

The Village of Westover



Newsletter April 2021

villageofwestover.org

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

Please visit the [PA Dept of Health website here](#) for up to date information on COVID-19.

Please visit the [Cumberland County website](#) for local information on COVID-19.

Spring Events in Westover



More daylight, sunny skies, and blooming trees bring a sense of hope and bring us outside! We are so happy to see familiar faces (even if from a distance) on the sidewalks and in the park at Westover. Have you seen the sunrise come up on the east side of Westover? A shining moon high above the rooftops? Look for something new this Spring in Westover. Send us a photo!

Spring Clean Up Days * April 10th, April 17th, and May 1st

Join us this Spring for Clean Up Days in the Commons! Bring gloves, pruners, chainsaws, pole saws, or other useful tools and we can get this done together!

April 10, 2021: McCord Commons General Clean Up

April 17, 2021: Lower Commons Clean Up

May 1, 2021: Continue McCord Commons Clean and Mulch

Spring Picnic * To be determined

We are hopeful that we can bring back the annual picnic at McCord Commons this year though it may not be in the Spring. Any determination on the picnic will be made by the Board in consideration of pandemic public health guidelines. Stay tuned on Westover emails for any updates.

Civic Association Board

President: Ken Lee

Vice President:

Amy Waugh

Secretary: Justin Edelson

Treasurer: David Krall

Zone Directors:

Linda Lippert

Dan Gross

Jason Petronis

Steve Gilligan

Steve Crosby

Laura Witte

Joe Washburn

Richard Sopko

Jim Nace

Lee Williamson

Maria Szczur

Dean Converse

Ted Baldwin

Debbie Keys

Nell Nickolas

Scott Cawthern

There are current vacancies for Zone Directors. Please contact us if you are interested.

Important Dates

April 10th at 10am: McCord Commons Clean Up Day

April 17th at 10am: Lower Commons Clean Up Day

April 22nd: Earth Day

May 1st at 10am: McCord Commons Clean Up and Mulch

May 7th & 8th: Westover Yard Sales, 8am-2pm

May 31st: Memorial Day

Q&A

With President Ken Lee

On a Playground in the Commons

Westover Civic Association has recently received inquiries about interest in a playground at McCord Commons. Here, we answer your questions!



Q: Is there any interest in a small play area for the children of Westover in the commons area? It's huge and can certainly hold a small playground.

A: Yes, there has been interest expressed. When I first moved into Westover, I thought it would be a great idea. Since becoming President of the WCA (Westover Civic Association), however, I have discovered enormous obstacles to installing one notwithstanding the space available. Also, what is "small" to one person might not be to another or applicable regulations. A playground is an "attraction" so we need to plan such a project with the assumption that a playground would attract more people, especially children, to the Commons. While anecdotal, but based upon my time living adjacent to the Commons, I would estimate that the project would have to accommodate at least 20 children at peak times. In addition, this would not just be one "playground" because the equipment is designed by children's age groups (6 to 24 months, 2 to 5 years, 5 to 12 years and 13 plus years) and so the project would need to accommodate most of these age groups and perhaps be segregated for liability purposes so that 1 year olds are not playing in the same area as 10 year olds.

Q: How much would this cost? The Civic Association may have some extra funds since no events were held last year.

A: I investigated these costs on a couple of occasions to get a ballpark figure and that figure is around \$225,000.00 minimum to obtain and install equipment that can accommodate up to 20 kids and provide "age" areas as I described previously. Because this is on Township property and possibly could be "dedicated" to the Township, spacing requirements and compliance with laws such as the American With Disabilities Act would be required. Annual maintenance, repair and replacement costs average 2% to 6% of original costs or \$4,500.00 (2%) to \$13,500.00 (6%). In addition, WCA's insurance premiums would increase initially about \$900.00 a year. WCA's yearly revenues from dues (WCA's only source of revenue) averages about \$10,500.00 per year and WCA spends most of its revenues each year. Thus, WCA would have to at least double or triple the annual dues. At present, only about 63% of the households in Westover pay the dues. Even if we can find \$225,000.00, WCA might have to make dues mandatory for all. While WCA may have about \$3,500.00 less in expenses for 2020 and 2021 (there may be no savings in 2021 if the pandemic is stopped), WCA has been able to replenish some of its savings account (maintained for extraordinary expenses) and may seek to use those savings to invest in new landscaping for the Commons which is presently being explored. Simply put, WCA has neither the revenues nor savings to fund such a project at present.

