



Solebury Messenger

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Winter Issue

January 2025

Supervisors Slate Priorities for the New Year

Solebury's Supervisors set aside the first business meeting of January to review ongoing and emerging issues and outline their priorities for the year. Farming, attainable housing, and ordinance updates are among the top agenda items for 2025, along with emergency preparedness planning and several ongoing, long-term issues.

"One of the biggest things we're working on now, and was the focus last year, is the Farm Ordinance overhaul," said Board Chair Mark Baum Baicker. The Farm Committee has identified several areas for the Board to review, including ways to provide housing for farm workers, a topic which will drive much of the Committee's work this year.

Farmers are not alone in their concerns about attainable housing. Many businesses in the Township have told

Supervisors that they have a hard time finding workers, and the inability to live near the workplace is a hiring obstacle.

"This speaks to sustainability issues," said Supervisor John Francis, "Buy local, work local, live local — it all adds up to a better and more sustainable community."

Solebury will move closer to achieving actionable items to further its Energy Transition Plan, a key element to the Township's commitment to gradually eliminate reliance on fossil fuels by transitioning to clean, renewable energy sources for electricity by 2035 and by 2050 for heat and transportation.

Joining the Supervisors in their Setting Priorities session were Police Chief Kelley Warner and Public Works Director Chris Clewell.

The two department heads discussed enhancing logistical

support and first responder coordination as part of the Township's emergency preparedness planning. November's brush fire — which sparked near Winfield Lane and Aquetong Road, drew responders from across the region and was finally extinguished after 24 hours — gave fresh urgency to the Township's ongoing emergency preparedness efforts.

"If it's predictable, it's preventable," said Chief Warner. Township Police, Public Works, and the half-dozen fire and EMS units in the area will be participating in tabletop simulations during the year to better anticipate response needs.

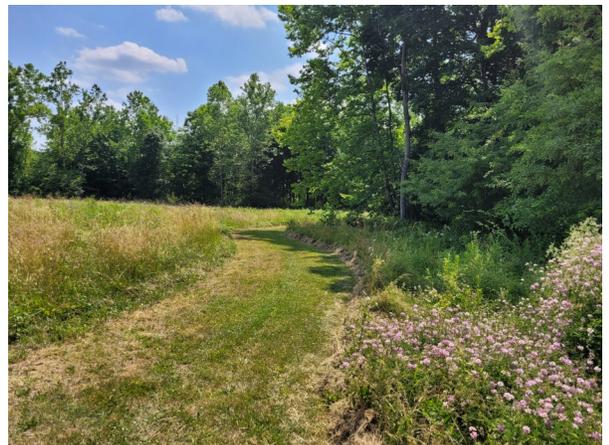
The Board also reviewed numerous ongoing priorities, including deer management, trail expansion, and the decennial update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Board Approves Master Plan for Solebury Green

The Board of Supervisors gave its approval to a Master Plan for Solebury Green at its Jan. 21, 2025, meeting, capping more than two years of community input and public hearings on the best use of the 13-acre former flea market site at the intersection of Route 202 and Reeder Road.

The official sign-off sets the stage for further design, permitting, and grant applications to fund the project. You

can download and review the Master Plan at SoleburyTwp.org/SGMP.



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."

State Grant Helps Fund Traffic Signal Improvements on Route 202

Solebury Township has been awarded a \$521,000 Local Share Account grant to help pay for upgrades to four traffic signals on Route 202.

The improvement project includes technology upgrades to help the signals to run more efficiently, emergency preemption to activate the signals when emergency vehicles approach the intersection, and battery

backup to keep the signals in operation during power failures.

The traffic signals targeted for the upgrades are located where Route 202 intersects with Sugan Road, Kitchen Lane/Bridge Street, Shire Drive, and Aquetong Road.

These improvements will make the intersections safer and save time for Solebury Public Works and the

Township Police Department during a power outage.

State Sen. Steve Santarsiero and State Rep. Tim Brennan were instrumental in securing this grant through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. The Local Share Account distributes gaming revenue to county and local governments to support projects in the public interest.

Zoning and Permit Applications Now Online

Beginning in January 2025, in an effort to minimize paper waste and maximize efficiency, Solebury Township will accept zoning and building permit applications exclusively through the Permit Portal, which is embedded on the Township website under **Planning, Code Enforcement, and Permits** page, or just visit SoleburyTwp.org/PermitPortal. All documents associated with an application (e.g. site plan, building plans, etc.) must be uploaded in PDF/A format.

