

McCandless Town Crier



Town of McCandless • Volume 30 • Summer 2005

IN MEMORIAM

Councilman William R. "Bill" Griffith passed away on April 20, 2005 after a brief illness. Bill faithfully and cheerfully served the residents of Ward 5 from January 1988 to the time of his passing. He was in the second year of his fifth term on Town Council. During this period he chaired the Services and Recreation Committees of Town Council and served as Council liaison to the Zoning Hearing Board, Volunteer Firefighters' Steering Committee and the North Pittsburgh Community Development Corporation. He was also the Chairman of the Town's first Community Day—its Sesquicentennial celebration.

Bill will be remembered as a soft spoken, gentle man with a quick wit, who never spoke a negative word about anyone. He will also fondly be remembered as an "authentic" Santa Claus, a role he long played during the Christmas season at a down town department store and many other venues.

God speed, Bill. May you rest in peace.

WELCOME – D. LAMAR OLIVER



Upon the death of Councilman Griffith, whose term expires in 2008, Council was required within 45 days to fill the vacancy with an individual from the same political party. D. Lamar Oliver was selected from among three candidates and was administered the oath of office by Judge Patricia McCullough on May 23, 2005. A Louisiana native and retired employee of PPG, Mr. Oliver was offered a position in the corporate PPG office in Pittsburgh in June 1986 at which time he chose McCandless to be his home. Throughout his life he sustained an interest in local governance and now has the opportunity to devote himself to it in his new position. He is a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. He has been an active member of the Republican Committee for the last several years. Mr. Oliver likes the efficient way McCandless is run. He expects to apply the knowledge, skills and insight he has into the various functions of local government. Mr. Oliver acquired wide-ranging project and construction management expertise through his U.S. Air Force service and corporate engineering career: "I am at the point in my life that I have the time to help fellow citizens. Too often we sit back and say 'let them take care of that'. Well, the them is us." Mr. Oliver is honored to be a member of Council and Council is pleased to have him on board. Welcome Lamar!

TAX OFFICE REMINDERS

Please heed the following when considering your tax obligation for 2005:

Real Estate Tax

On December 20, 2004, Town Council approved a Town millage rate of 1.5 mills (\$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value) for 2005. The North Allegheny School District has kept its millage rate at 18.522 for 2005.

The tax due dates are outlined in the 2005 Town Calendar, which was mailed to you last December, and also on the Town website. It is important that you pay your tax by the due date, even if you have filed an appeal with Allegheny County. Once a deadline passes, the higher amount must be paid, even if you win your appeal. In addition, failure to pay your tax by December 31 may result in a lien being placed against your property.

The tax bills will again be mailed the first week of July. If you have not received a tax bill by the end of July, please contact our office immediately at (412) 364-0616, and we will send you a new bill. In addition, if the billing address for your real estate tax bill changed after January 1 of this year, you need to notify us immediately. Allegheny County provides us with a billing address as of January 1, but they do not provide us with updates if there is a change after this date. Your billing address may change because you paid off your mortgage and no longer have your taxes escrowed, your mortgage was sold and you have a new escrow agent, or you are the owner but not the occupant of a property and you move to a new address.

Earned Income & Net Profits Tax

The tax due dates are outlined in the 2005 Town Calendar, which was mailed to you last December, and also on the Town website. If you do not have the calendar, please stop by Town Hall and pick one up. You can also see the Town's Rules and Regulations or print a tax form by visiting the Town website at www.townofmccandless.org.

On December 9, 2002, Acting Governor Schweiker signed Act No. 166 into law, to become effective on February 7, 2003. Act No. 166 amends the Local Tax Enabling Act, which governs how and what municipalities and school districts can tax, by changing the definition of "earned income" and "net profits" to reflect the definitions of "compensation" and "net profits" for the state personal income tax and regulations. Interest and dividends, which are taxable under the state personal income tax, are still not taxable at the local level. You can learn more about Act No. 166 changes by visiting

www.inventpa.com, and choosing search words: earned income.

Business Privilege Tax

If you operate a business located in the Town, either out of your home or at a specific commercial location, you are required to file and pay this tax. Please check the 2005 Town Calendar or call us at (412) 364-0616 for more information. In addition, the Town has recently revised its Rules and Regulations so that they are more useful to our business community and also comply with recent court rulings. You can print a copy from the Town's website, www.townofmccandless.org.

