



Civic Express

Published by Lower Merion Township for the civic and business communities.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- **Ardmore Blossoms**
Saturday
June 6th from
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- **Bryn Mawr Farmers Market**
every Saturday
from 10 a.m.—
2 p.m. at
municipal lot #7
- **Bryn Mawr Twilight Concerts**
Saturdays, 7 p.m.
at Gazebo Park
- And don't forget
First Friday Main Line on Friday,
June 5th!

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Soliciting Feedback on Solid Waste Collection in Lower Merion Township

A comprehensive public information effort on the subject of solid waste collection in the Township is underway, and a top priority is communicating to our citizens to help you understand the decisions facing the Township.

Since the last time the Township studied solid waste collection, **technology advances have led many communities across the country to shift to automated collection methods.**

Certainly, there are pros and cons to automation as there are to our existing manual collection. You can read more about these by visiting www.lowermerion.org, where we have prominently posted the solid waste collection topic on our home page.

Another critical component of the Township's study is the possibility of eliminating or charging for rear yard collection. The majority of our residents enjoy – currently at no additional cost - the convenience of rear-yard col-

lection, which is placement of refuse further than five feet from the curb line. Perhaps **instead of eliminating non-curbside collection altogether, it should remain an option for an additional convenience fee** for the enhanced service.

A complete list of frequently asked questions and answers on solid waste collection options are in this newsletter.

Citizen feedback is strongly encouraged.

The topic was introduced at a Public Works Committee meeting on May 6th, and further detail provided at a special Public Works Committee meeting on May 18th. **The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 3rd at approximately 6:30 p.m.**

Read the enclosed frequently asked questions and answers, and visit www.lowermerion.org. Please let us know what you think about the Township's solid waste collection. Send an e-mail to our study team at: solidwastecollection@lowermerion.org.

Thank you in advance for weighing in on this important issue!

Douglas S. Cleland
Township Manager

June/July 2009
LMTV Channel 7/37
Program Schedule
Monday-Wednesday-Friday

MontCo Commissioners Mtg.
6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Eye on Lower Merion
June: Rep. Tim Briggs
July: Rep. Mike Gerber
7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Green Works
7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Out and About
8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

The Pennsylvania Report
8:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.

The Arts In Lower Merion
9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

NASA
9:30 a.m. and 9:30 p.m.

**Behind the Gavel with
Board President Bruce D. Reed**
10 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Public Works Pipeline
**SPECIAL EDITION: SOLID WASTE
COLLECTION OPTIONS**
10:30 a.m. and 10:30 p.m.

LMTV Spotlight
11 a.m. and 11 p.m.

Township Talk
June: Information Services
Department

July: Purchasing Division/
Finance Department
11:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.

**Re-Play Committee/
Board of Commissioners Meetings**
12 Noon

Bulletin Board

Solid Waste Collection Q & A . . .

What is the current method for Township refuse and recycling refuse pick-up?

The Township provides collection and disposal services to all single-family dwellings, all two-family dwellings and all apartments containing four or fewer dwelling units.

Collection by the Township is optional for residential buildings of five to fifty units, but not from dumpsters. The Township *does not* collect commercial waste.

Trash is collected once a week at curbside or from the rear yard by municipal employees.

Residents are also required to recycle plastic, glass, aluminum food and beverage containers (comingled) and mixed paper which is collected once every two weeks by municipal employees. Residents are charged a Solid Waste Fee based on a subscription level of one container, two containers, or three to five containers. There is no limit on recyclables.

What options in solid waste collection are being considered by the Township?

There are several options under consideration:

- **maintaining the existing collection system** of manual collection at the curb and in the rear yard at many locations;
- **converting to manual curbside collection exclusively,**

thus eliminating rear yard collection;

- **converting to automated curbside collection exclusively,** thus eliminating rear yard collection;
- **maintaining optional rear yard collection but adding a new rear yard collection fee.**

Why consider a change in solid waste collection at this time?

The Township's **fleet of trash collection trucks is reaching the end of its useful life.** The vehicles are scheduled for replacement in 2010. If the Township were to change its collection method, this is the opportune time.

How does automated curbside collection work?

Each household is provided with a wheeled trash cart(s) with a hinged lid. The homeowner wheels the cart to the curbside. A truck pulls up alongside each cart and the driver extends the truck's automated arm to lift the cart and tip the trash into the hopper.

