

THE KENNETT PIKE ASSOCIATION

Newsletter



February 2017

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Walkable Mixed Use Communities – What Goes Around Comes Around



I grew up in a town in New Jersey in the 1950's. Woodbury had a town center with 20-30 shops and establishments including a drug store, a restaurant, clothing stores, shoe stores, a paint store, 2 hardware stores, a movie theater, an Acme and an A&P, an elementary school, a middle school, a high school, and 3-4 churches. Though we lived on the outskirts of town, we walked or rode our bikes everywhere we went, and my mother did not drive a car and walked to do her shopping. That might seem old

fashioned now, but we lived in the equivalent of a modern mixed-use, walkable community.

Throughout North America cities large and small are marketing their walkability as a sign of an energetic and attractive community. Such communities give residents the opportunity to live, work, shop and dine in a walkable area. Municipal governments everywhere see this increased livability as an opportunity to create new jobs, increase property values, and enhance communities without the need for additional infrastructure.

In May of 2016 the state of Delaware passed an innovative policy tool that should enable communities in the state to become more biking and walking friendly. The "Complete Communities" bill sets up a framework for the Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and local governments to work together to build bikeable, walkable communities. In exchange for permitting development at higher densities to increase transit ridership, DelDOT will provide local governments with funding to overcome barriers to walking and biking.

Cont.....

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Here in New Castle County the Unified Development Code is being updated and an exciting new addition will create development standards for Placemaking and Healthy Communities. Healthy Communities encourages development patterns and practices that promote healthy lifestyle choices --- physical activity such as biking and walking, and less dependence on the automobile. Placemaking encourages development practices that create a distinct sense of identity. The buildings, sites and public spaces can give a place a sense of identity for residents, employees and visitors. Healthy Communities and Placemaking standards can be implemented in a variety of ways including Mixed Use options where people can live, work, dine and shop in walkable places. But walkability does not mean no cars. It means a balance between pedestrians, bicyclists, cars and buses. It means slower paced streets, enhanced pedestrian safety, and improved public transportation.

In addition to higher property values, greater diversity and healthier lifestyles, studies have shown that people in walkable communities have a greater sense of community, pride of ownership, and a feeling of comradery with their neighbors. In short: happier people!

The trend towards mixed use, walkable communities continues to grow in popularity, growing more than twice as fast as the overall market. Time will tell how New Castle County and the state of Delaware fare in this transition.

Alert: Emerald Ash Borer Confirmed in Delaware

The Emerald Ash Borer is a metallic green beetle about ½ inch long that feeds on ash trees. Adult beetles lay eggs on the bark, and when the eggs hatch the larvae bore into the bark and feed on the water and nutrient transportation tissues of the tree. Within 2 years the tree usually dies. Since 2002 hundreds of millions of ash trees have been killed. The Emerald Ash Borer is native to Asia and was transported to the United States probably in packing materials made of ash. The first borer was found near Detroit MI in 2002 and since then has spread widely across central and eastern US states. The borer was confirmed to be in Delaware in August 2016. It is feared that the Emerald Ash Borer may eventually kill most ash trees with mortality similar to the hemlock woolly adegid and the American chestnut blight. When the adult beetle emerges from the tree it will leave behind a “D” shaped hole of about 1/8 inch. Initially infested trees will show a thinning and dying crown, and there may be sprouts growing from the main stem of the tree. Insects below the bark attract more woodpeckers causing the tree to lose patches of bark. Infested dying ash trees should be cut down and the wood chipped, burned or buried. Insecticides are available for those wishing to protect ornamental trees.





