



KENNETT TOWNSHIP

TO: Kennett Township Board of Supervisors
FROM: Eden Ratliff, Township Manager
SUBJECT: February 2022 Department Head Report

1. Broadband Update

As you recall from other reports and updates, a group of dedicated volunteers (Southern Chester County Digital Equity Coalition) affiliated with the Southern Chester County Opportunity Network (SCCON) are focusing on the lack of connectivity in Southern Chester County. Their areas of focus are broadband, cellphone coverage, and general connectivity. They are partnering with the municipalities and school districts in the southern part of Chester County, the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU, sponsored by Jessica Sahl, Assistant Director of Innovative Educational Services) as well as the County Commissioners to make progress in this arena.

Through grant funding they have hired a team of consultants, Magellan Advisors, to collect data and map areas of concern that can later be used with the different service providers in our area. The study will evaluate the lack of affordable and reliable high speed broadband access among schools, businesses, and households throughout Southern Chester County. The findings will form the basis for further action to transform our local economies in our region with robust connectivity.

On Friday, January 21st I had a meeting with Magellan and was able to share concerns specific to Kennett Township. I've also reached out to a number of our municipal neighbors asking if they'd be willing to do the same. I look forward to keeping you informed as this project progresses.

2. Recycling Grant Update

Each year, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides municipalities the opportunity to apply for a recycling grant (904 Performance Grant) based on the success of their recycling efforts. Performance is based on DEP-approved eligible materials and weight of material recovered from residents and commercial businesses. Our Recycling Coordinator and Procurement Specialist, Denise Serino, applied on behalf of Kennett Township in December of 2021 and I am happy to report that the Township received \$21,233.78 for recycling activity in 2020.

3. 2017 MTF Extension

In 2017, Kennett Township (Township) received notice of a Multimodal Transportation Fund award in the amount of \$1,700,000 to 1. rehabilitate the Chandler Mill Bridge and 2. complete trail construction in the same area. Since that time, the Township has made extensive progress on the project scope of work, completing the rehabilitation and construction of Chandler Mill Bridge. A payment request associated with the Chandler Mill Bridge portion of this project was submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development on March 3, 2021 in the amount of \$509,225.85.

The Township has asked the PA Department of Community and Economic Development for a third extension of twelve (12) month extension to extend the grant termination date to June 30, 2023. While the Chandler Mill Bridge portion of the project has been completely constructed, progress on the trail design work has been slowed due to significant time and attention redirected to the COVID-19 pandemic response and additional environmental design considerations. In June 2021, the Kennett Township Board of Supervisors approved the final engineering contract of the Chandler Mill trail segment. It is anticipated that the final design of the trail geometry and major components, as well as the coordination with the regulatory agencies, will be completed by the end of February 2022. Following permitting approval, it is anticipated that construction plans, bid documents, and specifications will be completed by August 2022, with construction slated to occur shortly thereafter. As a result, it is not expected that the overall project will be completed by the current grant expiration date of June 30, 2022.

4. Spar Hill Update

The Board is continuing to consider next steps for the Spar Hill property. In December, a Spar Hill Task Force was discussed and is still in early stages of development. One topic that came from that was a proposal to have a professional specializing in historic structures help develop a definitive plan for the structures on Spar Hill, incorporating already existing reports obtained by the Township. I have a meeting with Karen Marshall, Diane McGovern, Fredda Pennock, and Diane Hicks tomorrow to look into this idea further and look forward to keeping the public updated on this topic.

5. Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management (APMM) Executive Development Conference

On Thursday, February 10th and Friday, February 11th, I attended the APMM Executive Development Conference in Hershey, PA. I was honored to be asked to participate in a panel discussion on the topic of "Maintaining Professionalism/Neutrality in Difficult Circumstances" along with retired Manager Paul Lenard of Upper Dublin Township and Manager David Pribulka of Ferguson Township. I was able to share Kennett Township's experiences with fraud and the variety of publicity that accompanied it.

In addition to this panel session, the other sessions included Strategies for Managing in a Local Government in 2022: Polarization, Cultural Dynamics, Uncivil Rhetoric & Social Media, Leadership During Crisis, ICMA Code of Ethics Review, and Evolving Profession:

An Interactive Discussion About Ever-Changing Roles of Public Administrators. This was a valuable conference and I look forward to applying what I learned there to Kennett Township.

Respectfully Submitted.

Eden R. Ratliff
Township Manager