Are the subscription levels the same for each method?

With the current manual method, residents select a subscription level of one container, two containers, or three to five containers. With an automated system, residents would select a 32, 64, or 96 gallon cart depending on their needs. **Solid waste collection fees would be based on the cart**

. . . **Solid Waste Collection Q & A**

size compared to the current fee based upon the number of containers.

How does rear yard pick-up work in an automated system?

If the Township were to retain rear yard service while moving to an automated collection system, a separate collection truck and crew would be necessary to perform manual rear yard collection. There could be a separate additional fee for rear yard collection service.

What are the pros and cons of maintaining the current manual system of trash collection?

- **Advantages** are the lower capital cost of the rear-load collection vehicles vs. mechanical arm side-load vehicles and lower annual equipment maintenance costs.
- The **disadvantages** are higher labor costs.

What are the pros and cons of an automated collection system?

- The primary **advantage** of an automated solid waste collection system is lower labor costs.
- The primary **disadvantage** is higher initial capital costs for vehicles and special refuse carts.

If rear yard collection is offered with automated collection, it will require a manual pick-up by a separate

crew to those homes.

- Additionally, **some streets may be too narrow** for an automated collection truck. These streets would also require manual crews.

How do manual and automated collection trucks compare in terms of useful life?

Age, mileage, engine hours and repair costs all factor in to the useful life of an automated refuse collection vehicle.

Though automated vehicles travel more miles, less engine hours are incurred, resulting in less wear and tear on the engine.

Automated vehicles cost more to purchase and to maintain. These increases are factored into the automated refuse collection option's service costs.

Based on information provided from the manufacturers of automated collection vehicles and those who use these vehicles, **the life expectancy of automated trucks can range from 8 – 10 years.** This is the same useful life as the Township's current collection vehicles.

How does the Township make the decision to replace a vehicle?

The Township assigns each vehicle type with an estimated use life. The Township's Public Works Fleet Division then tracks
(continued on next page)

January/February 2009 LMTV Channel 7/37 Program Schedule Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday-Sunday

MontCo Commissioners Mtg.
1 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Eye on Lower Merion
June: Rep. Tim Briggs
July: Rep. Mike Gerber
2 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Green Works
2:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Out and About
3 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The Pennsylvania Report
3:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The Arts in Lower Merion
4 a.m. and 4 p.m.

NASA
4:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

**Behind the Gavel with
Board President Bruce D. Reed**
5 a.m. and 5 p.m.

**Public Works Pipeline
SPECIAL EDITION: SOLID
WASTE COLLECTION OPTIONS**
5:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

LMTV Spotlight
6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Township Talk
June: Information Services
Department
July: Purchasing Division/
Finance Department
6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

**Re-Play Committee/
Board of Commissioners Meetings**
7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Bulletin Board

Solid Waste Collection Options in Lower Merion Township. . .

repair costs on an annual basis. When repair costs exceed or are soon expected to exceed projections, staff weighs this data against estimated costs to replace the vehicle, leading to a determination to either repair or replace the vehicle.

Will my trash still be picked up once a week if a new collection option is selected?

Yes, there would still be weekly trash collection. Recyclables would continue to be collected every two weeks.

What is the Solid Waste Fund (SWF)?

The SWF is an enterprise fund which is intended to be self-supporting through user fees charged for services to residential customers. The purpose of the SWF is to account for revenues and expenditures related to the state mandated disposal of refuse and recycling.

What is the General Fund (GF) "subsidy" to the Solid Waste Fund?

Although the SWF is intended to be self-supporting, it has long been partially subsidized by the Township General Fund. The subsidy (contribution of GF funds to the SWF) is estimated at \$1.4M for 2009. **Without full cost recovery from the users of the solid waste collection services, the subsidy is projected to grow in 2010 and beyond.**

Would a new collection method result in savings?

Will residents share in any savings?

An automated system and/or a system with curbside only collection, or with a rear yard collection fee, would result in **savings after the initial start-up year.**

Any savings would be shared by the users of the service because the Solid Waste Fund is intended to be self-sustaining and is not a profit center. **All property owners would benefit in their real estate taxes** by the reduction or elimination of the annual General Fund subsidy to the SWF.

