

# the record

## Partnering Pays Off for Granville Township

This is the fifth in a series—including 4 one-topic issues and 1 wrap-up issue—of Township newspaper articles and newsletters covering 5 areas of Township government activities and topics for residents' open forums including:

- Taxation
- Open and Recreational Property Acquisition
- Strategies to Manage Growth and Assist Our Schools
- Partnering and Its Payoffs
- Overview of Township Government

Note: The next Township Residents' Open Forum on *Partnering and Its Payoffs* is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., October 19, 2005, at the School Administration Building on Granger Street. All residents are encouraged to attend.

### Partnering and its payoffs

Organizations and individuals have limited time, energy and resources. Granville Township is one political and economic institution among an interconnected continuum of political bodies that affect a broad range of social, cultural and economic issues for our citizens. As a township we interact with and are affected by many social and economic forces whose combined resources far surpass ours.

In the four prior editions of the Record, we described the structure and allocation of Granville Township's taxes, its open space and land acquisition process, and its tools for managing growth and assisting our schools. The Granville Community, through its comprehensive plan and its update, has set forth its expectations for township government. Beyond the structure of taxation, open space acquisition and development management, we attempt to leverage our resources through strategic partnerships to further the mission set forth for us in our comprehensive plan.

Globalization, coupled with the information revolution, has eroded many of the traditional separations between segments of the populations, economic and political entities, as well as individuals. An older view of organizations, which

envisioned an "us against them" proposition, has given way to accomplishing goals by understanding and focusing its limited unique abilities and seeking to achieve greater results through strategic partnerships. This later view of organizational thinking has guided Granville Township and provided an invaluable tool for making improved progress.

Over the past 10 years, we have entered into an extensive dialogue with legislators, individual landowners, community charitable, economic and political institutions as well as regional organizations. Through this process, we sought opportunities for mutual cooperation, and became a proactive participant in the dynamics of change that will impact the future of Granville Township. This article highlights some of Granville Township's Strategic Partnering.

### Union Township and Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District

In 1996, we arranged for Lew Molica, President of the Granville School Board to meet with Granville Township and Union Township Trustees. A large portion of the school district is located within Union Township and there were mounting development pressures there. Granville Township had undertaken a series of steps to improve its zoning laws and to deter residential development. We hoped to sensitize the Union Township Trustees to enrollment pressures within the Granville School District.

The meeting was extremely productive. We learned that Union Township faces numerous development pressures, and that the trustees were seeking opportunities to preserve the rural character within its borders.

In response to annexation pressures, Harrison and Lima Townships to our immediate west formed the Southwest Licking Water and Sewer District. The district is dependent upon users to create the fees necessary to pay for the water and sewer improvements. Granville Township citizens became alarmed when fire hydrants and residential sub-divisions popped up along our western boundary. Some feared this new source of water and sewer could spur uninvited residential development within Granville and Union Township, adding to enrollment pressures on the school district.

# Partnering Pays Off for Granville Town

In 1997, Paramount Financial approached the Township about its plans to construct a 110,000-square-foot office building on land it owned in Granville and Union Townships adjacent to the Southwest Licking Water and Sewer District. We spearheaded a discussion among the developer, Union Township, and the district that resulted in an agreement among the parties with respect to several areas:

- Extension of water and sewer into Granville and Union Townships is permitted only on a case-by-case basis, requiring approval of the respective township.
- In exchange for the townships' consent for service, the developer agreed to deed-restrict the 300-acre former Dow Chemical property, prohibiting residential housing.
- The townships each gained control over development in their jurisdictions adjacent to the district.
- The developer obtained water and sewer.
- The district received a substantial customer.
- The school district obtained an [\$8M] real estate improvement to strengthen its tax base.

Cooperation with Union Township continues through today. Union Township invited Jim Havens to testify before its zoning commission as it undertook steps to improve its zoning ordinances. It has recently concluded its process and is enacting zoning legislation to increase minimum lot sizes to 4 acres within those portions of its borders that are served by Granville Schools.

