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General

New home sales up in June

June saw a 23.6 percent increase in the sale of new homes, but that followed a record low in May and is still 16.7 percent below the figures for the sale of new homes in June 2009. At the peak of the housing boom in 2005, 1.28 million new homes were sold in a year. At the current rate, it is expected that 330,000 new homes will be sold by the end of 2010.

Source: Philadelphia Inquirer; 7/27/10

State grants municipalities stormwater rules extension

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has granted municipalities a nine-month extension for stormwater management plans. The plans were originally to be submitted by September 10 and were to detail how each municipality would deal with stormwater runoff and the resulting pollution and erosion. Local municipalities were concerned over the expense of the mandates and, led by Montgomery Township, formed the Southeastern Pennsylvania Stormwater Coalition. The coalition hopes to make the stormwater standards more affordable for municipalities.

Source: Philadelphia Inquirer; 7/28/10 & Times Herald; 7/20/10

Bucks

Warminster looks at budget cuts

Warminster Township is considering cutting \$700,000 from the current budget to avoid a large deficit for 2011. Revenue is down because of several delayed or unfinished projects within the township, causing the budget woes. Among budget reduction items discussed were cutting staff hours or reducing pay by 10 percent. The township has mainly union employees with collective bargaining agreements who are receptive to a cut in pay, but would expect it to be reimbursed in 2011. Layoffs are another option, but it would be costly to the township whose unemployment benefits are self-insured. Another option is to borrow the needed money from the parks and recreation department and storm water fund with repayment of the monies in 2011.

Source: The Intelligencer; 7/26/10

No bus stop consolidation in Central Bucks for 2010

The Central Bucks School District bus stop consolidation plan has been put on hold for the 2010-11 school year, but with an estimated savings of \$250,000, the plan will be reviewed again next year. The district identified 1,000 stops that could be eliminated for the savings, but eliminating just 100 stops would save the district an estimated \$34,800. State regulations allow for elementary students to walk up to 1.5 miles to school or a bus stop and high school students to walk up to 2 miles. The Central Bucks transportation management team had suggested bus stop consolidation that would merit a half mile or less walk. The school board has requested the transportation management team to continue to work on the plan for inclusion in the 2011-12 budget.

Source: The Intelligencer; 7/28/10

Lower Makefield views plans for Octagon Center housing

Lower Makefield supervisors were presented with sketch plans for 199 single age-restricted homes in the residential section of the Octagon Center. The community will include a clubhouse, pools and recreation areas. The second plan would include an additional 180 carriage-style homes to be built at a later date. The plan was presented by Toll Brothers, which expects to proceed with obtaining the necessary approvals within the next few months and begin construction by the end of the year. The plan also includes major improvements to Oxford Valley Road and Robert Sugarman Boulevard.

Source: The Intelligencer; 7/23/10

Shenandoah Woods plans sent for federal approval

The Horsham Land Reuse Authority finalized the approval of the redevelopment plan for surplus military housing in Warminster and Ivyland. Now the Shenandoah Woods plans will be forwarded to the federal officials in the Department of Housing and Urban Development for approval and from there to the Department of Defense for final approval. The Shenandoah Woods plan is unique in that it rehabs the old military housing for sale. The proceeds from the sale will create an anticipated \$6 million homeless fund for services in Bucks and Montgomery counties. This model differs from many reuse plans that directly use the housing for homeless and provide services on-site. Feedback from HUD is expected in two to six months.

Source: The Intelligencer; 7/22/10

Chester

Kennett debates adding 2 supervisors

Kennett Township supervisors are considering increasing the number of elected municipal officials from three to five. During the public comment period at Monday's meeting, Supervisor Tom Nale reported that a petition is circulating to assess residents' interest in a referendum to increase the number of supervisors from three to five. A petition is necessary to determine whether this is an issue that Kennett residents believe is worthy of turning into a referendum on which the township electorate would vote.

Source: Daily Local; 7/26/2010

New Garden begins gearing up for Baltimore Pike Corridor Study

The New Garden Township Board of Supervisors recently appointed Vice Chairman Bob Perrotti to serve as their representative on the Baltimore Pike Corridor Study Steering Committee. They also appointed Township Manager Dan Fox and Director of Planning and Projects Spence Address to serve on the committee that will begin meeting in September. The goal of the group will be to study Baltimore Pike from East Marlborough to Avondale and determine long-term plans. The other municipalities will also name representatives.

Source: Chester County Press; 7/21/2010

East Goshen Township cuts its meeting schedule

East Goshen Township supervisors decided Tuesday to eliminate workshops that normally precede their regular meetings. The workshops are generally held in a small conference room next to the large meeting room at 7 p.m. Then at 8 p.m. the board adjourns the workshop and moves into the meeting room for its regular meeting. Supervisors Chairman Senya Isayeff recommended the board eliminate workshops and just have the regular meeting because much of the discussion on various issues takes place in the workshops.