Per Capita Tax

All residents of the Town over the age of 21 are required to pay this North Allegheny School District tax. In 2005, the billing system for this tax has been revised so that each residential property will have \$20 added to the real estate tax bill to account for 2 individuals in the household over the age of 21. Additional residents in each household, and renters over the age of 21, will be sent a separate bill. If you have only 1 resident in your household over the age of 21, please contact us immediately so that the adjustment can be made. If you have more than 2 residents and do not receive an additional bill, please contact us so that we can add those individuals. If you receive a bill but are not yet 21, please write your month and year of birth on the bill and return it to us.

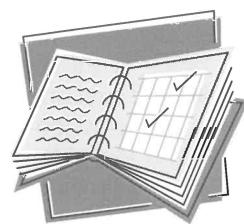
IMPORTANT TAX DATES TO REMEMBER

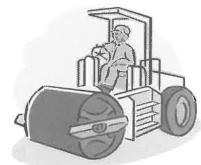
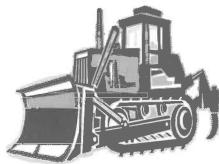
September 1 – Last day to pay 2005 Real Estate Taxes at the 2% discount amount.

October 31 – 2005 third quarter return and estimated tax payment is due.

November 1 – Last day to pay 2005 Real Estate Taxes at the face amount.

December 31 – Last day to pay 2005 Real Estate Taxes at the 10% penalty amount.





2005 PAVING PROGRAM

Annually, the Town's capital plan is reviewed to determine the roads to be included in its paving program. The list is compiled and specifications are prepared and mailed to prospective bidders. The bids are opened, read and a contract awarded by Town Council to the lowest responsible bidder. The recipient of the 2005 paving contract is Lane Construction Corporation at a cost of \$1,951,760.00. Streets included in this year's paving program are:

Street Name	From	To
Aldenford Drive	Whitley	East Arcadia
Arthur Drive	Rinaman Road	Haddon Place
Del Prado Court	Lammerton	Turnaround
Dubonnet Court	Turnaround	Post
East Arcadia Drive	Dead End	McKnight
Green Brier Drive	Kummer Road	Turnaround
Harmony Drive	Willoughby Road	Dead End
Lammerton Drive	Red Coach Road	Dead End
North Villa Drive	Babcock Boulevard	Town Line, Hampton
Old Babcock Trail	Lake Marshall Drive	Lake Marshall Drive
Old Perry Highway #1*	Perry Hwy. Rt. 19	Perry Hwy. Rt. 19
Old Perry Highway #3**	Perry Hwy. Rt. 19	Perry Hwy. Rt. 19
Overland Court	Post Road	Turnaround
Pannier Road	Cumberland Road	Arcadia Drive
Pine Villa Drive	South Villa Drive	Turnaround
Saginaw Drive	Cumberland Road	Guenevere Drive
Sandylynn Drive	North Villa Drive	Turnaround
Seminole Avenue	Old Perry Hwy. #2	Hillcrest Avenue
South Villa Drive	Babcock Boulevard	Town Line, Hampton
Terrace Drive	Harmony Parkway	Highland Road
Tivoli Drive	North Villa Drive	Turnaround
Trolley Court	Harmony Drive	Turnaround
Venango Drive	Arcadia Drive	Turnaround
Venango Place	Venango Drive	Turnaround
Wilderness Circle	Pine Villa Drive	Turnaround

The contractor provides the residents a two to three day advance, hand-delivered, written notice prior to the onset of work on the street. We apologize for any inconvenience and request your patience during the paving of the street on which you live.

*Old Perry Highway #1 (the portion adjacent to CCAC); **Old Perry Highway #3 (the portion with its southern location adjacent to Perryvista to its north location at Pine Road).

STORMWATER

In the 2005 Town calendar, we wrote about the federal government's requirement for municipalities to update stormwater ordinances to comply with new regulations. Town staff and engineers prepared an ordinance to comply with the new regulations and submitted this ordinance to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), the Town Planning Commission, and Town Council. Council reviewed it publicly in June and July. The Town Council, Planning Commission and public all commented on the draft ordinance and many of those comments were incorporated into the final ordinance, which was adopted on July 18, 2005.

Some of the key changes involve permitted and prohibited discharges into Town sewers and methods of providing infiltration of stormwater for both commercial and residential applications. In many cases, direct discharge of stormwater to storm sewers will be discouraged so that more infiltration is encouraged. Water gardens, rain barrels and cisterns are ideas that are being revived to comply with the new regulations. Roof and French drains, which currently discharge directly onto or under Town roads (not into storm sewers), will be required to be terminated off the right-of-way as the Town repaves the roads or if the discharge is causing a safety hazard.



