

## GARRETT HILL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (GHIC)

### 2010 ANNUAL REPORT TO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

#### INTRODUCTION

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.

#### GRANTS AND FUNDING

The Garrett Hill Master Plan incorporates a range of community investment ideas for implementation that range from modest enhancements that are easy and inexpensive to accomplish to ambitious and hugely expensive projects. Taken as a whole, the planned improvements are overwhelming, but taken singly; it is possible to chart a course toward realization of at least some of the GHMP goals within a reasonable time frame. The GHIC Grants and Funding working group aims to identify and secure resources to support GHMP implementation items.

Protection and improvement of Clem Macrone Park and Emlen Tunnell Field in Garrett Hill enjoys the highest priority among community residents. Radnor Township has dedicated planning and resources to these parks, including the expansion of Tunnell to include improved parking and a tot lot installed in summer 2007, and new improved signage in both parks installed January 2011. Both projects had support of grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA-DCED). Plans for a renovated comfort station at Macrone and a new comfort station at Emlen Tunnell are in progress pending sufficient Township and/or outside resources to complete the projects.

The GHIC is coordinating with the Garrett Hill Community Enhancement Trust (GHCET) to bring grant funding to a park improvement and educational project in this year. The GHCET is 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. The GHCET Advisory Committee includes a Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, and several members. The GHCET would like to include additional committee members willing to work toward the mission of supporting community improvements in Garrett Hill. Interested individuals can contact the GHIC committee members Jim Cunilio or Nancy Leinwand.

At present, the GHCET, with help from project coordinators Paul Overbeck and Sara Pilling, is formulating a proposal 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. The grant is small in terms of funding, but project partners bring additional rich resources. For this grant, the GHCET has secured the support of Radnor Township, Bryn Mawr Boy Scout Troup 19, Chanticleer, the Darby Creek Valley Association, Eastern College Graduate Sustainability Program, and other local partners. The expected benefits of the project to Garrett Hill and Radnor Township include providing information and demonstration of simple and practical actions that property owners can take to improve water quality and mitigate excess storm water run-off. The project will offer information for all Radnor Township residents concerning actions that individual property owners may take and their importance to the local environment. Benefits of the WREN grant project include locally improved stream quality in Macrone Park and downstream, reduced storm water runoff, and improved environmental quality in the park and beyond.

The GHCET also has established a structure to receive contributions and has begun to collect funds. 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. To date, six individuals have made generous contributions. Most of these were dedicated to gateway signage for Garrett Hill. We are setting up a means to encourage and receive donations by bequest as well.

There are many hopes and needs in the Garrett Hill community worthy of support. A number of these have been articulated in the Garrett Hill Master Plan. The WREN grant is a start on realizing the goals of park enhancement. The GHIC and GHCET continue to investigate other grants and funding sources for community improvement. We are providing liaison with potential state, federal, and private funding sources. Having a track record of managing projects and funds will be an asset in future grant and fund-raising efforts. Community engagement in the form of local programs can encourage outside agencies to commit to additional matching public and private support.

The GHIC and GHCET look at the initial small-scale but concrete improvements to Macrone Park and the growing seed funds for Garrett Hill gateway signage as a start on Master Plan goals. In time, these small beginnings may chart a path toward accomplishing the larger and more difficult goals of the community. We are most grateful for the assistance and support of the Radnor Township Board of Commissioners, the Department of Parks and Recreation, especially Tammy Cohen, and Township Manager Bob Zienkowski, who all have brought Township resources to meet improvement goals in Garrett Hill and facilitated the efforts of the GHCET.

#### GATEWAYS, CROSSWALKS AND THE SEPTA "ROCK SLOPE"

There have been several meetings over the past 3 years with SEPTA and PENNDOT. To date the following has been accomplished:

- Obtained an Access permit from SEPTA for the Surveyor.
- Site Survey and site drawings completed.
- Draft sketch plan that Mara Baird (Landscape Architect) and staff completed

Pending

- Approval from SEPTA
- Approval from PENNDOT
- Access Permit from SEPTA

SEPTA, PECO and PENNDOT have strict guidelines on what is permitted alongside their roadways. At our last site visit in the fall, we did get some guidance from PENNDOT on the location and design of the roadside work.

