Haverford Civic Association
Lower Merion Township

November 2026 Newsletter

Greetings, Haverford neighbors!

Thanksgiving is the season for food, for family and for giving. Unfortunately, too many among us, for various reasons, may not be able to enjoy these bountiful blessings of home and hearth. Consider donating to a local service organization and make someone's day something to be thankful for. Click **here** for a list of Lower Merion area food banks compiled by our friends at **Stand Up4LM**.



Brian Keaveney, LMT traffic engineer (left), and Joseph Mastronardo, township engineer.

HCA 2026 Annual Meeting Highlights

Two consulting engineers for Lower Merion Township addressed a lively crowd of about 60 at the Haverford Civic Association annual meeting on November 19 at the Merion Cricket Club. Joseph Mastronardo, Lower Merion's township engineer, and Brian Keaveney, the township's traffic engineer, recapped the the process and product of the Montgomery Avenue traffic study, which they oversaw and helped draft the resulting preliminary recommendations.

In the Q&A that followed, along with Lower Merion's assistant township manager Brandon Ford, they reviewed the data and rationale behind those recommendations. Many in the audience questioned proposed changes to the New Gulph Road/Rose Lane intersection near

where they live. The township is soliciting comments before the next round of recommendations is published toward the end of the year or early 2027 (see **Traffic Calming Report** below).

HCA president Charlie Davis reviewed the association's accomplishments of the past year, previewed plans for the next and presided over the election of officers and directors for 2027:

Officers:
• President – Charlie Davis
• First vice president – Catherine Abrams
• 2nd vice president – Anthony Arechavala
• Secretary – Charles Ault
• Treasurer – Lee Tabas
• Ass't. treasurer – Barbara Cohen

Directors:
• Robert Bocchino
• Maura Gillen
• Hala Imms
• John McIntyre, DDS
• Anne Mezey
• Michael Talarico
• Thomas Wilkinson, Esq.
• Jane Carton, Director Emerita

Slides of Davis's presentation can be found **here**. He also read a message from Lower Merion Commissioner Scott Zelov, who was unable to attend.

Township Commissioners' Updates

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

Commissioner Scott Zelov attended the November 10 HCA board meeting and offered these updates:

19% Proposed Township Tax Increase

The upcoming budget cycle is one of the most difficult in years. The draft budget includes a proposed 19% tax increase, which he described as shocking and potentially higher than necessary. Commissioners have historically modified proposed tax increases before final adoption. The budget remains subject to public hearings (December 2), commissioner questions, amendments and a final public vote (December 16).

Commissioner Zelov said the major drivers of rising costs are:

Health Insurance - Township health insurance costs rose approximately 19% in the prior year and were projected to rise another 19%. The township is attempting to modify healthcare plans through labor negotiations to control future costs.

Labor and Staffing - The police union contract was settled, while negotiations with the non-uniformed union remained ongoing. Police staffing increased from 119 to 136 officers, adding substantial personnel costs.

Pensions and Equipment - Pension contributions are expected to more than double in the coming budget year and equipment costs are increasing faster than inflation.

Montgomery Avenue Traffic Study

An October 26 public presentation used a workshop format with staffed tables rather than a town-hall-style Q&A, allowing residents to focus on issues affecting specific sections of Montgomery Avenue. Attendance was estimated at roughly 80-100 residents. Many

proposed safety improvements were viewed favorably, especially pedestrian protections around schools and major crossings. Public feedback continues to be collected through a dedicated email process (see **Traffic Calming Report** below). Final recommendations are not expected until early next year.

Commissioner Zelov strongly opposes the proposed westbound lane drop near Rose Lane/New Gulph Road because it could increase neighborhood cut-through traffic, create congestion and make left turns from Rose Lane more difficult. He suggested moving any lane reduction farther west, beyond Pennswood Road, and extending the Pennswood left-turn signal.

Traffic Enforcement

Only two days of traffic enforcement occurred in October, which Commissioner Zelov viewed as unexpectedly low. He requested an explanation from township staff and was awaiting a response.

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.)

From Charlie Davis, who attended the Federation's October meeting:

Lower Merion Commissioners Scott Zelov and Shelby Sparrow presented a detailed review of the 2027 township budget, other financial issues, the Montgomery Avenue traffic study and traffic enforcement activity (see **Commissioner Zelov's comments** above). Federation members requested stronger and more frequent enforcement of traffic laws, especially speeding, illegal left turns and running red lights.