While we hope these new web services will greatly improve your zoning and permit experience, you should always double-check with the Township Zoning Office before proceeding with your plans to be extra-sure that everything's in full compliance.

Lawncare's Winter Break

Fertilizer Use Tips from the PA Department of Agriculture

With winter weather in full swing, it seems an appropriate time to review the winter nutrient management rules.

Remember, nutrients should only be applied when the turf is actively growing. So as winter approaches and temperatures cool, our lawns go dormant. At this point, nutrients are generally no longer needed until the spring growing season resumes.

However, should a nutrient need arise, remember to follow these additional winter fertilizer use restrictions.

- Nitrogen is restricted to 0.50 lbs/1000 ft² from Dec. 15 through March 1.

- Phosphate is always prohibited unless the turf is being repaired or established or a soil test indicates a phosphorus need.

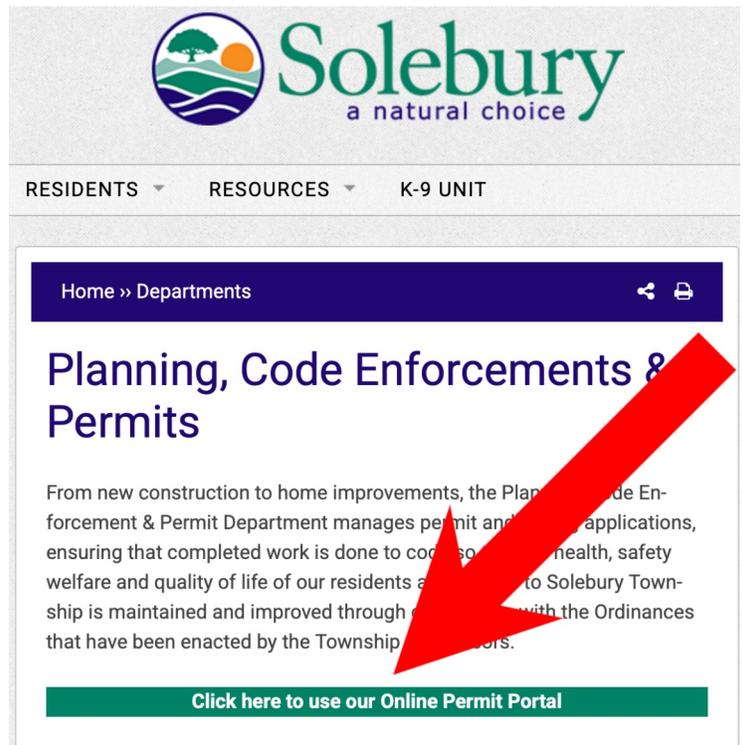
- Do not apply fertilizer to frozen or snow-covered

ground.

- Do not use fertilizer as a snow or ice melt.

Enjoy the winter lawncare break - winterize the mower, properly store any remaining product, and always be wise when you fertilize!

As you start planning for spring, be sure to visit agriculture.pa.gov/fertilizer to make sure you're following environmental and safety guidelines.



The screenshot shows the Solebury Township website header with the logo and tagline 'a natural choice'. Below the header are navigation links for 'RESIDENTS', 'RESOURCES', and 'K-9 UNIT'. The main content area features a dark blue navigation bar with 'Home » Departments' and a red arrow pointing to a green button labeled 'Click here to use our Online Permit Portal'. The page title is 'Planning, Code Enforcements & Permits'.

Solebury Township Accomplishments in 2024

During 2024, the Solebury Board of Supervisors addressed approximately 253 issues. The Supervisors met as a group 42 times during the year. Furthermore, all Supervisors are liaison to multiple Township Committees and taskforces which in total met approximately 98 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. Over 100 residents volunteered on numerous committees and other groups. They continue to provide important support for many Township activities and decisions.

Consequently, a significant number of Township activities involve contributions from Township Staff, resident volunteers and Township Supervisors. The following is a high-level summary of accomplishments.