Has the Township considered charging for solid waste collection by weight?

Charging by weight for solid waste collection is similar in nature to the Township's method of charging by volume.

In *volume-based* systems such as the Township's, residents pay more depending on how many and what size cans of garbage they set out each week.

Weight-based systems require scales to measure how many pounds of waste residents set out each week. **The weight-based system costs more to implement, requiring a new scale system and regular calibration.** Weight-based systems have not been widely implemented.

With an automated system, would there be any changes to Recycling pick-up?

If the Township automated solid waste collection, residents would have carts of different colors—one or more for trash, one for co-mingled glass, aluminum and plastic recyclables, and one for paper.

The Township is, however, considering adding additional items to the commingle (such as #3 - #7 plastics) for its new commingle contract to be bid late this year.

What about "single-stream" recycling that some communities are using?

Township staff has been researching single-stream recycling, a method in which paper is mixed in with the co-mingled glass, aluminum and plastic recyclables.

At this time, the Township believes that **single-stream is more costly than dual stream recycling.**

The paper product resulting from this collection method is obviously more contaminated than when collected separately. The market for recycled paper fluctuates according to need. **The cleaner the paper, the more the purchasers will pay for the product thus keeping solid waste fees down.**

In addition there are only two plants in this region taking single-stream recycling at this time.

. . . **Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

How will leaf waste be collected if the Township goes to automated trucks?

Leaf waste would continue to be collected as it is now, in biodegradable paper leaf bags.

How has the Township arrived at the various premises/projections included in the options under consideration?

Some estimates are based upon the professional judgment of

Township staff and the experiences of other municipalities.

Some projections have been based on the results of the 2004 Township-wide written citizen survey that was conducted in partnership with Franklin and Marshall College. A portion of the statistically valid survey questions were devoted to solid waste collection (*see highlights below*).

Has the Township already determined a course of action and chosen an option to recommend?

The options included in this newsletter and presented at public meetings are not recommendations. **No decisions have been made on this important topic** and will not be made until a thorough public process has been completed.

What is the timeline to make a decision?

The deliberation process will continue at the June 3rd Public Works Committee meeting. Should this matter require further public discussion, additional
(continued on back page)

2004 Township Survey: Solid Waste Collection Highlights

Which Township services, if any, should be eliminated:

- 53% of residents said "none."
- 5% of citizens favored eliminating free rear-yard collection.

Which Township services should be enhanced:

- 21% of respondents said "trash pick-up" (the highest percentage of all suggestions.)

Should a \$180 fee for Rear Yard Collection (RYC) be imposed:

- 56% of those surveyed agreed with implementing this fee.

If a \$180 RYC fee were imposed:

- 65% of those who *currently* have RYC said they would *move* their collection point to within five feet of the curb line.

Do the survey results vary from ward to ward?

Yes. Results varied in many cases based on where respondents resided. For instance:

Eliminating free rear yard collection was most favored by:

- Ward 13 (*Cynwyd and Merion Park*) - 13%
- Ward 1 (*Gladwyne, Merion Park and Penn Valley*) - 7%
- Wards 4 (*Ardmore and Haverford*) and 12 (*Merion*) - 6%

Support of a fee for Rear Yard Collection was favored by over 50% of respondents in *all* wards except for:

- Ward 4 (*Ardmore and Haverford*) - 43%
- Ward 8 (*South Wynnewood and East Ardmore.*) - 41%

Those who most favored a RYC fee were citizens in:

- Ward 9 (*Bala Cynwyd*) - 71%
- Ward 10 (*Bryn Mawr and Haverford*) - 69%
- Ward 11 (*Bryn Mawr, Gladwyne and Rosemont*) - 64%

Those who place their trash at rear yard (further than 5-feet from the curb line) were predominantly:

- Ward 5 (*North Ardmore and Wynnewood*) - 65%
- Ward 6 (*Rosemont and Villanova*) - 61%
- Ward 7 (*Wynnewood*) - 61%

Of those who currently have RYC, those more likely to switch to curbside to avoid a fee were:

- Ward 7 (*Wynnewood*) - 81%
- Ward 3 (*Belmont Hills, Penn Valley and Bala Cynwyd*) - 79%
- Ward 9 (*Bala Cynwyd*) - 74%

The complete data from the 2004 Township Survey is posted on www.lowermerion.org. Follow the Solid Waste Collection prompt on the home page for updated presentations, press releases and more.

