

McCandless Town Crier



Town of McCandless • Volume 29 • Summer 2004

BUILDING CODES - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Building codes are nothing new to the Town of McCandless. On July 7, 1946, what was then called Township of McCandless adopted a Building and Plumbing Code. On April 25, 1960, the Township of McCandless adopted its first BOCA Basic Building Code and its supplements. The Town's Home Rule Charter incorporated this building code tradition into the Charter by requiring the Town to adopt a "nationally recognized model building code".

On November 10, 1999, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted a law adopting a statewide code. This will have little effect on the residents of the Town of McCandless. Items that will change are enforcement of the energy requirements and the requirement that the replacement of a roof requires a permit from the Town. Currently, these requirements are enforced by the Commonwealth. Also, the new "Uniform Construction Code" requires the number of inspections to increase.

Commercial applications will no longer have to be reviewed by the State Department of Labor and Industry. This will result in a time and cost savings for those previously required to submit their drawings to them.

The Town, as it always has, will continue to have the Allegheny County Health Department conduct plumbing inspections. The new code will go into effect on July 5, 2004 in the Town of McCandless. If you have any questions, please call 412-364-0616, ext. 121 or ext. 140.

CONGRATULATIONS PEEBLES DISTRICT VFC

Peebles District Volunteer Fire Company was founded in 1944 with each member afforded a hand pump for his private vehicle. A trailer with mounted pump functioned as the department's first fire apparatus.

Throughout the years, the technology and sophistication of the fire service has changed dramatically. One thing hasn't changed—and that is the dedication and unselfish spirit that drives the volunteer fire fighters, male and female, young and old.

This year Peebles celebrates its 60th year of volunteer fire service to the citizens of McCandless. We heartily thank them for it.

McKNIGHT/DUNCAN TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

*In case you were wondering...*what is happening to **McKnight Road**, here are some answers: Since the 1960s, McCandless leaders have yearned to extend Duncan Avenue to accommodate east-west traffic. After extensive planning and design, this dream is coming true. Our contractor should complete the grading for the roadway by August if the weather cooperates. Pavement will be placed in October.

In conjunction with PennDOT, the Town finished planning and design of the widening of McKnight Road last year. Construction started last fall and should end by October 2004, providing a fully functional three way signalized intersection with turn lanes for through and local development traffic. When specific plans are considered for property along McKnight Road, access will not be from McKnight since it retains its limited access designation in McCandless. Collector roads will serve that purpose. The first 60 feet of Duncan Avenue's extension beyond McKnight Road will also be completed now. Duncan Avenue West will not connect to Perry Highway, but will serve as a local access road to now undeveloped land along McKnight Road. Federal funds funneled through PennDOT are paying for 80% of the \$3.0 million cost of construction. Local funds through assessments to benefited property owners plus local tax dollars cover the remainder as well as the cost of design and planning.

If all goes as planned, both projects will provide better and long-term access through two of our key traffic routes.



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 2004. 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).

In order to mirror the County program, Town Council extended this entitlement to all qualified applicants in the Town of McCandless on June 28. This program extends a 30% discount on Town real estate tax for each year to eligible residents. 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 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 the McCandless Town Hall.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT ELIMINATED FOR 2004

Effective January 1, 2004, Town Council has eliminated the credit on the first \$5,000 of earnings for all residents. The credit was established in 2001 as a way to reduce the Town's fund balance by returning a portion of the earned income tax paid by every resident of the Town. The result of this effort was a total tax forgiveness of approximately \$300,000 per year over the past three years. Town Council is eliminating this credit because it believes the fund balance is now at a more acceptable level. McCandless residents earning \$5,000 or less will continue to be exempt from the requirement that they file and pay on a quarterly basis.

