



Solebury Messenger

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Winter Issue

January 2024

Supervisors Outline Priorities for 2024

Solebury Supervisors gathered during the first week of January to preview the year ahead and determine the priorities for 2024. This year the Board chose not to rank items in order of importance, but reviewed each of the 29 priorities by category.

"It's important to note that we don't know what new issues will arise during the year," explained Board Chair Mark Baum Baicker at the opening of the meeting. "More often than not, very important issues arise and those become our priorities."

The hiring of a new Police Chief will be front and center in the first half of the year. Chief Dominick Bellizzie intends to retire at the end of June. The Board has formed a search committee and hired a consultant to assist in the candidate review process, which is proceeding on schedule.

The effects of climate change will receive attention from the Township on a number of levels. The Environmental Advisory Council's Sustainability Subcommittee is building public education campaigns and looking at ways to implement the Township's Energy Transition Plan. Solebury is working with a variety of state and federal agencies to explore ways to mitigate flooding, particularly in Carversville and along Fleecydale Road. While the

Paunacussing Creek has the highest level of protection from the federal government, the Township would like to see all of Solebury's creeks similarly covered.

The future of Route 202 is again on the agenda for 2024. PennDOT is in the early stages of a multi-year effort to calm traffic along the highway, including the eventual construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Route 202 and State Route 179. More immediately, Solebury's 202 Property Advisory Committee is presenting its recommendations on uses for the old flea market property to the Board of Supervisors this January.

Perhaps the most time-intensive project is the once-every-decade review of the Township's Comprehensive Plan. The special committee tasked to shepherd this project through what is expected to be a two-year process is set to hold its first meeting Jan. 23. The Bucks County Planning Commission will serve as a consultant on the Comprehensive Plan review.

Reclamation of the New Hope Crushed Stone quarry site will continue through 2024 and beyond, with ongoing discussions with Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection over the level of the lake that's developed in the former quarry pit.

2024 Solebury Budget: No New Taxes, Sustained Municipal Services

The new Solebury Township budget went into effect on New Year's Day, providing funds to maintain or increase the level of services to residents and businesses, continuing ongoing projects and tackling a few new endeavours, while holding municipal taxes at the same level as last year.

Township Administration notes that revenue, which had seen an unusual uptick related to the pandemic, has leveled off and is anticipated to remain relatively flat through 2024.

Solebury has earned an Aa1 credit rating from Moody's Investor Services, due largely to what the agency has described as the continuing strong fiscal management at

the Township, illustrated by conservative budgeting and careful management of expenses.

The Administration Budget Briefing notes that managing flat revenues while the cost of core services increases will be a key focus of the next five years, all the while continuing capital projects, sustainability initiatives and paying down existing bond debt.

What's in Your Inbox?

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

Meet Christy Cheever

Solebury's Newest Member of the Board of Supervisors

A lifelong Pennsylvania resident, Christy Cheever has lived in Solebury Township with her husband and three children for the past eight years. Shortly after moving to



Solebury, Christy became involved with the Solebury Township Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), first as a committee member, then as Vice-Chair. She appreciates the opportunity she had to contribute to the work of the EAC, to promote important local environmental initiatives, such as reducing plastic waste, protecting ecosystems and habitats, developing a sustainable energy transition plan, stormwater management and environmental education, to name just a few.

Christy is currently the Projects Coordinator for New Hope-Solebury Cares, a local non-profit that focuses on substance abuse prevention in

teens and young adults. A significant portion of her role involves reaching out to various sectors of the community, including local businesses, parents, schools and other charitable organizations, to find ways to work together to bring education and support to adolescents and families.

Christy practiced law as a pharmaceutical Patent Attorney, and her educational background is in the areas of Molecular Biology & Biochemistry. She holds a B.S. from Penn State University, a Master's Degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a law degree from Villanova University.

Supervisors Bid Farewell to Retiring Board Member Robert McEwan

The Solebury Board of Supervisors honored retiring Board Member Robert McEwan at his last meeting this past December.

"Everyone who has ever served as a Supervisor knows that completing a full term is not an easy undertaking," Board Chair Mark Baum Baicker said. "Six years is a long time for what is effectively a volunteer position, that you first have to successfully go through the rigors of an election to even begin!

"Robert has taken up a number of important causes along the way. Of course, there's the Library, whose cause he has championed since he started on this Board. He has also been very involved in the Township's sustainability movement. He has been the point person on the Lower Scenic Delaware Scenic Management Council, which has led to a just-completed National Park Service report on possible long-term measures to mitigate future flooding of the Paunacussing Creek through Carversville down to Lumberville. And the emergency river



(l to r) Retiring Supervisor Robert McEwan, Township Manager Chris Garges, Supervisors Kevin Morrissey, John Francis and Hanna Howe, and Board Chair Mark Baum Baicker.

rescue dock that will eventually be built at Hal Clark Park was largely the result of Robert's efforts.