New Contractor Chosen; Cynwyd Station Renovations Resume

After a 5-month suspension of work, The Lower Merion Historical Society has announced the **selection of a new General Contractor** to complete Phase 1 renovations to the Cynwyd Train Station.

"As those who have been following the progress of this project are well aware, we suffered a great loss in December of 2008 when Jim Easter of JECB Construction, LLC, our former General Contractor, passed away," commented Jerry Francis, President of the Lower Merion Historical Society. "It was very important that we take the time to partner with a firm that could equal the standards set by Jim Easter, and the Society is delighted that **Stumpo Construction of Conshohocken has been selected to restart the project.**"

Founded in 1951, the Stumpo firm is a third generation family from Belmont Hills, who specialize in

residential, commercial and institutional construction. "**The scope of their work will shift to the interior mechanicals,** such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC and fire suppression," added Francis. "The completion of this phase will also include build-out of the office and apartment areas."

"A restored Cynwyd Station is the fulfillment of a long time dream for the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, for our outstanding Lower Merion Historical Society and for all who value the preservation of historical structures."

**- Bruce D. Reed, President
Lower Merion Board of Commissioners**

Exterior stabilization, wood and brick finishes, and storm water control work still need to be completed. **Mobilization has begun and the project is expected take 4 to 5 months to complete.**

To date, the stone foundation walls have been rebuilt, the worn and damaged beams have

been repaired/replaced, and the bearing walls have been shored up and leveled.

In December 2007, representatives from Lower Merion Township and the Lower Merion Historical Society signed the **final paperwork sub-leasing the Cynwyd Train Station to the Historical Society.** This landmark occasion cleared the way for the Historical Society to begin the long-awaited first phase of renovation to this 1886 structure.

"The Historical Society is pleased with every aspect of the selection of Stumpo Construction, under the direction of Ned Stumpo, to complete this project," remarked Francis. "When work is completed, the Cynwyd Train Station will become **a contributing asset to the adjoining Cynwyd Heritage Trail and to the community.**"

Further information is available at www.lowermerionhistory.org.

Municipal Lot Permit Applications Available for Purchase

The Lower Merion Township Parking Services Department has announced that **new municipal lot permits are on sale for the following locations and time periods:**

- **Ardmore** - May through October
- **Bryn Mawr**-June through November
- **Bala Cynwyd**-July through December

Applications for permits are available one month prior to the start

date of each permit, and **the cost for a six-month permit is \$210.** "Permits purchased after the start date will be pro-rated," stated Tom Pintande, Director of Parking Services.

Permits can be purchased at the Parking Services Office located in the lobby of the Public Safety Building. Office hours are Monday - Friday from 8:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. **Additional information is available by calling (610) 645-6230.**

Citizens who have not yet renewed their 2009 Residential Parking Permits are reminded to do so immediately. Residential permits are also available for purchase at the Parking Services Office.

A parking ticket **payment drop box is located at the front of the Public Safety Building.** Payment envelopes can be deposited 24/7, and all payments are processed within 24 hours, except weekends. Envelopes are located inside the drop box door.

Civic Express
is a publication of
Lower Merion Township
aimed at providing useful information
to the Civic and Business Associations
of the Township.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Gladwyne, Merion Park
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Bryn Mawr and Haverford, Ward 10

Douglas S. Cleland,
Township Manager

Patricia M. Ryan
Assistant Township Manager

Brenda J. Viola,
Public Information Officer

If you have any comments or suggestions concerning the Civic Express, please call the Public Information Office at (610) 645-6199. This publication is posted in its entirety on the Township's website, www.lowermerion.org

Township Seeks Candidates for Historical Architectural Review Board

The Township Secretary's Office is seeking registered architects to apply for an available five-year term on the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).

This Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the Board Room of the Township Administration Building.

The HARB is comprised of nine members who possess knowledge of and interest in the preservation of historic districts. By code, at least one member is required to be a registered architect, which is the available position. All appointed members must be residents or have an ownership interest in property in one of the Historic Districts in the Township.

As an advisory body to the Board of Commissioners, HARB responsibilities may include reviewing the appropriateness of a proposed erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of a building or installation of signs.

For more information, contact the Township Secretary's Office at (610) 645-6145.