TOWN REAL ESTATE TAX RATE REMAINS UNCHANGED FOR 2004

Town Council has approved a real estate tax rate of 1.31 mills (\$1.31 per \$1,000 of assessed value) for 2004. This is the same tax rate that was in place for 2003. As a point of information, Town Council has not increased the real estate tax rate in over 20 years and, in fact, they have reduced the rate twice over that same time frame. Council last raised the real estate tax rate in 1982, to a rate of 10 mills. That rate was maintained until 1995, when it was reduced to 9.6 mills. In 2001, as part of the county-wide reassessment, the Town reduced the rate to 1.5 mills. You may remember the County made the change in 2001 from valuing properties at anywhere from 18% to 25% of their actual market value to a system which valued properties at full market value. Municipalities and School Districts were required to reduce their millage accordingly, so that they could realize an increase in total collections of no more than 5% over the prior year. Town Council set the rate at 1.5 mills so as to keep collections at the same total dollar level as had been realized in 2000. When, after this rate had been approved, the County determined it had overstated its calculation of the total market value for properties in the Town by approximately 14%, Town Council chose to keep the rate at 1.5 mills. This resulted in an overall tax cut of 14% for the Town as a whole. In 2002, Town Council again reduced the real estate tax rate another 14%, to 1.31 mills, to keep total collections at the same level as in 2001. Surplus funds have helped compensate for this 28% lower tax rate for these years.

TAX OFFICE REMINDERS

Real Estate Tax.

On December 15, 2003, Town Council approved a Town millage rate of 1.31 mills (\$1.31 per \$1,000 of assessed value) for 2004. This is the same rate that was enacted in 2003, and is one of the lowest in Allegheny County. The North Allegheny School District set its 2004 millage rate at 18.522, which is the same rate as in 2003.

The tax due dates are outlined in the 2004 Town Calendar, which was mailed to you last December. 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 were mailed the first week of July. If your bill is mailed to you directly, you will note that it is a change from prior years. The Town has installed new tax collection software that will allow us to process your payment more quickly and accurately than in the past. 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.

Please see the article in this publication regarding the repeal of the Earned Income Tax Credit. The tax due dates are outlined in the 2004 Town Calendar, which was mailed to you last December. If you do not have the calendar, please stop by the Town Hall and pick one up.

During 2004, the Town has installed new tax collection and billing software that we believe will result in more professional correspondence and more efficient and effective service from our Tax Office. If you receive quarterly forms, you should have already noticed the change in the appearance of our forms. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments regarding this change.

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 2004 Town Calendar or call us at (412) 364-0616 for more information. In addition, the Town is currently revising its Rules and Regulations so that they are more useful to our business community and also comply with recent court rulings. Once this process is completed, we will be supplying a copy of these new Rules and Regulations to each business registered with our office.

Per Capita Tax.

All residents of the Town over the age of 21 are required to pay this North Allegheny School District tax. 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.



2004 PAVING PROGRAM

Annually, Public Works Committee Chairman Aufman, Town Manager Cordek and Public Works Superintendent Sabina tour Town roads to determine the roads to be included in the Town's 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 2004 paving contract is Peter J. Caruso & Sons, Inc. at a cost of \$1,677,581.06. Streets included in this year's paving program are:

<u>Street Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Balmoral Drive	Dead End	Patricia
Crest Road	Reichold	Westvue
Dormar Drive	Dormar	Hazlett
Dormar Court	Brittany	Turn Around
Duncan Avenue	McKnight Road	Babcock Boulevard
Eleanor Street	Perrymont	E. Sandle
Fairfield Road	Turn Around	
Foxhunt Road	Cumberland Road	Turn Around
Foxwood Drive	Meinert Road	Turn Around
Glen Manor Road	Highland Road	Dead End
Harding Road	Ingomar Road	Dead End
Harrison Street	Roosevelt Boulevard	Dead End
Hazlett Road	Peebles Road	Thompson Run Road
Hillvista Drive	Balmoral Drive	Hazlett Road
Hubbard Road	Duncan Avenue	Sample Road
Krepp Court	Ingomar Road	Turn Around
Landau Court	Landau Drive	Turn Around
Landau Drive	Reichold Road	Westvue Drive
Lincoln Club Drive	Duncan Avenue	Dead End
Louise Street	Perrymont Road	E. Sandle Avenue
McCandless Drive	Plan Line	Grubbs Road
Mansions Drive	Wildwood Road	Turn Around
Meadow Oaks Drive	Duncan Avenue	Turn Around
Monet Court North	Hampton Town Line	Turn Around
Monroe Street	Roosevelt Boulevard	Dead End
Oakcrest Court	Meadow Oaks Drive	Turn Around
Old Perry Highway	Perry Highway/Route 19	Pine Creek Road
Old Perry Highway	Pine Creek Road	Perry Highway/Route 19
Parkway Road	Peebles Road	Dead End
Patricia Drive	Hazlett Road	Dormar Drive
Ridgeview Drive	Rinaman Road	Rinaman Road
Sequoia Street	South Irwin Avenue	Turn Around
Taft Place	Roosevelt Boulevard	Turn Around
Tanglewood Road	Parkway Road	Turn Around
Tyler Street	Roosevelt Boulevard	Dead End
Valleyview Court	Twin Hill Road	Turn Around
Victory Road	Willoughby Road	Harmony Drive
Vivian Drive	Hazlett Road	Turn Around
Westvue Road	Crest Road	Landau Drive
Willow Drive	Rinaman Road	Dead End
Wyngold Drive	Plan Line	Sequoia Street

