

OUR OPINION

Township business must be conducted in the open

An important meeting of the Dallas Township Supervisors was held last week, but you missed it. Chances are that had it been properly advertised — which it was not — the audience still would have been thin. It usually is. But the overwhelming apathy of the township's citizens does not get the supervisors off the hook for holding an illegal meeting.

There was one active participant, developer John Halbing, who has submitted a new project to the planning commission. That's what's supposed to happen; a subdivision goes to the planning commission for review and comment, the developer fixes or ignores any problems, and the commission forwards it to the supervisors, with a recommendation to either approve or reject it. The plans also are sent to the Luzerne County Planning Commission for review, although the township is under no obligation to pay attention to their observations.

The meeting raises at least two important questions. One is why the supervisors are allowing a developer to lobby them before the planning commission has completed its work. The other is why members of the public, who are affected by changes in population, traffic and other factors, weren't given their rightful opportunity to be in on the discussion.

We can anticipate some of the excuses for this lapse in judgement. "People don't care," is one. "They wouldn't understand," is another. Yet another might be, "We're just trying to do the best thing for everyone, and not hold up progress." All three of those — and any other — is not acceptable.

Frustrating as it might be for the supervisors to do what they think is right for the township while working in a vacuum of citizen apathy, they have an absolute responsibility to conduct the public's business in the open.

We can't know if the discussion about road grades and manhole covers would have proceeded differently before an audience. But if the lengthy critique of this subdivision offered by a county engineer is any indication, we can be certain that there is a lot more to talk about.

And what about members of the township planning commission? In effect, they are the potential victims of an end-around play, since a developer who gets tacit agreement from the supervisors for his plans will have little incentive to respond to criticisms from the planners.

The township expects to receive a grant that will pay for a thorough review of its ordinances, something that hasn't been done for 40 years. But a shiny new code book won't help Dallas Township deal with the escalating pressure of development unless officials consistently and energetically enforce the rules. The public has a role to play in that effort, adding some support to officials' backbones as they weigh the benefits of growth against the costs.

But if the people are cut out of the process, it becomes too comfortable for officials to fashion compromises that lean too heavily one way or the other, and that ignore the voices that matter most, those of citizens and taxpayers.

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

• On Feb. 8, 1587, after 19 years of imprisonment, Mary Queen of Scots is beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle in England for her complicity in a plot to murder Queen Elizabeth I. Mary's son, King James VI of Scotland, would later become king of England upon Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603.

• On Feb. 13, 1914, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers is formed in New York. ASCAP was the first U.S. group to help protect copyrighted music against illegal public performances for profit, and it lobbied for the collection of license fees for each public performance of a copyrighted song.

• On Feb. 11, 1960, host Jack Paar storms off NBC's "The Tonight Show" to protest censorship. Paar was infuriated when censors cut a joke about a "water closet," claiming it was in poor taste. Paar left the set in tears and did not return for a month.

• On Feb. 9, 1965, the United States sends its first combat troops to South Vietnam as a U.S. Marine Corps Hawk air defense missile battalion is deployed to Da Nang to protect a key U.S. airbase.

• On Feb. 12, 1976, actor Sal Mineo is stabbed to death in Hollywood, Calif., as he parks his car behind his apartment. Mineo was a famous teen actor in the 1950s, co-starring with James Dean in both "Rebel Without a Cause" and "Giant," and he later appeared in films such as "The Longest Day" and "Escape From the Planet of the Apes."

• On Feb. 7, 1984, Navy Capt. Bruce McCandless becomes the first human satellite when he exits the orbiting U.S. space shuttle Challenger without a tether and maneuvers freely, using a bulky rocket pack of his own design.