Interested candidates are asked to complete an application which can be found on www.lowermerion.org by following the prompt for the Township Secretary's Office. Completed applications accompanied by a current resume should be sent to Eileen R. Trainer, CMC, Township Secretary, 75 E. Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003.

For further information please contact (610) 645 6145.

"Lock for Life" Program Wins Top Crime Prevention Award

A unique program created by the Lower Merion Township Police Department, under the leadership of Lt. John Dougherty, has been named the Crime Prevention Officer's Association Crime Prevention Program of the Year.

"Lock for Life" provides police, fire and emergency medical service personnel access to a residence in the event of an emergency and

is available through ElderNet of Lower Merion and Narberth. Administered by the Lower Merion Township Police Department, Lock for Life uses a metal storage device, similar to a realtor's lock box, to store a house key. There is **no cost** involved to participate in the program; all that is needed is a spare key. For more information, contact (610) 645-5245.



THE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING WILL BE CLOSED ON:

- Friday, July 3rd (Observance of Independence Day)
- Monday, September 7th, Labor Day

Questions and Answers on Solid Waste Collection (continued)

Public Works Committee meetings will be scheduled.

If ready to do so, the Committee *could* vote to recommend a chosen solid waste collection method on June 3rd, which would then be considered for approval at the June 17th Board of Commissioners meeting.

Once a decision is made, what would be the timeline for implementation?

Should the Board vote to *change* the Township's solid

waste collection method, the implementation process would include:

- preparing bid specifications
- the bidding process,
- bid award and
- contract authorization.

This process would be followed by the turnaround time to order, receive and train employees on new equipment.

Therefore, implementation for *changes* in the Township's collection method would require **a minimum of 12 months from the time that the Board of Commissioners approved a solid waste collection method.**

How Can I Make My Opinion on This Topic Known to the Township?

- We encourage citizens to participate and **provide input at public meetings.**
- In addition, please **reach out to your Commissioner** and let them know your preferences.
- If you prefer to communicate using e-mail, the Township has set up a special address to share your thoughts directly with our staff study team. Please e-mail staff at: **solidwastecollection@lowermerion.org.**
- Our Public Works Department can also answer any questions or address any concerns you may have. Please **call (610) 645-6150.**

Special Public Works Committee Meeting DVDs Available at Libraries

If you missed the May 18th Public Works Committee meeting, **DVD copies are available at all Township libraries.**

The special meeting included a presentation by Director of Pub-

lic Works Don Cannon. Also on hand was Ed Micciolo, Abington Township Public Works Director for, who spoke about how his municipality successfully converted from manual to automatic collection.

Meeting Calendar

Times are approximate and subject to change.

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, June 17th, 8 p.m.
Wednesday, July 15th, 8 p.m.
Wednesday, August 5th, 7 p.m.

Cable TV Advisory Committee

Thursday, June 25th, 7 p.m.
Thursday, July 23rd, 7 p.m.

NO AUGUST MEETING

Committee Meetings

Wednesdays, June 3rd & 10th
Tuesday, June 30th—B & P Continued
Conditional Use Hearing
Wednesdays, July 1st, 8th,
22nd & 29th at 6 p.m.

Special BOC meetings to follow, if needed.

CIP Workshop

Wednesday, June 24th, 6 p.m.

Environmental Advisory Council

Tuesday, June 23rd, 7p.m.
Tuesday, July 28th, 7p.m.
NO AUGUST MEETING

HARB

Tuesday, June 2nd, 8 a.m.
Tuesday, July 7th & 28th, 8 a.m.

Health Advisory Council

Monday, June 8th, 7 p.m.
Monday, July 13th, 7 p.m.
NO AUGUST MEETING

Historical Commission

Thursday, June 25th, 4 p.m.
Thursday, July 23rd, 4 p.m.
NO AUGUST MEETING

Planning Commission

Monday, June 1st, 7 p.m.
Monday, July 6th, 7 p.m.

Shade Tree Commission

Monday, June 8th, 7 p.m.
Monday, July 13th, 7 p.m.

Zoning Hearing Board

Thursday, June 11th, 7:15 p.m.
Thursday, July 9th & 23rd, 7:15 p.m.
NO AUGUST MEETING

Visit www.lowermerion.org
for updated meeting information.