

PLANNING INSIGHT

A Newsletter of the Bucks County Planning Commission



GRANTS INSIGHT

FEMA offers a Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program for providing funding that reduces long-term flood damage risk. **Application deadline: January 28, 2022.**
www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/floods

The PA Historical & Museum Commission offers the **Certified Local Government Grant**, which provides support for services needed to administer local preservation programs. **Application deadline: October 30, 2021.**
www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Certified-Local-Government.aspx#1

PECO Green Region program provides grants to preserve protect, and improve public spaces. **Application deadline: September 30, 2021 at 4:00 PM.**
apps.natlands.org/pecogreenregion/

The **Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management (CZM)** grant program provides funds that address one or more priority areas of the Coastal Resources Management program. **Application deadline: October 18, 2021 at 4:00 PM.**
www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/Compacts%20and%20Commissions/Coastal%20Resources%20Management%20Program/Pages/Grants.aspx

PennDOT is now accepting applications for the Multimodal Transportation Fund Program. **Applicant Deadline: November 5, 2021.** www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/Pages/default.aspx

Check out more grant opportunities on the BCPC's Grants Portal:
buckscounty.gov/1134/Grants-Portal

BUCKS TRIVIA

Where is the oldest burial ground in Bucks County located?

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Greetings. We normally plan our newsletter content well in advance of our anticipated release date. You will note this edition features a "guest contributor" providing information on the local grass roots efforts around the Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign and the goal of 100 percent clean, renewable energy.

As we look back over the weather this past month, the idea of a resilient power distribution grid is even more apparent. Damaging floods, tornados, and straight-line winds have wrought havoc on our communities, and our hearts and prayers go out to those who have been affected. Our reliance on technology, powered by electricity, grinds to a halt when that system is disrupted for hours or days at a time.

As our climate and weather changes, so must our thinking on how we plan for, obtain and distribute the electricity we rely upon. Solar

power is certainly one alternative.

Our [Model Alternative Energy Ordinance](#) provides numerous examples of how we believe we can move our communities forward, building in resiliency and incentivizing sustainable energy planning and design. If your community has not considered the Ready for 100 Challenge, perhaps the article will help generate a healthy conversation around the topic and lead to positive steps and favorable outcomes.

As always, my door is open, and I may be reached via e-mail or phone at estone@buckscounty.org or 215.345.3401.

Please remember to visit our *Bucks2040, Building our Future Together*, comprehensive plan project website at www.bucks2040.com.

I look forward to hearing from you and welcome your feedback. Enjoy *Planning InSight!*

READY FOR 100 BUCKS COUNTY

Global climate change is the defining issue of the 21st century and the stakes are too high to ignore. The causes and effects of global climate change have been well understood by scientists for years, and their predictions have been borne out: increasing temperatures, severe weather events, negative health impacts, economic disruption, and adverse effects on quality of life. These issues are already occurring and will continue to accelerate.

The U.S. National Climate Assessment (U.S. NCA) has made specific predictions for Pennsylvania and the Northeast Region. The U.S. NCA predicts shorter winters, hotter summers, and increased intensity of precipitation. These predictions adversely affect agriculture, forestry, tourism, coastal recreation, commerce, infrastructure, and health.

In 1960, there was an average of 15 days per year to reach over 90 degrees Fahrenheit in Philadelphia. In 2017, that number was 22 days, and by 2040 it can be expected to be around 35 days. The time for climate action is now, and our response over the next 10 years will ultimately determine our long-term fate.

[Ready for 100](#) is a grass-roots initiative that works with individuals, communities, and political leaders to commit to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. The initiative is supported nationwide by the Sierra club and is particularly active in Southeastern Pennsylvania. *Continued...*





READY FOR 100 BUCKS COUNTY CONTINUED

Ready for 100 has two specific goals: for communities to commit to 100 percent renewable electricity by 2035, and 100 percent renewable energy for all uses (including heat and transportation) by 2050. These goals are aligned with the most recent international recommendation to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Ready for 100 has the following clear set of operating principles: energy efficiency first, equity for all members of the community, clear definitions of clean and renewable energy, inclusive and transparent planning processes, local generation and job creation, and political advocacy at the state level.

The Ready for 100 initiative has been active in Bucks County since September 2019. Since then, four townships have agreed to resolutions committing their communities to these goals: Doylestown Township in March 2020, Solebury Township in July 2020, Buckingham Township in October 2020, and Warrington Township in July 2021. In February 2021, Bucks County also approved a resolution committing to a renewable energy future. All of these communities are now working out

energy transition plans. Working on their own, West Rockhill Township has now become the first township in Pennsylvania to transition to 100 percent solar electric.

Many other communities in Bucks County are considering resolutions with their own elected leaders, and the pace of commitments will increase as momentum builds for local action. Long term success will require a critical mass of communities working together to share ideas and experience, contribute skills, and to take advantage of the economies of scale.

The transition to 100 percent renewable energy at the local level is within our control. It won't be easy or quick, but it is possible, necessary, and the right thing to do. Please join Ready for 100 Bucks County and activate your community. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm. For more information, contact Jim Baldassarre at jbaldassarre@verizon.net or Andrea Strout at alstrout_2000@yahoo.com and visit: <https://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/southeastern/ready-for-100-bucks-county>

PAPER STREETS

Do you have paper streets on your official municipal maps? Have you officially vacated them? If not, it might be time to consider doing so and here's why:

Based on a recent planning interaction in Newtown Borough, the subject of paper streets became a topic of debate. At the core, Pennsylvania statutes stipulate that streets which are laid out but have not been opened, nor used by the public for 21 years, cannot be opened without consent of at least 51 percent of the adjoining property owners and further, ownership reverts back to the adjoining property owners. Where this gets interesting is when viewing the county's tax parcel data as these paper streets continue to be represented and mapped. In many cases, if not all, it becomes highly likely that a "de facto" vacation has occurred as the municipality has

not met its burden of dedication and has exercised "municipal will" through inaction. While case law supports the concept of de facto vacation, it leaves open the question of official lot line adjustments and the validity of remnant paper streets on our parcel database.

Based on this, and to avoid ambiguity, it is recommended that paper streets, which have been unopened for more than 21 years, be officially vacated through municipal action. Official vacation allows the reversion of property interests to adjoining lot owners and allows the affected lot lines to be accurately represented and depicted on our board of assessment parcel data layer and map application. Naturally, there may be unique circumstances in every case and input from your solicitor is recommended.



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www.buckscounty.gov

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www.dataportal-bucksgis.opendata.arcgis.com

Bucks County Planning Commission

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Trivia Answer:

Slate Hill Cemetery in Lower Makefield Township is believed to be the oldest burial ground in the county, with gravestones dating back to 1698.

www.nps.gov/nr/travel/delaware/sla.htm

