



**Pocopson Township
Historic Community Campus
at the Barnard House**

**Project Planning, Evaluations and
Construction**

A Project Update

prepared by

The Barnard House Steering Committee

July 2015



Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| I. | Introduction..... | 3 |
| II. | Background..... | 3 |
| III. | Participants..... | 4 |
| IV. | Supporting Codes, Documents and Reports | 5 |
| V. | Evaluation of Needs..... | 6 |
| VI. | Evaluation of Township Properties | 7 |
| VII. | Comparison of existing Township Office Building to the Barnard House Property..... | 8 |
| VIII. | Project Costs..... | 12 |
| IX. | Clarifications | 12 |
| X. | Conclusion | 14 |
| XI. | Appendix: Barnard House Timeline..... | 15 |



I. Introduction

The Barnard House Project will repurpose the historic Eusebius Barnard house and the surrounding land as the Pocopson Township community campus encompassing all township administrative offices, resident services, government and community meeting space and a heritage park. The property is eligible for the National Historic registry as a documented stop on the Underground Railroad and a Pennsylvania Historic Marker on site acknowledges Eusebius Barnard's contribution to the Abolitionist movement. The Kennett Underground Railroad Center will be a tenant to help recognize this historic significance. Evaluation of options, planning, stabilization and the construction of Phase I – the exterior park and associated facilities – is 99% complete. Phase II – completion of the interior renovations to the building and occupancy, and Phase III – construction of the integral large meeting room addition – are the final steps.

II. Background

Boards of Supervisors have periodically evaluated Township facilities and properties in the township to find a suitable site or facility that would better meet existing and future Township administration, service and public needs. The former Public Works garage was converted into the current township office building when the current Public Works building was completed in the 1990s. In 2008, Chester County sold the Barnard House and the surrounding 68 acres to the township for \$1 as part of an overall expansion project on County property in the township. From 2009–2010, volunteers and professionals explored options to determine if this newly acquired property and building could meet Township needs. The planning for the repurposing the former residence into the township office building then began and has been continually revisited through 2015 and Phase I construction. These evaluations and findings have been compiled and are documented herein in response to public comments and questions at a public meeting on June 8, 2015. Information presented at that public meeting as well as additional information pertinent to the overall project are also incorporated for reference and clarity.



III. Participants

A. Barnard House Steering Committee Members.

The committee was formed in early 2009. Members were chosen based on the appropriateness of their contribution to the project, and their ability to fairly represent the interests of other committees, staff and the resident taxpayers at large. All were involved in completing evaluations between 2009 and the present. Backgrounds include:

- PA Licensed Professional Civil/Environmental Engineer
- Risk Analysis Expert
- Chester County Planning Commission Representative
- Several County endorsed, local and regional Historians
- Three Township Planning Commission Members
- Two Pocopson Historical Committee Members
- Past Parks, Recreation and Trails Committee Member
- Open Space Committee Member
- One current and three past Township Supervisors
- Two grants writers
- Code Enforcement Officer/Building Construction Expert
- Kennett Underground Railroad representatives
- Staff Representative

Committee members (with the exception of the Staff Representative) volunteered an estimated 4,000 hours of time and effort at no cost to the Township. All members performed in compliance with professional ethics laws and public government transparency laws. Regular committee meetings, open to the public, were held over an almost seven year period and minutes were generated. Recommendations of the committee during the entire process were presented at periodic bi-monthly Board of Supervisor meetings with minutes posted on the website.



B. Professionals and consultants:

- Two Energy Efficiency Experts (studies completed by two separate professionals – one for the existing Township and Public Works buildings, and one on the Barnard House). Services were donated.
- Township Engineer
- Township Treasurer
- Public Works Director
- Licensed Local Architect (selected by Board of Supervisors in 2009 after an interview process with three architects)
- Civil, mechanical, HVAC, construction and structural engineers under direction of architect
- Land Planners from The Brandywine Conservancy
- Residents who are renovation contractors

IV. Supporting Codes, Documents and Reports

- PA Municipalities Planning Code – Act of July 31, 1968, as amended. Section 105 Purpose of The Act: “to provide for the general welfare by guiding and protecting amenity, convenience, future governmental, economic, practical, and social and cultural facilities, development and growth, as well as the improvement of governmental processes and functions; to guide uses of land and structures, type and location of streets, public grounds and other facilities;” and “to promote the preservation of this Commonwealth’s natural and historic resources and prime agricultural land.”
- Second Class Township Code – Act of May 1, 1933 (P.L. 103, No. 69) as amended. Section 1701. Township Buildings. “The board of supervisors may procure by purchase, gift, devise or the exercise of eminent domain a lot or lots of ground located within the township and erect or use buildings thereon for township purposes.”
- Barnard House Property deed and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions-October 2008. “...County’s standard Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions limiting the Township’s use of the Property to Township-owned parkland for publically accessible recreation, open space and natural resources conservation, and the location thereon of the Township’s municipal offices, defined



herein as “municipal facilities”. “MUNICIPAL FACILITIES” shall mean a Pocopson Township municipal building for the Township’s governmental offices and public meeting rooms, including administrative and police, park restrooms and park and recreation equipment storage buildings and ancillary parking facilities ...but excluding public works facilities and public works storage areas...”