"So I'd like to thank Robert for the time and energy he has devoted to the betterment of Solebury Township," said Baum Baicker.

Solebury Partners with PSU in Forwarding Sustainability Initiatives

By Mike Johnson and Brandi Robinson

In the 2023-2024 academic year, Solebury Township is participating in Penn State's Local Climate Action Program (LCAP). The program partners students with Township staff to complete a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and assist the Township with climate action planning.

Now more than ever, local responses to the global challenges associated with climate change are coming into focus. We experience the impacts of a changing climate in the communities where we live and work, and therefore we have the opportunity to address them at this scale, all

while focusing on creating more resilient, equitable, healthy places to live and play. The recent United Nations Climate Conference (COP 28) reinforced these notions with a strong emphasis on the importance of local climate action, and Penn State is proud to build on that momentum with Solebury Township.

This spring, Penn State students Lily Loubriel-Perez and Nattalie McShan will be helping with Solebury's Local Climate Action Program (LCAP) as part of their undergraduate degree work in the Energy and Sustainability Policy (ESP) program. Another

Penn State ESP student, Mike Johnson, will be assisting Solebury's Sustainability Subcommittee (SSC) with public outreach for their Energy Transition Plan (ETP) initiatives for his undergraduate senior capstone project. Stay tuned for easy to digest ETP Bytes, as well as information on coming events for Earth Day 2024.

Have ideas for projects that can help improve our community's sustainability? Reach out to Solebury's Sustainability Specialist, Kate Robeson-Grubb, via email at EAC@soleburytwp.org.

2023 Snow Folk Art Winners

Judging has ended and the Overall Winners have been selected by vote for the 2023 Snow Folk Art contest, sponsored by Solebury Township Parks & Recreation and Niece Lumber of Lambertville.

First place was awarded to Gretchen Rice for her creation of the "Snow Folk Elf" with his reindeer pockets. Second place went to 10-year old Milana Gasiorowski (parent Kara) for her "Hawaiian Luau Snow Folk". And 7-year old Ian Rhen (parent Michael) took third place for the "Yellow Face Snow Folk" with the snail companion.



In the Group/School/Adult category the winners are Gregory Adam with the "Silver Girl Snow-Bot", Barbara Zietchick with her artistic "Feathered Snow Girl", and The NHS Clubhouse Extended Day Program for their stand up "Snow Folk with Dangle Cardboard Arms!"

Rounding out the contest were the Category winners: Eight year old Roman Gasiorowski (parent Kara) with the "Red Scarf Snow Folk"; the Matthews girls Ellianna, Mila, & Angelina (parent Cassandra) for their "Pink & Blue Multi-Colored Snow Folk"; and Cub Scout Wolf Den Troop 3464 with their "Blue Hat Snow Folk with Paint Stick Arms."

Snow Folk Art will remain on display in the front lobby of the Solebury Township Building.

Supervisors Outline 2023 Accomplishments

During 2023, the Solebury Board of Supervisors addressed over 174 issues. Many of these topics required extensive additional meetings and analysis. The Supervisors met a minimum of 43 times during the year. In addition, all Supervisors are liaison to multiple Township committees, which in total met at least 77 times this year. Additionally, Supervisors and Township staff participated in many community, contractor and resident meetings.

Special mention should be made of the resident volunteer committees: 202 Property Committee. Environmental Advisory Council, Deer Committee, Historical Architectural Review Board, Human Relations Commission, Land Preservation Committee, Parks & Recreation Board, Planning Commission, Solebury Farm Committee, Sustainability Subcommittee, and Zoning Hearing Board. They continued to provide the foundation of many Township activities and decisions.

Although this report should be much longer to accurately describe all the achievements of those associated with Solebury Township, the following is a high-level summary of accomplishments.

Administration

- Awarded over \$660,000 in grants for intersection upgrade design at Route 202 and Lower Mountain Road, extension of the Solebury Gateway Trail from Sугan Road to Kitchens Lane, and for the purchase of an electric vehicle.
- The paper reduction initiative continued with the commencement of the scanning project for the property files.
- The energy audit of the municipal building is nearly completed.
- A total of 73 new trees were planted throughout Township owned properties.
- Started the bidding process to construct trail extension from North Sугan Road at Eagle Fire House to the Kitchen Lane / Route 179 intersection. Project completion is anticipated to be year-end 2024.
- Through its participation with Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River Management Council, Solebury Township worked with the National Park Service to obtain a report on potential future action to mitigate flooding of the Paunacussing Creek from Carversville to Lumberville.

