

GARRETT HILL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (GHIC)

2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, the GHIC would like to welcome the newly elected Ward 1 Commissioner, James Higgins, Esq. He replaces Hank Mahoney and previously served on the Board of Commissioners in the 1980's and 1990's. The GHIC looks forward to working with Commissioner Higgins and the entire Board of Commissioners. Thank you for your service.

Secondly, as requested in the GHIC's 2010 Annual Report, the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution that incorporated the Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) into Radnor Township's 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) on October 24, 2011. Sharing the same status with the CLUP means that future Garrett Hill ordinances follow the standard of being "generally consistent" with the GHMP and is subject to 10 year periodic updating along with the CLUP.

The Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) Action plan describes recommendations for short, middle and long-term improvements. These recommendations fall within the following areas:

- Grants and funding
- Gateways, crosswalks and the SEPTA "rock slope"
- Park improvements
- Street and façade improvements
- Parking strategies
- Consideration of historic preservation and/or design criteria

The Committee formed working groups for each of these areas. These working group reports form the basis of the Committee's annual report as well as a Villanova Re-Development Update and a prioritization worksheet where Committee members ranked the importance of the various tasks described in the Master Plan.

VILLANOVA RE-DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Villanova University published a Campus Master Plan in October 2008. Last December the university invited local residents to a presentation that outlined proposed residence halls and related projects to be sited on the Lancaster Avenue parking lots. This proposal and the Campus Master Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/president/initiatives/masterplan/ResidenceHallDevelopment.html>

Briefly, their plans include the following:

1. Residential housing for approximately 1,160 junior & senior undergraduate students. This will increase on-campus housing to accommodate about 85% of the under-graduate student body (currently 6,352). Approximately 15% (953) students would continue to live off campus.

The proposed residence halls may or may not impact the number of student housing rentals within the Township. However, they will increase the overall population of our Township and will certainly provide a large change in Township demographics. Thus, it is vital to our community that wherever these demographic shifts occur, great care is taken to insure positive impacts within our communities.

The proposed height of these buildings will vary between 4 and 5 stories. Currently, building height in Radnor Township Institutional Districts is limited to 3 stories or 38 feet.

Villanova is proposing building setbacks of 45 feet on Lancaster Avenue. Currently, Radnor Township requires a 75-foot setback.

2. Approximately 17,000 sq. ft. of University-operated, student-centric retail (including University bookstore, convenience store and bistro). A retail expansion of this magnitude may adversely affect many of our community's established locally owned and operated businesses.

3. Parking structure to accommodate 1,800 vehicles. Combined with surface parking lots behind the planned residence halls, this project will result in approximately 2,100 parking spots. Current parking lots hold 1,700 vehicles. Proposed is a net gain of 400 vehicles. The proposed structure will stand approximately 55 feet high which exceeds the Radnor Township height limit by 17 feet and 2 stories.

4. Performing Arts Center on the corner of Ithan and Lancaster Avenues is a cornerstone of the overall proposal. It will generate its own concomitant parking and traffic concerns due to the nature of scheduled performances with people arriving and departing at the same time.

Villanova will be seeking substantial zoning waivers from Radnor Township since they are not entitled "by right" to build these proposed facilities. There are 2 ways this might be accomplished. Firstly, they must demonstrate legitimate hardship to the Zoning Board in order for the Zoning Board to grant the zoning waivers that Villanova is seeking. Alternatively, they can seek the Board of Commissioners' assent as a conditional use through Article XXIII, Chapter 280-134 through 137.

It is likely that the Commissioners' would give careful consideration to their re-development proposal along with the requested zoning waivers.

It is this Committee's belief that before us now is a historically unique opportunity for a collaborative effort to insure that the ultimate re-development scenario falls within the overlapping set of what is best for both the residents of Radnor Township and Villanova University.

The traffic burdens that will be generated by the magnitude of the proposed expansion may be dramatic, far-reaching and difficult to mitigate. If the congestion along Lancaster Avenue increases in frequency and duration, the spillover onto Conestoga Road will make it even more difficult to traverse our community. One of the goals described throughout Radnor's 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) is to make our streets, business areas and neighborhoods safe, pedestrian friendly environments – the opposite may result if offsetting measures are not designed and utilized.