## Kendal

One of the segments underserved in our community is the aging population. Ideas and attitudes about aging are undergoing radical changes as people are living much longer and are remaining productive and energetic into their 80s and beyond. The Comprehensive Plan indicated that there is a substantial population of Granville citizens older than 60 who want to continue living within the community.

A number of forward thinking citizens approached the Township and sought support for bringing a Kendal Community to Granville. Kendal is a charitable organization that provides assisted living based upon Quaker ideals, and locates their communities in college towns.

After considering various locations within the community, Kendal sought to locate its facility on two adjacent parcels owned by Denison University and Granville Township. The property lacked a public sewer connection. Granville Township, in cooperation with Kendal, Denison University, and the Village of Granville entered into a series of agreements which facilitated construction of the world-class \$23m project, and will allow the community to retain the significant resources, creativity and wisdom of this aging population

## Village of Granville/JEDD

Near the Kendal facility's completion date, the Granville Chamber of Commerce sponsored a series of Community Connections Meetings to explore opportunities to increase the non-residential tax base of the Granville School system. These forums reopened stalled discussions between the Village and the Township to develop a water and sewer extension policy that resulted in a proposal to form a JEDD or joint economic development district in the vicinity of Kendal.

Kendal had constructed an extension of sewer into an area of the Township largely zoned for non-residential development. Kendal's needs only accounted for 5% of the line capability. In constructing the line, Kendal encountered cost overruns due to dewatering and other factors. Because the line provides critical service to an area proposed for appropriate non-residential development that could provide additional school tax base, the Township approved a non-school TIF (tax increment financing) arrangement for Kendal.

The net results of these series of agreements are that Kendal is able to recoup a portion of its development costs, the school district will receive a \$23m improvement to its tax base, the community has a facility to retain its talented aging population and the Township, Village, and Chamber have an opportunity to attract additional appropriate future partners and development to further assist in lessening future dependence of the school district on residential and agricultural taxpayers.

## Licking Land Trust

The Licking Land Trust is a charitable organization that seeks to preserve open space through property donations. Its board has been primarily staffed with Granville residents. One of its areas of expertise is managing watershed areas.

Granville Township acquired six properties to construct the recreational facility at Raccoon Park, and to provide a buffer along its Southeast border with Newark. These properties are located primarily along the Raccoon Creek watershed.

Granville Township has limited resources to manage property in this watershed and has entered into a series of agreements with Licking County Land Trust to conserve and manage this watershed. In addition, the Land Trust has been an invaluable partner in providing support and documentation for two successful grants received by the Township.

The first was a \$100k Nature Works grant from the State of Ohio that provided significant funding for the acquisition of the first phase and improvement of Raccoon Park. The second was a \$50k State of Ohio Habitat protection grant for the acquisition of the Watts property. The land trust also owns and manages a wetland located at Raccoon Road and 539A near the Evans Foundation bike path.

An abandoned gas station site known as White Point bordered this wet lands. In consultation with the Land Trust, the Township acquired White Point and coordinated the construction of Bicentennial Park and parking facility for citizens to visit, study, and explore the wetlands, and safely access the bike path.

**161 Corridor Study and Participation in the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)**

The widening of Route 161 to four lanes from I-270 to Newark will significantly impact Granville Township. The construction is scheduled for completion within four years, with construction underway at the 161/I-270 interchange.

There are many political entities with diverse demographics and motivations along the 161 corridor. Coordinating any planned development along this corridor will be a difficult proposition. There will be major challenges faced by these communities, as strong pressures will be mounted by land owners and private development groups who will certainly seek to exploit the improved access and increased land values adjacent to this major arterial.

The Township has recently entered into a series of discussions with Bill Habig, the director of MORPC. At Habig's invitation, Granville Township has agreed to join the 161 Corridor Accord.

Licking County has been spared many of the intense development pressures faced by other communities in the metro area of Columbus. But, with the success and resources behind the Easton and New Albany developments, coupled with low interest rates and historically high interest in real estate asset investment, we believe that future changes along the corridor could be dramatic. Although we know our ability to stop change is limited, our hope is that through participation and cooperation, we may continue to engage and bring change compatible with Granville Community interests and values.