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.

REFUSE PICKUP IN THE TOWN

Many of you have noted problems with your curbside pickup this past spring. Pickup has often occurred well into the evening on your scheduled pickup day, or even two or three days after pickup should have occurred. We ask that, when a situation arises with your pickup, you contact Vogel directly first to register your complaint. You should contact the Town directly if you do not receive satisfaction or the problem persists over a period of time. We may be able to help get the problem solved, and in addition we are keeping a log of problems that residents have experienced so that we can use this as a reference for future contracts.



A reminder...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.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANIMALS

Many calls are received at the Town Hall concerning animals running loose, dead deer on the roadside and rats. Hopefully, the following will provide some insight into these matters:

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 your 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.

PARKING PROHIBITED ON CERTAIN DEAD END AND HAMMERHEAD STREETS

At the May 24, 2004 Business Meeting of Town Council, an ordinance was adopted prohibiting parking the last 200' on certain dead end and hammerhead streets from November 1 through March 31. This prohibition applies to nineteen streets. They are: Adams Street, Birch Avenue, Canterbury Drive, Emerald Drive, Harold Street, Harrison Street, Highview Street, Jackson Street, Jefferson Street, Kind Drive, Madison Place, Monroe Street, Parkway Road, Sequoia Street, Shirley Drive, Towne Court, Tyler Street, Van Dyke Street and Wittmer Road. The primary reason for the prohibition is to allow the Town salt trucks ample room to turn around when providing snow and ice control during the winter months. We ask that you adhere to the requirements of this ordinance; that is, please do not park your car 200' from the terminus of each of the above-named streets.

STORMWATER REGULATIONS

On October 28, 1999, the Federal Environmental protection Agency (EPA) signed into law its Phase II Stormwater Permitting Regulations affecting small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). The small MS4 is defined as any municipality with a population less than 100,000. The new regulation includes a list of 20 “Urbanized Areas” encompassing over 700 local municipal government entities automatically designated as needing permits to discharge Stormwater into a stream of the Commonwealth.

Under the regulation, EPA was to develop a Best Management Practices manual by December 8, 2000 for use by MS4s. Final guidance for measurable goals for permit compliance was to be in place by December 8, 2001. The regulation required the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop and implement necessary permits and permit applications by December 8, 2002. It further required affected MS4s to obtain an individual permit or permit coverage under a general permit no later than March 8, 2003. The Town is among those hundreds of municipalities required to obtain a permit under these regulations. On March 4, 2003, the Town submitted a Notice of Intent (NOI), which is a request for coverage under NPDES General Permit regulations. The Town was granted coverage under General Permit regulations on December 11, 2003.