- Pocopson Township Comprehensive Plans 2001 and 2014 – Meets all goals and objectives of planning for Community Facilities and Services, Historic Resources Planning and Natural Resources Protection
- Deeds and restrictive covenants of all township owned properties
- Pocopson Township, Pennsylvania, Office and Garage Facilities Energy Assessment, Ralph Nigro, PE, Applied Energy Group, Inc. February 2008
- Barnard House Energy Audit Report, Matthew Lillard, HERS Rater, BPI Analyst, LEED AP, Green Savers, August 2009
- Master Plan Process – “Pocopson Township Building and Kennett Underground Railroad Center at Historic Barnard House” – Melton Architects 2009
- Planning Study – “Scope of Work Following LEEDS Reference Guide for Existing Buildings” – as it applies specifically to the Barnard House and property – Melton Architects 2009
- PA Uniform Construction Code

V. Evaluation of Needs

The committee and consultants developed a list of current needs and desires and possible future needs as the Township continues to evolve:

- A. Existing needs include services, parking, building size, storm water management, sewerage, recycling, uses of structures and land, access, traffic safety, code compliance, locations, recycling, neighborhood impact, relationship to parks, Public Works facility and operations, availability of other non-Township owned lands, public space use including meeting and work areas and community gathering space and costs.



- B. Future possible Township needs including police force, parks and trails maintenance department, expanded administration hours, additional staff, records retention and available space and land for those needs.
- C. Conclusion – After evaluating the current and possible future needs, the committee concluded that two locations would provide a suitable solution – one for Public Works facilities and operations and a second for all other needs.

VI. Evaluation of Township Properties

- A. A land purchase option to purchase or negotiate additional land holdings for a Township facility was investigated. Existing large properties sufficient in size for use as a Township facility are now either deed restricted from future development (approximately 25% of the township) or reserved by the private landowners for their own future plans. Also, no development projects during this time presented a viable opportunity to obtain additional land from a developer.
- B. Township-owned parcels were reviewed for deed restrictions, size, location, current use and use restrictions (wetlands, accessibility and infrastructure) to determine the ability of each, or of combined contiguous properties to meet existing and future Township needs. Pocopson Township owns 14 separately deeded parcels of property, many combined and serving as a single use for the township. Township owned properties include:
 - Park property – 3 contiguous parcels, 28.9 acres on Corrine and S. Wawaset Roads
 - Public Works Building and Park – 1 parcel, 8.5 acres on Lenape Road (Rt.52)
 - Schoolhouse property – 1 parcel, 0.87 acres at Corrine and Locust Grove Roads
 - Existing administrative office and Public Works Equipment barn – 1 parcel, 0.86 acres
 - Barnard House property – 1 parcel, 68.2 acres on N. Wawaset Road
 - Vacant property on South side of Lenape-Unionville Road – 3 parcels, 11.8 acres
 - Property on east side of Pocopson Road – 3 parcels, 18.3 acres



- C. The committee determined that the township needs could be met using three township-owned parcels. The existing Public Works/park parcel (8.5 acres) combined with a portion of the existing Township office property (portion of 0.86 acres) containing the equipment storage barn would serve existing and future Public Works needs. The third parcel, the Barnard House property was well suited to provide the office administration, public use, public services and public meeting space for existing and future needs.

VII. Comparison of existing Township Office Building to the Barnard House Property

- A. The existing Township building was evaluated as total township needs became better defined and code and safety deficiencies, space and amenities with the existing building continued to surface year after year. Property characteristics and major deficiencies include:
- The existing building on 0.86 acres is a 1400 square foot retrofitted garage that was built and used to house Township road equipment. It is a cinderblock structure built on a slab on grade. The property contains an additional barn structure used for Public Works equipment storage, and a recycling drop off area.
 - The facility does not meet ADA accessibility requirements.
 - Heating and cooling costs are high as the structure was not constructed for occupancy, it was constructed as a garage. Staff members find the environmental conditions are often uncomfortable.
 - The existing building is considered an uncertified building under the PA Uniform Construction Code. Access into the structure does not comply with established standards (ANSI a 117.1 or the 2009 IBC).
 - There is no private public restroom. The existing restroom is in the staff working area and during normal work hours, offers little privacy to employees or users.
 - Existing bathroom does not comply with accessibility requirements.
 - Electrical wiring is lacking in some areas.
 - Well connection runs through a plan file storage cabinet.
 - The building lacks proper sewage facilities. The septic field is sealed off by pavement and partly underneath the barn. Percolation capacity cannot be tested without borings. No grassed space for a compliant main and backup septic field, as required by ordinance. Hookup to the Riverside public sewer system would



require construction of a sewer line along Denton Hollow Road to the first manhole at the Riverside, and would include tie-in fees and ongoing service charges.

