



SPRING 2012

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Beautification of the Pike Starts With a Successful Partnership
The Kennett Pike Association and the Delaware Center for Horticulture

By Emma Howells

Driving north along Kennett Pike is a journey from urban to residential to pastoral zones. It was the challenge to beautify this diverse highway that first bought the KPA and the Delaware Center for Horticulture (The DCH) together ten years ago. The DCH works with local community groups to create beautiful and healthy places in Delaware. In this interview with two members of The DCH team – Gary Schwetz, Senior Project Analyst and Lenny Wilson, Assistant Director of Horticulture – we discuss how their collaboration with KPA has blossomed into a successful partnership.

What was The DCH involvement with the median improvements through Greenville?

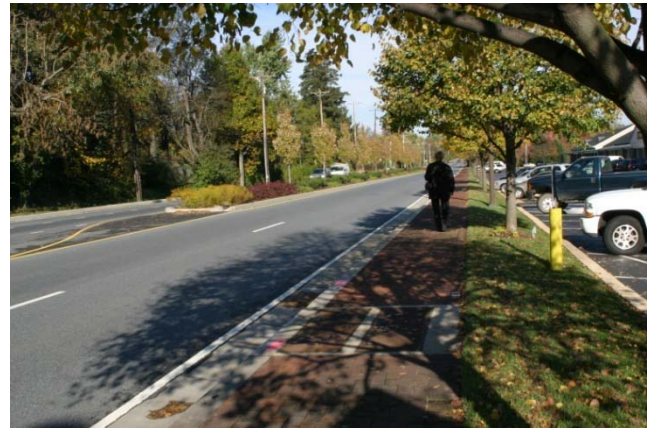
The planning began for the first medians on Kennett Pike in 1999. The DCH advised on layout, design and technical issues. External contractors built and maintained these medians.

Some of the original trees in these medians before we started were invasive Norway Maples. The KPA worked together with The DCH to redesign the landscaping. In 2002 the maples were removed and new landscaping was planted in the medians by The DCH.

What was the design strategy for these medians?

Our focus was to create a landscape design that provided year-round interest for passing motorists and emphasized blocks of colors with the trees as central interest points. All designs also had to conform to DeIDOT requirements. Roadside plants must be either native species or non-invasive and not grown beyond certain size restrictions.

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What plants were selected for the medians and what qualities were you looking for?

The plants in our palette were all hardy and resistant to disease and insect infestation. To ensure low maintenance, we emphasized native shrubs that naturally form thickets and colonies to suppress weeds.

The plants we chose included: Armstrong Maple, Winterbury Holly, Switch Grass, Amsonia, Russian Sage, Daffodils and Crocuses.

What challenges did you face in your installation of the medians?

Over 800 shrubs and perennials were planted during the installation in the first week of April 2002. It was unseasonably hot that week and the plants had to be carefully tended.

Working in the middle of a busy highway required that the planting crew remain alert to the dangers of the situation. The workers had to learn to block out the noise and distraction so that they could concentrate on planting.

How much maintenance of the site is now required?

Now that the plants are well-established, the maintenance only requires annual mulching, a fall and spring cleanup, and bi-weekly visits to the sites for weeding and trash clearance.

Can you tell me about how The DCH worked with DeIDOT recently to save trees along Routes 52 and 82?

The original plans to widen the road at this junction called for the removal of dozens of large, well-established trees. This news was not well received by the community and there was pressure to stall the project.

The DCH is currently in negotiations with DeIDOT to find alternative solutions that will preserve trees and maintain the integrity of the Scenic Byway. Arborists from The DCH recommended which trees could be removed with minimal disruption, taking into consideration which trees were the least valuable environmentally and aesthetically.

Discussions are still ongoing, but the most recent plan is to shorten turn lanes, thus reducing the amount of new pavement. If this plan is approved fewer trees will have to be removed and new trees to replace them will be planted at the work zone area.

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What process does The DCH follow on roadside beautification projects?

Any project between The DCH and a local community must be initiated by representatives of that community and include people with authority to make decisions. The property in question must belong to the public or a public service agency.

Our most successful beautification projects always involve The DCH very early in the development and design stages. This allows us to apply our expertise to develop innovative horticultural solutions with sustainable management strategies, and ensure that native Delaware landscapes are conserved.

What new initiatives is The DCH working on with the KPA?

The DCH is working closely with DeIDOT and KPA to enhance the two large medians that straddle the intersection of Routes 141 and 100. A lovely new landscape design has been completed for this location. Currently The DCH is securing plant material and developing an installation schedule.

In addition to ongoing maintenance of the intersection of Routes 52 and 82 and several other medians along 52, representatives from The DCH, DeIDOT and KPA meet frequently to identify future projects that will provide sustainable and beautiful landscape plantings for everyone who travels along Kennett Pike to enjoy.