The impact of Villanova's plans on Radnor Township will be unprecedented. These plans promise to provide the greatest development impact on our Township and our communities that most of us will experience in our lifetimes. This Committee learned during the Garrett Hill process that it is ordinary and customary practice with re-development to spend 5% or more on community investments. In developments of this magnitude, particularly where such substantial zoning exceptions are sought, the pledge of community investment is vital.

The GHIC believes that the basis for any waiver of zoning standards that Villanova receives should be community investment to alleviate the significant adverse impacts of their proposal. Investment can take the form of contiguous improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks and traffic lights related to the project and/or non-contiguous improvements that are not directly related to the project such as park improvements. Villanova estimates that \$200+ million dollars will be spent on their proposed project. 5% of \$200 million = \$10 million dollars; 5% of \$300 million = \$15 million dollars.

Villanova anticipates that the project will generate \$4 - 5 million in permit fees for the Township over a 3-year period. However, these fees are to provide the Township with the funds necessary to perform the mandated inspections

Our Committee puts forth the community-generated Garrett Hill Master Plan as a guide to implementing any Villanova investments in our neighborhoods to ease the impact of their development plans.

The Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) recommends an Action Plan (p. 50 – 55) that designates short-, medium- or long-term projects on the basis of community priorities. The Committee believes there are opportunities for Villanova to partner with Garrett Hill and Radnor Township to benefit our overall community.

Care must also be taken not to allow development to occur in a piecemeal fashion that would not be allowed to occur as a whole.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

The GHIC Grants and Funding working group aims to identify and secure resources to support GHMP implementation items in coordination with Radnor Township. The GHIC coordinates with the Garrett Hill Community Enhancement Trust (GHCET), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established as of April 2010, EIN 80-0302198, whose mission is to find and manage funding to support improvements in the Garrett Hill zoning district, neighboring community, and Radnor Township.

From late in 2010 until the present, the GHCET has received grants and donations amounting to \$1,650. It has paid out \$500 to transfer grant funds and \$5 in bank fees. The current fund balance is \$1,145. Grant activity for the year included the pass-through grant of \$500 from the Hardy Plant Society to Common Ground, to support the development of the community garden in Garrett Hill. Private donors gave \$300 to support gateway signage and the Garrett Hill Coalition gave \$850 of the proceeds from their spring fundraiser to build the general fund. The GHCET can receive tax-deductible contributions to support improvements in Garrett Hill. Donations may be targeted and restricted to specific purposes such as park improvements,

gateway signage, heritage tree replacement, or given for general Garrett Hill community improvements.

Last year, a subcommittee of the Garrett Hill Coalition had applied to the League of Women Voters for a 2011 Water Resources Education Network (WREN) grant to carry out stream and environmental improvements and related educational programs in Clem Macrone Park. We did not win the grant for 2011, but plan to reapply in early spring 2012, working with the same set of project partners, with the addition of Aqua PA. Also in progress, Common Ground has submitted a second grant application to the Hardy Plant Society to expand the community garden located behind Radnor United Methodist Church. Finally, we are working on designing an inexpensive banner type sign that could be hung on poles in the Garrett Hill business district.

There are many hopes and needs in the Garrett Hill community worthy of support. Many of these have been articulated in the Garrett Hill Master Plan. In the coming year, this subcommittee will continue to work with Radnor as the Township develops its planning and scheduling for capital improvements.

GATEWAYS, CROSSWALKS AND THE SEPTA "ROCK SLOPE" - Excerpted from a letter sent by David Leh, Engineer

The SEPTA Spillway project originally proposed a 10' x 50' extension of the existing raised planting area along Conestoga Road. Dan Malloy had worked with a landscape architect to prepare a conceptual design, which Gilmore & Associates was directed to formalize into a plan. The project is to be funded by a \$10,000 DCED grant with a \$10,000 matching contribution. Therefore, the total construction budget will be \$20,000.