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Letters are welcome

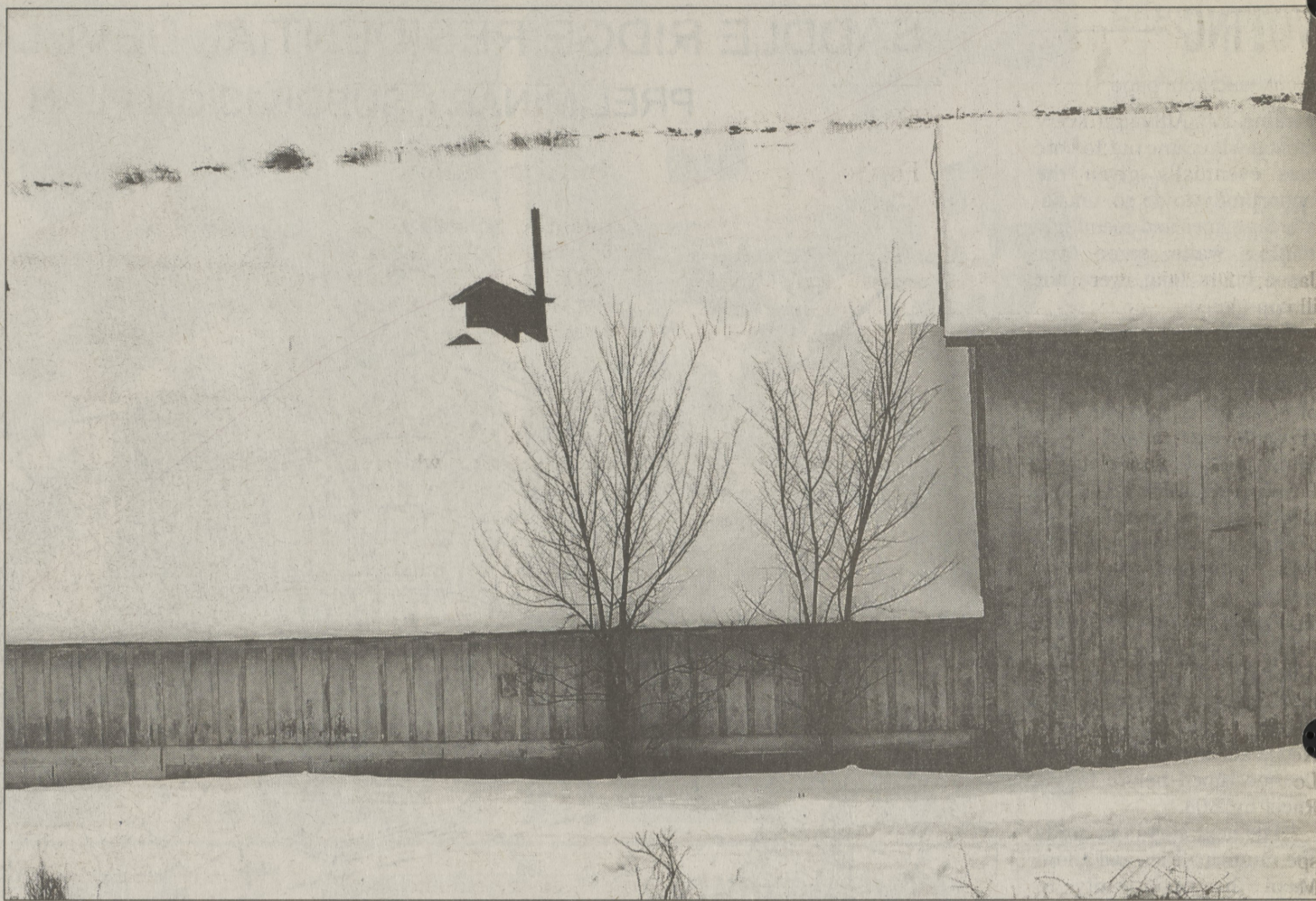
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By mail to: The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711.

By using the drop box located in the Uni-Mart convenience store on Route 309 in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center.



