

“Talk of the Township”

Township of Ligonier • One Municipal Park Drive • Ligonier, PA 15658

A Newsletter For Our Residents

October/November/December 2010

TOWNSHIP NEWS

From the Desk of Ligonier Township Police Chief Michael Matronics

First of all, I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to Bethlen Home and all who helped organize the second annual Ando Memorial Walk. This walk was first organized and held last year with great success for the purpose of remembering our first fallen K-9 officer named “Ando”. In addition, the walk is a fundraiser to support the current K-9 “Blek” and his handler Lt. Eric Eslary. Thank you all for your support. This year there were over 30 walkers. The event raised almost \$2,000. These funds will help with training and provide medical care when needed. We hope to see you next year.

Now I would like to mention that winter is just around the corner. Here are a few tips to help prepare for old man winter. First, plan to prepare your car for winter travel. You can start by making sure your tires are suitable for winter traction. I would recommend mounting four winter tires on your car, not just two. I have investigated many accidents where the accident was caused by bad tires. For example, vehicle owners who only put two tires on that have good tread and the other two are bad. This can be a dangerous combination. Secondly, keep in your vehicle items such as flares, triangles and a blanket in case you do get stuck. The most important tip is, if you do not have to be on the roads, stay off of them, especially when there is high accumulation. This now leads into another advisory. During last winter’s major snow falls we encountered many residents parking their vehicle on the road, especially after the Township Road Department plowed. This can result in a parking ticket as well as getting your car towed. If we have to tow the car off the road you will be responsible for the tow bill, not the Township. Please be courteous to the road department. They work very hard keeping our roads clean and safe.

Leaves & Snow Removal

The Ligonier Township Supervisors would like to thank our residents for their cooperation during our road sealing that took place in late August. The Supervisors would also like to remind residents that it is unlawful to burn or dispose of leaves in any township ditches or roadways. Please dispose of them in a proper manner. A reminder that during the winter months any on-street parking that interferes with snow removal will be cause for a ticket. It is also unlawful to deposit snow on any township roads or block ditches, which may cause ice hazards. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated because it makes our job easier and snow removal can be done in a more timely fashion.

Trick or Treat

The Ligonier Township Supervisors have designated Sunday, October 31, 2010 as Trick or Treat in the township, between the hours of 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Please be extra cautious when traveling at this time and watch for children. Here are some tips to make this a safe and fun Halloween:

- Younger children should be accompanied by an adult or older sibling
- Check all candy when you get home
- Remind children not to go to strange houses or cars



TAX COLLECTOR

By Sue R. Kinsey

County and Township (spring) taxes are now at Penalty until December 31, 2010. School (fall) taxes for 2010-2011 can be paid at Face Value until November 30, 2010, then at Penalty until December 31, 2010. If you do not receive your statement, please contact the Tax Office. Failure to receive a statement does not relieve the Taxpayer of the responsibility of payment. A drop-off slot is available at the township tax collectors office to accept payments before or after normal business hours. Tax statements are no longer mailed to the mortgage company. Taxpayers are responsible for sending their tax notice to their mortgage company for payment. Please forward statements to your mortgage company as soon as possible for prompt payment.

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday thru Thursday
8:00 am to 12:00 noon
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Friday - 8:00 am to 12:00 noon

724-238-2300

Closings

The Ligonier Township Municipal Building will be closed on:

October 8:
Ft. Ligonier Days

November 11 & 12:
Veterans Day

November 25, 26 & 29:
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 24:
Christmas Holiday

TOWNSHIP NEWS

From the Ligonier Township Supervisors: Resolution 2010-R-13

Recently, the Supervisors passed Resolution 2010-R-13, in opposition to Session 2010 proposed legislation known as HB 2431 and SB 1357 in Harrisburg. These proposed bills deal with efforts to force merge municipalities and to finally merge all municipalities into County government. An editorial was submitted to a phillyburbs.com internet blog presenting the argument in favor of these bills.

"It is about time the political will was mustered (sic) to do what can be a win-win for all Pennsylvanians - the elimination of redundant (sic) levels of governance, the consolidation of resources and the forward thinking of establishing a (sic) Counties as the local level of government. Much of the rest of the country runs quite well with the County government and incorporated and unincorporated jurisdictions. We should all have an open mind in dragging the 18 (sic) century style municipal government in to the 21st century." (Sic designations throughout this opinion piece reflect spelling and grammatical mistakes by the author and not mistakes in our typing).

At first glance, there may be discussion room in these ideas. And so, why did the Supervisors reject these ideas? And what is the ultimate plan we are only now beginning to see forced upon us? It is my belief that turning collection of Earned Income (Wage) taxes beginning 2012 over to the County, is the beginning of the elimination of local governments altogether. And why is this such a bad idea?

Pennsylvania's municipalities have always had the right to merge. Periodically, it is brought up again as an issue with Ligonier Township and Ligonier Borough. Currently, if the Township and Borough placed the question on an election day referendum, and the majority of voters supported the merger, it can be done without the proposed changes. The Township surrounds the Borough and so the outer borders would not change at all. But, there is a big reason why a referendum won't pass in the Township. Municipalities get the great bulk of their tax money from two sources: real estate taxes and wage taxes. Township residents are paying 3.5 mills while Borough residents are paying 6 TIMES as much. This is, in NO way, a slight on the Borough Council. But look how many properties are tax exempt in the Borough. And yet they must provide the same services found in the Township, and a few others as well. In addition, the Borough has a high percentage of retired residents, who do not pay wage taxes because they are no longer working.

