



EAST NOTTINGHAM TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008

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Letter from the Staff

During this summer of high gas prices and limited travel, why not take the opportunity to rediscover some of the wonderful places and things to do we have in our own back yard. Nottingham Park is close by and offers beautiful scenery, plants, exercise trail and picnic areas. Take a quick drive to Maryland and visit Elkton, North East, Chesapeake City or Havre de Grace. There is also fun in the sun at Elk Neck State Park just past North East along with an adventurous walk to Turkey Point Lighthouse. And remember, Oxford offers summer movies and music in the park. Check local papers for events. Don't let the high gas prices get you down. Find some local fun and enjoy!

planning program which can be applied to all the communities and which embodies solutions to present and future problems and self-sustaining proposals for the control of growth and land use, community facilities and a transportation network."

In 2008, the region's unique character and valuable resources are continuing to be threatened by development from both outside and inside the region. Through the development of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan, the region will address several areas of interest and concern as prescribed by Act 247, including: land use, transportation, community services and facilities, energy conservation, and resource protection.

On a snowy night in December 2007, representatives from the six municipalities of the region and Chester County Planning staff met at Chipper's Café in the Herr's Complex in West Nottingham Township to identify priorities for the development of the multimunicipal comprehensive plan. The group enjoyed a festive and optimistic time for reflection about the region's past and a positive outlook for the work program that began in January 2008.



If you have a question or comment, please contact the editor at enteditor@zoominternet.net.



Rural Living

We would like to pass along this information from the Chester County Planning Commission 2008 Newsletter article "**Implementing the Comprehensive Plan:** Oxford Region is Planning Together."

During the fall of 2007, the municipalities of the Oxford Region (East and West Nottingham Townships, Lower and Upper Oxford Townships, Elk Township and Oxford Borough) developed and adopted an Intergovernmental Cooperative Planning Agreement. This agreement is required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247) to "encourage cooperation and coordinated planning among adjoining municipalities" and identifies the region's resolve to work together towards the common goal of developing a multimunicipal comprehensive plan.

Nearly forty years ago, in 1969, the municipalities of the Oxford Region adopted the Oxford Region Comprehensive Plan. Since that time, three of the six municipalities have adopted their own individual comprehensive plans, West Nottingham being the most recent with the adoption of their comprehensive plan in 2006. In the meantime, the other three municipalities have been limited by the dated recommendations of the 1969 plan.

Although dated, one of the planning goals in the 1969 plan holds true and provides a bridge to the development of the plan program, "To prepare a

Before you dig – Call 811



Did you know there could be up to five separate underground utilities running through your property? To help keep you safe, and the power, cable, phone lines, gas lines, and pipelines of the community operating, it is mandatory to call 811 before you dig!

Pennsylvania One Call has joined all other states across the country in implementing the new 811 phone number. It is the only number you need to remember to call before digging into the ground with any type of power equipment, including posthole diggers and rototillers.

One caveat, if calling from out of state (i.e. at work in Delaware or Maryland) a call to 811 will take you to the state that you are calling from. The operator will be able to transfer the call to the appropriate state. More information can be found online at www.pa1call.org.

Pennsylvania's Natural Gas Boom Puts Townships in a Difficult Position

Knock. Knock. Who's there? It's a landman, and the energy company he works for wants to lease your property so it can capitalize on what many suspect is a significant — and untapped — natural gas reserve lurking under Pennsylvania's surface. The gas is trapped thousands of feet underground in what is known as the Marcellus shale, a layer of rock that stretches from upstate New York to West Virginia and, in between, blankets parts of Ohio and two-thirds of Pennsylvania.

Recent drilling innovations, coupled with the prospect of huge profits for companies that can get the gas to market, have triggered a gold rush of sorts here in the commonwealth, where the shale formation appears to be the thickest and, therefore, holds the most abundant supply. As a result, thousands of gas wells have been popping up in townships across the commonwealth. Right now, the most intense interest is in the northcentral and northeastern parts of the state, in places like Bradford, Lycoming, and Susquehanna counties. According to the experts, the shale's seemingly vast supply offers real promise for the nation's natural gas reserves. On top of that, its development over the next decade or so could lower home heating bills across the United States, reduce our dependence on foreign energy, bring jobs and businesses to areas of Pennsylvania that need them the most, and pump millions, if not billions, into the state's economy.

There is another side to this story, though. And it's the one being told by township supervisors statewide, many of whom have found themselves in a difficult position. As local elected officials, they must deal with the impact of this growing industry and even address your complaints. However, the truth is, your township supervisors have very little authority to regulate gas well drilling — and they certainly can't stop it.

Powerless in Pennsylvania

Among townships, damaged roads are the most common complaint. But the development of gas wells in Pennsylvania has brought other side effects, too, including altered landscapes, declining property values, and around-the-clock noise. And what troubles township officials the most is that thanks to Pennsylvania's Oil and Gas Act of 1984, they are virtually powerless to halt the damage. "I understand our energy problems and the need to address them," one township supervisor said recently, "but these companies can just come in and run roughshod over us and we have no recourse. "We would just like to be able to exercise some control, but we can't do anything," he added. "Our hands are tied."

So who does have the power under the act to make these companies play by the rules? It all lies with the state Department of Environmental Protection, which regulates, permits, and oversees the oil and gas industry. It's an ironclad authority that means one thing: Townships are precluded from establishing their own rules for oil and gas drilling. "Every well that gets drilled must comply with the Oil and Gas Act, and townships are pre-empted from interfering with this DEP function," says Matthew Wolford, an environmental law attorney in Erie.