Administration

- The staff is preparing an ordinance to adopt provisions of the International Fire Code, the first step in creating a commercial fire – life – safety inspection program which will enforce commercial property maintenance in 2025.
- \$521,036 in grants was awarded to Solebury Township through Township staff development of grant requests.
- Solebury Township has been certified “Sustainable Township Gold” by PA Dept of Community and Economic Development: Sustainable PA. Three municipalities in Bucks County and 52 in Pennsylvania have received such designation.
- The Alternative Energy and EV Charging ordinances have been updated. The Board has authorized the ordinance to be reviewed by the Township’s Planning Commission.
- Charging stations have been updated, improved and installed at the Township Building.
- New security measures such as access control and cameras were installed in the building complex.
- A feasibility study has been completed on the Bond House (the white house in Aquetong Spring Park); the staff submitted a grant application for first floor improvements.
- The Heritage assisted living community development is under construction and will be opening in 2025.
- The Heritage 55+ community (a.k.a. Fountainhead) is early in the planning and permitting process. The Township will be reviewing plans in 2025.
- All property files, subdivision and land development (SALDO) files, minutes and ordinances have been scanned and are accessible by Township staff. In 2025, the building permit process will become paperless. These measures have significantly increased staff productivity.

Comprehensive Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan committee was established this year to develop the Township priorities and goals for the next 10 years. While working with the Bucks County Planning Commission, the plan will be completed by the end of 2025 or early 2026.

- A Comprehensive Plan Survey was distributed to the Solebury Community with 954 residents (approximately 13% of adults) responding.
- With one community outreach meeting held in 2024, several more are scheduled for 2025.

Deer Management

- The deer population at March 2021 was 2,054 and has been reduced to 1,276 as of March 2024. The program will continue into 2025. The goal is to have an environment where occasional recreational hunters will be able to maintain the herd level.

Environmental Advisory Council

- A Tree City and Bird Town application has been submitted.
- The single use plastics ban has been enhanced.
- The concept of a Township-wide single waste hauler has been proposed. The Township is developing a “Request For Bidding” for interested haulers. A resident survey will be forthcoming.

Farming

- The farm committee has made significant progress in creating an ordinance aimed at additional revenue-generating opportunities making it easier to sustain a farm in the Township.
- An ordinance has been approved that will make housing for farm workers more attainable. This is another effort to make Solebury farming more sustainable.

Financial Overview

- Moody’s again has rated the Township at Aa1 due to its strong financial position that consistently has been improving in recent years.
- All Township expenses can be addressed in 2025 with the current real estate tax millage level with exception of a 1.1 mil increase to address rising costs for Fire and Emergency services.
- Township had an additional \$300K in interest earnings due to a better economy and renegotiating with the banks for a higher interest rate. Also, the Township invested Land

Continued on page 4...

Solebury Supervisors Outline Accomplishments from 2024

...continued from page 3

Preservation Funds in the Treasury's State and Local Government Series (SLGS) securities program which enables state and local governments to invest bond proceeds in higher-yielding investments and eliminating the risk of arbitrage profits.

Historical Architectural Review Board

- HARB is continuing to review the feasibility of a Minimum Maintenance Ordinance to encompass the Historic Districts. Such an ordinance would provide guidance to property owners, and mitigate instances of property neglect.
- HARB is working to update and optimize communication with both existing and new property owners in the Historic Districts, by way of mailings and email newsletter updates.

Library

- Funding for the library has been increased to support the steady increase in programing and community participation.

Land Preservation

- The Land Preservation Committee is working on four potential properties to preserve, approximately 88 acres. In 2024, 12.98 acres was preserved.
- 64% of Comprehensive Plan Survey respondents view Agricultural/Open Space Preservation as important and 73% of residents think retention of rural character is valuable.

Park & Recreation Department

- The P&R department was involved in the following programs: Snow Folk Art Contest, Easter Egg Hunt at Pat Livezey Park, St. Baldrick's Day Fund Raising Event, Road Rally Event, Participation in National Night Out / Community Night as well as summer camp.
- The Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways plan update has commenced, which prioritizes and organizes the park and recreation programs for the next 10 years. This process is estimated to be completed by the end of 2025.
- The Gateway Trail Extension project (Sugan Road to Kitchens Lane) is now complete.
- A Master Plan for Solebury Green was completed this year. It was submitted for final review by the Board of Supervisors in January 2025. The Township will now commence design and permitting as well as seeking grant funding.

Planning Commission

- Reviewed as well as provided recommendations to the Board of Supervisors two Land Development and five Conditional Use applications.
- Reviewed Short-Term Lodging, EV Charging and Alternative Energy ordinances.
- The PC is establishing subcommittees to engage with the Township professional staff and advisors on the preparation of new draft ordinances at concept and review stages.

