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## **General**

### **Call for Action: Congress Abandons Critical Housing Programs**

Once again, Congress left for recess without reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Section 502 Rural Housing programs. The NFIP is now expired. The Section 502 Rural Housing program has exhausted its funding and lenders have stopped accepting applications. Until Congress extends NFIP, no new or renewal flood policies can be issued. Without the flood insurance coverage provided by NFIP, thousands of residential and commercial transactions are on hold. Congress has also abandoned the Section 502 Rural Housing Program. The housing program provides zero-down payment mortgages to eligible families in rural areas of every state. Many of these families signed contracts before April 30 and plan to utilize the homebuyer tax credit. If this program is not restored soon, they will lose their chance. Regardless of your location, rebuilding our markets in every corner of America is in every REALTOR's interest. The REALTOR® Party must speak with one voice to urge Congress to renew both NFIP and the Rural Housing 502 program today. [Click here](#) to take action!

### **Time expiring on \$45M to eradicate Philadelphia blight**

The clock is ticking loudly at City Hall, and if the Nutter administration and City Council do not move fast, Philadelphia could lose \$45 million to fight blight. The \$45 million represents the last of the bond proceeds for the city's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, an expensive crusade that former Mayor John F. Street launched nearly a decade ago to demolish abandoned buildings and acquire vacant property. Of the \$296 million raised since 2001 for NTI, this last pot of money has the most strings attached. It may go only to certain hard-pressed neighborhoods - including parts of Germantown, North Philadelphia, Point Breeze, and West Philadelphia - that are specially designated for redevelopment. The trouble is, it has to be spent by March 2011. City Controller Alan Butkovitz said that given how long it takes to condemn and acquire a property, the city "could run into a wall" on the way to allocating all the money. And "in a city where dollars are hard to come by," he added, "it would be a sin not to avail ourselves of dollars that have already been borrowed." [Click here](#) to read more.

*Source: Philadelphia Inquirer; 6/2/2010*

### **Philadelphia budget continues to draw opposition**

Philadelphia City Council passed a \$3.85 billion budget last week that raises real estate taxes, commercial trash fees and taxes on tobacco products. Under the budget, real estate taxes will increase by 9.9 percent for two years, which is projected to generate \$86 million annually. Critics of the budget have charged that more cuts should have been made and the real estate tax increase should have been more modest. As it is, Mayor Michael Nutter said the budget will not generate enough revenue to meet obligations and requires an additional \$20 million in cuts to be made, and more than 300 positions eliminated.

*Source: Philadelphia Business Journal; 6/3/2010*

### **Public comment period open for PA Transportation Improvement Plan**

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has announced the opening of a public comment period for the draft FY 2011 PA Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a regional list of agreed upon priority transportation projects and is required by federal law. The comment period is open from June 1 to June 30. Please visit the [DVRPC website](#) for more information.

*Source: Philadelphia Inquirer; 6/1/10*

## ***Bucks***

### **Pennridge budget includes \$105 tax hike**

The Pennridge school board passed the 2010-11 budget that will raise the school property tax bill on the average home in the district assessed at \$30,400 by about \$105. The property tax millage will increase to 123.0169 from 119.55, an increase of 2.13 percent. A mill is a tax of \$1 for each \$1,000 in assessed property value. The total average tax bill will be \$3,739. Residents who enrolled in the homestead exemption will see a reduction of their tax bill by \$206. The homestead exemption funding comes from state gaming revenues. In other news, the Pennridge teachers' contract expires on June 30 and both sides have been meeting regularly.

*Source: The Intelligencer; 5/28/10*

### **Bucks County mortgage foreclosure program lacks funding**

The future of the Bucks County Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program is unclear due to lack of funding. The program was started last August and requires lenders who file foreclosure actions in Bucks County to participate in mediation with homeowners. Between August and April, 516 defendants have used the program to schedule a conference with the bank or mortgage company attorney. The initial end date for the program was December, however, mortgage foreclosures continue to rise and the need for the program is still evident.

