is continuing discussions with the developers of the Heritage Senior Living Facility and emergency care project located adjacent to Logan Square.

Continued on page 4...

2020 in Review

...continued from page 3.

New Hope Crushed Stone Quarry

• Quarry operations have ceased at the Phillips Mill Rd site. Equipment has been removed and sold. The property was offered for sale at a September 2020 auction. The DEP has informed the Township that a new owner has not been established. The Township continues to work with the DEP to ensure that quarry reclamation and Primrose Creek stream restoration is completed.

Sign Ordinance

• The revision of the Sign Ordinance is an effort by the Township to adapt to changing technologies as well as methods of posting signs. The updated ordinance represents a significant improvement with how and where signs will be displayed in the Township. Much appreciation is given to the Planning Commission and Farm Committee for their efforts.

Sustainability

- The Township has received a Platinum Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification. This is the highest recognition level, and only 7 other municipalities in the state have achieved this rank.
- The BOS has endorsed the EAC “Ready for 100” proposal which set the Township goal of adopting 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and fully renewable energy by 2050. Currently, the Township Energy Transition Plan is in draft mode.
- The Planning Commission is currently evaluating an additional sustainability metric by the American Planning Association (APA).
- The BOS has established the Sustainability Steering Group to coordinate Township sustainability efforts.

Supervisors Will Continue to Seek Community Input on 202 in 2021

During August 2020, Solebury Township purchased approximately 12 acres along the 202 Corridor.

The Board of Supervisors agreed to the purchase after substantial feedback from the community on how best to ensure that the character of the Township was safeguarded. The Board solicited emails as it was considering the 12-acre purchase, held community discussions in 2019 regarding the 202 Corridor in general, and conducted a review of the results of the 2012 community survey during development of the Township Comprehensive Plan.

The community input process will continue in 2021, as the Supervisors have set a priority to build toward community consensus on future use of the property. So far in this process, residents have expressed that their

primary goal is to retain our rural character. Since Land Preservation funds were used for the purchase, future use of this acreage is limited to passive recreation, active recreation or cultural purposes. Within those categories, there are many options available, including a trail to link Aquetong Spring Park with the canal walk.

What are the views of Solebury residents for the future of these 12 acres?

Later this year, the Township will be reaching out to residents so they may express their opinion in a variety of ways.

To keep up with the latest information on this and many other Township issues, visit the Solebury Township website, www.soleburytwp.org, and select the “Email Sign-ups” menu option on the front webpage to receive Township updates.

Library

- The Township contributed \$120,000 to the Library in 2020, 40% of its revenues—making it the largest supporter of the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury. This year the Solebury Board of Supervisors appointed a task force to start the review of the Township-Library relationship. These discussions will continue in 2021.

Grants

- New grants awarded in 2020 were 1) Solebury Trail grant \$400k with a \$400k match from the Township. This provides funding to build the walking/bike trail from Sungan Road at the Eagle Firehouse to Kitchens Lane/179. This will extend the trail that starts at Magill's Hill Park. 2) Leaf truck \$213k.
- Grant funding used this year is from Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for \$350k and a portion of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for the Aquetong Stream restoration and plantings completed November, 2020.

Other Projects Started in 2020

- The BOS endorsed the Heritage Road initiative. This would include in the Solebury Comprehensive Plan this new road classification that reflects the Township plan to preserve the character of historic roads in the community.
- The BOS is reviewing a Solebury Farm Committee proposal for a “New Farmer- Landowner” program. This would support the effort to introduce farmers and Solebury land owners who would like to have a portion of their acreage farmed.
- The BOS is determining community consensus as to whether the Township should initiate a new committee, “The Arts and Heritage Committee”. It would support endeavors to heighten awareness of cultural and historical elements in the Township.