What Township resident is going to vote to raise his real estate taxes in a sufficient amount to support the Borough. We are a single community and on wonderful terms in working together, but consideration of a marriage of the two municipalities would be rejected on economic grounds. Proposed legislation would tell us we have to come together regardless of the consequences.

And what is the problem with turning our problems over to the County to operate. The County is charging us 6 TIMES as much as Ligonier Township does for real estate taxes. Pull out your spring tax receipt. It shows clearly how much of what you paid is going to the County as compared to the Township. Basically, except for the maintenance of a single bridge in Darlington, our County provides us with NOTHING in exchange for what we send them. In no time, our real estate taxes will be raised to conform with what the County is charging already. Suddenly, they have to provide services - road and bridge maintenance and snow plowing, and ditch cleaning, and police and fire services (?) and I'm not sure I haven't missed other vital help. Taxes will soar as they develop additional levels of bureaucracy to cope with added levels of responsibility.

These are all economic considerations. But there are more. Who would you complain to when your drains are clogged, snow remains unplowed, roads deteriorate before your eyes? Does everybody with a problem go to the Commissioner's meeting to complain? How many of us have even met our Commissioners? It's not their fault either. As the level of government goes a step higher, the chances you have of getting help with any problem becomes more remote.

We are small communities on the eastern border of Westmoreland County. We will have no resources to bring together to make our needs heard. Currently, all the municipalities on this end of the County work together, and if we have issues that affect us all, we work together to supply the voice of our constituents to the State and Federal officials who need to know our problems.

The macro-planners, who think they have the clear picture from above, know nothing of the day-to-day operations in taking care of things and people that is the function at the "lower" levels of government. They don't care about the problems and concerns of people at the local level. They don't bother to consider, or never understood, what is meant by "all politics is local". Getting services and help to the people can never be done efficiently through levels and levels of government. This is done by the local municipalities paying attention to those who put them in office (and also who remove them when the job isn't getting done). In Ligonier Township, it is done as efficiently and inexpensively as it possibly can be. Your roads are being maintained, police are on duty every minute of every day, there is fire protection, and you have elected officials who will talk to you on the phone about your problems. You are paying us 3.5 mills in real estate taxes. The County is charging you 20.99 mills and using that money everywhere but Ligonier Township.

When we developed this newsletter, we made a careful effort not to use it for editorial letters. But it is vital that people know that efforts are being made behind their backs to take their last voice in how they are governed.

Important Facts to remember about Fort Ligonier Days

The 51st Fort Ligonier Days will be held October 8, 9 and 10, 2010 with sidewalk sales beginning on Thursday, October 7. The community parade will begin at 11:00 a.m Saturday, Oct. 9.

Visitors will be directed by signs to special parking areas. Parking is \$5 with free shuttle bus service provided all three days from Ligonier Valley High School. The shuttle will run from:

Oct 8 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Oct 9 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Oct. 10 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

We love our pets however:
pets are prohibited at the festivities.

Visitors are reminded that parking is prohibited on the shoulders of Route 30 within the borough of Ligonier. All the normal restrictions concerning parking are in full effect including:
No parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
No parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk/intersection
No parking within 30 feet of a stop sign
No parking in any place where official signs prohibit parking

All visitors will be ticketed and, if necessary, towed.

Chairs may not be placed on the parade route or Diamond area until Friday, October 8 **after 6:00 p.m.** The Ligonier Borough and Fort Ligonier Days Committee are not responsible for missing chairs.

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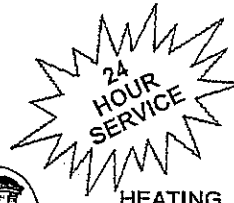
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MEETINGS

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER

- Ligonier Township Municipal Building.....724-238-2725
- Ligonier Township Municipal Authority** 7:00 p.m.
October 6 • November 3 • December 1
- Ligonier Township Supervisors' Work Session**.. 8:00 a.m.
October 7 • November 5 • December 10
- Ligonier Township Supervisors' Meeting**..... 7:00 p.m.
October 12 • November 9 • December 14
- Ligonier Township Recreation Board**..... 6:30 p.m.
October 14 • November 11 • December 9
- Ligonier Township Planning Commission**..... 7:30 p.m.
October 19 • November 16 • December 21
- Ligonier Township Zoning Hearing Board**..... 7:30 p.m.
October 26 • November 23 • December 28

Volunteer Fire Departments Directory

- Waterford Volunteer Fire Department..... 724-238-0471
Chief Robert Beaufort
- Darlington Volunteer Fire Department..... 724-238-4820
Chief Robert McDowell Cell..... 814-242-3785
- Wilpen Volunteer Fire Department..... 724-238-6585
Chief Michael DiRinaldo

LIGONIER TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY

- Ligonier Township Supervisors** 724-238-2725
William C. Penrod, Jr., Keith A. Whipkey, Timothy R. Komar
- Receptionist**
Barbara L. Hollick
- Ligonier Township Secretary / Treasurer**
Keith A. Whipkey
- Ligonier Township Zoning Officer/Assistant Secretary**
Cindy Turley..... 724-238-3640
- Ligonier Township Municipal Authority** 724-238-7464
Manager - Paul Knupp
Secretary - Anna Bills
- Ligonier Township Tax Collector** 724-238-2300
Sue R. Kinsey
- Ligonier Township Police** 724-238-5105
Chief of Police Michael W. Matrunics
- Ligonier Township Code Enforcement** 724-875-2785
- Ligonier Township Web Site**.....www.ligoniertwp.com
- Ligonier Township Email Address** ligsec@comcast.net
- Ligonier Township Fax Number** 724-238-3711
- Pennsylvania Municipal Service Co** 724-238-9450

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