The DCH, DeIDOT and the KPA ----- a beautiful partnership!

Possible Repeal of National Scenic Byway Program

There is pending legislation before Congress that would repeal the very successful National Scenic Byway Program launched 21 years ago. If repealed, it would reverse 21 years of voluntary grass roots hard work in Delaware and other states to create 150 scenic byways across America treasured and preserved for their intrinsic beauty and historical and cultural qualities.

Delaware has just one National Scenic Byway ---- the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway ---- which includes the Kennett Pike and Route 100 corridors from Route 1 in Pennsylvania to Wilmington.

This important program has been the catalyst for the creation of thousands of state scenic byways, including many in Delaware. The program has been a genuine economic development success creating jobs and helping small businesses.

The KPA, Delaware Greenways and other organizations have asked our delegation of national leaders in Washington DC ---- Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Chris Coons, Senator Tom Carper, and Representative John Carney ---- to support the continuation of this program, which represents less than one-tenth-of-one-percent of the Transportation and Infrastructure budget.

We encourage you to let them know your feelings as well!



Update on Stoltz Projects

The Kennett Pike Association, Citizens for Responsible Growth (CRG) and many other area civic and neighborhood organizations, representing residents and small businesses, worked hard for more than 3 years seeking compromises to 3 large projects filed in 2008 by Stoltz Real Estate Partners. The original plans called for:

- Greenville Center : a major development of commercial and residential space including a tower up to 180-foot tall
- Barley Mill Plaza : a major development of 2.8 million square feet of commercial, residential and office space including 7, 8 and 9 story buildings which would rival the combined King of Prussia malls
- Montchanin Corporate Center : a significant expansion including the construction of a 3-story building 40-feet off of Montchanin Road

Chris Coons, then County Executive, announced a compromise set of plans for these projects in late 2010 which to a large extent addressed many of the concerns expressed by the community. After careful and comprehensive reviews of the compromise plans, and with input from the community at many public meetings, the KPA, CRG and other civic and neighborhood groups agreed to support the new plans, but only if other limitations in the form of permanent deed restrictions, were put in place. Negotiations with the Stoltz organization over a 6 month period were finalized and most of the concessions sought by the community were agreed.

The compromise plans call for:

- Greenville Center : elimination of the tower and parking garage; permanent limits on building heights, commercial uses, and setbacks; granting of a parking variance necessary to construct a new 1-story building at the corner of Kennett Pike and Buck Road
- Barley Mill Plaza : reduction in square footage from 2.8 million sq ft to 1.6 million sq ft; permanent limits on building heights, commercial uses, future development, store sizes, and outdoor displays; community input on landscaping, lighting and traffic; granting a rezoning for a portion of the property to accommodate the new plans
- Montchanin Corporate Center : elimination of the 3-story building 40-feet from Montchanin Road replaced with a 1-story retail or office building set back 100-feet; permanent limits on building heights, uses, and future expansions; new permanent deed restrictions to replace old deed restrictions

The community, led by CRG, KPA and other groups was successful in getting the Greenville Center and Barley Mill Plaza compromise plans approved. This will eliminate the tower and parking garage at Greenville Center, and reduce the development at Barley Mill Plaza from 2.8 to 1.6 million square feet. County Council members who supported the community compromise were Council President Kovach and Council members Weiner, Kilpatrick, Tackett, Reda, Smiley, and Powers to whom we are grateful.

Unfortunately, the compromise plans at the Montchanin Corporate Center were blocked by Save Our County, Inc. putting in jeopardy all of the compromise plans. The compromise structured between Chris Coons and the Stoltz organization was "all or nothing" and the developer can now elect to go back to his original, much larger by-right plans. Save Our County is also suing the County to defeat the 1.6 million square foot compromise at Barley Mill Plaza. CRG has continued to communicate with the Stoltz organization, and is urging it to honor the compromise plans despite the actions of Save Our County.



Did You Know ... 6 Area Volunteer Fire Companies Serve With Honor

The greater Kennett Pike and Route 100 areas north of the city of Wilmington are served by 6 Volunteer Fire Companies, all with long and proud histories.

The first area fire company ---- Kennett Fire Company No. 1 ---- was established in 1875 in Kennett Square just after the old Unicorn Tavern was destroyed by fire and it became evident that better equipment was needed to protect the public. Today the company responds to more than 1,000 fire and EMS incidents each year.

The second area fire company was Longwood Fire Company established in 1921. This company was originally formed by Pierre du Pont as the Longwood Fire Brigade to protect Longwood Gardens. In 1926 the fire brigade became the Longwood Fire Company serving the surrounding area. Each year the Longwood Fire Company responds to some 2,500 fire and EMS incidents.

