



Keeping our promise to keep you informed

Meet the Candidates

Candidates for the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors present their views on the challenges facing the Township, their qualifications for leadership, and what they will do, if elected, to preserve open space



This brochure is brought to you as a public service by the
Whitemarsh Township Residents Association

Meet the Candidates Forums

Forum #1

Date: Wednesday, October 8

Location: Whitemarsh Elementary School, 4120 Joshua Road, Lafayette Hill
(across from Wm Jeanes Library)

Time: 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Forum #2

Date: Tuesday, October 21

Location: Spring Mill Fire Company, Hector Street & North Lane, Conshohocken
(across North Lane from Lee Park Building)

Time: 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Hear the Candidates in Person

To help the community prepare for the local November elections, the WTRA has again organized Meet the Candidate Forums when all six candidates running for the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors (BOS) will present their views on open space, traffic congestion, development and other issues facing the Township.

The forums will provide an opportunity for the community to hear directly from the candidates about important issues affecting the future of the township. They will respond to questions asked by the moderator and submitted by the community. The moderator for both forums will be Nadya K. Shmavonian, a Flourtown resident and independent management consultant to foundations and nonprofits.

The forums have been structured to be sequential, meaning that the second forum is expected to build on discussions that take place in the first.

How to Submit Your Questions for the Candidates

To ensure that the forums address the priority concerns of residents, we would like to hear from you. If you have questions you would like to have asked of the candidates, please submit them to us in one of the following ways:

- email: info@wtra.org
- phone: 610-828-5351 and leave your question(s) on the answering machine
- fax: 610-828-5351
- mail to WTRA, P.O. Box 154, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
- submit in writing at the forums

To the extent possible, we will try to factor your questions into the discussions. Because the forums must necessarily address the interests of the greatest number of people, questions/ concerns of a highly individual nature will not be considered.

Introduction

The Whitemarsh Township Residents Association believes that an informed public is an empowered public. This November, Whitemarsh residents will have an opportunity to help shape the future of their community by determining who fills the three available seats on the five-person Board of Supervisors, the township's governing body. These positions are for four years. This year's election slate includes three Democrats and three Republicans:

Steve Brown	Democrat	Ron DeRosa	Republican
Joe Corcoran	Democrat	Nicole Fumo	Republican
Jim Corr	Republican	Jon Weiss	Democrat

To help residents better understand the candidates' positions, the WTRA has prepared this brochure, which contains brief biographical information and personal statements from each of the six candidates. These statements represent responses to the following questions:

1. What do you think are the township's greatest challenges over the next 5 years and what *specific actions* will you take, if elected, to address these challenges?
2. What have you done in your personal and professional life that qualifies you to lead the township?
3. You have endorsed the WTRA's Action Agenda, which among other things, calls for making open space preservation a priority of the township. If elected, what *specific actions* will you take to secure our remaining open space?

We encourage you to read this brochure, attend the Meet the Candidates forums, determine which three candidates you want to support, then go to the polls and vote on November 4.

Every vote counts. The future of our township is up to you.

The WTRA is a community-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to represent and serve as a resource to Whitemarsh residents on land preservation, development and revitalization issues. The WTRA advocates land use strategies aimed at preserving the township's quality of life and distinctive character through maximum preservation of its remaining open spaces and natural resources, conservation-oriented approaches to new development, and quality-minded revitalization of existing developed areas.

The biographical information and personal statements in this brochure were submitted by the individual candidates, who are solely responsible for their content.



Steve Brown (D)

Resident of: Lafayette Hill

Years in township: 5

Education: Ph.D., Aquatic Ecology and Environmental Toxicology

Occupation: Senior Scientist, Rohm and Haas Company

Community Service/Activities: Whitemarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board – Chair; Whitemarsh Township Residents Association – former Vice-President, Board of Directors; Whitemarsh Little League – former and probably future coach; Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association – volunteer, advocate; Montgomery County Open Space/Green Futures Action Committee – Advisory Council; Montgomery County Lands Trust – volunteer, advocate; Natural Lands Trust –volunteer, advocate; Delaware River Basin Commission – Implementation Advisory Council

1) Challenges

DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED PLAN—In my opinion, the township's greatest challenge is to develop and implement an integrated plan for the future that will enable Whitemarsh residents to live in beautiful neighborhoods, with easy access to many amenities, without the adverse impacts associated with suburban sprawl. This integrated plan must involve both conceptual and financial considerations (how should the township look/function, how will we finance it). Together these components will provide *A Vision for the Future of Whitemarsh*.

