



Haverford Civic Association

Lower Merion Township

May 2026 Newsletter

Greetings, Haverford neighbors!

Whether you observed Memorial Day at home, down the shore or further afield, you participated in a civic ritual that both honors our fallen soldiers and herald's the summer vacation season. Sad and glad at the same time, it's a Janus-faced tribute to our common humanity and the awesome range of human experience. So, at least for a day, we can put down our phones and pick up where we left off with family and friends – engaging in real life.



Township Commissioners' Updates

(Ray Courtney, Charles Gregory and Scott Zelov each represent a part of Haverford)

Road Report - Commissioner Scott Zelov emailed the monthly Road Report summarized below:

- Citations – April 34 (March 35) (February 70)
- Warnings – April 26 (March 35) (February 45)
- Equipment notices – April 31 (March 28) (February 36)

HCA board member Charles Ault noted that the number of enforcement actions seems to be trending down. Commissioner Zelov said police have reported fewer vehicles to cite but asked for a copy of the documentation to share with Lower Merion Police Chief Andy Block.

Montgomery Avenue Study - The commissioner also reported that there have been four meetings to review the initial recommendations resulting from the Montgomery Avenue traffic study. They meetings included representatives from Narberth, because a segment of the road skirts the border of the borough. The township's engineering staff are

considering responses to the many questions that have been raised, he said, adding “It’s a slow process.”

Main Line Health Borromeo Development - In response to a question about Main Line Health’s ambitious, but slow-moving development project at the former St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Commissioner Zelov said a zoning change would be needed, and that’s another slow process. In addition, he noted, opinions differ about elements of the project, with the local civic association, the township commissioners and Main Line Health each having their own priorities.

Initial plans for the development envisioned a comprehensive “health care village” with senior housing, a hotel and retail space in addition to medical facilities. Those plans have changed multiple times since 2019, when Main Line Health first bought the property from the Philadelphia Archdiocese.

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.)

Federation Delegate Anne Mezey reported on the following topics and speakers at the April 13 Federation meeting:

Township Manager Ernie McNeely gave a rundown of recent capital investment projects in the township amounting to some \$50 million in all -

- Construction of a new Ardmore Community Center, including a new swimming pool, playground and recreation fields.
- Renovation and expansion of the PALM (The Center For Positive Aging In Lower Merion) senior center.
- Renovation of Ashbridge House, the historic mansion in Ashbridge Park, currently accommodating the New Horizon senior center.
- The planned installation of solar panels in the parking lot of Penn Wynne Library.

Federation members also discussed -

- The township’s ban on gas-powered leaf blowers that goes into effect June 1.
- Traffic calming.
- Engineering plans that are underway for construction of sidewalks in targeted areas of the township.

The Gladwyne Civic delegate announced that updated plans for redeveloping Gladwyne’s historic village center would be presented at a public meeting on May 18. Haldon House is the lead developer on the project, which aims to renovate historic structures, create public green space and add new commercial ventures.

Minutiae

(Highlights from the May 10 HCA Board Meeting.)

Historic Preservation:

HCA board member Mo Gillen announced that a new 143-page preservation plan will be introduced at the next meeting of the township's Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB). She raised concerns about possible limits on property owners' rights, expansion of historic districts, lack of community input and noted the ongoing tension between preservation and development.

Sharpe Park Workdays:

HCA vice president Catherine Abrams was pleasantly surprised at the bigger-than-usual turnout at this spring's community workdays at Sharpe Park, including some folks who came out multiple days. HCA sponsors the volunteer gardening and cleanup sessions twice a year in conjunction with local horticulturalists The Garden Workers, who are in the second year of a multi-year beautification and habitat restoration effort at the local bird sanctuary.

Snowflake Lights:

HCA president Charlie Davis said he has an invoice from a local supplier of commercial decorative lights, and the HCA board approved spending up to \$4,600 to buy 10 new LED snowflake lights to be hung on the Haverford stretch of Lancaster Avenue. The new lights will replace older lights that are past their prime. The long-term goal is to replace all the aging ones and replace them with 26 brand new sparklers. That will require ongoing fundraising to cover the costs, even if Lower Merion Township agrees to a 50 percent reimbursement. Two board members have each made new pledges to support the effort. Click [here](#) if you'd like to contribute to the Snowflake Fund. Just write "Snowflakes" in the comment section of the donation form.

