

Bedminster backs open space plan

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The Bedminster Township Board of Supervisors threw their weight behind the Bucks County Open Space Referendum, which will appear on the Nov. 6 ballot, at a recent meeting.

"The open space referendum is before the voters for consideration, and the outcome is not absolutely certain," said Bedminster Supervisors Chairman Eric Schaffhausen. "The supervisors of Bedminster Township are strongly in favor of this measure and have passed a resolution supporting it.

"In my view, nothing is more important, financially and aesthetically, to the long-term future of the township and the county than preserving open space while it is still available."

At the same meeting, the board gave conditional final approval for the construction of six houses on the McKnight tract on Slotter Road. It was agreed that a field contiguous to the land already conserved by Louis Burke will be preserved as part of the standard agriculture protection zoning requirements,

and the houses will be built on another part of the property that is unsuitable for farming.

In a related measure, the board appointed Sarah Heyer part-time assistant in the Bedminster Land Use Office as of Oct. 1. She joins Sue Demusz, also a part-time assistant, in the office, which is overseen by manager Dawn Cook. The hiring was deemed necessary to prepare for increasing activity in this vitally important office.

Also, the Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee (PACC) has been formed to assess the quality of groundwater in Central Bucks County.

Recognizing that the supply of water is not infinite and that management would soon be necessary to oversee consumption and pollution, a number of entities joined together under the direction of senior planner David Livrone to pool resources and collect the data necessary to judge the quality and quantity of available water.

Because 95 percent of constituents draw their water from the ground, and because it is not financially feasible to

do small studies, PACC was formed. It comprises the boroughs of Perkasio, Sellersville, Dublin and Silverdale and the townships of East and West Rockhill, Bedminster and Hilltown, along with the Pennridge Chamber of Commerce, the Pennridge School District and the Heritage Conservancy.

The collected data will provide a clear view of the current status of available water and, as such, will affect development in the area. The study is a new tool for the management of growth.

According to Executive Director of the Bucks County Planning Commission Lynn Bush, this project has been ongoing for five years, and approximately \$250,000 has been spent.

"We've finished six of the seven parts," she said, "and we keep adding pieces to the puzzle."

The multipronged approach that has been taken considers groundwater, rainfall and usage; how to protect the water's quality; how to dispose of used water; and how to capture as much stormwater as possible.