Quick Updates

- The Crooked Billet development on the historic Brindley Farm property is proceeding as the proposed 55+ community gains the necessary approvals. The 28-acre estate just north of the Christiana Care facility was originally deeded by William Penn and visited by General George Washington just before the Battle of the Brandywine. Developer and builder Tim Dewson plans to build 22 single family homes while preserving 14 acres as open space, and the estate home will also be preserved. In addition, 7 new homes will be constructed on Kent Road joining the Westover Hills C community.
- The Country House retirement community in Greenville is proceeding with their plans to expand their facilities. 55 new independent living apartments and 18,000 square feet of amenities will be constructed by extending the front of the main building. In addition, 20 context-sensitive duplex cottages in 10 buildings will be constructed on the Charis Parcel closer to the Delaware Museum of Natural History.
- The Wagoner's Row development at the southeast corner of Buck Road and Route 100 has now gotten underway. A suit challenging the proposed development was found in favor of Wagoner's Row. The 20-acre property owned by the Mary Kaye Carpenter Trust will have 12 cape-style homes approximately 3000 square feet each for people over age 55. The owners worked with the community to increase the setback from the roadway and to agree to height restrictions and requested landscaping.
- The Stonebrook development just north of Stonegates in Greenville has broken ground and started construction on 6 new homes. The new homes will be about 2,700 to 2,900 square feet and sold to age 50+ residents. The developer worked with the community to convince the state and county to waive requirements for sidewalks along the Kennett Pike, which would not have connected to any other sidewalks or pathways. The original home will be preserved.
- The Marra Project located just south of the Al DuPont Middle School in Greenville is also proceeding. This is a 4-lot subdivision with the new homes set well back from the Kennett Pike --- more than 125 feet --- with significant landscaping along the roadway.

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Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway : Proposed Overlay

The Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway (BVNSB) is comprised of the Kennett Pike and Route 100 / Montchanin Road. It was recognized as a national treasure when it was designated one of just 120 National Scenic Byways in America and has since been judged to be one of the top 10 in the country for its wonderful intrinsic scenic, historic and cultural qualities. The National Scenic Byway designation requires the state, county and community to take actions to preserve and protect its intrinsic qualities. A Corridor Management Plan has been developed and adopted, and several organizations, including the Kennett Pike Association, are working to ensure that the Byway is not threatened.

A proposal has been submitted to New Castle County to create a form-based overlay for the Byway. Such an overlay would encompass the entire Byway north of Wilmington and would establish more stringent standards to preserve the viewsheds and protect the rich heritage and culture we all cherish. The proposed standards include limits on building heights, set-backs from the Byway, and signage restrictions including the number of signs, the size of signs and the illumination of signs. In addition, we are proposing to the County and the State to create walkable pathways instead of sidewalks and curbs. Finally, we have asked the State to consider gradually placing the utility lines now on poles underground when the opportunity presents itself, and to standardize utility fixtures such as traffic light stands to a context-sensitive design.

The BVNSB Partnership has endorsed the proposed new standards and New Castle County has shown some support too. They will shortly consider the detailed proposals and convert them into codes which would apply to the overlay district. County Council will then vote on the new codes, with County Councilman Bob Weiner leading the effort to push for their adoption. We recently met with the new County Executive Matt Meyer and the new Land Use General Manager Rich Hall to ask for their support.

The proposed Byway overlay with the more stringent standards will take us a significant step forward in preserving and protecting this National treasure.

“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance.”

Theodore Roosevelt



Intercollegiate Studies Institute Expansion

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational organization whose mission is to instill an understanding of, and appreciation for America's founding principles, including the importance of the rule of law, capitalism and free markets, individualism, personal responsibility and personal liberty. It is located at 3901 Centerville Road near the intersection with Hillside Road, on the banks of Hoopes Reservoir.

ISI is proposing to expand its facilities for conferences, offices and a library. The 23-acre property was one of the first Historic Zone Overlay / Adaptive Reuse projects in New Castle County and has won many accolades including the Historic Preservation Award in 1997. The expansion is intended to make its facility more open and accommodating to students, donors, and the community, while maintaining its quiet, unassuming and neighbor-friendly presence.

In the early 1950's journalist Frank Chodorov called for a project to revive the American ideals of individual freedom and personal responsibility. In 1953 Chodorov founded ISI and selected a young journalist --- William F. Buckley Jr. --- to lead the new organization. ISI has a proud history in carrying out their mission. President Ronald Reagan said, "By the time the Reagan Revolution marched into Washington, I had the troops I needed --- thanks in no small measure to the work with American youth ISI had been doing since 1953." Prominent alumni include Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, PayPal Cofounder Peter Thiel, Editor William Kristol, Journalist Laura Ingraham, and many others.