The Federation is looking for a volunteer delegate to Lower Merion Community Watch.



Haverford Train Station Gets Seasonal Plantings

HCA board members Jane Carton, Tash Duff and Michael Talarico have installed seasonal displays in the planters at Haverford Station. Jane, Tash and Michael have been performing this cyclical service to the community for many years.

Minutiae

(Highlights from the November 10 HCA Board Meeting.)

Party in the Park Wrap Up:

The reviews are in and this year's Party in the Park was another big hit. An enthusiastic crowd turned out despite chilly temperatures and multiple coinciding community events. Several new members signed up. HCA treasurer Lee Tabas reported net income of $2,652, topping last year's take by more than $850. A big Thank You goes to HCA board members Catherine Abrams and Hala Imms, who did most of the planning and led the business sponsorship campaign with treasurer Lee Tabas – and of course the sponsors themselves.

A majority of the money raised is earmarked for another round of purchases to replace the deteriorating seasonal snowflake lights on Haverford's stretch of Lancaster Avenue. Drive by one evening to see how the new lights bought last year are brightening up this busy roadway. Part of the proceeds will also go towards The Garden Workers' beautification and habitat restoration project at Sharpe Park.

Traffic Calming Report - *From HCA board member Barbara Cohen:*

Montgomery Avenue Traffic Study – Preliminary Recommendations

Using traffic data and community feedback, the study team has developed preliminary recommendations to improve safety for everyone traveling along Montgomery Avenue. They were first presented at a public meeting on October 26.

The recommendations are available on the project's website. To review them:

1. Visit the project website at: https://www.lowermerion.org/departments/building-and-planning-department/long-range-plans-projects/transportation-planning/montgomery-avenue-study
2. Open the interactive map.
3. Search by intersection or browse the map.
4. Click on all icons at an intersection, as multiple recommendations may be listed.

Timely community feedback is critical as the study team is finalizing recommendations for publication in late 2026 or early 2027. Whether you support, oppose or would like to suggest additional recommendations, please share your comments as soon as possible. You can email them to: **MontAveStudy@lowermerion.org**.

Community support is especially important because implementation of these recommendations will depend on securing local, state and federal funding.

Other Traffic Safety Concerns

In addition to Montgomery Avenue, residents may have concerns about traffic safety at other intersections, roads or road segments in Haverford. The township provides a process for addressing these issues through a traffic calming petition. Instructions and a copy of the petition can be found here.

Membership Report - *From HCA secretary Charles Ault:*

Social media outreach in October included three email communications, 10 Facebook posts, four posts to the website and one on Instagram. The monthly Newsletter has the highest engagement statistics, followed in recent months by posts on traffic safety.

Paid memberships for 2027 are starting to pick up. So far we have 46, compared to 95 for all of 2026. Click here to join or renew your membership. Dues payments or renewals now will accrue to the 2027 membership year.

Help Wanted – HCA still needs help with our Facebook 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.)

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. To subscribe, email haverfordcivicassociation@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.

Bits & Pieces

(A miscellany of factoids from various sources.)

Trifecta? Lower Merionites are in store for a tax trifecta. Township commissioners are pondering a third straight year of property tax increases after 13 years of no increases. The township raised taxes by 6.5% in 2025 and 8% in 2026. A proposed 19% increase for 2027 is under consideration (see **Commissioner Zelov's comments** above). If approved, the annual tax bill would go up $263 for a property assessed at the median value of $287,600, which translates roughly to a market value of $965,000. *[various]*

Firefighter's Retreat: The township will buy a four-bedroom house in Bala Cynwyd to house up to four active volunteer firefighters serving in any township fire company. The cadre of volunteer firefighters has been declining and the purchase is part of an effort to retain those already signed up and attract new recruits. *[Inquirer]*

Where to Now? Downtown Ardmore District was awarded $68,000 in September to support a major wayfinding project. The money comes from Pennsylvania's Statewide Local Share Account program. The kiosks won't just include directional maps and a QR code to an online business directory but also historical information. *[Downtown Ardmore District]*

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.

Next Board Meeting is Tuesday, December 8, 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.)