*Source: The Intelligencer; 6/2/10*

### **Developers seek deadline extensions**

In several Bucks County municipalities, builders are seeking extensions to approved building projects that are close to the five-year expiration period. Under the state municipal code, approved projects are allowed a five-year grace period so that ordinance or zoning changes will not affect the plan. With the economic downturn, many builders have not started projects that received approval and are approaching municipalities for extensions because the approval process is very costly and time consuming. Richland Township is drafting a policy on how to handle the extension requests and Plumstead Township recently granted a request for the Garden Village project after the developer reviewed and scaled back the original plan.

*Source: The Intelligencer; 6/1/10*

### **Northampton Township posts 2010 Open Space Plan**

Northampton Township has posted the 2010 Open Space Plan on the township website. Please [click here](#) for the website and access to the open space plan.

*Source: Northampton Township, Bucks County, PA; 5/28/10*

### **Warrington Township to hold Route 202 project update meeting**

Warrington Township will host a meeting on Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. to update residents along the Route 202 corridor on the progress and timelines for the Route 202 project. The meeting will be held at the Mill Creek Elementary School, 638 Bellflower Boulevard, Warrington PA 18976.

### **Doylestown Township approves sewer study**

The Doylestown Township supervisors recently approved a study to determine the feasibility and cost of installing a public sewer system in the Pebble Ridge and Woodridge neighborhoods of the township. The study will be completed by the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority and will cost \$2,500 only if the township decides to proceed with the installation of the system. The neighborhoods have been visually inspected since 1998 and have several failing systems or situations where a septic system cannot be replaced because of physical constraints.

*Source: The Intelligencer; 6/2/10*

## **Chester**

### **40 vacancies on Coatesville committees**

A recent review of meeting minutes reveals that 40 vacant seats exist on Coatesville's various authorities, boards, commissions and committees. The goal now is to get dedicated residents appointed to these various committees. One vacancy exists on the redevelopment authority, the firefighters' pension fund commission, the non-uniform pension commission, the police pension commission, the zoning hearing board and the vacant property review committee. Two exist on the parks and recreation advisory board, the civil service commission, the reserve trust commission, the advisory fire committee and the planning commission. Three exist on the board of housing appeals, the board of use registration appeals and the solid waste review board. Four exist on the technology commission. Five exist on the uniform construction code appeals board, the historical commission and the parks and recreation commission. City officials urge anyone interested in applying to be a member of the city's authorities, boards, commissions and committees to contact the city administration at 610-384-0300.

*Source: Daily Local; 6/1/2010*

### **More changes coming for London Grove comprehensive plan**

Preserving the commercial zoning of properties along the Route 41 corridor probably is not going to be enough to keep critics from questioning the draft revisions to London Grove's draft comprehensive plan, so it looks as though more changes will be made. The township's board of supervisors held a hearing last week to look at the plan, and a few of the original elements will likely be changed. The "town center" overlay plan will no longer be near the U.S. 1/Route 41 interchange. It will be moved somewhere further south. The supervisors also voted to remove specific references in the plan to the proposed roundabout at Route 41 and Evergreen road.

*Source: Chester County Press; 5/26/2010*

### **Coatesville school board OKs 3.6 percent tax hike**

The Coatesville Area School Board approved the 2010-11 final budget, which includes a 3.6 percent tax increase, in a split vote on Tuesday night. The general fund budget was approved at \$146.4 million, which is about a 5 percent increase over last year's school budget. The 3.6 percent tax hike would raise the tax rate to 28.49 mills, with one mill equal to \$1 in tax for every \$1,000 in assessed property value. An average taxpayer with a home in the district assessed for tax purposes at \$117,347 would therefore generate a school tax bill of \$3,343 — an increase of \$116 over the prior year. Similar to other school districts, Coatesville Area officials struggled with the impending Pennsylvania State Employee Retirement System (PSERS) contribution increases — an issue that has frustrated officials across the county and state in recent months. This year, the district contributed 4.7 percent of retirement funds. Next year that number will double to 8.2 percent and will be as high as 33.6 percent by 2014-15, officials said.