As the work will occur on SEPTA property, John Rice and I have been working to obtain approval from them for construction. It wasn't until last Friday (January 13th) that we received a response from their engineering Department in which we were told since SEPTA uses this area as a staging area for local projects, the planting area can not be extended as proposed as it will hinder their access to the area. Their engineer has indicated they would be amenable to a separate planting island being constructed to the south which would allow an access for their vehicles to get in and out of the area. I have attached a copy of this revised plan with this memo. I will be submitting this plan to SEPTA today for their approval.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

I would like to highlight some of the projects and improvements made at our two Garrett Hill Parks in 2011.

- 1) A flagpole and light were installed at Emlen Tunnell Park due to the efforts of Commander Marty Costello, American Legion Bateman-Gallagher Post #668, Nick Santoleri, Steve Norcini (Director of Public Works) and the Radnor Township Public Works and Parks employees. Thank you to all.
- 2) Trees at Emlen Tunnell Park were trimmed and maintained by Radnor Township employees.

- 3) Several heritage trees and stumps at Clem Macrone Park were removed (no replacement trees were planted)

In addition to this work the following projects are being proposed and planned for in 2012:

The Radnor Conservancy has applied for a grant for a stream bank stabilization project that would fund new trees to be planted by the Township at Clem Macrone Park. The trees would be planted by the township but will need to be maintained by a local community group. The Garrett Hill Coalition has been informally requested to assist in the maintenance of these planted trees. Although not asked directly, the Coalition would be willing and very capable of helping with this task.

The GHCET has been formally requested by Kathy Mulroy, Executive Director of the Radnor Memorial Library, to prepare a proposal for a small amount of grant money to help pay for a rain barrel installation or other “green workshop” to be held in Garrett Hill at a site of our choosing (the parks, church or another location). The workshop must be held prior to June 30th, 2012.

The Library has also indicated that it would be our partner when we resubmit our Water Resources and Education Network (WREN) grant proposal to the PA League of Women Voters by March 23, 2012. While our WREN grant proposal was not funded last year we have been in contact with the WREN grant director who has indicated that we have a very good proposal and with some minor adjustments the work should be resubmitted for the 2012 funding round.

We would like to plan a spring 2012 cleanup of the Wetlands area at Clem Macrone Park. The annual fall cleanup assisted by the Bryn Mawr Boy Scout Troop 19 was not completed in the fall of 2011.

A contact with Phil Wallace of the Audubon Society has been made. We will explore some funding options from them with regard to planting native plants to attract insects which ultimately will attract declining bird populations – possibly in Clem Macrone Park.

We are considering asking the Villanova University Service group to assist with these projects.

Future Considerations:

This past Christmas, I lost my brother-in-law Greg, who was a 35 year employee of Lower Merion Township. As a memorial for service to the township and community the Township plants a tree in the deceased employee’s honor at a Township Park. I would like to say that this is a great gesture and that it would be something that we would like to see initiated in Radnor Township in the future. The memorial trees could be planted in honor of ANY Radnor resident (deceased or alive) who are willing to donate the funds for the tree. In 2008, as part of my son’s Eagle Scout project, a memorial tree was planted on the edge of the Wetlands area at Clem Macrone Park in memory of his grandparents in 2008. We recommend that other park furnishing be considered for inclusion in this memorial program.

Lastly, listed below are 2 links – one to an excellent New York Times article from January 14, 2012, the second is a NPR radio broadcast from “All Things Considered” that aired on December 30, 2011. Both feature our best-known Garrett Hillian, homegrown hero, Emlen Tunnell.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/sports/football/emlen-tunnell-the-giants-greatest-packer.html?_r=4&hpw

<http://www.npr.org/2011/12/30/144491425/emlen-tunnell-a-largely-unknown-nfl-great>

STREET AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS - No Report

PARKING STRATEGIES – No Report

CONSIDERATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND/OR DESIGN CRITERIA

The focus of this working group continues to be on the research of historic areas within Garrett Hill, the area's property owners' concerns and issues regarding preservation, and Pennsylvania state guidelines. Historic preservation is given a priority in the Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) under "Policy Recommendations" (page 45) and is one of the "Action Plan" recommendations (page 53). Additionally, this work is helping gain research information and expertise for further historic recognition and/or preservation (page 54). The initial scope is on the Beechwood Drive homes of the historic Wentworth Estate and the historic Radnor United Methodist Church property.