Originally, this project envisioned involving volunteers. In recent discussions John Fisher (7<sup>th</sup> Ward Commissioner) had with staff and the township solicitor, it is their preference that no volunteers are used due to the potential hazards working roadside. At this point we need more funding to take this project through multiple phases.

The \$10,000 community grant money from State Rep. Greg Vitali's office does expire at the end of June 2011 so we will need to push this first phase project along to meet the deadline with the help of John Fisher. We need more money to make this project work so we will look for additional sources of funding from various sources.

John will be asking staff to make application to the following programs:

- PECO Green Region Grant Program  
[http://www.natlands.org/peco\\_green\\_region.html](http://www.natlands.org/peco_green_region.html)
- Pennsylvania Growing Greener  
[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/growing\\_greener/13958](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/growing_greener/13958)

The GHIC and GHCET might consider sponsoring/ writing grant applications to these and many more programs to insure the applications get submitted by their deadlines. John Fisher will invite Jerry O'Connor (Gateways & Crosswalks Working Group Chair) to the next meeting once the date is set.

While efforts continue for a constructive approach to the beautification and storm water mitigation issues at this site, the Garrett Hill Implementation Committee also recommends that the Township determine which agency or agencies are responsible for the wholesale application of herbicide to the SEPTA "rock slope". The committee believes it is time for the Township to step in to prevent the long-standing, ill-conceived cycle of neglect, destruction and rock dumping at this location, one of the prominent gateways to the Township. It seems that when the vegetation (has finally) grown to the degree that it begins to mitigate the eyesore, some impetus from some quarter (PECO?, SEPTA?, PENNDOT?) effects the wholesale application of herbicide. This destroys all vegetation, exacerbates the chronic problems with storm water runoff and re-creates the eyesore. This, in turn, is "rectified" by the dumping of rock, which only serves to make the problem worse in both the short and long term. The committee believes we must discover who specifically is responsible for this activity, then enter into a conversation and reach agreement to prevent this periodic cycle of neglect and destruction from re-occurring once again.

## PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Many discussions have been held pertaining to both the immediate, necessary needs to preserve and protect the community parks and all the improvements that are possible beyond those basic needs. The GHIC has been fortunate to have the input and cooperation of many community members, as well as Radnor Township staff.

The following was completed during 2010:

- A) Sara Pilling and Paul Overbeck have donated a substantial amount of time to the development of improvements to the wetland area at Clem Macrone Park, removing invasive plants and replacing them with indigenous species of shrubs and small trees.
- B) Bryn Mawr Boy Scout Troop 19 coordinated and completed an annual clean up of the wetlands area at Clem Macrone Park on September 11, 2010.
- C) Throughout the entire year the Garrett Hill Community Enhancement Trust has been working diligently to research avenues of grant funding that may help with the Park Improvements efforts.
- D) Radnor Township Parks & Recreation Interim Director, Tammy Cohen, worked tirelessly to finalize the Park Sign project at Clem Macrone Park and Emlen Tunnell Field. Grant funds were issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for this project, allowing for two signs at each of the designated park facilities. The Radnor Township Design Review Board approved the signage on August 17, 2010. Tammy had several meetings with the GHIC and community members to insure proper placement of the signs and the community's satisfaction with the end result. The signs were installed January 5, 2011.

In going forward, the Committee will pursue the following:

- A) Continue efforts to raise funds and engage volunteers for Park clean-ups and maintenance and pruning of plants and shrubbery.
- B) Attempt to develop a program to insure the replacement of the older heritage trees in Clem Macrone Park but are quickly reaching their natural lifetime expectancy.
- C) Investigate all resources available for the installation of a comfort station at Emlen Tunnell Field, maintenance on the Clubhouse at Clem Macrone Park and the possibility of erecting a pavilion at both locations.