Snow on a barn, Hayfield Farm. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

GUEST COLUMN

Take care, and time, when facing winter tree damage

By JIM FINLEY
Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry

In the past few weeks, across some parts of the state, the woods have taken on a winter wonderland appearance. While ice in the treetops can be beautiful, it is also frightening. Ice changes the forests and the sounds of breaking limbs and falling trees lead to landowner uncertainty. Long after the ice has melted, the evidence of winter's icing is visible, and landowners face important long-reaching decisions about how to manage their forests.

The urge is to do something — to salvage the damaged trees. Do not act too quickly. Safety is a principal concern. Obviously the storms have left behind many hazards, such as hanging limbs and severely damaged branches. Working in the forest under these conditions is dangerous. Mark dangerous trees and leave working

around them to the experts.

What to do first? Start by doing a careful evaluation of the extent of damage. Consider paying a trusted resource professional to visit the site. Salvage might be one option; however, when working with hardwood or broadleaf trees it is often advisable to wait and see how they respond the next summer. Trees have an amazing ability to respond to this type of injury.

Many of our hardwood forests have experienced ice before. Oftentimes there is evidence by forks in trees across the stand that are all at about the same height in the canopy. Sometimes the forked trunk will split again somewhat higher. This is especially evident on the Allegheny Plateau, where cherry stands exhibit ice damage from more than 50 years ago.

The point is that hardwood trees have mechanisms for

responding to ice injury.

Dormant buds beneath the bark will typically sprout, forming new branches and leaves. So, if you have a hardwood forest with ice-damaged crowns, wait and watch. If we have a good growing summer like last year, your trees may respond well.

Standing trees with only partially ice-damaged crowns will retain their value long enough to more carefully plan your response. The biggest effect could be the stain that eventually will enter the wounds. When trees are more severely damaged, having lost their crowns or having broken or split trunks, or have been uprooted, a salvage operation may be the right response. Don't rush in, though. Hasty decisions, without proper road planning, can lead to site damage as well as residual tree damage. Wait and plan the harvest when conditions are better

for logging in late summer.

Softwoods, like pine and hemlock, unfortunately do not have the same adaptations as hardwoods. Severely damaged softwoods may show signs of insect damage and staining in the wood shortly after this winter's ice. They can withstand some injury and have mechanisms for containing some of the negative impacts. However, if the damage is heavy, seek professional input and consider recovering some of these trees this summer.

Most important, use caution when entering and working in ice-damaged stands, even into the summer months. Take advantage of the expertise of natural resources professionals, especially when thinking about helping your stands recover from natural disaster. The forests are an important resource to Pennsylvanians; their wise care and use is dependent on you. Take care.

70 Years Ago
Feb. 8, 1935HOWELL EXPLAINS
VALUE OF X-RAY

The increased opportunities for fighting disease as a result of recent X-ray developments were explained by Dr. G. L. Howell of Shavertown in his talk before members of Greater

ONLY
YESTERDAY

Dallas Rotary Club last Thursday night. Dr. Howell brought a number of X-ray plates with him and showed graphically how the use of the equipment frequently uncovers physical weaknesses which have escaped the attention of physicians.

Flames threatened to consume the building of the Harvey's Lake Bottling Works early yesterday morning and caused a loss estimated roughly at \$5,000. Chief James Besecker of the Laing Co. was enthusiastic yesterday in his praise for the Dallas men who turned out to make the trip to the lake in sub-zero weather at 1:30 am. About fifteen of the local firemen responded.

C. Harold Wagner was selected this week by Dallas Borough Council to fill the office of Burgess, left vacant by the death of J. Harry Anderson.

60 Years Ago
Feb. 9, 1945PFC. CAVANAUGH
WOUNDED
IN BELGIUM

Dorothy K. Worth of Trucksville Gardens has received word that her nephew, Pfc. Michael Cavanaugh, 22, a paratrooper, was seriously wounded in Belgium on

January 10. Pfc. Cavanaugh previously received the Purple Heart in June for wounds received during the invasion of Normandy.