2020 Township-purchased Route 202 Corridor property
(Highlighted in yellow)



Pickleball Is Coming to Laurel Park

Pickleball is arriving at Laurel Park in Solebury this spring! Just prior to the heavy ground covering snowfall this year, Solebury Township completed the construction of two pickleball courts located between the new multi-purpose field and the football field in Laurel Park right behind the Township municipal building. The nets and some windscreen remain to be installed.

Both courts are side by side, each accommodating 4 players, with ample parking available nearby. A walkway of brownstone pavers leads from the parking area to the gated entrances to the courts. Benches with the Solebury Parks name and logo are provided near the gates for waiting players and for those resting from a vigorous game of pickleball.



An official, grand opening is being planned for the spring that will allow players to initially use the courts without membership fees while the Township monitors the level of participation and assesses the program. Pickleball rules for “court etiquette” will be posted, with time limits set for games, in order to maximize the use and to give everyone a fair opportunity to play and enjoy the new facility. Some special activities,



games, and prizes will be a part of the community day opening. So, get ready, grab your paddles and pickleballs, and join us at the grand opening. Sneakers only on our new courts!

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

Attending Virtual Committee Meetings: How to Zoom

With the Board of Supervisors and the Township's advisory committees holding meetings via video conference for the foreseeable future, public participation is also making the switch to digital. There are several ways to join in, none of them too complicated.

In advance of every meeting, participation instructions are posted on the Township website, along with the meeting agenda and relevant documents. Just click on the board or committee you're interested in under the Government tab and scroll down to Agendas.

To join the meeting on the Zoom platform, you can download the app for your iPhone or Android device, or go to zoom.us from any web browser. Using the meeting ID and password from the meeting notice, you can watch, listen, and participate in public comment sessions.

If you know your way around Zoom, the easiest way to make a comment is to use the "hands up" icon and wait for the meeting monitor to recognize you. Or you can sign up in advance with an email to soleburytownship@soleburytpw.org before the deadline listed in the notice.

If you don't want to Zoom, you can still send your comments. Either email them to the address above, or send them by USPS to Solebury Township Building, PO Box 139, Solebury, PA 18963. Your comments will be read into the record, either by the Board or Committee Chair or by the meeting monitor.

Just like an in-person meeting, you'll need to give your name and address along with any comments submitted via Zoom or in writing.

Additional details, like any time limits and deadlines for comments, will be posted in the meeting notice on the Township website.

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@soleburytpw.org

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

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

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

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

Right-To-Know Officers

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

Board of Supervisors

Chair Mark Baum Baicker mbaumbaicker@soleburytpw.org **Vice-Chair Kevin Morrissey** kmorrissey@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Noel Barrett nbarrett@soleburytpw.org **Supervisor John Francis** jfrancis@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Robert A. McEwan
rmcewan@soleburytpw.org

Township Calendar

Calendar information is subject to changes.

Confirm all dates and times with the Township office.

Instructions on virtual meetings are posted on the Township website.

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

March

3/2 10 a.m. Board of Supervisors Work Session
3/8 Solebury Township Planning Commission
3/9 Environmental Advisory Council
3/10 Zoning Hearing Board
3/16 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
3/18 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
3/23 and 3/24 Zoning Hearing Board
3/25 Parks & Recreation Board
3/30 Solebury Farm Committee

April

4/5 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
4/6 10 a.m. Board of Supervisors Work Session
4/12 Solebury Township Planning Commission
4/13 Environmental Advisory Council
4/14 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
4/15 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
4/20 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
4/22 Parks & Recreation Board
4/27 Solebury Farm Committee

May

5/3 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
5/4 10 a.m. Board of Supervisors Work Session
5/10 Solebury Township Planning Commission
5/11 Environmental Advisory Council
5/12 Zoning Hearing Board (As Needed)
5/18 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
5/20 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
5/25 Solebury Farm Committee
5/27 Parks & Recreation Board

*Stay on top of meeting times with email alerts!
Visit: [SoleburyTwp.org](https://www.soleburytpw.org) and click "Email Notices."*