Finally, the GHIC strongly endorses the idea of trading Memorial Field, a Township-owned property, for Emlen Tunnell Field, a School Board-owned property, for the following reasons:

1. Memorial Field is effectively contiguous to School Board property; Emlen Tunnell Field is contiguous to Township property.

2. Memorial Field is more valuable to Radnor School District because it can be utilized more effectively for School Board purposes, fronts on 2 roads, has ample access and helps form an “educational use” campus. It is adjacent to Radnor Elementary School and is already utilized for school parking. Conversely, the School Board would be faced with various hardships using Emlen Tunnell for School District purposes as it is essentially trapped on Garrett Avenue, one of the narrowest and most congested streets in the Township.
3. Radnor Township has had discussions with Agnes Irwin School with regard to leasing Memorial Field. It seems it would be in the best interests of all Township residents for the School Board to determine the future use of Memorial Field, to determine if, when and to what extent to monetize Memorial Field with any lease (or sale) arrangement and to negotiate directly the resolution of any issues that may arise (e.g., conflict over parking or how to fund shared resources). Likewise it seems it would benefit all Township residents if Emlen Tunnell Field were within the purview of Radnor Township.

The GHIC is hopeful with regard to this outcome and views this as an opportunity to create a win-win situation for all those involved.

## STREET AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

The purpose of this working group is to further the goals and objectives of the Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) regarding Streetscape and Façade improvements. Because these have been identified as more long-range projects, they will be more fully investigated in the coming year. Since most, if not all, of these projects would require significant funding, this working group will partner with the newly created Garrett Hill Community Enhancement Trust (GH CET), as well as Radnor Township and look for other funding sources.

Medium and Long-Term projects proposed include:

1. Façade improvement
  - a. Brick or wall surface cleaning
  - b. Signage or lighting replacement/repair
  - c. Patching and painting of façade walls
2. Route 100 Station improvements
  - a. Improve ADA compliance
  - b. Repair stairs and railings
  - c. Install new lighting
  - d. Install glass shelters
3. Streetscape improvements
  - a. Installation of landscaping, lighting, benches, trashcans
  - b. Construction of continuous sidewalks and curbing on Conestoga Road from Clem Macrone Park to the Rosemont Business Campus and Radnor United Methodist Church
  - c. Burying electric and utility lines to reduce visual clutter.

In the coming year, this working group will look for opportunities to effect at least some of these improvements with minimal funding and begin to seek resources that may take on more significant improvements in the future.

### PARKING STRATEGIES

Parking considerations were central throughout the Garrett Hill Process. The chronic deficit in the parking supply led to the determination that “nothing should be done that would make it any worse”. The GHZD ordinances provide for parking compatible with a compactly settled area, however this does very little to increase the parking supply.

The Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) outlined four areas for consideration with regard to parking:

1. Shared parking – This is now codified in Chapter 280, Zoning.
2. Employee parking – The incentives for employee parking are most likely to occur with re-development.
3. Expanded permit parking – The opportunities for expanding permit parking are limited because they are governed by the state. These laws are not affected by Township ordinances. Along with any relief, expansion would also impose the burdens associated with permitting and compliance in any new permit area.
4. Municipal parking – As recommended in the GHMP, the Committee recommends public investment in a small “pocket lot” in Garrett Hill that would serve both businesses and residents. The Committee recommends this for inclusion in the Township’s capital budget. Although we understand that, facing our current economic and financial outlook, it is unlikely this would be funded any time in the near future; it warrants inclusion as a long-term objective because of the benefit and relief it would provide.

### CONSIDERATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND/OR DESIGN CRITERIA

The focus of this working group has been on research of historic areas within Garrett Hill and ways to preserve them, consistent with property owners’ interests. 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 to gain research information and expertise for further historic recognition and/or preservation (page 54). The initial scope has been on the Beechwood Drive homes of the historic Wentworth Estate and the historic Radnor United Methodist Church property.

