



# Haverford Civic Association

## Lower Merion Township

## December 2025 Newsletter

### Greetings, Haverford neighbors!

'Tis the season of light . . . literal and metaphorical. Astronomically speaking, it's the season when daylight stops its shrinking slouch and starts its slow sprint to fullness. Spiritually speaking, it marks the return of the Light, the guiding spirit illuminating the path to redemption or enlightenment. For humanist or religionist, now's the time for reflection and renewal.

Speaking of light, this is also the season we start our drive to replace the aging snowflake lights on the Haverford stretch of Lancaster Avenue. Haverford Civic Association, with partial funding from Lower Merion Township, is responsible for maintaining and installing these season brighteners along our main business artery. It's a job typically done by a local business association, as it is in Ardmore and Bryn Mawr.

But Haverford doesn't have the commercial density our neighboring communities have. It has no business association. So, it's up to us to keep the lights on, so to speak. It will take upwards of \$10,000 to \$15,000 or more to replace our deteriorating snowflakes with bright, new sparklers. We'll be kicking off a fundraising campaign early in the new year.

In the meantime, we're asking all public-spirited Haverford residents and friends to consider becoming or renewing as an HCA member at the \$145 Snowflake level, which covers an annual membership and supports our capital campaign. To sign up, go to

[haverfordciviccassociation.com/join-donate](https://haverfordciviccassociation.com/join-donate)

or scan the QR code in the poster below.

All members get a subscription to our newsletter and an invitation to attend board meetings, including the annual meeting at the Merion Cricket Club, and our community events. (This past year we got an exclusive tour of the Lower Merion Historical Society collection in the historic Lower Merion Academy building.)

'TIS THE SEASON . . .

# TO PAY YOUR 2026 DUES!

(DUES PAID NOW ACCRUE TO 2026)



HOUSEHOLD \$30

BUSINESS/INSTITUTIONAL \$100

BIRDWATCHER \$80



HELPS SUPPORT SHARPE PARK BIRD SANCTUARY

SNOWFLAKE \$145

HELPS SUPPORT LANCASTER AVE SNOWFLAKE LIGHTS

PAY ONLINE AT



[www.HaverfordCivicAssociation.com](http://www.HaverfordCivicAssociation.com)

OR SCAN THE CODE



Township Commissioners' Updates

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

**Road Report:** Commissioner Scott Zelov has agreed to report monthly on Haverford-area traffic metrics compiled by the Lower Merion Police Department. Here's the latest report:

- Citations – 56
- Warnings – 39
- Equipment notices – 32

The enforcement actions were for aggressive driving and speeding during the seven-week period from October 15 through December 4.

In emailed comments to the HCA board, Commissioner Zelov announced there will be a public presentation in January of the findings of the Montgomery Avenue traffic study. Following a review by township commissioners and the Narberth city council, preliminary recommendations of township staff will be aired at a later public presentation.

“Leaf us alone” is the cry of many residents, according to Commissioner Zelov, who voted against a measure that will ban gas-powered leaf blowers in the township after a two-year phase-in period. Zelov said he favors a seasonal prohibition instead, with a longer-phase-in. The ordinance was adopted last month on a 10-to-4 vote and goes into effect on June 1.

**Transition:** The December HCA meeting was the last official appearance of Commissioner Anthony Stevenson, who chose not to seek reelection after his term representing Ward 4 ends this month. HCA President Charlie Davis thanked the commissioner for his years of service to the community and led a round of applause. The outgoing commissioner promised he would continue to be available.

Davis will invite Ward 4 Commissioner-elect Charles Gregory to speak at HCA board meetings starting in January.

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## Federation of Civics

*(Haverford is a member of the township-wide Lower Merion and Narberth Federation of Civics. We send delegates to their meetings to exchange news and concerns.)*

HCA Delegate Anne Mezey reported that commissioners-elect Shelby Sparrow (Penn Wynne) and Michael Daly (Gladwyne) appeared at the Federation's December 8 meeting. Sparrow said almost all residents she heard from during her campaign cited pedestrian and traffic safety as their priorities. Shelby said she also heard concerns about Main Line Health's development at the former St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and the proliferation of vaping shops. Daly said safe streets and traffic calming were also the main concerns of residents in Gladwyne, along with parks and open space protections.

Anthony Arechavala, another of HCA's Federation delegates, added news about a new Chase Bank branch planned at the corner of Lancaster Avenue and East Wynnewood Road in Wynnewood. The former gas station site has been vacant for years.

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*HCA members Jane Carton and Michael Talarico are responsible for the stunning floral displays in the Haverford Train Station planters.*

## **Minutiae**

*(Highlights from the December 9 HCA Board Meeting.)*

**It Grows on You:** Jennie Kelly, program coordinator at the Haverford College Arboretum, offered a brief history of the local tree collection, its current status and future plans. The first trees were planted in 1834 and the initiative sprouted a long-term vision statement in 1840 that has now been grafted onto the college's current 2030 Plan.