*Source: Daily Local; 5/27/2010*

### **Owen J. Roberts budget for next year raises property tax rate, spending levels**

The Owen J. Roberts School Board preliminarily approved a proposed 2010-11 budget that will raise the property tax rate by 0.67 mills. State gaming funds, however, will offset the tax hike for the average homeowner. The proposed \$82.4 million spending plan will be presented to the board for final approval at a June 21 meeting. The new budget represents a 4.17 percent increase over the \$79.16 million spending plan for 2009-10, and it will require a tax hike of 2.6 percent. That equates to a \$124 increase to the property tax bill of the average homeowner in the district with a property assessed at \$185,400, according to district Business Administrator Jaclin Krumrine. But the district is to receive \$1.5 million in state gaming funds to offset tax bills of each qualified homestead by \$170. Therefore, the average homeowner with a homestead exemption will see a net school property tax decrease of \$46.

*Source: Daily Local; 6/2/2010*

### **Phoenixville Area School District includes 2.54 percent tax increase**

The Phoenixville Area School Board passed the 2010-2011 school budget with a 2.54 percent increase. The increase will translate to \$89 for the average homeowner. There were staff reductions, supply reductions and procedural changes made to save taxpayer money. The original draft of the budget had included an increase of 6.9 percent.

*Source: Potts Merc; 5/25/2010*

## **Delaware**

### **Chester City Homebuyer Fair**

Chester City will hold its Homebuyer Fair this Saturday, June 5 from 10 am to 1 pm at Chester City Hall (One 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Chester PA, 19013). For additional information call 610-447-7850.

### **Chester Upland avoids tax increase in budget**

Chester Upland School District officials voted in favor of a \$114.7 million preliminary budget Thursday with no new tax increases. The empowerment board also approved the district to float a special \$23 million revenue bond that will go toward renovations at the Science and Discovery High School in the Showalter building, an expansion of seventh and eighth grades at Stetser and the purchase of the Village at Chester Upland School building, which is currently leased. The district's tax rate will hold steady at 51.336 mills (a rate of \$5,133.6 on every \$100,000 of assessed value). Although the rate is the highest in the county, real-estate taxes generate a small proportion of the district's operating budget because local property values are low. In fact, the preliminary budget relies on 72 percent of its revenues from state sources — although the exact amount of contribution has been notoriously difficult to predict. Last year, the state did not approve its own budget until well after schools had opened. Another 11 percent of the budget comes from federal sources, while 17 percent comes from local sources, including real-estate taxes. A budget guide and breakdown is available on the district's website, [www.chesteruplandsd.org](http://www.chesteruplandsd.org). The district aims to approve a final version of the budget by June 30, contingent on the approval of the state education funds in Harrisburg.

*Source: Daily Times; 5/30/2010*

### **Upper Chichester to consider EIT revisions**

The Board of Commissioners in Upper Chichester will consider amending the earned income tax ordinance previously passed in December at its regular meeting on Thursday, June 10, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. Ordinance No. 09-657 provided for the imposition of a tax on earned income and net profits received or earned by residents of Upper Chichester Township and by non-residents for work done or services performed in Upper Chichester Township. The ordinance imposed the rates of taxation, required declarations, returns, collections at source and payment of the tax, assessed interest and penalties for late payment, provided for the appointment of an earned income tax officer, and prescribed penalties for violations. The original ordinance incorrectly indicated that a tax payer would have the option of paying the amount of the tax shown as due thereon or before April 15 of the succeeding year, or filing a quarterly return on or before April 30 of the current year, July 31 of the current year, October 31 of the current year, and January 31 of the succeeding year. It is the intent of this amendment to indicate that every taxpayer must file an annual return and a quarterly return as indicated above. Copies of the full text of the proposed amendment are on file at the Upper Chichester Township Municipal Building.

*Source: Daily Times; 06/02/2010*

### **Springfield school taxes up 3.55 percent**

The proposed final 2010-2011 budget for the Springfield Area School District shows a 3.55 percent increase in taxes. The \$59 million budget requires taxes of 27.223 mills, about \$3,963 for a property assessed at \$145,580. The public has an opportunity to view the budget in the administrative offices, library or the district website, [www.ssdougars.org](http://www.ssdougars.org) by clicking on the documents section. The board will cast the final vote on June 17 prior to submitting the budget to the state.