Q: The Commons is Township property. How does this impact the decision?

A: Township approval will be required and conditions placed upon the project by the Township would have to be met. While I think WCA could meet these conditions and obtain Township approval, it is doubtful we could "dedicate" the playground to the Township and this factor is HUGE! "Dedication" is where a private party constructs something and then transfers ownership to a municipality such as Hampden Township for free. If the Township accepts the project, then the Township owns the project and is responsible for maintaining, repairing and eventually replacing it for all time.

A (Continued): The streets in Westover (which are scheduled to be re-paved in 2021) are examples of a "dedication" where the developer constructed them and then turned ownership and all responsibility for them over to the Township. However, McCord Commons, while Township property, is not publicized as being open to the public and is pretty much for the benefit of Westover residents. Thus, the criteria for a "dedication" of "benefitting the community as a whole" might not be met in the eyes of the Township staff or Commissioners. Maintaining, repairing and replacing playground equipment is an enormous expense. Depending upon the type of playground equipment purchased, the maintenance, repair and replacement costs can equal the initial purchase price over the estimated life of the equipment (either 10 or 20 years). So if we were to buy less expensive equipment, we might end up paying an even greater price over the life of the equipment due to substantially increased maintenance, repair and replacement costs. My experience is that inferior equipment not only raises maintenance, repair and replacement costs, but increases the chance of injury exponentially as well. Personally, I will not cut costs where the safety, especially safety of children, is concerned.

Q: Who would take care of the playground area? I already see you ask for volunteers to clean up the Commons.

A: If the Township does not accept a "dedication" of the project, then this would be the responsibility of WCA. However, to maintain the manufacturer warranties, WCA might be required to hire a professional to perform this responsibility. Volunteers are WCA's life lines without which we could get little accomplished. However, I can count on about a dozen volunteers for any project and often for not more than 4 hours at a time. Each spring these dozen or so volunteers spread about 25 cubic yards of mulch and pick-up or prune wood debris which often overflows a 30 cubic yard dumpster or 2. Last year we had 3 "Clean-Up Days" with only about 6 volunteers assisting on the third day when all of the trees along the side walk in the lowers Commons area were pruned.

Q: I have no interest or stake in a Westover playground. The Township already has great parks with playgrounds nearby (Hampden and Creekview). Can I opt out of any donation or assessment that is made?

A: NO!!! To accomplish this project, dues and a "special assessment" would have to be made mandatory for all homes, including the Towns Houses in Westover. Dues would be increased to between \$60.00 to \$100.00 per year and a "special assessment" of \$475.00 would be imposed with this \$475.00 being paid at once or over no more than 4 years (about \$120.00 per year). WCA is very mindful of the HOA fees and "special assessments" that our neighbors in the Towns Houses already face which those in the detached (standalone) homes do not. All must participate because it would not be fair that some do not participate in their share of the costs but get to use the benefits of the project. Of course, if those living in the stand alone homes believe this is more than beneficial to them even if others get a benefit without contributing and are willing to absorb the increased costs per home, then this could be an option since the stand alone homes generally participate more.

Q: We've heard the reasons it hasn't been done. What would need to happen to make this go forward?

A: Personally, and as President of the WCA, I would ask the Board of the WCA to move forward only upon being presented with a Petition signed by at least 60% of those residing in the stand alone homes and 60% of those residing in the Town Houses agreeing to (1) mandatory annual dues for WCA, (2) a special assessment of around \$500.00 (payable over no more than 4 years), and (3) the desire of a playground in McCord Commons. Unless these matters are in place first, there is no use exploring the playground project any further. Now if someone wants to provide a donation to cover these costs, then there is the potential that such a donation could be tax deductible.

What's New in Westover

The Benches in McCord Commons

Thank you to Westover Civic Association Board Member Dan Gross and his team at DB360 Soft Wash for the bench improvements in McCord Commons! The benches are sturdy and shiny now with fresh boards and finish. If you have not seen them, take a walk in McCord Commons and check it out!