- Existing office space places two primary part time employees in one room. Conversations with members of the public or Supervisors with one cannot be kept separate from the other, creating disruption of work flow and time management difficulties.
- The most basic privacy practices of an organization for the public cannot be offered. Discussions between permit applicants and building/code officials are in the same space as receptionist and all other public space. There is no private area to discuss personal financial issues, personnel matters or other confidential issues.
- A single room contains building/codes officers functions, reception, public area, work session area, conference room, and committee session area which produces an interference between the functions all using a single space.
- Storage space is limited for existing files, plans and records and significantly encroaches into the public and office areas. There is no space for additional archives currently held by residents in the community.
- Parking is limited and there is no safe overflow area.
- If the recycling area is relocated to the Barnard House property at the completion of Phase I to reduce the noise and traffic issues at the existing building, the public services would be split between two locations in the township.
- Well water cannot be confirmed as potable as well construction, septic construction and the distance between the two cannot be confirmed without extensive investigation. Staff and public drink bottled water.
- Noise associated with Township activities and lighting outside the building in this residential location have been longtime neighborhood complaints. Exterior lighting is kept to a minimum and is inadequate which creates safety concerns with walking through the parking area while vehicles are coming and going during evening meetings.
- Traffic ingress/egress, including regular traffic, and large public works trucks pass within four to five feet of the building entrance. This is and has been a significant safety concern.



B. Improvement and cost considerations for the existing structure:

The building cannot be expanded outward without further reducing already limited parking. Expanding the building would also render the current vehicle ingress/egress routes unusable. To provide adequate and proper division of work spaces for existing functions, staff, work sessions and basic meeting space, a second floor would have to be added to the building.

Complications from enlarging the building by adding a second floor:

- The building foundation or footings will likely not support additional load bearing walls for a second story, so structural modification would be required.
- A second story would create the need for a stairway. First-floor area would be reduced and some of the overall space gained with the additional of the second story will be consumed by the staircase.
- The existing restroom must be enlarged and a second restroom added on either the first or second floor to serve the public.

Also needed are:

- Installation of sewer line to Riverside.
- Provide permanent safe drinking water supply.
- Insulation and HVAC improvements/expansion.

The estimate of the cost to bring the building into compliance with current codes and expand the space based on typical planning costs plus construction costs in Chester County is \$480,000. The actual costs would be known only if bids were obtained. This estimate does not include relocation of staff and services to an undetermined location while work is being completed or revisions to the security system, internet technology and phone systems or additional furniture, all of which would be additional expenses incurred by modifying the building. Also, expansion of the existing building does not resolve the following issues which will remain due to site restrictions and location:

- Neighborhood disturbance from noise and lighting
- Inadequate space for adequate, safe parking and traffic ingress/egress routes



- No space for storm water management facilities
- No building space as additional staff and township functions grow
- No space for a larger public meeting room
- No dedicated space for resident archives storage

C. Barnard House Comparison

This project consisting of 68 acres and occupiable building space of about 4100 square feet incorporates all of the elements missing in the existing structure now used for Township Offices and the exterior work is essentially completed. Once completed, the facilities will:

- Be central to the community for business and recycling, in one location.
- Be located in an appropriate zone with similar institutional facilities, not a residential neighborhood.
- Significantly improve access to and visibility of the Township municipal offices.
- Provide adequate and safe parking for the trail head and Township business as well as overflow parking.
- Preserve a Historic resource and an important historic landmark within Pocopson Township.
- Meet ADA requirements for public accessibility and as a workplace.
- Meet pertinent commercial building codes.
- Provide a compliant permitted sewage system sufficient for end use including future large meeting room addition. *In place with Phase 1*
- Provide safe public safe drinking water. *In place with Phase 1*
- Incorporate best management practices for storm water *In place with Phase 1*
- Reduce traffic flow on Denton Hollow Road due to trips to and from the existing building.
- Provide for expanded office areas, conference rooms, adequate file storage, a break room for employees and a home for the Kennett Underground Railroad Center.
- Accommodate expansion as the needs of the community change.
- Utilize and preserve an existing township asset



The estimated cost to complete Phase II of the project so that the Barnard House is renovated, repurposed and can be utilized based on typical construction costs in Chester County is \$450,000 for construction plus \$200,000 for security, internet technology, furniture, and a contingency allowance. The actual costs will be known once bids are obtained. The building and property will then provide all needed components of a code compliant, well-functioning facility with room to grow.