REFUSE AND RECYCLING

With 11 other North Hills communities, the Town continues to participate in a collective bid for refuse and recycling service. Specifications have been prepared for re-bidding of this contract for a two year period beginning January 1, 2006 and an option for the first nine months of 2008. The contracted level of service method of pickup is expected to remain the same during this time frame.

Over the next two years, the Town and other North Hills communities within our North Hills Council of Governments will be evaluating a transition to automated pickup and expansion of recycling. These communities and we have filed for a state grant to help purchase large recycling carts to replace our smaller, aging containers. Through this grant request, we also are exploring the utilization of wheeled containers to recycle yard waste, which does not yet include grass clippings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECYCLING A CAN, BOTTLE, LEAF, ETC.

Recycling benefits the quality of life for the entire community. It reduces the need for landfill space and requires fewer of our natural resources, thereby providing more green space for all of us to enjoy. You, as an individual or a business, can choose your own level of participation, from simply recycling products already in your home, to using both sides of a piece of paper, to creating a compost pile, to buying recycled products.

The Town of McCandless has established, by law, minimum standards that should be followed by all residences in the Town. State law dictates that all commercial, institutional and municipal establishments in the Town also recycle. If your landlord or employer does not have a recycling program or a separate receptacle in which to deposit recyclable materials, or if you witness a refuse hauler throwing recyclable materials into a regular refuse vehicle, please contact the Town at (412) 364 – 0616.

Residential Recycling Requirements

All single and two-family residences in the Town are required to separate recyclable materials from general refuse for weekly curbside pick-up. The Town's contracted refuse hauler, currently Vogel Disposal Service, will provide you with a recycling bin. If your home is a new construction, you will receive this bin at no charge when you contact Vogel to establish your account. If you live in an existing house but do not have a bin, Vogel will provide one for a minimal fee.

Apartment buildings and residences with more than two dwelling units are required to provide a separate, clearly marked receptacle for recyclable materials, and to contract with a licensed hauler to remove these recyclables on a regular basis.

Recyclable materials included in the Town's residential program are:

- GLASS food and beverage containers of all colors.
- PLASTIC beverage containers and any plastic container (previously this was limited to plastics labeled 1 or 2).
- TIN, ALUMINUM, and BI-METAL food and beverage cans, and empty aerosol cans not containing paint or chemicals.
- MAGAZINES and NEWSPAPERS, including all inserts in the daily and Sunday paper.
- LEAVES (no grass clippings or brush).

Items that should not be put in your curbside bin include window glass, light bulbs, ceramics, oil or chemical containers, office stationery, phone books, and junk mail.

Vacuum equipment permits LEAVES to be raked onto the curb. Where possible, they should be composted on your lot. Due to unpredictable weather, specific days for leaf pickup are not designated. Bag routes on highly trafficked streets remain intact. Leaf pickup starts October 24 and will end November 23 unless weather precipitates a one-week extension.

Business Recycling Requirements

The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101) requires commercial, institutional and municipal establishments located in Pennsylvania's mandated municipalities to recycle high-grade office paper, corrugated paper, aluminum and leaf waste. In addition, establishments must recycle any other materials included in the municipality's recycling ordinance or regulations, which may include glass, newsprint, plastics, and/or steel and bimetallic cans. As a mandated municipality, businesses and institutions with facilities located within the Town must implement recycling programs. All commercial, institutional and municipal establishments must source separate the materials identified above, along with:

- High grade office paper
- Corrugated cardboard

These establishments must arrange for the collection and recycling of all designated materials.

So Why Should You Have a Recycling Program?

The most obvious reason for implementing a recycling program in your workplace is that it is the law. It is required as a provision of Act 101 and by the Town of McCandless. Because commercial, institutional and municipal establishments contribute about 50% of the municipal waste stream, they must be a part of our waste management program. There are, however, very sound reasons for recycling at work. Waste reduction and recycling are environmentally responsible and usually cost effective methods for reducing the waste generated in your workplace. They are environmentally responsible because they divert materials from disposal. Recycled materials are remanufactured into new products, thus saving natural resources. Most processes for manufacturing new products from recyclables require less energy, which means reduced emissions to the air and water. Waste reduction and recycling may also result in what is referred to as "avoided cost," which means a savings in costs for waste disposal. And depending on market performance, some revenue may be generated for the materials you recycle. For more detailed information about implementing a waste reduction and recycling program in your workplace, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection website at www.dep.state.pa.us. In addition, the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP) have published "Developing a Waste Reduction and Recycling Program for Commercial, Institutional, Industrial and Municipal Establishments." To obtain a copy, contact PROP at: P.O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA 16617, or by phone at (814) 742-7777, by fax at (814) 742-8838, or by e-mail at prop@epix.net. You can also visit them at www.proprecycles.org.