Traffic Calming Report - From HCA board member Barbara Cohen:

A preliminary list of the Montgomery Avenue traffic study recommendations has been shared with township commissioners for review and comment. An updated list will be presented at a public meeting, now expected sometime in June.

Township Manager Ernie McNeely shared a few of the recommendations under consideration at the May meeting of the Lower Merion and Narberth Federation of Civics. Among them are partial road diets, lane narrowing and changes in traffic signaling, as well as other changes at intersections. Different interventions are likely to be employed at different segments of the corridor, but no full road lane reduction along its entire length is expected.

A handout was shared with examples of traffic calming measures designed for use in various environments. A more detailed primer gleaned from PennDOT and federal sources is in the works. Its purpose is to give HCA members a knowledge base on which to evaluate the township's Montgomery Avenue recommendations.

There was another car crash at Haverford Station Road and Lancaster Avenue. Commissioner Zelov confirmed a collision there and another at the Montgomery Avenue/Airdale Road intersection.

Membership Report - From HCA secretary Charles Ault:

There was a bit of an uptick in viewers and page visits on the website last month, but little or no change to paid memberships and email subscribers, currently at 95 and 249, respectively.

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 haverfordcivicassociation@gmail.com. (P.S. We can also use some technical assistance with the website.)



Bits & Pieces

(A miscellany of factoids from various sources.)

Don't Touch That Phone! Getting caught driving with a phone in your hand – or anyplace else on your body – will cost you 50 bucks plus costs starting June 6. The state law banning cell phone use while driving went into effect last year, but violators only got a warning during the phase-in period. And don't read or write a text on your car's touchscreen either. That's another form of distracted driving, which results in more crashes annually than drunk driving does. *[PennDOT]*

Excellent Housing: Ardmore House II, Lower Merion's 48-unit affordable senior housing project, snagged the 2026 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence in Innovative Planning and Sound Land Use Practices (no mean feat). The structure at 55 Ardmore Avenue is still under construction but is expected to be finished by the end of the year. *[LMT Newsletter]*

Running Out of Gas: The ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in Lower Merion Township starts on June 1 and runs through October 1 of this year. In 2027, the ban is in effect from January 1 to April 1 and then again from June 1 to October 1. In 2028 it runs continuously from January 1 to October 1. The greenhouse gas-spewing, eardrum vexing equipment is outlawed year-round from 2029 on. *[LMT Notice]*

Less Is More: Disgruntled parents in Lower Merion School District want much less classroom screen time for their kids, or none. For them, the district's new guidelines limiting the use of technology don't go far enough; they want to be able to opt out their children from classes that require screen time. They voiced their displeasure at a school board meeting earlier this month, but Lower Merion School Board member Anna Shurak maintained that "There is not an option for us to not have technology in schools." District administrators said they are continuing to develop their technology policies. *[WHYY News]*

More Is More: Lower Merion commissioners voted to increase their annual stipend from \$4,000 to \$6,000 at a recent meeting of the Governance & Administrative Committee. The 50 percent pay boost will not take effect during their current terms. It's been so long since the \$4,000 stipend went into effect, no one could remember the exact date, but it was sometime in the 1970s. The township manager was also authorized to suggest periodic cost-of-living increases that would have to be voted on before taking effect. *[Patch/LMT meeting video]*

Child Care Wanting: While most of Lower Merion has adequate access to childcare, that's not the case in parts of Bryn Mawr and Rosemont, where there's a scarcity of licensed childcare facilities, according to new data from the nonpartisan Center for American Progress. *[Phila Inquirer]*

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 members to share the newsletter with their friends and neighbors. Subscription and membership requests can be sent to haverfordcivicasociation@gmail.com. We encourage subscribers to also become dues-paying members to help defray the cost of our email service. Click [here](#) to sign up.

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, June 9, 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 / RENEW / DONATE

Annual membership is on a calendar-year basis, due in January.
(Dues paid early accrue to the following year.)