

FOWWOS NEWS



Friends of West Windsor Open Space, P.O. Box 73, West Windsor, NJ 08550
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WEST WINDSOR TO PURCHASE PARCEL FROM ICC

Township Council recently approved a contract with the Jewish Community Center of Mercer Bucks to purchase 27.59 acres for \$1,358,725 and preserve it as open space. Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh and staff deserve considerable credit for a successful negotiation. We at FOWWOS are particularly pleased by this purchase. The parcel, #92 on the Township's open space inventory, is located on Clarksville Road just past the state-constructed wetlands that have become a nesting location for blue herons. The parcel will serve as a buffer between the heronry and the soon to be built Jewish Community Center, and at some time in the future a trail leading from Clarksville Road into Duck Pond Park could be constructed on it.

The parcel lies in the Duck Pond Run watershed, and it is particularly important to preserve open space in this watershed because of the intensity of development along Route One in West Windsor, which is also in the watershed. Ernest Hahn, of the Delaware and Raritan

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Canal Commission, is so concerned about the health of the Duck Pond Run watershed that he negotiated an agreement with Samuel Switzenbaum, developer of the Greenview Corporate Center, located on Route One near Meadow Road. As the Corporate Center is built it will contribute \$50,000 to FOWWOS for the purchase of open space in the Duck Pond Run watershed. The funds will come in three equal installments, with FOWWOS already receiving the first. FOWWOS will contribute that money, along with \$50,000 of our own funds, toward this purchase.

In 2002 the JCC negotiated a contract with Dataram, owner of two adjacent parcels totaling 81.36 acres, to purchase the property for \$3,075,000, pending a change in zoning to permit the construction of a new Please see *JCC* on page 2

Pay your 2011 Dues Today and Continue Your Membership

WALKING IN DUCK POND PARK

By Alison Miller

Have you been to Duck Pond Park lately? If not, I recommend going. Purchased in 2001 with State Green Acres funding and an Environmental Infrastructure Trust Fund loan, the 123.48 acre Duck Pond Park (named for Duck Pond Run, the waterway that runs through its wetland woods) is a combination of open flatlands, wooded wetlands, and wetland buffers. Located off Meadow Road across from the Estates at Princeton Junction, the unwooded section of the park, when fully developed, will have sports fields, a play area, parking lots, a winding walking path, and a picnic pavilion with restrooms similar to the one in Community Park, as well as a feature unique to West Windsor parks, a fishing pond that the township will stock with fish and which will also serve as a retention basin for storm water. Some of us at FOWWOS took a couple of walks in the

park last summer. On our first walk we took a detour through an upland portion of the existing woods. Most of the trees were relatively young, and there was a great deal of underbrush, but we thought that at some time in the future the township might want to clear a woodland path around the perimeter of the open area to create a very attractive hiking trail. By the time we took our second walk, underbrush made the wooded areas impassable. We did, however, walk through the unimproved open portion of the park. Its uneven, dry surface was covered with empty spots and a great diversity of plant species, including, but by no means limited to, Queen Anne's Lace, Daisy Fleabane, Purple

Please see *Walk* on page 3

*Annual Meeting February 4th at 7:30 PM
Town Hall Room C*

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community center. At that time, the closest water and sewer were at Route One, with improvements to Meadow/Clarksville Road intersection unspecified. The purchase was finalized in 2005 at the price negotiated in 2002. The economy faltered, lowering commercial and residential land values. After two years of negotiations, the Township and the JCC came to an agreement based on two appraisals done by licensed appraisers on the State Green Acres list. State and County matching grants, which help finance Township open space acquisitions, are based on official appraisers' valuations. The appraisals recognized that the property's value had decreased because of the economy and

increased because of road improvements and utilities availability. There were complaints that the negotiated price was too high, focusing on the price per acre, not taking into account that in commercial development each acre is not equally valuable, nor taking into account improvements to the road and the availability of utilities. The JCC lowered the price by \$200,000 and on November 22nd the Council approved the purchase. FOWWOS is pleased with these results. Nothing more epitomizes the value of open space preservation than this acquisition; it will help protect a valuable watershed, shield an important wildlife nesting area, buffer wetlands, preserve woodlands, and provide an opportunity for healthful recreation in the form of a hiking/biking trail.

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Alison Miller, President
 Bob Murray, 1st Vice President
 Andrew Kulley, 2nd Vice President & Secretary
 John Sabino, Treasurer
 Elliot Kleiman, Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary
 Bob Kenny - Counsel to Board
 FOWWOS is a nonprofit organization incorporated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, E.I.N 22-3419086.
 Preserving Land in West Windsor Since 1996

