

Depot

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the ice ponds at Mountain Springs. "Of course you shoveled coal a little bit," he said.

"He didn't go too fast" up the grade to Stull, Hettesheimer said. "Coming down, he didn't have to do much."

Stull was a boomtown in those days, with sawmills, butcher shops and other businesses serving the thriving timber and ice harvesting industries. The railroad grade is now open to the public for use as a walking or biking trail, and even can accommodate vehicles.

"You could buy a ticket here and travel anywhere in the country."

Frank Ely
Tunkhannock

While Hettesheimer didn't make it to the open house, other folks who saw the trains run stopped for snacks and conversation at the school.

Greg Montross is old enough to remember those days, and young enough to join in the effort to restore the depot.

Montross, 52, is a Noxen native and a member of the All Aboard Committee of the North Branch Land Trust, which is spearheading the depot restoration.

While the frequency was down to once a day, trains pulled into the station when he was young, near the end of the Lehigh Valley Railroad's existence. Noxen was a stop on the Bowman's Creek Branch of the LVRR, and was a busy place when business at the Noxen Tannery was at its peak.

"Most of the people in town worked there (the tannery)," he said. "At one time, it was kind of like working at Procter & Gamble is now."

The tannery was located a stone's throw from the depot, off Stull Road. Historical records say it employed as many as 300 in its heyday. Forty years after it closed, Jim Hettesheimer says the smell of acid used in the tanning process is still evident on damp days.

Both Greg Montross's father and grandfather worked at the tannery until it closed in 1961. His grandfather was less than two years from retirement, and the company paid off his time. His father worked for the game commission for a couple of



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

A model railroad display caught the attention of these three. From left, Drew Martin, Beau Mont; Trevor MacDougall, Kunkle, and Emily Pellam, Kunkle.

Want to help?

Volunteer labor will be used as much as possible in the restoration and adaptation of the Noxen depot interior. The North Branch Land Trust is seeking the help of both professionals and "helpers." To put your name on the list, call 696-5545, or send an e-mail to Thoma@nblt.org.

You can find out more about the depot project and NBLT at www.nblt.org.

years, then at the old Red Rock airbase, which is itself now closed.

The depot was built in 1893. Train service ended in 1963, and Dave Dembowski purchased it to use as storage space. He and his wife Elaine donated the depot structure and land surrounding it. It will return to life as a meeting-house, small museum for the ice, tanning and timber industries, and as a conservation center.

"There was so much in this little community," said Helen Ely of Tunkhannock, who came to the open house with her husband, Frank, a railroad buff.

"You could buy a ticket here and travel anywhere in the country," Frank Ely said of that time. He also serves on the All Aboard Committee.



Frank Harvey, Centermoreland, provided horse-drawn wagon rides from the old Noxen School to the depot during the open house.

Or you could take a shorter ride.

"My grandmother and mother took the train to Wilkes-Barre for shopping," said Montross.

Most of the exterior work on the depot was done by professional contractors, so that the building could be made secure

before winter. That used up much of the budget for the project, Thoma said, so volunteer help is now essential.

"Money is really tight," she said. The remaining money will be used mainly to purchase materials. "We'll only bring in professionals when it is absolutely necessary."

Board sends ATV ordinance back for review

By VICKI KEIPER
Post Correspondent

JACKSON TWP. — Leisure activities occupied the Jackson Township Supervisors at the February 2 board meeting.

The board tabled a proposed recreational vehicle regulation ordinance after a long debate on restrictive distance requirements and the general reason for the ordinance.

"I don't disagree with you. You have a lot of property," Supervisor Al Fox said in response to a resident's complaint about ever-increasing restrictions faced by property owners.

"We have problems with houses that are three, four on an acre," Fox said. The ordinance, he explained, helps protect residents from dealing with all-terrain vehicle drivers who damage property and disturb the peace, mostly in more populated sections.

"What's good for them may not be good for you," Fox said. "We have to come to a compromise."

The ordinance would prohibit

"We're doing something so when you call the police, something is done."