The third area fire company ---- Brandywine Hundred Fire Company No. 1 --- was established in early 1924 when residents were alarmed at the increasing number of fires and the lack of equipment to fight them. Until the Claymont company was formed in 1928, the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company was the only volunteer fire company serving New Castle County north of the city. Today they respond to more than 2,500 fire and EMS incidents a year.

The fourth fire company in our area ---- the Claymont Fire Company No. 1 ---- was established in January 1928 spearheaded by resident Joseph Tatnall. The company is very busy, responding to more than 3,000 fire and EMS incidents per year.

The fifth area company established was Talleyville Fire Company founded in late 1928. Residents gathered in the Grange Hall to organize a fire company that would protect their families and neighbors. The company responds each year to some 4,500 fire and EMS incidents.

The last fire company established in our area was Hockessin Fire Company. In September 1936 the Hockessin Supply Company burned down nearly taking the adjoining property with it. Five men met at Gormley's Store to lay the plans for a fire company in Hockessin and by December the fire company was formed. Hockessin Fire Company responds to some 2,000 fire and EMS incidents a year.

These 6 area fire companies collectively respond to more than 15,000 emergencies every year. That is 42 every day! These volunteers put their lives on the line every day to save lives and protect the communities they serve and we are all grateful for their service. Thank You !

Have You Heard?

- Construction work at Buckley's Tavern in Centreville is progressing. A peek in the windows shows the rough walls and floors are nearing completion and the finishing work should soon be underway. A summer opening is still forecast.
- In 2003 New Castle County adopted a Hometown Overlay ordinance intended to perpetrate and enhance the character of early settlement areas which possess unique characteristics. The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure that infill and developments are compatible with the existing community. Centreville and Hockessin now both have Hometown Overlay districts. A federal grant has been received by Delaware Greenways to study whether Greenville might be considered a candidate for such a designation, Work will get underway later this year.
- Many members of KPA have expressed concern about the appearance and overabundance of signs erected at the Mendenhall Deli, feeling that it is inappropriate for an establishment situated along Delaware's only National Scenic Byway. KPA asked the Mendenhall Deli to remove many of the signs. We are grateful that some signs have been removed, and the owner --- who also owns the lovely Mendenhall Inn --- has told the KPA that remodeling work of the Deli is expected shortly and some additional signs may be removed.
- The intersection at Kennett Pike and Campbell / Kirk roads has experienced many serious accidents over the years and DeIDOT intends to redesign the intersection starting later this year. The KPA and local residents were not happy with the new design which would have created some unsafe features. Following a number of public and meetings with local residents, DeIDOT agreed to modify their design plans to everyone's satisfaction. They would not at this time, however, lower the speed limit from 50 mph to 35 mph as requested by the community



YOUR KENNETT PIKE ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER DIRECTORS

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We want to support the KPA in its work, and become a member, with a tax deductible payment.

Name

Street

City and State Zip Code

Amount Enclosed\$60 Family\$150 Civic or Neighborhood Association

Send To: The Kennett Pike Association
P. O. Box 3592
Greenville, DE 19807

We Love Our 10 Median Sponsors!

Through the generosity of our sponsors, the KPA is able to maintain the lovely landscaped medians in the Greenville area along the Kennett Pike and Route 100. These plantings create lovely vistas and greatly enhance the beauty of our community. Now another wonderful local company has stepped forward to be our newest sponsor. Because of **M&T Bank**, we are expanding the landscaping to include the medians along Route 141 that straddle Route 100 and the Kennett Pike. In partnership with KPA and the Delaware Center for Horticulture, DelDOT will do the initial plantings and maintenance which will then be handed over to the KPA for long-term care. Please thank M&T Bank for their generosity and community spirit. Please also thank our other generous and civic-minded sponsors: **Janney Montgomery Scott** and **Acorn Energy** (also new sponsors); **BSA+A**; **The Wine & Spirit Company of Greenville**; **BDO USA, LLP**; **Setting Properties**; **Stoltz**; **Weymouth, Swayze & Corroon**; and **WSFS**.



Lovely spring flowers in Greenville!



Fine Wine and Cheese at the KPA Annual Meeting!

Your Kennett Pike Association will hold its Annual Meeting on Monday October 1 at 5:30 pm. The meeting will take place at the Soda House at Hagley Museum (enter on Buck Road). This year, as a special "Thank You" to our many members and as a "Welcome" to potential new members, we are featuring some very fine wines and cheeses. The wines are favorites from one of our volunteer Director's private cellar. After a short and informative business meeting, including an update on the Stoltz projects, we will serve the wonderful wines and cheese --- please come and sample them!

The Kennett Pike Association
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