During the first permit year, the Town was required to take steps to meet several Best Management Practices (BMPs) and other Measurable Goals. A pamphlet has been produced and made available to residents entitled “When It Rains It Drains”. This pamphlet describes the process of rainwater entering the storm sewer system and what happens during the journey. The Town has also increased efforts to involve and inform residents in matters related to storm and other water runoff entering the system. A map of all Town streets including all catch basins, manholes and other facilities relating to stormwater and other water runoff is being completed. This map will aid in locating and defining watersheds within the Town. New or updated ordinances will be adopted to regulate runoff and drainage in accordance with the latest concepts. New regulations will be created and implemented relating to post-construction stormwater management in new and existing developments. Lastly, the Town is required to implement and enforce regulations relating to stormwater pollution and its prevention. These regulations must speak specifically to illicit discharge, detection, and elimination of pollution entering into streams within the Commonwealth.

As you can see, each of us plays a part in what goes into our storm drains. The enclosed flyer prepared by the EPA provides further information on this increasingly important subject.

THIS LAND IS OUR LAND

Many of us are not aware 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 anyway? 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. Existing such items 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.

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 at the owner's risk and expense if they must ever be moved.

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.

McCandless Community Day

September 11, 2004

Town of McCandless Community Day 2004 will be held on September 11. The date, September 11, has special meaning for Americans. A special memorial service will be held for those who lost their lives on this date in 2001. An invitation has been extended to the Pastors of churches in the Town of McCandless inviting them to participate in this special service. As in the past, we will have a parade with marching bands, fire trucks, dignitaries, greyhounds; inflatables, face painting, and games for the kids; food, craft, vendor and informational booths; day-long entertainment, and a fantastic fireworks display at 9:00 p.m. New this year will be a car cruise and rides for the kids! Won't you join us?

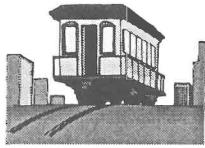
A booklet will be published listing the day's events, the location and name of the vendors, and advertising the many businesses we have in the Town. Would you like to be a part of this booklet? Please identify the amount of your donation along with your name and address on the form below and send them along with your check to the Town of McCandless at 9955 Grubbs Road, Wexford, PA 15090.

All proceeds go towards supporting the publishing of the booklet and the day's activities. Contributions are tax deductible.

NAMES(S) (as they will appear in the booklet) _____

ADDRESS: _____

DONATION:

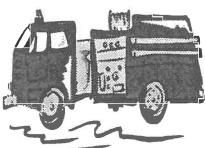


Patron (\$15.00)



Sponsor (\$25.00)

Amount \$ _____



Donor (\$50.00)

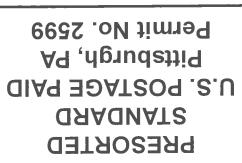
**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
FOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR A POWER OUTAGE**

Because summer storms sometimes cause power outages, the Allegheny County Health Department is offering advice on how to preserve perishable foods without refrigeration and how to tell when food is spoiled and should be discarded.

Health officials offer the following recommendations:

- Use appliance thermometers in refrigerators and freezers. Safe temperatures are a maximum of 40° F for refrigerators and 0° F for freezers. Most food borne illnesses are caused by bacteria that multiply rapidly above 40° F.
- Keep freezer doors shut. A full freezer should keep food safe about two days; a half-full freezer, about one day. Add bags of ice or dry ice to the freezer if the power will be out for an extended time. You can safety refreeze thawed foods that still contain ice crystals or feel cold to the touch.
- Refrigerated items should be safe as long as the power is out no more than four to six hours. Discard any perishable food that has been above 40° F for two hours or more and any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture. Keep the refrigerator door closed; every time you open it, cold air escapes and raises the temperature inside.
- If the power will be out more than six hours, transfer perishable foods to an insulated cooler filled with ice or frozen gel packs. Keep a thermometer in the cooler and make sure the temperature does not go above 40° F.
- Never taste food to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature longer than two hours, bacteria that cause food borne illness can begin to multiply very rapidly. Some types of bacteria will produce toxins which are not destroyed by cooking and can cause illness.

Please call the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-ACHD or visit www.achd.net. for advice about the handling of specific foods in a power outage and when they should be saved or thrown out.



TOWN CRIER
TOWN OF MCCANDLESS
9955 GRUBBS ROAD
PA 15090-9645
EXFORD, PA 15090-9645