*Source: Daily Times; 5/24/2010*

### **Rose Tree Media increasing taxes 2.9 percent**

Rose Tree Media School Board approved the district's final operating budget for the 2010-11 academic year that requires a 2.9 percent tax millage increase to balance the budget. Based on the average \$236,106 assessment in the district, the increase means an additional \$148 in taxes next year. Property owners who qualified for Homestead/Farmstead property tax relief will see a reduction of \$206.19 in their property tax for the coming year.

*Source: Daily Times; 6/1/2010*

### **Parkside newsletter available at businesses**

Distribution of the next Parkside Borough newsletter will be achieved by leaving copies at several businesses within the borough, saving the expense of mailing copies to every resident. The following Edgemont Avenue locations will offer free copies of the Parkside newsletter in July: Dunkin' Donuts; Razor's Edge; Phil & Jim's; LaSpada's; Crilly's Car Cures; and Dan Snyder's Automotive. Copies will also be available at the borough office on East Elbon Road and the firehouse on West Roland Road. Residents can



submit items to be printed in the borough newsletter, provided the nature of those items is non-political and non-commercial. All submissions must be received no later than June 18 to be included in the next edition. Send all potential newsletter items to [jstamis@parksideboro.com](mailto:jstamis@parksideboro.com).  
*Source: Daily Local; 6/1/2010*

## **Montgomery**

### **Lower Moreland discusses revitalization ordinance**

The Lower Moreland Township supervisors recently approved the advertisement of a new revitalization ordinance. If enacted, the ordinance will create a “revitalization zoning district” along Philmont Avenue that would include mixed commercial and residential uses. The township planning consultant envisions a pedestrian-friendly, landscaped area that could include retail stores, restaurants, offices, townhouses, apartments and banking institutions. Existing business owners were concerned about maintaining the value of their properties and being able to keep their current zoning. A public hearing has been set for July 13, 2010 in the auditorium at the Township Building beginning at 7:30 PM. The ordinance will also be on the Thursday, June 24, 2010 Planning Commission meeting agenda, also in the auditorium at the Township Building beginning at 7:30 PM. Lower Moreland Township has posted the revitalization ordinance [on the township website](#).

*Source: Glenside News; 5/28/10*

### **Montgomery County suspends purchase of land for sewage plant**

Funding issues have caused the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority to temporarily pull out of a \$3.2 million contract to purchase 12 acres of land along the Schuylkill River waterfront. The land is to be used for the construction of a sewage plant to replace an aging system. The authority plans to complete a new purchase contract for the land once funding is in place and remediation plans for asbestos clean up are complete.

*Source: Times Herald; 6/1/10*

### **Ardmore Transit Center developer requests one-year extension**

The developer of the Ardmore Transit Center has requested a one-year extension of the agreement with Lower Merion Township and cites Amtrak negotiations as the cause for the delay. The first key date for developer Carl Dranoff is June 30, 2010, when Lower Merion Township wanted an acquisition agreement between Dranoff and Amtrak for the existing station and commuter parking lot. Meetings have been held in Washington between the township and Amtrak but no agreement is in place. Therefore, Dranoff has requested a one-year extension to all dates set forth in the initial agreement with the township. The project would include the construction of a new train station and garage, along with the developer building a mixed-use building with retail at street level and luxury apartments above. Please visit the [Lower Merion Township website](#) for more information on this project.

*Source: Main Line Times; 5/27/10*

### **Upper Providence schedules public meeting on comprehensive plan amendment**

The Upper Providence Township Planning Commission will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, June 9, 2010, to consider recommendation of an amendment to the proposed comprehensive plan. The complete comprehensive plan may be viewed [on the Upper Providence Township website](#). The public is invited to attend the meeting which begins at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall, 1301 Black Rock Road, Oaks, PA 19456.

*Source: Times Herald; 5/27/10*

### **Whitemarsh unveils tentative waterfront development plans**

Whitemarsh Township residents got a first look at tentative waterfront development plans for the two-and-a-half mile stretch of Schuylkill riverfront located in the township. The plans encompass the land that runs from Spring Mill to Conshohocken. The development plan was proposed to gather public input for access to the valuable river resource. An extension to the Schuylkill River Trail was proposed, along with boat launches, fishing piers, overlooks and a civic gathering place. The township stresses that the plans are in infancy and the major development obstacle is the private ownership of land leading up to the river.

*Source: Times Herald; 5/30/10*