Kevin Appelget
 Ted Begun
 David Siegel
 Ronald Slinn

FOWWOS PROPOSES CONSTRUCTING DUCK POND RUN TRAIL

By Alison Miller and Andrew Kulley

The West Windsor Master Plan envisions a future where there is a network of off-road trails for hiking and biking throughout the township. FOWWOS has developed a plan to realize a piece of this vision, a path from the Trolley Line Trail to Clarksville Road, at no expense to the township. Because the trail follows the Duck Pond sewer easement, which is currently maintained (mowed) by West Windsor Township, we call it the Duck Pond Run Trail. When completed, improvements to the existing pathways would facilitate the use of existing bicycle and pedestrian trails and provide useful new connections between them. At the outset of the new trail some trimming of tree branches would be necessary along the easement between the Trolley Line Trail and Penn-Lyle Road. Some signs, as well as closer mowing, would also be needed in order to make this alternative path to Penn-Lyle Road clear to new users. The trail would then continue for a short distance to the north (towards High School South) along the soon-to-be constructed sidewalk on the east side of Penn-Lyle Road. A crosswalk would have to be painted across the road where the sewer easement turns to the west. The

coarse stone surface on the stretch of the easement between Penn-Lyle road and Duck Pond Run would need a top coating of sand or quarry blend to make it bikeable. This top coating would need to cover a path only about four feet wide down the center of the existing coarse stone easement road. A similar, but lighter coating of quarry blend would suffice to improve the portion of the easement from Duck Pond Run to North Post Road. This portion is seasonally muddy in spots, but a blend topcoat would make it usable. If necessary, a boardwalk-type covering could be installed for a short stretch over the wettest portion of the path at the side of the easement roadway. The new trail would then follow the existing roadway shoulder along the east side of North Post Road to Jacob Drive. A crosswalk would be needed at the Jacob Drive intersection, so the trail could continue on the already paved easement route to the pumping station. The final segment of the trail, from the pumping station to Clarksville Road, would require the same quarry blend and boardwalk treatment as the Penn-Lyle to North Post segment. FOWWOS and its volunteers would provide the

Please see *Trail* on page 3

President's Message

by Alison Miller

All of us at FOWWOS were saddened to learn of the death of Harley Pickens on October 30th. Many West Windsor community organizations benefited from Harley's participation, including the Lions Club, the Parking Authority, the Shade Tree Committee, and of course FOWWOS, of which he was a founding Trustee. We missed Harley when he moved out of West Windsor; now we will miss him more.

I first met Harley when he was the Chair of the Senior Housing Task Force, and I made an appearance before them to discuss including lower income seniors in the age-restricted development then in the early planning stages (now built out as the Village Grande). He was particularly gracious and made sure that the rest of the committee was equally receptive. I have since served with Harley on a number of committees and task forces, and have long been of the opinion that he was the best committee chair I ever met.

My favorite memory of Harley is when we worked together to reorganize the West Windsor school election consolidated polling places. Both of us were regular poll workers at regular as well as school elections, and both of us felt frustration at the confusion voters faced when trying to remember where they voted. Rather than just griping, we decided to do something about it. With the encouragement of the Township Clerk, we put together a proposal and negotiated individually with members of the Mercer County Board of Elections, eventually convincing them that our goal was not to benefit one political party but to benefit all citizens who wished to vote. It took several letters and a lot of phone calls, but we were successful, and I credit Harley's persuasiveness, persistence, and personal charm for that success. Harley served his country with distinction in the Korean War and in the Army Reserve, rising to the rank of Major General. He also served his community, and the people of his community, with equal dedication and distinction, all his life. It was an honor to know him.

Our New Meeting Dates are the First Thursday of each Month

Walk from page 1

Loosestrife, Pennsylvania Smartweed, Plantain, various clovers, numerous grasses, Monkshood, Butter-and-Eggs, Toadflax, Chicory, Yarrow, Milkweed, Mugwort, Carpetweed, Goldenrod, Feverfew, and, of course, Ragweed. It is an excellent place to go if you are a student of botany and want to write a paper on the weeds of Central New Jersey.

We were disappointed not to see, on either walk, the wild turkeys we had heard about, but on our first walk we did catch a glimpse of a heron and an unidentified raptor soaring overhead, and on our second walk we saw several deer, all of which ignored us.

Duck Pond Park is a beautiful place. When fully developed, it will be as much of a township asset as the Community Park is now. It deserves to become a favored destination for all West Windsor walkers, bikers, and drivers.

Trail from page 2

necessary materials and labor for trail construction. Importantly, we don't anticipate any measurable increase in ongoing maintenance costs to the township as a result of this trail being added to the existing trail network, Mayor Hsueh has expressed his support for the idea, and sent FOWWOS' proposal to the Township Engineer for assessment.



EAGLE SCOUT DONATES TO FOWWOS

One of the requirements for a Scout to achieve Eagle rank is to raise funds and carry out a project that will benefit his community. Eagle Scout Kevin Campbell's project was to build a fully accessible picnic table and place it at the Millstone River Preserve. After the completion of his project he had \$131.12 left over, which he chose to donate to FOWWOS. We congratulate him on becoming an Eagle Scout and thank him for his donation.

FOWWOS Membership Form:

Friends of West Windsor Open Space

P.O. Box 73, West Windsor
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Phone:

(609) 799-8372

E-Mail:

fowwos@yahoo.com

Web:

www.fowwos.org

Preserving Land in West Windsor
Since 1996

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

To join FOWWOS: Send name and address to the address above. Enclose dues check made out to FOWWOS for one of the following memberships. Tax deductible yearly membership dues are:

Please make checks payable to FOWWOS and mail to:
P.O. Box 73
West Windsor, N.J. 08550

Student	\$15.00 per year
Adult	\$25.00 per year
Family	\$40.00 per year
Supporter	\$50.00 per year
Benefactor	\$100.00 per year

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Join FOWWOS every year!*

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