In an advertisement: "For prompt removal of dead, old, disabled horses, cows, mules phone Carl Crockett, Muhlenberg 19-R-4. Phone charges paid. We buy waste fats and cowhides."

With an A-20 Havoc Group in Italy: (censored) Cpl. James G. LaBar, son of Mr. and Mrs. Timothy LaBar, Dallas, received his most welcome Christmas gift of the year when on the morning of December 25, the veteran light bomb group to which he belongs received official orders awarding it a War Department Citation, the highest organizational honor bestowed by the U.S. Army.

50 Years Ago
Feb. 4, 1955MYSTERIOUS 'QUAKE'
RATTLES DISHES
IN SHAVERTOWN

Origin of a mysterious earth trembler that vibrated dishes on luncheon tables and frightened residents of Shavertown about noon on Tuesday has been cleared up. The "earthquake" was the result of underground blasting during well-drilling operations on Gerald Frantz's property on Memorial highway where Whitesell Brothers are constructing a new store and apartment for Mr. Frantz.

This was a wonderful week for Mrs. Bessie Jones, Shavertown, and her daughter Mrs. Willard Hoover as they watched young, 18-year-old Kenneth Roberts win the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout Competition on Monday night with a baritone solo. He also appeared on Godfrey's morning show on Wednesday.

Cpl. John Hackling, Noxen, has been honorably discharged from the Signal Corps at Camp Gordon, Georgia. John, the son of Mrs. Sophia Hackling, is a talented musician, one of three organists at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Shavertown.

40 Years Ago
Feb. 4, 1965NOTED PEDESTRIAN
STRUCK DOWN
IN BEAUMONT

Beaumont folks could tell time by watching to see when the Seipler brothers walked by along the highway, and this happened twice a day for many a year. Then Thursday night at 7:15, 70-year-old Howard L. Seipler crossed Route 309 toward his home up on the hill for the last time, and was struck by what turned out to be, ironically, a slowmoving car on a treacherously icy roadway.

Pfc. Stanley Parduski, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ignatious Parduski, Hillcrest Drive, Shavertown, arrived home last week from Okinawa, where he had been serving with the Marine Corps.

The three-point field goal instituted by the Eastern Professional Basketball League this season is proving to be very popular with everyone. Most of the players have failed to score a three-pointer this season. The league leaders have averaged less than one a game.

30 Years Ago
Feb. 6, 1975DALLAS MEN
ACTIVE IN
WILKES-BARRE YMCA

Two Dallas residents were reelected as officers of the Wilkes-Barre YMCA. Ronald D. Ertley, Country Club Road, Dallas, was reelected as presi-

dent and Frank E Paczewski, 10 Pear Tree Lane, Dallas, was reelected as vice-president.

Carol Lee Evans, 17, a senior at Dallas High School, has been chosen to represent her school in the Good Citizen Contest sponsored locally by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Claims for regular weekly unemployment insurance benefits decreased by 4,150 during the past week in the seven county area of Northeastern Pennsylvania according to Guy A. Solfanelli, District Manager, Bureau of Employment Security.

20 Years Ago
Feb. 6, 1985DALLAS POST FINDS
TWO COUPLES WHO
TIED THE KNOT
61 YEARS AGO

In conjunction with Worldwide Marriage Encounter's proposal to have the Sunday before Valentine's Day designated Worldwide Marriage Day, the Dallas Post has searched for the longest married couples in this area. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Elston, Overbrook Road, Dallas and Mr. and Mrs. Willard Cornell, Meeker, are the winners. Both couples have been married for 61 years.

Glen Mazer achieved a goal every bowler dreams of last Friday night at Bonomo's Sports Center in Dallas. Mazer rolled a perfect 300 game and at the same time, achieved his first 700 series which has been his ambition since he first started bowling seven years ago.

Danny and Frank Natitus of 161 Harris Hill Road, Trucksville, were recently presented with a \$75 savings bond as grand prize winners in the Kingston Twp. Halloween House Decorating Contest.

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