TO BUILD SUCH A VISION, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MUST (1) ADOPT THE RECENTLY REVISED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, (2) ENACT/ENFORCE STRONG ORDINANCES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS IN THE PLAN, AND (3) IMPLEMENT A PROACTIVE PLAN TO PROTECT AND CONNECT OUR OPEN SPACES WITH RESIDENTS—The Supervisors must tackle these actions head-on. I am proud to say I have helped lead the effort to promote these initiatives as former Vice-President of the Whitemarsh Township Residents Association (WTRA) and current Chair of the township's Environmental Advisory Board. As an elected Supervisor, I will work even harder to accomplish these goals.

INTER-MUNICIPAL COORDINATION AND PLANNING—We cannot develop/implement a clear *Vision for the Future* without considering the impacts of neighboring townships. Forward-looking leadership must involve improved communication with our neighboring municipalities. If we do not do a better job fostering inter-municipal planning and promoting mutually beneficial land preservation opportunities, then we will all suffer. Pennsylvania has provided incentives to promote regional planning. This and similar legislation can be used to revitalize existing commercial areas and foster land conservation.

REBUILDING THE MORALE OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT—Whitemarsh faces another significant challenge. We rely tremendously on our Police Department, which has been proud and cohesive for many years. In recent months, the Department and the residents of Whitemarsh have been embarrassed by charges of racial profiling. This has caused stress and division within the Department. As I sit here and write this (on September 11th), our current Supervisors are considering appointing a new Chief of Police. Whoever takes over will have a very difficult task. The challenge of healing the Police Department is one we all share. We are a community. September 11th reminds us who the real heroes are. They are the officers and they need our support. They have mine, completely, whether or not I get elected.

2) Qualifications

I have served in several leadership positions in my personal life, from mentoring students to being President of Church Council. These experiences have presented challenges and have been fulfilling. Perhaps the best indicator of my personal leadership is reflected in my children. Raising our kids is a responsibility and joy shared with my wife, Kelly, and she deserves most of the credit. I am proud of our kids beyond words.

As former Vice-President of the WTRA and current Chair of the township's Environmental Advisory Board, I have had ample opportunity to serve as a community leader. I have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with residents to express our concerns about uncontrolled development, traffic gridlock, flooding, and the lack of proactive planning. Together, we have done more than just complain. We have offered real solutions and a roadmap for protecting and preserving Whitemarsh. As a member of the Advisory Council for Montgomery County's Green Futures Action Committee, I am working with other leaders to promote Open Space preservation in our area.

As a faculty member at the University of Maryland, I developed and led a graduate research program in environmental science. As a manager in a private consulting firm, I led teams conducting environmental projects for government and industrial clients. As Senior Scientist with Rohm and Haas Company, I provide guidance and technical advice to ensure that our products and processes are safe. I have led industry-government science panels concerned with environmental risk assessment, and I serve on committees that guide co-sponsored research programs. I am Associate Editor for a peer-reviewed scientific journal, and serve on editorial boards for others. I have chaired national and regional conferences and symposia, and I currently serve on an Advisory Council for the Delaware River Basin Commission.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

In addition to identifying actions I will take, if elected, I think it is appropriate to highlight certain actions I have *already* taken to protect open space in Whitemarsh.

In spring 2003, I proposed that the Board of Supervisors establish the Whitemarsh Township Open Space Committee, which they did. Funding for open space, like other causes, is provided on a competitive basis. I moved to establish the committee because the township must be prepared with a rational, prioritized, up-to-date Open Space Plan in order to compete successfully. As a member of Montgomery County's Advisory Council promoting the open space referendum, I understand how important preparation and communication is with regard to this issue. When Montgomery County voters pass the upcoming bond referendum for open space, Whitemarsh will be in a strong position to compete for funding, and to leverage these dollars.