The matter gets muddier when you add the fact that this issue is largely about private property rights, too. If a landowner does not mind a well or two or three on a property, very few municipal officials are going to argue with that — or try to intervene. In fact, energy companies are making many township residents an offer they simply can't refuse, and they are quickly opening the door and saying, "Come on in." Stories are circulating that some landowners in northeastern Pennsylvania are signing leases for as much as \$2,500 an acre on top of the 12.5 percent royalty fee they'll receive for gas that is extracted from their property.

Get the facts

Given these circumstances, you, as a township resident, have some real control in determining what unfolds in your community. Experts advise residents to do some research to fully understand the gas industry. One valuable resource is the Penn State Cooperative Extension's Natural Gas Exploration and Leasing Team, which has been offering workshops statewide to educate landowners on the energy industry and also hosts an informative website, www.naturalgaslease.pbwiki.com Useful information can also be found at www.pagaslease.com.



PHOTO BY BARR H. SHRIVER

Rigs and wells, similar to those above, have been popping up all over Pennsylvania, which many believe is sitting on top of a bountiful and valuable natural gas reserve, known as the Marcellus shale. It wasn't until recently, though, that energy companies had the techniques and technology to access it. Now, townships statewide are dealing with the side effects of this new industry.



Preventing Wildfires

DCNR Warns Pennsylvania Communities about Danger in Forested Areas

Township residents who live near state forests or other woodlands should be vigilant this summer and fall as the wildfire threat increases due to hot, dry conditions and changing weather patterns. "Though forests are a renewable resource, they can quickly become endangered by acts of carelessness," state Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources Michael DiBerardinis said recently. "People cause 98 percent of wildfires. A mere spark can touch off a devastating forest blaze during dry periods when conditions are especially ripe for wildfires." According to DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, nearly 10,000 acres of Pennsylvania's forests are burned by wildfires each year, and while nearly 85 percent of those fires occur between March and May, the threat remains during the warm summer and early fall months.

Wildfires are so named for their rapid spread through bare vegetation in dry, windy conditions. State forestry officials urge landowners to be extremely careful when burning trash and debris, one of the most common causes of wildfires, and obey local open-burning bans. Many townships have such bans in place during the summer to minimize the risk of wildfires. Education is still the best way to prevent wildfires, and the nation's best-known fire prevention symbol, Smokey Bear, is still going strong after more than 60 years.

For more information about wildfire prevention and education, call DCNR's Bureau of Forestry at (717) 787-2925 or visit their website, www.dcnr.state.pa.us and click on "Forestry."

Ordinance Reminders!

The township has a new ordinance that requires all building contractors engaging in business in East Nottingham Township to register with the township and pay a registration fee of \$50. The registration form is available on the township website.

Please remember, the township has a weed ordinance which states that a property owner may not allow weeds or vegetation to grow to exceed 15 inches in height that has not been planted for useful, ornamental, or edible purposes.

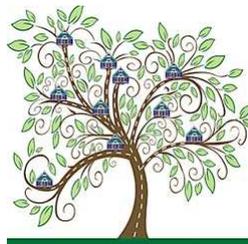
Information is available on the township website, www.eastnottingham.org, under the Township Ordinances section, or contact the township zoning officer at (610) 932-9812.

Buy Local Produce



If you did not get the chance to plant that summer vegetable garden, you are still in luck. One of the many benefits of living in ENT is the ability to buy locally-grown produce. Here are some great reasons for purchasing food from your neighborhood farmer:

- Money spent locally tends to stay local, bolstering the community's economy.
- Locally grown fruits and vegetables are allowed to ripen on the plant longer which enhances their taste.
- Local produce is the freshest food you can get other than from your own garden.
- Naturally ripened, fresh fruits and vegetables have higher nutritional value for you and your family.
- Food grown and purchased in the community has not been transported across wide distances, thereby decreasing fuel consumption and pollution.
- Supporting our local farmers supports open space and responsible growth and development of our township.



You Can be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution

Polluted stormwater run-off is the greatest threat to clean water. Practice these healthy household habits and you will be the ***Solution to Stormwater Pollution:***

- Keep your nearest storm drain clear of debris and litter.
- Never dump anything down a storm drain.
- Use fertilizers sparingly.
- Use pesticides only when necessary.
- Do not blow grass clippings or leaves into the street.
- Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down paved areas.
- Compost or recycle yard waste.
- Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly.
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on an unpaved area.
- Service your car regularly to prevent leaks onto paved areas.
- Dispose of household hazardous waste at designated collection locations.
- Produce less waste – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled or recyclable products whenever possible.
- Have your septic tank pumped and system inspected every three years

On May 1, 2008, Penn State University President, Graham Spanier, participated in a ceremony honoring the Pugh family for preserving the farm where Evan Pugh, founder of Penn State, was born in East Nottingham Township. The ceremony consisted of the presentation of a ceremonial check by President Spanier and the ENT Board of Supervisors to the Pugh family. The 72-acre Evan Pugh Homestead will now be preserved as farm land along with over 1900 acres in ENT that has already been designated as preserved.



The Ceremony to honor the preservation of the Pugh Family Farm on May 1, 2008.



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.org
Evan Pugh was the first president of the Pennsylvania State University, serving from 1859 until his death in 1864. An agricultural chemist, he was responsible for securing Penn State's designation in 1863 as a land-grant institution under the Morrill Land Grant Act.

Spring 2008

East Nottingham Township Newsletter

East Nottingham Township
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 Tel: (610) 932-8494

Visit Us on the Web
www.eastnottingham.org

Board of Supervisors meetings are held the second Monday of each month.
 Planning Commission meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month.
 All meetings are held at 7 pm at the Township Building.

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