

# APPROVAL

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posed a new resolution allowing up to a 9 percent grade, with an exception to 11 percent for short distances. That resolution is expected to pass at Tuesday's supervisors meeting.

Asked for an example of a 9 percent grade after the meeting, commission Chairman Jack Dodson said Machell Avenue above Gate of Heaven School was probably pretty close.

Halbing still has some work to do to get all his roads in compliance. "Everything at this point is under 10 percent," he said, but some is still more than allowed. "We will be able to meet that new ordinance."

While making that commitment, Halbing implied that he expected some flexibility. "The ordinances are there as guidelines," but some sites can't be made to conform perfectly, he said.

The effect of water runoff has been a concern for nearby property owners. Halbing said he is trying to minimize the effects on neighbors, but acknowledged, "There's going to be an impact."

Bob Mitchell, whose land runs from Saddle Ridge to Wyoming Road, feels the development will continue an already worsening problem with water runoff. "Before they built Sleepy Hollow, Wyoming Road never flooded," he said. Sleepy Hollow is on the other side of Wyoming Road, and the runoff from both developments runs together near his property.

Joan Schooley, who lives on land behind Saddle Ridge, laments the loss of natural habitat. An amateur naturalist, she has observed the plants



Developer John Halbing points out a feature on the plan for his proposed Saddle Ridge subdivision. Joan Schooley, left, owns neighboring property and is concerned about the effect the development will have on wildlife in the area. Halbing's engineer, George Albert, is between them.

and animals on the land for 20 years.

"I know it's inevitable," that housing development will take the land, she said with a note of resignation. She is particularly dreading the excavation process, which is likely to be noisy given the rocky subsoil.

One holdup for Saddle Ridge is the absence of a review by the Luzerne County Conservation District, which will address the impact on streams during construction.

"We're looking at the plan during development," said Dave Moss, a district resource conservationist, seeing that there are adequate silt fences and the temporary roadways are constructed to limit runoff.

District personnel also will inspect the project while it is underway.

Township Engineer Tom Doughton and Dodson agreed that Halbing had made a great deal of progress since the last meeting. "There's been a substantial amount of changes required," Doughton said. Halbing said as a result, lot prices will be higher than he anticipated, although they still "won't be \$80,000."

If all conditions are met, the commission could approve the plan at its May 10 meeting, said Dodson. If only minimal requirements haven't been met by then, Halbing could get conditional approval, but compliance must be documented "before he can put a shovel in the ground."

It will take at least a month and possibly two to complete the revised layout for Goodleigh Manor, said Dave

Lopatka of Acker Associates, engineers for the project. "To get to this point took a pretty monumental effort."

"The lots themselves won't be changing," said Comes. But raising the road grades will make it easier to get access for driveways, and will affect the storm water drainage plan. He said lots will vary between 2 and 20 acres, and there are about 4.5 miles of roads in the 485 acre property.

In addition Comes said there will be about two miles of paths on old roads that were built by a former owner of the property for use as riding trails.

The new plan must be submitted at least three weeks before the meeting at which it will be discussed, to allow Doughton to review it.

# CLEANUPS

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paign. Local "streamside cleanups" are arranged by the Wyoming Valley Watershed Coalition, an outgrowth of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Holly Frederick is project manager for the coalition. Her agency was instrumental in organizing last year's first Toby's Creek cleanup, but, she said, "This year the municipality has really taken the lead."

That's how it's supposed to work, Frederick said. Local volunteers turn out "because it's their neighborhood and that's where they want to participate."

The coalition continues to provide gloves, bags and promotional support.

The Back Mountain Trail offers another opportunity to spruce up the environment. The annual trail cleaning will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday, after volunteers gather at the Dallas Area Municipal Authority "recycling" sign, off the northbound lanes of the Cross Valley Expressway. Participants will pick up litter along Route 309 from Carverton Road to Hillside Road, as well as along the trail, which parallels the highway.

Mark Albrecht, President of the Back Mountain Trail

## LOCAL CLEANUPS

Volunteers are welcome to participate in three local cleanups on Saturday, April 23. Here are times and contact persons: Toby's Creek, 8 a.m.-noon. Gather in the parking lot of Goeringer Family Dentistry, Lincoln St., across from Offset Paperback. Joe Moskovitz, 673-1389.

Back Mountain Trail, 9 a.m.-noon. Meet at the DAMA recycling sign, Route 309 north, Trucksville. Mark Albrecht, 696-3409.

Frances Slocum State Park, 10 a.m.-noon. Meet at the park office for assignments. Kathy Kelchner, 696-9105.

Council, said in addition to sprucing up the trail and highway, volunteer hours can be applied to the matching funds requirement of grants for trail development.

This will be at least the 10th year for the trail cleanups, and Albrecht was effusive in praising PennDOT, which carts away the collected junk. "PennDOT has been an absolutely wonderful partner," he said.

There also will be a cleanup at Frances Slocum State Park, where volunteers can rake and pick up litter to make the park presentable for the spring and summer seasons.



Patrick Foley and Neil Bellanca, Dallas, removed a bumper from Toby's Creek during last year's cleanup of a stretch along Lake Street. The scouts helped out as part an Eagle project.

## Projected growth rate startles township officials

The accelerating pace of development in Dallas Township is attracting attention beyond its borders. Township Manager Leonard Kozick said someone from the Dallas School District noticed newspaper articles about new subdivisions and called to inquire about them.

Township Engineer Tom Doughton said at last week's meeting of the Planning Commission that about 500 new housing units are either under construction or proposed in the next three to five years. The 2000 Census counted 2,917 occupied housing units in the township, so the anticipated households would be 17 percent increase, twice the

rate of growth between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses.

That has Doughton concerned. "The growth of this township is outrunning our ordinances," he said.

Help appears to be about a year away. The township has gotten approval to use a \$40,000 state grant to redraft its planning and zoning regulations, a process Doughton said will take at least a year.

"Somebody should have thought of that 10 years ago," said Bob Mitchell, whose property abuts the proposed 101-lot Saddle Ridge subdivision.

Bernadette Rushmer, whose Kingston

Township property will be affected by runoff from Saddle Ridge, asked if new ordinances will make it harder for developments to gain approval. Doughton said he doubted that would be the case, but that it likely will cost more to meet new requirements.

"The more regulations, the more expense to build a house," he said. He mentioned that fast-growing communities in Bucks County assess impact fees on new developments, some as high as \$10,000 per lot. Some of that money goes to local school districts that are affected by growing population.

— Ronald Bartizek

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