

## **Borough Tax Increase Being Considered to Maintain our Infrastructure**

One of our Borough's major responsibilities is to keep our town's infrastructure in good condition. This includes our roads and any associated bridges and culverts, the street lights, the public buildings and our parking lots. It also includes our parks and associated maintenance of equipment and landscaping, as well as our entire water and sewer system.

For way too long, rather than the Council passing a tax increase, our Borough's infrastructure needs have been placed on the back burner. The borough's last tax increase was in 2017, when the Council voted to levy a 1 mil fire tax in order to pay for the loan to build the new Collegeville Fire Station.

***During 2021, the Council has been engaged in strategic planning to anticipate our upcoming capital maintenance expenses. Our borough budget has no money set aside to anticipate major infrastructure repairs.***

So in 2016, when the culvert for the Donny Brook Creek began crumbling under Eleventh Ave., the borough took out a \$600,000 low interest loan to replace the old rusted metal culvert with a strong, large concrete one. We now have five years of payments left on that loan balance of \$250,000.

Since then, more infrastructure has begun to fail:

- The culverts for the Donny Brook Creek under Eighth, Sixth and Fifth Ave. are over 30 years old and could be much older. The metal culverts have rusted badly and are in danger of collapsing under the roadways. We estimate replacement costs for the three will total about \$1.2 million.
- The borough has about 100 original storm drains installed in our roads that we need to begin replacing. Our Public Works Dept. is our most cost-effective option, and they will replace each one for about \$1,200—a total of \$120,000 for the job over time.
- We also have more residential roads that need to be repaved each year than we have money for. Although we spend about \$100,000 to \$135,000 in road repaving each year, we have never had a formal plan. In the past, whatever money was available from our liquid fuels account (money we receive from the PA gasoline tax) and any leftover money from our snow removal budget dictated how many roads we could repave.

We also have a new expense due to PA DEP's recent stormwater requirement:

- As part of the Borough's Municipal Storm Sewer Permit (MS4), the Borough was required to submit a pollution reduction plan (PRP) to remove 21,000 pounds of sediment from being released into the Donny Brook Creek. The PRP plan was discussed and adopted by Borough Council at a public meeting in 2017. This reduction needs to be completed by the end of our permit cycle in 2023. The pollution mitigation measures will require us to make an expenditure of a minimum of \$100,000

To discuss our options on the best way to pay for these needed capital expenses, we have scheduled a Budget Workshop for Tuesday night, Nov. 30 at 6:30 p.m. All interested residents are invited to attend. The meeting will be both in person at The Collegeville Fire House and also available via Zoom.

### **Collegeville Mayor and Borough Council**

Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Cathy Kernen,  
Marion McKinney, Gary Hoffmann,  
Shannon Spencer, Val Beckius, Kathy Costello and Craig Farr