

The State of the Township



February 25, 2020

**Report Prepared by:
Amanda Serock,
Township Manager**

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Dear Council,

As your Township Manager, it is my honor to report on the State of Concord Township. To begin, I would like to congratulate the three new Council members sworn in this year. I look forward to working together to position this amazing community for continued prosperity in this new decade. Our future is looking bright: Our economy continues to be strong; Our financial picture is healthy; and Our planning efforts over the last decade are coming to fruition. While this new decade ahead is sure to pose many challenges for local governments across this commonwealth, our focus is to meet these challenges while positioning Concord Township as a regional leader in achieving a quality of life for our residents that is a model to other communities.

A COMMUNITY TO LIVE, WORK & RAISE YOUR FAMILY

As Council President Dominic Pileggi articulately stated in his 2020 memorandum to taxpayers, “Concord Township continues to be an extremely desirable and enviable location to live, work, raise our families, retire or own and operate a business. This provides Concord Township and the Garnet Valley School district with an extremely healthy real estate tax base and a tax collection rate above 98% as well as a favorable ratio of non-residential and age-restricted communities that helps fund our excellent Garnet Valley Schools. Our ability to again not have to raise our Township Taxes is also due to the hard work of our Township employees and consultants, who in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, continue to stretch our tax dollars to their maximum potential.” This statement from President Pileggi, a resident for over 30 years, couldn’t be truer. We have thousands of residents in Concord Township that grew up here, started businesses here and stayed here to raise their families, and thousands more who have relocated to Concord Township because of our prime regional location, award winning school district, safe neighborhoods, sound economy, diverse housing stock, access to top notch retail, family/pet friendly parks and for our over 300 acres of preserved open space. Where else in Delaware County can you have all these amenities and still have your Township taxes under 1 mill, averaging only \$327/year for the average Township taxpayer?? The answer is.... nowhere!

OPEN & HONEST GOVERNMENT

According to the Government Study Commission Members in 2016, authors of the Home Rule Charter, “...the current Board of Supervisors exercises a level of transparency that exceeds the requirements of both the 2nd Class Code and the Sunshine Act.” This tradition of transparency was exemplified with the adoption of the Home Rule Charter and has been continued by Council and staff since its inception. Some of the many efforts that have been enhanced are:

- Communication of Council Initiatives to the Public Through Various Media Outlets (i.e. live streaming of meetings, annual printed newsletter for budget preparations, postcards for

township events, increased social media presence, new LED message signs in two different areas of the Township, and a new user friendly website scheduled to launch in March.

- An Annual State of the Township Address Prepared by the Township Manager and Presented at a Public Meeting.
- An Annual Budget Message & Budget Presentation Prepared by the Township Manager and Presented at Public Meetings.
- Annual Audits Conducted by an Outside CPA Firm & an Audit Presentation Prepared by the Township Manager and Presented at Public Meetings.
- Financial Updates to Protect Current Financial Resources (i.e. fund balance policy, review of banking procedures, investments, administrative responsibility reviews, and insurance policy enhancements).
- A Five-Year Capital Planning Document to Notify the Public of Major Initiatives and to Assure the Viability of our Important Infrastructure.
- Availability of Hundreds of Documents on the Township's Website for Residents to Review & Download.
- Monthly Reports Given by Council, Consultants, Committee Members and Staff at Public Council Meetings to Report on the Monthly Business Activities of the Township.

These communication measures and policies are in place to assist the public in engaging in Township government, whether at home or by attending one of our public meetings. In 2020 we are planning more engaging opportunities for the public including open houses, on-line surveys, and a visioning workshop. We encourage all residents to get involved in the process and to reach out to Council members or staff with any questions or ideas to assure our tradition of an accessible, open and honest government continues.

DEMONSTRATED FISCAL LEADERSHIP

Concord Township has continued its goal of impeccable services to our residents while maintaining a low tax base. Township Council and staff continue to achieve this goal by being fiscally prudent in our operations and through annual evaluation of fund balance and costs and services to maintain efficiencies within our organization. The Township staff has been working over the past few years to put protections and planning mechanisms in place to assure a healthy financial picture for years to come. Some of those measures include, an updated fund balance policy, review of contracts and agreements to achieve better cost containment, hiring of additional staff to achieve more separate roles/duties to protect from full-circle duties in our finance department, increasing of insurance policies to further protect the Township from theft, and also evaluating services that can be outsourced to more effectively position Township staff and to achieve further savings.

Our fiscal responsibility is further demonstrated through our Moody's bond rating of Aa1. A rating which is the second highest ranking by Moody's and considered by the S&P as AA+, which signifies creditworthiness and credit stability. According to Moody's Investor Services, "Concord Township has

a very good credit position...the notable credit factors include a robust financial position, extremely small debt and pension liabilities, a very strong wealth and income profile and a healthy tax base.”

OUR EXEMPLARY TEAM

*“Great things in business are never done by one person, they’re done by a **team** of people.” – Steve Jobs*

This quote holds very true in Concord Township as we have a team of people consisting of staff, volunteers, consultants and committee/board members who dedicate many hours to providing impeccable services to our residents. In fact, most of these folks live, work and raise their families in Concord Township. This dedicated group of individuals is constantly striving to meet and exceed expectations of service delivery. I am honored to work for a Township where I receive regular positive feedback from the public on how great our team is at assisting our residents. I would like to personally thank each person for their hard work, positive attitudes, and dedication each day.