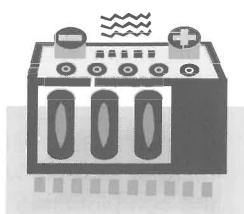
Guidelines for Recycling

When placing glass, plastic and metal containers in your recycling bin, please make sure they are clean and all lids have been removed. Newspapers and magazines should be placed in brown paper bags, and should not be placed out if they may get wet. Once newspaper gets wet, it must be discarded.

Following these guidelines and keeping your bin free of non-recyclable materials will help to keep the cost down for products made with recycled materials.

Other Recyclable Materials

There are a number of other items you may find around the house that can also be recycled, including but not limited to telephone books, tires, computers, batteries, oil, and scrap copper or metal. To find out more about recycling, please contact the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection or visit their website at www.dep.state.pa.us.



Do You Know Your Right-of-Way?

Many of us are unaware of the width of the right-of-way in which our streets are built. While some street rights-of-way are 40 feet wide, most are 50 feet in width. A few older road rights-of-way, often state roads, are 33 feet wide. In any case, public rights-of-way belong to the Town. Easements are recorded by deed over properties for general or specific purposes; i.e., the Town has many easements for storm drainage; they usually range in width from 10-25 feet. So what does this mean to a property owner? Several things.

The paved road is usually 26' wide and in the middle of the right-of-way. This leaves about 12' on either side of the road for storm and sanitary sewers, sidewalk (often with telephone, electric and cable underneath), natural gas and water lines. It is a good idea to maintain some simple landscaping from the curb to the right-of-way line such as grass, mulch, or hardy plants that do not reach car window height. Large stones, trees, shrubbery or expensive bushes growing above 2-2 1/2' are a poor choice because they could block vision, be damaged by a snow plow or cause damage if struck. Certainly fixed objects such as walls must be kept at least 3' behind the curb.

Here's a summary of the policy on landscaping. No new landscaping or walls can be placed or planted in the right-of-way. Such items existing can remain unless they cause a problem or until the street is repaved. The Town's goal is to comprehensively and systematically clear at least the first three feet behind the curb of landscaping and fixed objects. Trees, shrubs, and other landscaping in the right-of-way are there at the owner's risk. When roads are repaved or drainage work is performed, grass or mulch is used for restoration work. Other landscaping materials will not be replaced. Owners should remove landscaping from right-of-way prior to public work being performed.

While on the subject of landscaping, the Town Council has determined it necessary to pass an ordinance regarding the height of lawns. A relatively few parcels out of the over 13,000 parcels in the Town have had lawns growing over ten (10) inches. Many times neighbors and community groups help to keep the lawns maintained when their neighbors have fallen on hard times. However, sometimes property owners cannot be located or have passed away and have no known heirs. In these cases, the Town, after following the established procedure, will cut the grass and seek a judgment against

the property. Each additional time the lawn needs attention, the procedure must start anew.

A note on subterranean items such as irrigation systems. If they are installed in the right-of-way, the Town must be notified to inspect them and they remain there are the owner's risk and expense if they must ever be moved. This information is to serve as notice that the Town does not intend to be liable for such systems or any personal property placed in rights-of-way or easements.

Please keep in mind that grass, flowers, mulch or ground cover in a right-of-way or easement is fine; everything else really is not.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Community growth and land use is an issue that has a daily impact on our lives. If we do not plan for growth and land use, the planning will be done for us in ways that may not benefit the community.

As part of the ongoing planning process, the Town has rewritten its Comprehensive Plan, which was last officially updated in 1978 and rewritten in 1992 without being adopted. The Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for growth in the Town. The plan is not an end to the planning process, but rather a continuation. The Comprehensive Plan has already spawned a traffic study of the Pine Creek Road, Route 19, Blazier Drive and McKnight Road corridor. This traffic study has done several things. Among them, it shows the traffic impact of a full build-out of the existing parcels. It also shows us the needed improvements for existing traffic and gives us a tool for state and federal funding for that corridor.

