



Haverford Civic Association

Lower Merion Township

November 2024 Newsletter

Greetings, Haverford neighbors!

As the sunlight shrinks and nights turn frosty, it's time to count our blessings over Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends, whether here in person or in our thoughts and memories. And let us not leave out the afflicted, the poor, the oppressed and the wayward, for are we not all deserving of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?



Public hearings upcoming on the Lower Merion Township 2025 budget and capital spending plan.

Township Commissioners' Updates

(Anthony Stevenson, Ray Courtney and Scott Zelov each represent a part of Haverford)

Budget Season: Fall is budget season for Lower Merion. The draft budget for 2025 was aired at a public hearing on November 20 and will be again at a second public hearing on December 4. Township commissioners are scheduled to vote December 18 on a final budget.

Taxing Situation: The township manager is recommending a 5 percent increase in the township real estate tax. If approved by the Lower Merion Commissioners at the December 18 meeting, it would be the first such increase in 13 years. (School taxes, which account for most of the real estate taxes residents pay, and a small county tax, are levied by the school district and county, respectively.) The owner of a single family detached home assessed at the median valuation of \$350,000 would pay \$74 more in 2025.

Several factors play into why the increase might be needed. For one thing, federal grants to deal with costs of the Covid 19 pandemic are running out. That means the township debt holiday for

the past several years is over, and the township will again have carry a normal level of debt to fund the township's capital budget and maintain its favorable credit rating.

Also, revenue from business and real estate transfer taxes took a dip in 2024, while personnel costs are expected to rise in 2025. For the first time in years, there is a proposed addition of full-time staff, including two social workers for the police department and an additional sustainability position.

You can find both the 2025 general fund budget and the 2025-30 capital budget online at <https://www.lowermerion.org/departments/finance-department/proposed-budget>.

Traffic Calming: There's been an increase in enforcement activity on our roadways of late, and citations are on the rise. The police department has identified three intersections in the township and submitted them to PennDOT for approval to install red light cameras. There's been some progress moving forward with the township's \$272,000 federal transportation grant to fund a traffic study of Montgomery Avenue, but as yet no consultant has been hired to manage the project. Still no word on when the township's Ad Hoc Traffic Calming Committee, empaneled in the spring, plans to convene.

Federation of Civics

(Haverford is a member of the township-wide Lower Merion and Narberth Federation of Civics. We send a delegate to their meetings and report back on what's doing.)

Training the Watchers: Lower Merion Community Watch is gearing up again after a drop off in participation due to the Covid pandemic. Community Watch and Lower Merion Police are hosting a patrol training class at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 21 at the Township Administration Building, 75 E. Lancaster Avenue. Lower Merion residents 18 or older can sign up for the one-hour training [online here](#).

It's the Pits: Spurred by the current drought conditions and the November burn ban declared by the township, Federation members questioned whether fire pits are properly regulated. The township's temporary burn ban prohibits all open fires, including residential fire pits and fireworks. Also, recreational fire permits are revoked during the ban.

Minutiae

(Highlights from the November 12 HCA Board Meeting.)

Annual Meeting Set: The date of the Association's Annual Meeting was set for Thursday, January 16, starting at 7 p.m. in the Sun Room of the Merion Cricket Club. Lower Merion's new Superintendent of Police, Andy Block, will be the featured speaker.

In Support: The Board voted to support a developer seeking relief from an adverse zoning ruling affecting a property at 527 Old Lancaster Road. The developer maintains that the property is currently an eyesore that they wish to improve.

Looking for Partners: After its highly successful Party in the Park last month, the Association will be looking for partners to help stage more neighborhood events. Board member Catherine Abrams will head up event planning and solicitation of interested community groups and individuals. For more information, contact haverfordcivicassociation@gmail.com.

Maintaining Focus: Board member Barbara Cohen brought up the need to maintain a public focus on traffic calming issues, which continue to be of urgent concern to local residents. Many are unaware of the township's recent and ongoing initiatives to address the problem. She urged township commissioners to highlight these measures in their constituent newsletters to keep residents up to date and ease fears that "nothing is being done." The Association's monthly newsletter will also offer continuing coverage of the situation.

AMTRAK Rerouted? "Back to zero," is where Board member Lee Tabas says efforts are to find a developer to rehab the historic Haverford Train Station after an emerging deal fell through when AMTRAK decided it would only support redevelopment of the outbound side of the facility. AMTRAK is now entertaining unspecified "broader initiatives" for redevelopment, he added.

Paying the Workers: The Association approved a \$750 donation to The Garden Workers in appreciation of their many hours of service at Sharpe Park Bird Sanctuary. The Garden Workers, a local affiliate of The Garden Club of America, is currently developing a revitalization plan for the local nature preserve. Sharpe Park is The Garden Workers' primary community service project.

Subscribers Wanted: The Association's monthly newsletter is a project of the Membership Committee to reach out to the broader community and foster greater engagement with our membership. We encourage subscribers to our email list to share the newsletter with their friends and neighbors. Subscription requests can be sent to haverfordcivicasassociation@gmail.com.

Stay Connected!

Don't miss our next meeting to stay informed and involved. Your voice matters in making Haverford a better place for all!

Tuesday, December 10, 7:00 p.m.
Merion Room of the Merion Cricket Club
351 Montgomery Avenue
Haverford PA 19041

Warm regards,

The Haverford Civic Association Board

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