The arboretum sponsors an extensive educational program and plenty of hands-on opportunities to participate in the ongoing care and feeding of established and newly planted specimens. More information about the arboretum and its membership association can be found at [haverford.edu/arboretum/support/membership](https://haverford.edu/arboretum/support/membership).

**Favorable Return:** HCA Treasurer Lee Tabas did the math and concluded October's Party in the Park at Sharpe Bird Sanctuary added almost \$1,800 to the Association's bank account, after expenses. The account balance at the end of November came to \$8,171.52.

**Traffic Calming:** HCA board member Barbara Cohen's report :

- **Red Light Cameras** - Word from Police Superintendent Block is that red-light cameras will be installed at the Lancaster Avenue/Remington Road intersection by the end of December. And Lower Merion Commissioner Anthony Stevenson added that red-light cameras will be deployed at the Lancaster Avenue/Haverford Station Road and Montgomery Avenue/Airedale Road intersections in the first quarter of 2026. These two intersections had 339 and 249 red light violations respectively over one 24-hour trial period.
- **Local Use of Radar** - Pennsylvania is the only state that does not permit local police to use radar, a key traffic calming tool. PA Senate Bills 509 and 542, which would change that, were referred to the Transportation Committee in March and April 2025. There has been no action since then.
- **Funding for Traffic Calming Measures** - In 2025, Lower Merion used funding from the federal Safe Streets for All program to conduct an in-depth traffic study and develop an action plan to address identified issues. The township then submitted a proposal requesting funding for implementation of the action plan. Award announcements appear to have been delayed by the government shutdown. Stay tuned!

**Membership Report:** From HCA Secretary Charles Ault:

- **Membership** - Our 2025 paid memberships came to over 90, almost doubling the 2024 number. We hope to improve on that in 2026.
- **Social Media** - The HCA website is still getting over 200 monthly visitors and hundreds more page views. Our Facebook numbers are creeping up, too, with now over 220 followers. And we have well over 200 email subscribers.
- **Help Wanted** - HCA still needs help with our social media messaging. No writing or technical skills necessary. We'll provide the minimal training needed to post weekly updates on Facebook. If you can spare a few minutes a week for this important work, email [haverfordcivicasociation@gmail.com](mailto:haverfordcivicasociation@gmail.com). (P.S. We can also use some technical assistance with the website.)

**In Other News:**

- **Annual Meeting Review** - A post-mortem on the process and performance of the HCA Annual Meeting suggested a scheduling change. The Board will next year consider a date in January to open up space between preparations for the year-end wrap-up and Party in the Park, HCA's major outreach event in October. Several suggestions for featured speakers were also brought up, including polling the membership for ideas.

- **Snowflake Lights** – Catherine Abrams, Anthony Arechavala and Charlie Davis were named to a committee to map out a path to replace the aging snowflake lights on Lancaster Avenue. The effort will entail a major fund-raising campaign.
- **Haverford Train Station** – HCA remains committed to promoting the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic transit stop. Board member Barbara Cohen has privately filed a complaint with SEPTA urging quick action to remediate the deplorable current conditions there, including a badly leaking roof and the lack of even minimal sanitary facilities. HCA will follow up with a formal complaint of its own. The situation is complicated, as the station is owned by AMTRAK. SEPTA only leases space there.

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## Bits & Pieces

*(A miscellany of factoids from various sources.)*

**Splitting the Difference:** Lower Merion commissioners split the difference at their December 17 meeting, adopting an 8 percent township property tax increase for 2026 after rejecting proposals for a 6.5 percent and a 9.5 percent rise. Montgomery County commissioners, meanwhile, have proposed a 4 percent increase in the county property tax. And Lower Merion School District is expected to pass a 3.5 percent increase in the school tax next year.

**Zoned Out?** Commonwealth Court ruled Lower Merion can't use local zoning laws to keep gun shops out of residential neighborhoods or walkable commercial districts. The township is weighing its options. The ruling has major implications for the regulatory power of local jurisdictions.

**Heat Rising:** Eight of ten electric companies in the state have raised rates following a recent state Public Utilities Commission decision. PECO customers can expect a 6 percent increase in their heating bills this winter.

**Morning Jolt:** A car crashed through the front window of a Starbucks in Wynnewood just after 7 a.m. last Wednesday. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the store had to close. No word on whether authorities tested the caffeine level of the driver.

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**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 [haverfordcivicasociation@gmail.com](mailto:haverfordcivicasociation@gmail.com).

## Stay connected!

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

**Tuesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Merion Room of the Merion Cricket Club**  
**325 Montgomery Avenue**

**Haverford PA 19041**

Warm regards,  
The Haverford Civic Association Board

**JOIN / DONATE**