VIII. Project Costs

- The Township has budgeted for a \$750,000 loan to complete Phase II construction and occupy the building. The amount that will be borrowed is expected to be less than the budgeted amount and will be determined once firm bids are in hand.
- The annual payment on this loan starts at about \$49,000 and declines to about \$47,000 over the 20-year life of the loan – about the same as the loan payment amount that ended late 2014 on the Public Works building and park. **There is no new tax impact for the completion of Phase II.**
- Phase III will complete the Historic Community Campus. Funding options for this phase include a combination of sale or lease of the existing Township building and other township funds.
- The cost to complete Phase II is less than 2.6% of the township budgeted income. Stated another way, the average cost per household is equivalent to \$3.21/month in property tax based on the average assessed residential property value. This similar cost has been paid by residents for the previous park and public works loan for 20 years and would now essentially be redirected to complete this facility.

IX. Clarifications

Questions and comments from June 8, 2015 Public Meeting that are not otherwise addressed above:



- A. The recent studies brought up during the public meeting (an organizational analysis by the Lafayette College Meyner Center and a space review by a Rubinstein’s employee) are not comparable with the evaluations and conclusions presented above.
- The Meyner Center report states that the “current administrative office and public meeting room are insufficient to meet the Township’s present and future needs.” and recommends the Township prepare a “master plan for the relocation of its administrative offices.” The author was apparently unaware of the already completed planning process that considered the elements and options for many alternatives as described above.
 - The Rubinstein’s employee proposal recommends dedicating the existing office building to office space for the day-to-day township activities by eliminating the meeting room. Concurrently, the first floor of the Barnard House would be renovated and several first-floor interior walls removed to create meeting room space. She also proposes later finishing the second-floor into offices for either the Township or to lease to others. While this study does support the viability of using the Barnard House as the Township municipal office building, renovating the Barnard House in two phases as proposed does not consider engineering, construction, historic preservation and code requirements or costs. Further, splitting activities between the existing office building for day-to-day work and using the Barnard House for every meeting creates operational inefficiencies; and the deficiencies in the existing building are either to be ignored or would require spending an unknown sum to bring it into compliance while not addressing the noise, parking and traffic issues in a residential neighborhood.
- B. Grants for historical restoration projects for a public property are difficult to obtain if the building is not occupied or open to the public. It is the responsibility of the Township to renovate and repurpose this Township owned building.
- C. The \$825,000 amount in the 2015 budget represents the remaining payments due for Phase I that will be paid in 2015 plus the costs to complete Phase II. The loan amount attributed to Phase II is \$750,000.



X. Conclusion

The Barnard House Steering Committee has taken great care to evaluate the feasibility of the project and alternatives while minimizing costs and the impact on taxpayers from the project. A master plan process was followed and significant grants and donations were awarded. Costs are at or below the earlier 2012 construction estimate, even though completion has been stalled.

The project is supported by our State Senator and State Representative, Chester County Commissioners, Chester County Planning Commission and County Historic Resource representatives and all Pocopson Boards of Supervisors since before property settlement occurred in 2008. The search for land since the 1970's, the purchase of the property from the County for \$1, and the thousands of donated hours by qualified professionals has saved the Township millions of dollars and taken this project to a final construction schedule that will complete this landmark project within two years.

The project looks to the future in observance of the township government responsibility *to provide for the general welfare by guiding and protecting amenity, convenience, future governmental, economic, practical, and social and cultural facilities, development and growth, as well as the improvement of governmental processes and functions; to guide uses of land and structures, type and location of streets, public grounds and other facilities.*



XI. Appendix: Barnard House Timeline

- October 2008 – Township acquired property from County
- April 2009 – Volunteer day to remove kitchen appliances and cabinets, carpeting, bathroom fixtures, general cleanup, etc.
- October 2009 – Community meeting to discuss renovation of the historic Eusebius Barnard House
- April 2011 – Pennsylvania Roadside Historical Marker recognizing Eusebius Barnard unveiled at house
- July 2011 – Old furnace and two heating oil storage tanks in basement removed
- August 2011 – Stabilization project to install support columns and beams in basement and to replace unsafe flooring in first floor kitchens
- June 2012 – Requested bids for entire project. \$1.3M cost deemed too high given state of economy – elected to break into smaller pieces
- August 2013 – Four deteriorated first-floor windows refurbished
- December 2013 – Awarded matching grant for exterior park project
- January 2014 – First floor HVAC system installed
- June 2015 – Awarded \$50,000 matching Keystone Grant towards the Barnard House windows and doors preservation work
- July 2015 – Project to install bathroom, connect water, improve traffic ingress to and egress from property, parking and construct KURC area completed