Neighborhood Entry Signs

You may start to notice neighborhood signs at entrances to Westover. These changeable message boards will help us get the word out about events in Westover! This was a suggestion from a Board member based on noticeability of signs in near-by neighborhoods for community events.

Westover Women's Club

Westover Women's Club has paused activities and meetings due to the pandemic. The Women's Club will not be hosting the community yard sale but residents may participate on their own on May 7 & 8. Please follow current public health guidelines if you choose to participate. Stay tuned for when Women's Club resumes activities!

On Nextdoor

Nextdoor is a voluntary social network with over 500 Westover neighbors online. Examples of things you can find on Nextdoor lately are lawn mowing requests, fence and deck recommendations, vaccine availability, and more. Visit www.nextdoor.com to see if this social network could be useful for you. You will need to verify your address to participate.

Nextdoor and related neighborhood posts are not managed by the Westover Civic Association.

We Need Your Help

Volunteer organizations such as Civic Association benefit most from member involvement. Send us your ideas for newsletter articles! **Do you know a neighbor who has celebrated a recent milestone or achievement? Have a special interest story? We welcome communication and feedback at westover@villageofwestover.org.** Please visit the Store on the website to pay your dues if you have not already paid for 2021. We appreciate all members who joined during the annual Membership Drive! A second round of dues letters will be coming out soon for those who have not yet paid.

Westover Mailbag

Dear Westover Civic Association,

Q: Can you tell people to slow down when they are driving in the neighborhood? My child is a new bike rider and while we do our part to teach him bicycle safety, it would help if drivers would be attentive.

A: This sounds like a fun family activity! Thank you for doing your part to encourage safety including wearing a helmet, staying on the side of the road with traffic, and NO PHONES while on a bike. Drivers are reminded that speed limits in Westover are 20-25mph. Drivers should exercise more caution in low light conditions and when approaching bikes, runners, and pedestrians.



Q: Did you know Hampden Township has a Safe Exchange Zone? I was doing porch pick up for items I was selling on social media but this is a safer option.

A: Yes, thanks for sharing! The Hampden Township Police Department has two "Safe Exchange Zone" parking slots at the new police department facility. Located at the front of the building, it is under 24 hour surveillance and is intended to provide a safer and more secure area for residents to make child custody, private property, or e-commerce exchanges. The posted signs indicate the area is under 24 hour surveillance and that if the police are needed to call 9-1-1. The Police Department does not guarantee that a police officer is physically present at the building nor is anyone actively monitoring the video feed.

Westover Willie



Dear Westover Willie,

Q: Why does a bird keep flying into the same spot on my front window? I don't know how to help it and it does not seem to learn its lesson.

A: This is confusing for the bird and the human! Most birds have excellent wide angle vision but it can be hard to see directly in front of them with both eyes. They may see trees reflected in glass or see the view inside and think they can fly right through the window. Birds can become disoriented from artificial light. You could try a couple things. First, turn off lights when you are not using them. Consider closing a blind or curtain in that particular window so the bird can see the window area. You might also put a sticker or decal inside the window on the tricky spot to show the bird there is something in the way. Thanks for looking out for us! My feathered friends love Westover with all the trees, bushes, flowers, and birdfeeders!

**PLEASE
CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG**



the Village of
Westover

Village Of Westover Contact List	
Name	Phone number
EMERGENCY – Fire, Police, Ambulance	911
Westover Civic Association	Villageofwestover.org
Comcast Cable	1-800-934-6489
Cumberland County Offices	717-240-6100
Cumberland Valley School District	717-697-8261
District Justice	717-697-2201
Fredricksen Library	717-761-3900
Hampden Township	717-761-0119
Hampden Pool	717-737-4219
Hampden Recreation Department	717-761-4951
Hampden Township Utility Department	717-909-7145
Humane Society	717-564-3320
PA American Water Co	1-800-565-7292
P A Dept. of Transportation	1-800-932-4600
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
PPL Electric Utilities	1-800-342-5775
Waste Management	1-800-869-5566
Township Tax Collector	717-737-4822
UGI Gas Utilities Inc	1-800-276-2722
United Water PA	717-564-3662
Verizon Communications	1-800-837-4966

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