Al Fox
Jackson Twp. Supervisor

all-terrain vehicles from public parks or playgrounds without permission. Also, ATV drivers would need written consent from property owners before being allowed to drive on their land or within 250 feet of an occupied dwelling.

The ordinance covers recreational transportation such as three- and four-wheel ATVs, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles. Riding lawn mowers and farm equipment are exempt.

Fox pointed out that the ordinance protects the township from any litigation stemming from ATV accidents and having an ordinance on the books would make the work of the local magistrate and police easier, he said.

"We're doing something so when you call the police, something is done," Fox said.

Township Solicitor Jeffrey

Malak said the township was "behind other municipalities" in creating an ordinance addressing problems with ATV use. He also mentioned that the proposed ordinance doesn't have any provisions regarding the hours ATV owners can ride, which is covered under the township's noise ordinance.

In another controversy, a cable rate increase prompted the Jackson Township supervisors to authorize an agreement review.

In a letter to township secretary Joy Bird, GMP Cable TV of Hazleton announced an upgrade in programming that would include channels such as Cartoon Network, Fox Movie Channel, the Travel Channel, and Court TV. The upgrade would increase the monthly rate from \$24.30 to \$31.30.

Supervisor Chairman John J. Wilkes, Jr. called the increase "pitiful" since he receives many complaints about the quality of service. "Half the time it's out," he said.

Solicitor Malak will look at the current agreement with GMP to see if "increases are acceptable," he said. The present franchise contract, which is in effect until 2007, automatically renews every seven years unless the board gives written notice.

In other business
• The board appointed the Gattuso Group LLC at the cost of \$3,000 to audit the township.

• Supervisor Fox reminded residents that calendars showing the recycling schedule are available at Hillside Farms and the township building.

• Supervisor Wilkes said the township Crime Watch group is starting a sign sponsorship program similar to the "Adopt-a-Highway" signs. With a donation, individuals or groups will have their names printed on a Crime Watch sign.

ed that many communities get much more than \$1,000 per month.

"We did our homework" said Vice Chairman Frank Wagner.

Zoning officer Len Kozick said that a zoning hearing will be held before the start of construction. He said other cell towers in the township were all approved.

In other business, the board approved the new burning ordinance.

Barriers, new turns urged for Route 309

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — Speeds probably won't go down along the Route 309 corridor, but median barriers may go up.

That was the recommendation of engineers from the state Department of Transportation at a Feb. 4 special meeting of supervisors.

PennDOT officials told the supervisors that the stretch of 309 between Hillside Road and Center Street probably would not qualify as an urban district, a designation that would allow lower speed limits.

Police Chief James Balavage had pushed for the reduction as a way to reduce the frequency of serious collisions. But after some discussion, he accepted that dangerous turns onto the highway were the larger problem.

Balavage suggested that jughandle turns could be constructed using South Main Street near the former Yesterday's restaurant and below Rave's, and that Ferguson Avenue and North Main Street could serve the same function.

"Long term, there's going to have to be a significant investment to change the character of the road," said Robert Doble, acting district engineer. The first step would be a study that could cost \$300,000 to \$400,000. In the meantime, "We would focus more on the high accident zones."

Doble said it was unlikely any major modifications could be made in the next few years. PennDOT works with a four-year plan that is updated every

"Long term, there's going to have to be a significant investment to change the character of the road."

Robert Doble
Acting district engineer

two years, and funding shortages are likely to prevent changes to that plan.

However, he suggested that the supervisors contact the Metropolitan Planning Organization, which coordinates projects in the region, and ask to be included in the next revision. "A lot of the problems we have in Luzerne County are in the Back Mountain," Doble said.

Balavage asked if left turns leaving businesses could be banned in the short term, to prevent drivers from crossing four lanes of traffic, the cause of several recent serious accidents.

Ronald Bonacci, district engineer, cautioned that such a move could backfire by moving the problem elsewhere. "A physical barrier is the only way to go," he said, adding that businesses must also be given an alternative or they won't accept the restrictions.

The supervisors also are considering banning left turns from township roads onto Route 309, and making South Main Street one-way northbound.