Teamwork by the Numbers 2019:

- Zoning Hearing Board – Reviewed and processed 17 cases.
- Planning Commission – Reviewed 12 Subdivision & Land Development Applications, Reviewed 3 Ordinances, Two Conditional Use Applications, and One Sewer Planning Module.
- Parks & Recreation Board – Successfully Planned & Managed 7 Township Events and Activities, and Managed 43 Pavilion Rentals.
- Historical Commission – Reviewed 3 Demolition Permits, Reviewed 12 Subdivision & Land Development Applications to Assure Historic Resources Were Protected, Drafted an Amendment to the Historic Ordinance, and Continued Finalizing the Township’s Historic Inventory Resources List.
- Codes Department – Completed 2, 842 Property Safety Inspections, Processed 25 HOP Permits, 27 Septic Permits, Processed 179 Resale Certificates, Issued 70 Sign Permits, 7 Special Event Permits, 318 Building Permits, 122 Plumbing Permits, 236 Electrical Permits, 200 HVAC Permits, 11 Fire Code Permits, 23 Zoning Permits, and 39 E&S Permits.
- PW Department - Repaired/Replaced 38 Street Signs, Managed 21 Snow/Ice Storms with 1,334.5 tons of Salt, Maintained over 50 Miles of Roadway, Repaired/Patched Potholes with 22.79 tons of Cold Patch, and Maintained over 300 Acres of Township Open Space.
- Sewer Department – Maintained over 58 Miles of Sewer Lines for over 2,700 Customers, Maintained and Monitored 2 Sewer Plants including a Main Plant Averaging Over 1.1 MGD, Managed 14 Pump Stations, Managed 5 Privately Owned Pump Stations, and Performed 105 Lateral Inspections.
- Administrative Staff – Fielded/resolved hundreds of Township calls, processed 34 solicitation permits, Prepared 53 Resolutions and 6 Ordinances for Council approval, Created a You Tube Channel and a Streaming Channel for recording of live meetings, Created 10 Newsletters, and posted over 100 social media posts, which reached an average of over 15,600 people.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES AHEAD

 **Capital Planning** – Capital Planning is integral to a healthy financial picture for the Township. Maintaining high-quality infrastructure is essential to the economic vitality and quality of life of our community. As part of the five-year capital planning process, the Township assesses the infrastructure opportunities and challenges ahead. Items on a capital plan are not cheap and they require a keen focus on balancing needs and benefit for the community, expected life of the infrastructure, and costs. While the Township currently has a robust fund balance to plan for such expenditures, those monies must be planned out strategically to balance our needs for the next decade. The current capital plan includes Township expenditures of approximately \$20million dollars and Sewer expenditures of approximately \$14million dollars. We have balanced those expenditures by using grant monies, developer monies, loans, and fund balance achieved through various revenue sources.

 **Grants** – The Township’s team of staff and consultants has provided the greatest opportunities for Concord Township by leveraging Township dollars with local, state and federal grant monies. These monies help to fund important priorities for Township Council over the next decade and include, open space purchases, trail expansion, infrastructure upgrades, etc. In the next three years the Township will receive over \$4million dollars in grant funding and under Council’s leadership we will continue to apply for future opportunities.

 **Sustainability** – Sustainability in Government is a complex matter. It is focusing our efforts on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In the next decade, under Council’s leadership the Township will evaluate its operations, policies and practices to create a brighter future for the next generation. Currently, the Township is evaluating solar opportunities for our sewer plant, partnering with the Newlin Grist Mill to implement better maintenance practices as land stewards, evaluating the possibilities for more green infrastructure on Township owned properties, creating more trails for the public to walk, bike and run to destinations within the Township with the hopes of alleviating traffic congestion, planning for EV Charging stations in public parks and on the municipal campus, engaging our land planner and engineers to design more sustainable landscaping at our parks, municipal campus, and gateway areas along our highways, and considering legislation to address plastics, and to possibly create a council of consultants to address our future environmental needs.

 **Open Space** – If you have lived in Concord Township for over 30 years or 5 years you know the importance of focusing our efforts on the protection of open space. However, you also know that the Township cannot do this alone. The acquiring of open space needs a willing seller and the funds to purchase the land. Over the next decade Council has committed millions of dollars to achieve this goal of expanding our current 300+ preserved acres and working with landowners to consider many options to preserve/protect their land from future development. To say that this process takes time is an

understatement. To say that the Township has the funding in place now to protect everything it can from development would be a lie. To say that Council is doing everything in its power to protect/preserve what it can from development is the truth. The balance of protecting open space and the rights of property owners is a constant challenge. The fact is that many of us live in homes built on what was once farmland. Council's commitment to strategize and fund open space opportunities has been a top priority, and in 2019 we saved an additional 25+ acres that otherwise would have been developed.

As we approach this next decade, I want to implore everyone on our team and all our residents to take responsibility in keeping Concord Township as an exemplary community to live, work and raise our beautiful families! Let's work together in a positive respectful manner to achieve our shared goals.

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'it's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." - Mr. Fred Rogers

Let's be our own heroes!

Very Truly Yours,

Amanda Serock
Concord Township Manager