Comprehensive Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for Township priorities and goals.
- Committee members have been interviewed and selected to start the process of revising the Township Comprehensive plan. The first meeting was in December 2023. The project is expected to last approximately 24 months.
- Work in conjunction with Bucks County Planning Commission. Contract coordinated by the Township.
- Will include survey to the community.

Deer Management

- 488 deer have been harvested in 2023 with over 13,000 pounds of venison donated to local food banks, which reimbursed 50% of processing costs back to Solebury Township.

- After two years of USDA deer removal (January through April, 2022 and 2023), the March 2023 infrared drone survey indicated a 40% reduction in herd population.

- Population is approximately 1,200–1,300 deer (will be refined in March 2024 drone survey)

- Deer-vehicle collision data reported through Solebury PD is down by 22% from last year's data and down by 75% from peak data in 2018.

EAC

- The energy audit of the municipal building is nearly completed.
- The Local Climate Action Plan project commenced in August with plan deliverables expected in April 2024.
- The EAC Sustainability Subcommittee was created to primarily implement the Energy Transition Plan.

HARB

- Reviewed the standards for installation of solar panels in historic districts, which is included in revisions to the Guidelines.
- Continued to work with Carversville Inn and Phillips Mill Inn with restoration efforts.
- Published revised History & Maintenance Manual, and combined it with the Design Guidelines, placing it on the web site.

Farming

- At the year-end Board of Supervisor meeting, the Farm Committee discussed with the Planning Commission several changes to Township regulations that would enable farming to be a sustainable business in current era.

Financial Overview / Bond Rating

- Moody's again has rated the Township at Aa1 due to its strong financial position that consistently has been improving in recent years.
- The price of goods, materials and services continue to rise, most significantly for vehicles, fuel and asphalt. Insurance

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Supervisors Outline 2023 Accomplishments

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costs, specifically for property and cyber insurance, have risen sharply. The Township has also felt the effects of an aging municipal complex as several unexpected costly repairs were required in 2023.

- The 2024 Budget does not require a tax increase. The real estate tax millage allocation will remain constant to meet expenditure requirements.

Human Relations Commission

- Created in early 2023.
- Established a formal complaint process to review complaints of unlawful practices, supervise mediation of disputes, and take other actions under the ordinance as directed by the Township.

- Members have met with other area Human Relations commissions.

Land Preservation

- Currently working on seven properties, approximately 174 acres

- Held a successful reception in October at a local preserved farm for property owners with a current or possible future conservation.

Park & Recreation Department

- Performed a number of repairs and improvements. They include replacing batting cages and nets at Laurel Park, repaired drainage swales between the Robo-Ball and minor league baseball fields, installed welcome and information signs, and completed landscape planting at Aquetong Spring Park.

- Completed five-week Summer Camp program; hired and trained three new camp counselors.

- Completed the most successful July Road Rally with 57 cars participating.

- Adjusted mowing areas at all parks resulting in less cutting, expense, and improved sustainability.

Planning Commission

- A Sketch Plan was reviewed of the former Fountainhead property, next to the future Heritage Assisted Living and Logan Square. The applicant proposes a mixed-unit community consisting of single-family detached cottages, multi-family units, and a clubhouse community center.

- An application by Solebury School, to relocate playing fields and tennis courts was conditionally approved.

- The application for the boat ramp at Hal Clark Park was approved.

- The draft model alternative energy ordinance was reviewed. Review and rewrite is ongoing with the township engineer and landscape planner and solicitor.

Police Department

- The department began participating in the Bucks County Police Assisting in Recovery (BPAIR)/Supporting Treatment and Recovery (STAR) program aimed toward getting help for

individuals seeking substance use disorder treatment by connecting them with resources, support, and services.

- National Drug Take Back: The department was recognized by Bucks County for its ongoing participation in collecting unused and expired prescription medication.

- Instituted the Blue Envelope Program with a primary goal of assisting drivers with ASD with document organization and to help them understand what to do at a motor vehicle stop.

- The department accepted delivery of a Ford F-350 multi-purpose special service/rescue vehicle which will be utilized during extreme weather and off-road emergencies.

- Solebury Township Police have seen an increase in reports of stolen vehicles and thefts from parked vehicles. With STPD's stationary license plate reader in conjunction with the department's mobile license plate readers, most of these theft investigations have led to criminal prosecution of suspects.