Jim Havens has accepted an invitation to join the MORPC Steering Committee. There have been historical views of MORPC by non-municipal critics who believe that MORPC defers to municipal interests. Our view is that it's better to be at the table listening and understanding the discussion and having a voice to present the views and goals of our community. We have lobbied Jersey Township, St. Albans Township, and the Village of Alexandria to join the Accord and they have agreed to participate. The City of New Albany and the Village of Granville have also joined.



*Granville Township hopes to use the donated Schwartzkoft property as a future access point to link the bike path over Raccoon Creek directly to Raccoon Valley Park.*

### Other Areas of Cooperation

- **The Granville Recreation Commission:**

The Granville Recreation Commission is a charitable organization with which the Township contracts annually to provide services. The Township has used its unrestricted funds to purchase recreational space. In partnership with the Recreation Commission, we developed Raccoon Valley Park Phase I and are now in the process of developing Phase II of Raccoon Valley.

We have recently purchased the Raccoon Valley Conservation Club and are currently studying that facility with the Granville Recreation Commission. It is expected that the Recreation Commission will operate and utilize that facility to provide further services to the community.

- **Licking County Commissioners:**

Currently, the Township Trustees and the Village of Granville are working together to complete their regional portion of a countywide 208 plan. A 208 plan is a regulation under the Ohio EPA that allows the county to coordinate the multiple water and sewer providers within the county into a regional road map for future growth.

By partnering with the Village of Granville and the Licking County Commissioners, we hope to designate future potential areas of growth in a manner such that we avoid competing interests from neighboring water and sewer providers and private developers. We are also participating with the County Commissioners in the development of an NPDES plan that helps to regulate, in an environmentally safe manner, the discharge of surface water.

- **Newark-Granville Community Authority:**

In the aftermath of the Keny annexation case, the Granville Board of Education developed the concept of the Newark-Granville Community Authority. This Authority is a special tax district that assesses additional millage on new residential construction within the district for funding of future capital improvements by the School District. The Township supported this concept. Jim Havens has been the Licking County Commissioners' appointed board member to the Newark-Granville Community Authority.

- **Granville Exempted Village School District:**

The Township worked with the School District to help facilitate its purchase of 179 acres on Burg Street. We granted easements in Township right-of-ways to permit the extension of sewer service from the Village of Granville to

the Intermediate School. The School District's purchase of 179 acres of prime potential real estate development property was viewed as a positive for the community.

The Township has purchased, through open space acquisitions, nearly 400 acres of adjacent property. We believe that this large cluster of publicly owned property in the northwest quadrant will preserve a large rural block of land, as well as deter future residential development. We also cooperate closely with the school district in coordinating mutual use of school district and Township recreational fields.

- **Individuals:**

We are in continual contact with individuals who may be interested in donating property for charitable purposes to the Township. Those discussions and negotiations have resulted in the donation of a 7.5 acre property by Samuel Schwartzkoff, which is immediately adjacent to the Raccoon Valley Park. We hope to use the Schwartzkoff property as a future access point to link the bike path over Raccoon Creek directly to Raccoon Valley Park. We also received a 7.4-acre donation of property from MGM Investments in its cluster development of the Roseview subdivision, which has been added to the Township's existing Salt Run Park.

As always, your Granville Township Trustees welcome your input and questions regarding Township issues. Please call or e-mail us at the numbers provided. We are interested in your concerns.

Jim Havens, Trustee	jameshavens@granvilletownship.org 614-496-3500 740-587-4989 (home)
Lyle King, Trustee	lyleking@granvilletownship.org 740-587-1328
Wes Sargent, Chair	wessargent@granvilletownship.org 740-587-0926
Norm Kennedy, Clerk	businessoffice@granvilletownship.org 740-587-3885
Business Office	740-587-3885 740-587-7206 (fax)
Township Web Site:	www.granvilletownship.org

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