

Main Street Matters

Downtown Glenside is sporting a striking new look, thanks to the major streetscape enhancement project completed last fall. Decorative streetlights, embossed crosswalks, granite curbs, sidewalk pavers, attractive trash and recycling containers, comfortable benches and traffic-calming measures along Easton Road between Springhouse Lane and the SEPTA overpass have beautified the commercial district. Such enhancements are a proven strategy for attracting shoppers and businesses to promote a healthy business base, a key component of the Township's economic development strategy. Officials dedicated the project, funded in part with nearly \$1.75 million in grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Montgomery County, at the WinterFest celebration last December.

Elkins Park East is the next commercial district targeted for streetscape enhancements. With design plans and construction documents already in place, the Township is aggressively pursuing grants to get the project underway.

Facade Grants

Thanks to additional state funding, the Township can again offer matching grants to businesses in Cheltenham Village, East Cheltenham Avenue, Elkins Park East, Elkins Park West and Glenside commercial districts to improve their property exteriors. The Design Challenge Grants, which must be approved before work begins, can total up to \$5,000 or 50% of the project cost, whichever is less.

All work must conform to the design guidelines in the Cheltenham Township Commercial District Enhancement Plan. Eligible projects include improvements to windows, doors, exterior woodwork, architectural metals, painting, fabric awnings, signage, lights, masonry cornices, parapets and roofs visible from street. Complete details and application forms are available at www.cheltenhamtownship.org.

BIDs

The Greater Cheltenham Avenue Business Improvement District (BID), which spans Cheltenham and Philadelphia, is officially a go. In December, the City of Philadelphia adopted the ordinance establishing the district, which Cheltenham adopted a year prior.

Over 400 businesses and nearly 300 properties fall within the boundaries of the district, one of the densest retail concentrations in the area. The BID interim board of directors held its first meeting in February and will kick off a beautification effort in cooperation with Philadelphia in May. Future projects may include public safety improvements, sidewalk and gutter cleaning, and marketing and promotions for special events. Property owners within the district agreed to provide BID funding through assessments.

The Township expects to launch a feasibility study to consider a Glenside BID this summer. A consultant will assess property-owner interest in the concept and possible boundaries, thanks to a \$25,000 Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development matching grant.

Market & Co-op

The Glenside Farmers Market re-opens for business this May on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The market features products grown or made by the vendors, supporting local farmers and benefiting the environment. Located at the Glenside Train Station at Easton Road and Glenside Avenue, the market runs through late November. Details are available at www.theglensidefarmersmarket.com.

Although not slated to open until early 2010, CreekSide Co-op is already approaching 1,000 member households. The member-owned food cooperative plans to set up shop at the former Ashbourne Market in Elkins Park East.

Annual membership dues are \$50 per household for the first eight years, but members can invest the full \$400 immediately. Non-members will be able to shop at the market but will pay higher prices than members. Check www.creekside.coop for more information.

Quick Notes

- To continue qualifying for Montgomery County Revitalization Program grants, the Township recently hired a professional planner to update its 2002 revitalization plan. The planner will investigate if additional sections of the community could qualify for the program.
- "Congrats, Grads" invites this year's high school and college graduating seniors to enjoy discounts at several area restaurants. From mid-May through mid-June, participating restaurants offer graduates in parties of six or more (at least five paying guests) a free meal, while graduates in parties of less than six will enjoy a 50% discount on their meals. Check www.cheltenhamtownship.org for details. □



BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS. Commissioners Morton J. Simon, Jr., (left) and Drew Sharkey (right) presented 2008 Cheltenham Township Main Street Business Recognition Awards to (left to right, front) Robin Katz of Max and David's International Kosher Cuisine (New Business winner); Rob Carachilo (Volunteer of the Year winner); Cynthia Blackwood (Volunteer runner up); (back) Soo-Il and Soon Hee Jung of Melrose Shopping Center (Established Business runner up); Ron Whiddon of Ron's Cornucopia Deli (New Business runner up); Jiri and Molly Stejskal of CETRA (Established Business co-winner); and Dr. Jerry Greiner of Arcadia University (Chairman's Award winner).