- National Night Out was extremely successful with over 500 residents and families in attendance. Our officers attend, support and work this event on their own time.

Public Works

- The Public Works Department spent the majority of the spring and summer months fixing Township owned roads that were in poor condition by performing patchwork and then sealing the patches.

- Repaired broken stormwater pipes, investigated sinkholes in the street or sunken asphalt near storm drains. Replaced nine storm water inlets that were severely compromised.

- Resurfaced nine Township roads.

- Maintained three Township dirt roads keeping them in very good condition for motorist and walkers to use.

- Negotiated an agreement with PennDOT giving the Township the ability to repair state roads and be reimbursed by Harrisburg.

Solebury/New Hope/NHS-SD Committee

- Met to share updates, goals, issues, etc.

202 Property Committee

- The 202 Property Advisory Committee researched, discussed and met with experts in variety of issues to provide a proposal to the Board of Supervisors on the future use of the approximately 13-acre former flea market site at the intersection of Route 202 and Reeder Road.

- The 202 Property Advisory Committee proposal is scheduled to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors during January 2024.

Zoning/Permitting

- The Township responded to 64 property complaints.

- Approximately 110 projects were inspected and received a certificate of occupancy.

- The Township issued 522 permits.

- 451 Certificates of Occupancy were approved by the Township.

New Hope-Solebury School District Sees Several New Programs Grow in 2023-24

New Hope-Solebury School District continues its commitment to driving innovations in education, to preparing future-ready students, and to strengthening its role as a valued community resource.

The high school recently launched a brand-new program, College and Career Pathways, designed to foster career readiness. All freshmen participate in a mandatory career exploration course, culminating in the selection of one of three career pathways, Arts and Humanities, Business and Communications, and Health Sciences, STEAM, and Innovation. Students tailor their class selections and engage in a series of career experiences related to their pathway, all with the flexibility to change course on their journey.

The Career Pathways program culminates with a 60-hour capstone internship project known as the Active Personal Engagement Experience (APEX), which provides a hands-on, direct experience in a chosen field. New this year, the district will introduce a job-shadowing program for juniors as a precursor to the APEX experience. Throughout this process, the school district has relied on local residents and businesses as a source of accomplished professionals who serve as role models and mentors. Known as “Pathways Partners,” these individuals conduct mock interviews, participate in panel discussions, serve as guest presenters, host tables at the career fair, or facilitate job-shadowing and internship opportunities. To learn more, visit nhsd.org/careerpathways

Lions Community School is a new endeavor for the school district and serves as a revitalization of the former New Hope-Solebury Community School. New Hope-Solebury School District faculty members will facilitate introductory courses in yoga, pickleball, offer technology instruction to navigate Microsoft Excel and an iPhone, and host an interactive book club. The programs are open to residents of New Hope and Solebury and will run with varying schedules from late-February to May. Through this project, the school district will also offer a class, Building Bridges Through

ESL, for parents and guardians learning English as a second language. The course will help families develop their language proficiency while also better equipping them to support the learning needs of their child. Register for courses at nhsd.org/lionscommunityschool

Finally, the district is launching a Visual and Performing Arts initiative to spark innovations in its arts curriculum and revitalize its arts facilities while maintaining the rigorous standards that have led to ongoing recognitions for its arts programs. Most recently, its music program was recognized as a Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for the ninth consecutive year and its visual arts program was deemed an Outstanding Visual Arts Community by the Pennsylvania Arts Educators Association. Stakeholders throughout the community have been invited to provide guidance via a new Arts Advisory Panel. The panel includes representatives from post-secondary arts education institutions, local arts organizations, professional artists, and parents of artistically-inclined students. “Our school district recognizes the tremendous arts community that surrounds us, and we are committed to working in partnership with our local institutions to explore new artistic possibilities for our students and our schools,” shared Superintendent Dr. Charles Lentz. To learn more about this opportunity, please contact Dr. Amanda Benolken, Director of Education, at abenolken@nhsd.org.



New Hope-Solebury School District will embark on a Visual and Performing Arts Initiative, designed to explore new possibilities for its arts curriculum and to enhance its arts facilities.

Snowy Weather Safety Tips from Solebury Township

From Public Works

- Stay off roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, then stay inside your car and call 911.

- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, then wear layers of warm clothing.

- Reduce the risk of a heart attack by avoiding overexertion when shoveling snow and walking in the snow.

- Warn your kids about hiding in snow piles close to the road's edge; snow plow drivers can't see through snow piles.

- You should always use extreme caution when traveling on any road covered in snow, regardless if your vehicle is four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive.

