



## Solebury Township Achievement Summary – 2023

### Introduction

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 Committee, 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.

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### Administration

- Awarded over \$660,000 in grants for intersection upgrade design at Route 202 / Lower Mountain Road, extension of the Solebury Gateway Trail from Sugaan 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 seventy-three (73) new trees were planted throughout Township owned properties.
- Started the bidding process to construct trail extension from N Sugaan Rd/ Eagle Fire House to Kitchen Lane / rt 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 of 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 12/2023. 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 2 years of USDA deer removal (Jan-Apr 2022, 2023), March 2023 infrared drone survey indicated a 40% reduction in herd population.
- Population is approx. 1,200 – 1,300(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.

## **Environmental Advisory Council**

- 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.

## **Historical Architectural Review Board**

- 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 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 early 2023
- Established 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 7 properties, approx. 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 Dept.**

- Perform 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, completed landscape planting at Aquetong Spring Park
- Completed 5-week Summer Camp program / hired and trained 3 new camp counselors
- Completed the most successful July Road Rally with 57 cars participating
- Adjusted mowing areas at all parks resulting is 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 Dept.**

- 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.
- 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 five hundred (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, investigating sinkholes in the street or sunken asphalt near storm drains. Replaced 9 storm water inlets that were severely compromised.
- Resurfaced 9 Township roads.
- Maintained 3 Township dirt roads keeping them in very good condition for motorist and walkers to use.
- Failing stormwater pipe replaced on Sugan Road. New concrete floor formed and poured on a box culvert on Paxson Road.
- Have negotiated an agreement with PennnDot the ability to repair State roads locally and be reimbursed by Harrisburg.

## **Solebury/New Hope Borough/New Hope Solebury District 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 approx. 13-acre former flea market site at the intersection of Route 202 and Reeder Road.
- 202 Property Advisory Committee proposal is scheduled to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors during 1/2024.

## **Zoning/Permitting**

- The Township responded to 64 property complaints.
- Approx. 110 projects were inspected and received a certificate of occupancy.
- The Township issued 522 permits
- 451 Certificates of Occupancy were approved by the Township