What's been accomplished in 2011:

1. Research group has met quarterly, whose 10 members include those from the GHIC, the Radnor CPIC and Garrett Hill and other Radnor residents, including some property owners on Beechwood Drive. These meetings have been held at the Radnor United Methodist Church.
2. A smaller working group met more frequently to research and compare neighboring townships' historic preservation ordinances and other options within PA state guidelines and reported back to the larger group.
3. A special meeting was held March 22, 2011 with group members, including Beechwood Drive residents, and Michel Lefevre, historic preservation planner for the Bureau for Historic Preservation at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). The group toured the Beechwood Drive area and one of the homes and met for several hours with Michel, who answered their questions and offered his expertise about preservation. Although it was an unofficial visit, he reacted positively to the recognition of Beechwood Drive's historic character and Garrett Hill's historic pattern of development.
4. The group worked with area property owners to uncover a comprehensive list of concerns and issues regarding preservation – useful in their consideration of pursuing this designation for their area.

Going forward, this group will continue with these likely steps:

1. Further consult with Beechwood Drive area owners about their questions and intent to pursue historic designation and preservation, in meetings later this year.
2. Help prepare the documentation necessary for designation, if so desired by the property owners.
3. Continue research in other areas, including the “historic pattern of development” within Garrett Hill and the site of the Radnor United Methodist Church.

Once again, the Chair would like to thank all the group for their efforts, including support of members from the Radnor Historical Society, the Radnor CPIC, Beechwood Drive property owners, and in particular, Beverlee Barnes, for her expertise and help in reviewing area ordinances. We are fortunate to have the time and talent of all our members.

PRIORITIZATION WORKSHEET EXERCISE

The prioritization worksheet describes the 14 GHMP Action Plan recommended projects adopted on July 21, 2008. Each Committee member was asked to rank their understanding of the relative importance of these projects. They used a ranking system of 1 – 14, with 1 being the highest priority. The worksheet is attached as Appendix A. The tally of this worksheet exercise is listed below:

1. Western Gateway Improvements (17 points)
2. Clem Macrone Park Improvements (26 points)
3. Conestoga Road Streetscape (29 points)
4. Eastern Gateway – SEPTA Rock Slope Improvements (32 points)
5. Emlen Tunnell Park Improvements (37 points)
6. Garrett Avenue Streetscape (52 points)
7. Façade Improvement Program (64 points)
8. Employee Parking Strategy (71 points)
9. Route 100 Station Improvements (75 points)
10. Garrett Hill Enhancement Trust (84 points)
11. Expand Residential Permit Parking (84 points)
12. Garrett Hill Historic Overlay (86 points)
13. District-wide Shared Use Parking (87 points)
14. Garrett Hill Design Standards (96 points)

Please also note here the results of the Prioritization Workshop conducted on February 26, 2008 during the Garrett Hill Master Plan and Re-Zoning process.

Garrett Hill Prioritization Workshop (reference) (page 22 of GHMP)

High Priority	
1	Park Improvements
2	Gateways
3	SEPTA Rock Slope Beautification
Middle Priority	
4	Village Center / Conestoga Rd. Improvement
5	Garrett Avenue Improvements
6	Existing SEPT station Improvement
Low Priority	
7	Construction of a new SEPTA Station

CONCLUSION

As we move forward, clearly the greatest challenges to confront Garrett Hill as well as the greater community of Radnor Township will be counter-balancing the adverse impact of Villanova's proposed development.

This will involve insuring that any development proposal is consistent with the CLUP and the GHMP. It will also involve deciding on what basis zoning exceptions should be granted and what counter measures must be instituted to affect the anticipated adverse impacts. These include, but are not limited to, view sheds, noise, traffic congestion and pedestrian safety. Committee and citizen participation, as well as Section 280-137 and 280-145 of our Zoning ordinances will guide these decisions. This committee cannot overstate the importance of community involvement in this process.