- Snowmobiles and ATVs should not travel on Township roads during a snowstorm. Plow drivers will not see you

until it's too late.

- Get your snow shovels out and ready.

- Check your generators and fuel levels in case of a power outage. Call PECO if you do have a power outage 1-800-841-4141.

- Calcium Chloride pellets, even though more expensive, cause less damage to concrete than rock salt does.

- Check the Solebury Township Website and Facebook for updates on any road closures within Solebury Township.

- Never shovel or blow snow onto the street. Please put the snow onto your property.

- Do not shovel out your driveway apron unless the storm has passed and the plow trucks have made their final pass on your street. If you need to call Public Works for any questions, please call 215-297-8383.

The goal of the Public Works Department is to have every street plowed as wide as possible to allow all emergency vehicles to access any street in an event of an emergency without delay. By keeping the roads clear of all snow, this will allow water to drain off the street without creating icy spots on the roadways.

From Solebury Police

- Check your tire treads.
- Keep an ice scraper and snow brush in your car.
- Leave time to clear snow and ice from your vehicle before driving.
- Turn on your headlights during snowfall.
- Don't assume that other drivers are prepared to deal with slippery road surfaces; keep your distance.
- Stay alert and expect icy conditions.
- Drive Slowly!

Use Your Generator Safely if the Power Goes Out

Use outdoors only: Never use generators indoors or in attached garages - you run the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Only operate outdoors in well-ventilated, dry areas, away from air intakes to the home.

Don't overload it: Always operate generators in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions.

Avoid shocks & electrocution: Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords. Don't operate it in the rain unless it's well-tented with ventilation.

Prevent fires & burns: Allow at least 5 feet of clearance on all sides of the generator. Let it cool at least 2 minutes before removing the fuel cap.

Prevent back-feeding: Never try to power your house by plugging a generator into an ordinary wall outlet, a practice known as back-feeding.

Shut it down safely: Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down. Do not store the generator or gas indoors.

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

New Online Permit Portal

The Solebury Township Permit Department is pleased to offer digital permit submissions for Grading/Stormwater Management and Zoning applications utilizing the **Permit Portal** on the Township website.

You can access the new **Permit Portal** by visiting the Planning, Code Enforcement & Permits page at SoleburyTwp.org, and clicking on the green banner in the middle of the page.

In addition to the digital submission and payment of the filing fee through the **Permit Portal**, Grading/Stormwater Management applicants must mail or drop off to the Township one hard copy and the escrow fee.

Grading/Stormwater Management resubmissions may be done via the portal as long as a permit number is available.

Zoning permit application fees can be paid through the portal.

Sorry, No Winter Pickleball Maintenance Work Closes Courts From January Through the End of April

* Temporary Closure Notice *

Please be advised that the pickleball courts will be closed beginning January 15, 2024 thru mid to late April 2024 for maintenance, repairs and improvements.

Courts will be locked and not accessible during this time.

Thank you for your patience as we complete this work.

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@soleburytwp.org

Township Manager Christopher Garges:
soleburymanager@soleburytwp.org

EAC Administrator Kate Robeson-Grubb:
krobeson-grubb@soleburytwp.org

HARB Administrator Zachary Zubris:
zzubris@soleburytwp.org

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

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

Right-To-Know Officers

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

Board of Supervisors

Chair Mark Baum Baicker mbaumbaicker@soleburytwp.org **Vice-Chair Hanna Howe** hhowe@soleburytwp.org

Supervisor Christy Cheever ccheever@soleburytwp.org **Supervisor John Francis** jfrancis@soleburytwp.org

Supervisor Kevin Morrissey
kmorrissey@soleburytwp.org

Township Calendar

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

January

1/16 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
1/18 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
1/22 Sustainability Subcommittee
1/23 Comprehensive Plan Committee
1/25 Parks & Recreation Board
1/30 Solebury Farm Committee

February

2/1 6 p.m. Human Relations Commission (as needed)
2/5 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
2/6 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors
2/12 Solebury Township Planning Commission
2/13 Environmental Advisory Commission
2/14 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
2/15 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
2/20 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
2/22 Parks & Recreation Board
2/26 Sustainability Subcommittee
2/28 Comprehensive Plan Committee

March

3/4 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
3/5 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors
3/7 6 p.m. Human Relations Commission (as needed)
3/11 Solebury Township Planning Commission
3/12 Environmental Advisory Council
3/13 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
12/14 Parks & Recreation Board
3/19 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
3/21 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
3/25 Sustainability Subcommittee
3/26 Solebury Farm Committee
3/28 Parks & Recreation Board

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