A brief summary:

1. Residents and property owners of this district are interested in becoming included as part of Radnor’s Local Historic Districts.
2. This district appears to fit the requirements already contained in Radnor Code: Chapter 178, Local Historic Districts.

3. The working group has and will continue to work with the property owners and stakeholders to achieve an outcome acceptable to all.
4. This is another good example of the public working to support the Commissioners for the good of Radnor.

What was accomplished in 2010:

1. A research working group was formed in December (2009), whose members, about ten, include those from the GHIC, the Comprehensive Plan IC, the Radnor Historical Society, the Garrett Hill community and other residents of Radnor Township.
2. The working group has held approximately bi-monthly open meetings utilizing the local facilities of the Radnor United Methodist Church, which we thank for their gracious hospitality.
3. Delaware County Planning Department Intern surveyed Garrett Hill to include many more resources for inclusion in the Radnor Historical Assets Inventory.
4. Determined an initial focus on Beechwood Drive historic homes of the Wentworth Estate and surrounding, as well as Radnor United Methodist Church and property.
5. Met with property owners of Beechwood Drive and a representative of RUMC in March 2010 to discuss their interest in historic preservation, with the idea being well received.
6. Organized a historic tour of this district and surrounding Garrett Hill for Bob Zienkowski, Bill White and Tammy Cohen in July 2010.
7. A historic “inventory” of the structures has been conducted and nearly completed by Beverlee Barnes, including:
  - a. Narrative history of the structures and their significance
  - b. Architectural descriptions of the buildings
  - c. Photos showing design features
  - d. Note: This inventory will yield a comprehensive document and was produced over a period of months with cooperation and consent of the property owners. It will serve as the basis for any formal historic certification that may be required by the State of Pennsylvania.
8. A review of Radnor’s current Township Code regarding Local Historic Districts (Chapter 178) was made with respect to these areas, with an initial determination that these areas could be included in the current ordinance, should the property owners so desire.

Going forward, the working group will continue with these likely steps with regard to the Beechwood Drive properties:

1. Completion of the Historic Inventory of properties.
2. Re-confirmation of commitment by stakeholders/property owners.
3. Arrange for a tour of the district by the Commissioners, with their feedback
4. Apply and receive certification by the state from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC).
5. Create a proposal for ordinance consideration and arrange for its introduction in 2011.
6. Receive Commissioner and Township support for inclusion under this ordinance.

Beyond the initial focus of this area, the working group will subsequently research the “historic pattern of development” within Garrett Hill, as called for in the GHMP, and formulate a research and documentation plan, after which further steps will be investigated, if needed.

The Chair would like to thank the efforts of all working group members, and in particular, Beverlee Barnes, for her extensive work in interviewing the property owners and documenting the property history and features in this district. We are fortunate to have her interest and expertise, as well as the time and talent of all our members.

## CONCLUSION

The GHIC suggests that the most important issue to be addressed in the short term was brought to light during the November Zoning Workshop by the presenters (Mark Vasoli, Shirley Yannich and G. Fasic). In order for the Garrett Hill Master Plan (GHMP) to share the same status and essentially be incorporated into the 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) it needs to be "institutionalized".

The presenters reported that institutionalizing a plan simply means that contained in the resolution which adopts the plan is language specifically incorporating the plan into the CLUP as an addition to be part of the overall plan. The GHIC does not believe there was sufficient language to accomplish this result in the resolution that adopted the GHMP in July 2008.

Sharing the same status with the Comprehensive Plan means fundamentally that future Garrett Hill ordinances would follow the standard of being "generally consistent" with the GHMP. In addition, the GHMP would be subject to 10 year periodic updating along with the CLUP.

The committee is confident that it was our intention as well as the community's, the Commissioners' and the Township's intention and desire for the GHMP to be incorporated into the CLUP. The committee believed that by its adoption the GHMP would become part of the CLUP.

The GHIC respectfully suggests that in order to rectify this deficiency our Township Solicitor, John Rice, draft a resolution with the appropriate language to incorporate the GHMP into the 2003 CLUP for the Commissioners' consideration and anticipated adoption.