Sidewalk

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A letter from Dr. James DeFinnis, who has an office at 210 Carverton, was read at the January 14 meeting of supervisors. DeFinnis expressed concern about the difficulty of clearing the walk.

"I have concern that I may be held liable should injury occur in this situation which I feel is not truly under my control," DeFinnis wrote.

"We're able to clear the small snows we've had this year," DeFinnis said recently. But if the snow is heavier and falls overnight, it won't budge. "Time is of the essence," he said. "If it goes to the next day it's pretty much impossible."

That's true even for professionals, DeFinnis said.

"I've attempted to have it removed by contractors, who have refused due to the back-breaking labor needed or because they're afraid of damaging their equipment."

A township ordinance requires property owners to remove snow and ice within 24 hours after the end of a storm. The supervisors are considering a longer time frame in order to ease the burden on property owners.

"I would certainly think that's one of the options," O'Neill said, and PennDOT officials who attended a special meeting with the supervisors Feb. 4 agreed.

Steve Shimko, a PennDOT engineer, said the state would have no objection to giving more time to clear the sidewalk. Or, "Maybe get rid of your ordinance," he said, only half joking.

A fine of up to \$1,000 per day can be levied on property owners who don't keep the sidewalk clear, although Bill Eck, zoning enforcement officer, says the ordinance has never been enforced.

Eck sent notices to everyone along the sidewalk in November, reminding them that sidewalk cleaning is their job, and of the potential fine for not complying. Eck was responding to a complaint from a resident who uses the sidewalk to get to stores at Route 309.

"I really feel bad for the people," Eck said. "That's a lot of responsibility."

Marlyne Lipfert lives at 201 Carverton, on the opposite side of the road from the sidewalk. She's concerned that the re-

"You can be out there three or four times trying to clean it."

Marlyne Lipfert
Carverton Road

quirement to clear snow and ice places an unfair burden on a tiny minority of township residents, some of whom are unable to keep up with the work.

"You can be out there three or four times trying to clean it," she said, and that is impossible for her 88-year-old neighbor. So Lipfert crosses the road and tries her best to keep the path clear.

Lipfert said PennDOT does come through to pick up cinders and sand each spring, but otherwise some portions of the sidewalk are irregular and pitch sharply. "They are really in pretty deplorable condition."

She is among the people who think removing the sidewalk entirely is the best option. "Nobody walks to that school. There's very limited use made of the sidewalk," she said.

If the township or property owners wanted the sidewalk removed, they would have to petition PennDOT, said Dave Krisanda, spokesman. "Our main concern would be pedestrian safety."

Ronald Bonacci, a PennDOT engineer, cautioned against removal, suggesting that the township could be held liable if someone was later injured while walking along the side of the road. And, he said, removal would be entirely at the township's expense.

Protest to construction of cell tower in Kunkle

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — The construction of an AT&T cell phone tower in Kunkle, needed to satisfy a dead zone on the Tunkhannock highway, was the subject of heated debate between three Kunkle residents and the Board of Supervisors at the Feb. 3 meeting.

Dave Pellam and two neighbors voiced their disapproval of the proposed 185-foot tower.

Pellam said the tower will be approximately one-quarter mile from his home and he is worried about his property value dropping and the effect it will have on an adjacent baseball field.

The tower will be on a 56-acre parcel of land donated to the township many years ago by Dr. Bud Schooley. The land is mostly wooded, and residents have used for snowmobiling, hiking, hunting and playing baseball.

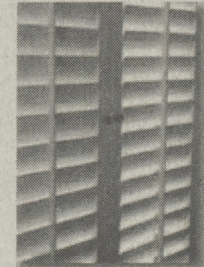
"My biggest gripe is that it's public property donated to the township for public use and it doesn't seem like there is anything we can do to stop it from being built," said Pellam.

"There is already a cell tower less than a mile away on Irem Temple property. I'm against it for the aesthetics."

The township will receive \$1,000 per month rent from AT&T. Pellam asked the supervisors if they shopped around for the best price. He comment-

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