Police Department

- Chief Dominick Bellizzie retired after 18 years of service; the Township welcomed Chief Kelley Warner to lead the Police Department.
- Over \$10,000 was awarded to update the Department's older body-worn cameras and cover certain expenses for community events overseen by the Department.
- The STPD joined a statewide police records data-sharing network which brings all data sources together into one aggregated source of information that allows Officers to gather real-time information from across counties in Pennsylvania.
- Received a grant for a new Police Report Management System (RMS). In conjunction with the COBRA sharing software, this new national data collection system will enable the STPD to collect information on nearly every major criminal justice issue facing law enforcement.

Public Works Department

- The PWD performed four different road treatment projects on 10 roads. The Department also completed 82 mastic repairs around storm inlets in the North Pointe Development. These repairs will improve waterflow into the storm drains and reduce tripping hazards around the storm inlets.
- An aged storm drain pipe was found on Paxson Road during the course of normal safety inspections and required immediate replacement. All work was completed by Department employees.
- Approximately 90% of street signs throughout the Township that did not meet the "Minimum Sign Retro-reflectivity Requirements" as established Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices of the FHWA have been replaced. The new street signs have improved the visibility, and safety for Township residents.
- Mutual Aide Agreements with the surrounding Public Works Departments were established in 2024. The agreements aid in the event assistance is needed due to major emergencies, borrowing of equipment, or manpower shortages.

Quarry

- The Township has been actively involved in the DEP's reclamation efforts at the New Hope Crushed Stone former quarry. The Primrose Creek has been restored to a natural flowing creek by way of a channel constructed by the DEP.

Sustainability

- Organized and held the 2024 Sustainability Forum in partnership with NHS.
- Organized and held an Electronics Recycling Event.
- Developed a pilot program for residential energy assessments.
- Established "Sustainable Solebury Live!" webinar series for public engagement and education.

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 cannot 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

Preservation In Action

As we look back on 2024, the Solebury Township Land Preservation Committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our mission of conserving the beautiful natural and rural landscape of our township for present and future generations. These conservation efforts preserve and protect our land, natural habitats, and essential agricultural and cultural resources.

If you or someone you know is interested in more information about this program, please contact Jean Weiss, Township Administrator, at 215-297-5656.



Township Directory

Police:

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

Administration:

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

Township Manager Christopher Garges:

soleburymanager@soleburytpw.org

EAC Administrator Kate Robeson-Grubb:

krobeson-grubb@soleburytpw.org

HARB Administrator Zachary Zubris:

zzubris@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 Kelley D. Warner,
police@soleburypd.org

Board of Supervisors

Chair Mark Baum Baicker

mbaumbaicker@soleburytpw.org

Vice-Chair Hanna Howe

hhowe@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Christy Cheever

ccheever@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor John Francis

jfrancis@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Kevin Morrissey

kmorrissey@soleburytpw.org

Township Calendar

*Calendar information is subject to changes.
Confirm all dates and times with the Township office.*

February

- 2/4 Board of Supervisors
- 2/6 Human Relations Commission (as needed)
- 2/10 Comprehensive Park & Open Space Plan Committee
- 2/11 Environmental Advisory Council
- 2/12 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 2/18 Board of Supervisors
- 2/19 Comprehensive Plan Committee
- 2/20 Land Preservation Committee
- 2/24 Planning Commission
- 2/25 Solebury Farm Committee
- 2/26 Sustainability Subcommittee
- 2/27 Parks & Recreation Board

March

- 3/3 Historical Architectural Review Board
- 3/4 Board of Supervisors
- 3/6 Human Relations Commission (as needed)
- 3/10 Comprehensive Park & Open Space Plan Committee
- 3/11 Environmental Advisory Council
- 3/12 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 3/17 Sustainability Subcommittee
- 3/18 Board of Supervisors
- 3/19 Comprehensive Plan Committee
- 3/20 Land Preservation Committee
- 3/24 Planning Commission
- 3/25 Solebury Farm Committee
- 3/27 Parks & Recreation Board

April

- 4/1 Board of Supervisors
- 4/3 Human Relations Commission (as needed)
- 4/7 Historical Architectural Review Board
- 4/8 Environmental Advisory Council
- 4/9 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 4/14 Comprehensive Park & Open Space Plan Committee

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