After 42 years in Philadelphia, ISI moved its headquarters in 1995 to the present site, the old Worth estate. On behalf of the immediate neighbors, the Kennett Pike Association will hold certain deed restrictions to ensure that the neighborhood retains it's quiet and bucolic ambience.



Barley Mill Plaza Update

The Stoltz real estate group purchased the 92-acre Barley Mill Plaza site from DuPont in 2007 for \$94 million. One year later they proposed a massive development on the site including 700 apartments and condos, 731,000 square feet of retail space, and 1.5 million square feet of offices. The community was galvanized to oppose this proposal. In 2010 the County Executive Chris Coons announced a “compromise” which reduced the project to 1.6 million square feet of offices and retail shops. The Delaware Chancery Court ultimately overturned the rezoning approved by New Castle County Council leaving the site development in limbo.

In 2012 Stoltz sold 35-acres furthest from Rt. 141 to Odyssey Charter School, and a year later sold the remaining 57-acres to Pettinaro along with the Greenville Center, Powder Mill Square, the Montchanin Corporate Center, Greenville Professional Center, and Barley Mill House. Greg Pettinaro, a Greenville resident, wants to build a mixed use plaza comprising offices, residences and shops that will be embraced by the community.

Mr. Pettinaro is expected to share his initial plans with local civic and neighborhood groups in April.

For 60 years the Kennett Pike Association has been working for the community to preserve, protect and beautify the Kennett Pike and Route 100 corridors ---- Delaware’s only National Scenic Byway. We are able to carry on our work thanks to the generosity of our many members who live, work and visit here. We are proud to have as members some 250 families, 35 small businesses and neighborhood associations, 10 corporate sponsors, and 11 median sponsors --- without their support we could not do our work. Thank you on behalf of the community for making our area a better and more beautiful place in which to live and work. A special “Thank You” also to our volunteer Board of Directors who work hard to pull it all together:

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New Castle County Updating Unified Development Code

In early 2015 New Castle County launched a project to update and amend the Unified Development Code (UDC). The UDC is the primary guide to development in New Castle County and it establishes standards, procedures and requirements for new and existing developments consistent with the Comprehensive Development Plan. The update project is planned for 3 phases and the first phase is now largely complete.

Following a significant amount of groundwork and review, the Land Use department hosted a series of public workshops and focus group meetings in September 2016 to seek input on some major themes of the update. On Monday January 23 County Executive Matt Meyer signed 3 new ordinances creating: (1) a new Appendix 7 with Guiding Principles for new development, (2) the standards for creating neighborhood preservation overlay districts, and (3) a new zoning district for economic empowerment.

The Appendix 7 Guiding Principles include such things as Walkable Communities with a sense of place, development designs that respect the neighborhood context, and guiding design principles appropriate for each context area. Appendix 7 will be an advisory supplement to the UDC.

The part dealing with establishing new overlay zoning districts --- Neighborhood Preservation Overlay Districts (NPOD's) -- aims to maintain the distinctive physical qualities of existing neighborhoods. It will identify neighborhoods with distinctive and cohesive physical characteristics, it will develop and adopt regulations that will maintain, strengthen and enhance those qualities, and it will provide a framework for establishing regulations to protect the neighborhood character including building heights, setbacks and streetscape elements.

The final part dealing with establishing new Economic Empowerment Districts is intended to create a master planned campus-like setting comprising corporate headquarters, high-tech offices, research and light assembly centers, and planned employment centers. Each EED will have a set of guidelines to accommodate development or reuse land. Such sites must be a minimum of 10-acres, 90% of the floor space must be for target industries, and must be proximate to a collector or arterial roadway.

The final 2 phases of the UDC update project are projected to be completed during 2017.



KPA MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT

The KPA has been protecting and beautifying the Kennett Pike and Route 100 corridors for more than 55 years. We are blessed to have an all-volunteer leadership team, but the plantings, landscaping and maintenance cost a lot of money each year. We could not do our work without our family members, our median sponsors, and our company and neighborhood association supporters. On behalf of the entire community, "THANK YOU" for making our surroundings more beautiful!

Please support the KPA in its work, and become a member, with a tax deductible payment

Name

Street

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