Source: Daily Local; 7/25/2010

Sewer rates expected to rise in Penn Township

Penn Township supervisors recently discussed an increase in sewage rates. The increase is a necessary response to new sewer regulations that will require improvements to the existing system, as well as increased repair costs due to unwanted materials entering the sewer system. Items such as grease and disposable diapers being flushed into the system are being blamed for ruining sewer pumps. Supervisors have determined that the increase will be based upon usage, which will encourage people to conserve water. Rates are expected to increase by next quarter.

Source: Avon Grove Sun; 7/28/10

Delaware

Newtown Township eyes possible sewer expansion

An amended Act 537 Sewage Disposal Plan that would set the stage for public sewer expansion into the western half of the township cleared an important hurdle at the planning commission meeting, where a unanimous vote recommended approval of the revised plan. Once township supervisors approve changes to the 537 plan, the proposal will need to be reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). A map of the proposed 537 plan can be viewed at the township office or on-line at www.newtowntownship.org. The cost to build the new sewer network is estimated at \$18-20 million. The township will initially procure funds for sewer infrastructure through a municipal bond or bank loan. The bond or loan would be paid back through tapping fees and connection fees assessed to the users of the system. It is important to note that tapping fees will be paid by every property owner in the areas to be served by public sewers, whether they connect or not. Connection fees, however, will only be paid by homes or businesses that actually hook up to the new system. Last year, township supervisors adopted an ordinance that allows any homeowner to opt out of sewer connection, if an on-site septic system is certified to be in working order. Otherwise, connection will be mandatory.

Source: Daily Times; 7/22/2010

Concordville Town Centre proposal discussed

Concordville supervisors listened to comments regarding the proposed Residences at Concordville Town Centre. The 30 acres to be developed sits toward the rear of the property at Baltimore Pike and Route 322, and would complete the mixed use of the 100-acre site. The concept would be proposed as a series of communities connected with integrated pedestrian walkways linked to the main walk in the retail center. The proposed housing units would include 70 cottages and 48 townhouses, built in groupings and opening onto courtyards, and 312 apartments divided among six, four-story buildings. The homes would have garages or designated spaces in adjacent lots, with underground parking for the apartments. The target market would be young professionals and empty nesters. The adjacent homeowners presented a laundry list of concerns, such as the impact on property values, effect on the school district, high density of the proposal, overdevelopment of the surrounding area, amount of open space located in wetlands, traffic and crime. The hearing will continue at 7 p.m. on Oct. 12.

Source: Daily Times; 7/24/2010

Ridley School District names superintendent

The Ridley School District has announced that Lee Ann Wentzel will become the new superintendent of the district on August 1, 2010. Wentzel has been with the school district for 20 years, serving as assistant principal, and personnel director and most recently assistant to the superintendent and board secretary. This will be only the fifth person to serve as superintendent in the past 60 years.

Source: Daily Times; 7/28/10

Morton borough office summer hours

Summer hours are now in effect at the Morton Borough office through Sept. 6. The office will be open 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m.-noon on Friday.

Source: Daily Times; 7/26/2010

Montgomery

Abington named one of “Best Places to Live”

Abington placed number 29 out of 100 on Money Magazine’s annual “Best Places to Live” list. The list this year was gleaned from “small cities” with a population between 50,000 to 300,000 people that were ranked by affordable housing, diversity, schools, recreational opportunities, safety and health care. The magazine described Abington as “a family-oriented suburb with a Philadelphia attitude.” Taking first place on the list was Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Source: Philadelphia Inquirer; 7/12/10

Comprehensive plan approved in Upper Providence

Upper Providence supervisors recently approved an update to the township’s comprehensive plan. Last updated in 1994, the current plan is designed as a “long-term planning and policy guide for growth and development.” Many residents voiced opposition to the plan, stating that it does not provide enough specific information for problem issues such as traffic. The supervisors unanimously approved the comprehensive plan and voted to schedule a meeting between township residents, the planning commission and board of supervisors on Sept. 22 to discuss the implementation of the plan. The plan is available on [the Upper Providence Township website](#).

Source: Springford Reporter; 7/25/10

Montgomery Township approves townhome plan

Montgomery Township supervisors approved a plan to build 95 townhomes between Upper State Road and Garden Golf Boulevard. The 16-acre property is adjacent to Costco, LA Fitness and a proposed hotel. One point of contention in the land development plan was that the buffer zone between the proposed hotel and the townhomes would be larger than allowed by township code. The majority of supervisors did not want to strike down the plans simply because of a buffer zone, which might leave the township open to litigation.

Source: The Intelligencer; 7/27/10

Abington township manager of 19 years to retire

Abington Township Manager Tom Conway has announced his plans to retire in 2011. Conway has been manager of Abington for 19 years. The board of commissioners is in the process of advertising for a replacement, hoping that interviews will be completed and someone hired before the end of the year.

Source: Glenside News; 7/21/10

No conversion of single-family to multi-family homes in Norristown

Norristown council approved an ordinance that bans the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family apartments. However, conversions will be allowed in mixed-use circumstances where the bottom floor is commercial and the upper floors are apartments.

Source: Times Herald; 7/21/10