At eleven meetings, our Planning Commission reviewed Comprehensive Plan iterations. Town Council reviewed the final draft at a public hearing and three public meetings.

The preparation and countless revisions to the plan were completed by Town Councilman Harry Lyon. Councilman Lyon has been a volunteer planner since 1968. The Town is fortunate to have a person with his capability to effectuate the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

ANIMAL INFO

Calls are often received at the Town Hall concerning animals dead or alive. Hopefully, the following will provide some insight:

Animals Running Loose. While an animal can be one person's beloved pet, it can also be a neighbor's pest. Ordinance prohibits animals running loose, is kept in a manner so as to create offensive odors or unsanitary conditions which are a menace to the health, comfort or safety of the public, habitually barks, yelps, screeches or howls thereby disturbing the quiet of any person or the community, or scratches, digs or defecates on any lawn, tree, shrub, plant or any other public or private property other than that of the owner. The Town's Police Department enforces this ordinance.

Dead Deer. The Pennsylvania Game Commission removes dead deer from the roadside. The telephone number of the Game Commission is 724-238-9523. The Game Commission does not pick up small animals. In this instance, please pick up the animal, with a shovel, put it in a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and place it in a garbage can for pickup by the refuse hauler.

Rats. Rat control involves getting rid of things that cause rats, i.e., refuse left lying around, food left outside to feed birds, clutter, dog feces that is not picked up, and yes, even a compost pile. If you or your neighbor has a problem with rats, please clean up any of the above that might exist. If the problem persists, put out rat bait, or hire an exterminator to help you. Neither the Town nor Allegheny County provides the bait. Diligence on everyone's part will make this problem nonexistent.



Wild or Dangerous Animals. The harboring of wild or dangerous animals within the Town may be offensive to other residents, may constitute a public nuisance or pose a threat to the safety of other residents. Any person keeping such an animal shall register the animal with the Town, provide proof of general liability insurance and pay the Town an annual fee of \$20.00. Upon the death or disposal of the animal, the animal shall not be replaced.

For further information on this ordinance, please contact the Town Hall at 412-364-0616, ext. 120.

WINDOW SAFETY TIPS

With the recent incidents of children sustaining injuries from falls from windows, the Allegheny County Health Department has provided the following tips to prevent injuries from window falls:

- Never leave small children alone, especially near open windows. Set and enforce rules not allowing youngsters to play near open windows.
- Don't depend on window screens to prevent children from falling. Screens can easily give way under even a small child's weight.
- If possible, keep windows closed and locked. If you must open them for ventilation, install window guards that keep them from opening more than four inches or only open windows that small children can't reach, such as the top of a double-hung window.
- Keep furniture and anything else kids can climb on away from open windows.
- Plant shrubs or place wood chips beneath windows to lessen the impact if a fall occurs.
- Keep window blind cords, a strangulation hazard, out of children's reach.

SENIOR CITIZEN (ACT 77) PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAM

As has been the case since 1995, the Town of McCandless is offering its Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief Program for 2005. A summary of the program follows:

- The applicant must have owned and occupied a primary residence in Allegheny County continuously for the past 10 years. Applicants are no longer required to have lived in McCandless for that time period. A property owner who has moved within Allegheny County within the past 10 years, and has continued to own and occupy the new property as a primary residence shall be eligible.
- The applicant must: (a) be age 60 or older, or if married either spouse must be age 60 or older, (b) be a widow or widower age 50 to 60, or (c) be permanently disabled and age 18 to 60. Applicants must meet the required age by December 31, 2004 to qualify for tax relief in 2004.

- The applicant must have total household income of \$30,000 or less. For calculating income, applicants should use only 50% of your Social Security Benefit, SSI, and Railroad Retirement Benefits (except Medicare benefits).

This program entitles all qualified applicants in the Town of McCandless to a 30% discount on their Town real estate tax for each year they are eligible. The Town offers an additional 2% discount if the 2004 tax is paid in full by September 1.

Application must be made directly to the Allegheny County Treasurer's office, and the deadline to apply is June 30. If you have already been approved, you do not have to reapply each year. You can obtain an application and get answers to your questions by calling the Treasurer's office directly at (412) 350-4100 or toll free at 1-866-282-8297, or by going on line to www.county.allegheny.pa.us and clicking on Forms & Applications. You can also pick up an application at McCandless Town Hall.