I am in close communication with the Natural Lands Trust and Montgomery County Lands Trust. The relationships I have built with these organizations will help me be an effective advocate for Whitemarsh. I will continue to build lines of communication and partnerships with these and other local/regional organizations concerned with open space, e.g., Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association (WVWA). I will also work to gain support from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). In fact, on behalf of the WTRA and together with the WVWA, I recently submitted an application for a Growing Greener grant which was approved and funded by DCNR. This grant (\$43,800) will fund a project to stabilize and restore the streambank along an eroded section of the Wissahickon, and will improve water quality and reduce flooding in Whitemarsh. As an elected Supervisor, I will continue to initiate these sorts of externally funded projects to protect open space. I will also encourage those who own ecologically important properties (including builders, public utilities) to consider the personal and community benefits of providing conservation easements and deed restrictions to help preserve open space, e.g., tax relief, flood protection, legacy.



Joseph P. Corcoran III (D)

Resident of: Fort Washington

Years in township: 30+

Education: B.A., Philosophy, Kutztown State College, 1980; J.D., Widener University School of Law, *cum laude*, 1991

Occupation: Part-time attorney; primary parent for three children

Community Service/Activities: *Current Service:* Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission – Commissioner; Planning Commission Zoning Sub-committee – member; Flourtown Erdenheim Advancement Association (FEAA) – Steering Committee member; Colonial School District’s Gifted Advisory Council – member. *Recent Service:* Whitemarsh Township Residents Association (WTRA) – member, original Board of Directors & Steering Committee; St. Thomas Nursery School Board – member; Whitemarsh Elementary School library – aide; YMCA & Whitemarsh Township youth basketball – coach

1) Challenges

TRAFFIC—I will continue to fight high-impact development, strictly enforce density limits, and promote “least traffic” solutions. I will propose formal cooperation with neighboring communities, so we are involved before decisions are made on projects like the apartments/office towers discussed for the Plymouth side of Butler Pike. A long-term solution for Ridge Pike is years from completion, so we should explore interim measures to relieve the bottleneck: re-stripe the road to four narrow lanes; work with Philadelphia and Springfield to synchronize traffic signals.

PLANNING AND ZONING— Increase coordination among the Supervisors and our various boards in order to identify priorities, problems and solutions. Schedule working sessions to increase actual planning. Implement the new Comprehensive Plan. Complete and pass Growing Greener zoning. Survey the township to identify undesirable zoning situations, and correct them before they become problems. Pursue resolution of the quarry situation, and move quickly to promote/support efforts to revitalize the Germantown Pike corridor. Ensure that Ridge Pike improvements include sidewalks for our residents who live along or near roadway.

PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE—See below.

FINANCES—Create a Citizens Budget Committee to identify and eliminate waste.

PUBLIC SAFETY—Whitemarsh is served by many dedicated and talented and reliable police officers, firefighters and ambulance personnel. I will devote the time and effort required to ensure that these vital public servants receive the support they need and deserve.

In the past several years, Whitemarsh citizens have demonstrated time and again how much we care about this community. More than I can ever recall, residents are asking to be heard and offering to help. If we can encourage and harness this remarkable citizen energy, I believe Whitemarsh will become even better than it is today.

2) Qualifications

I grew up in this township’s strong neighborhoods, went through our schools, played in our parks and explored most of our open spaces. I feel that I understand the things that make Whitemarsh special. I have invested a good deal of volunteer time on behalf of this community. In doing so, I have become familiar with township procedures and personnel. I understand our challenges, and I have worked effectively with residents, developers and government officials to create opportunities and solve problems. I have demonstrated the vision, commitment and temperament needed to effectively lead Whitemarsh Township.

At present, I serve on the Township Planning Commission, the Zoning Sub-committee, the Flourtown Erdenheim Advancement Association (FEAA), and the Colonial School District's Gifted Advisory Council. I am organizing "Whitemarsh 300," and recently served on the St Thomas Nursery School Board. I have engaged in other volunteer activities (community service, school, coaching youth sports, etc.) throughout my life here.

I was an original Board member of the WTRA and actively involved with many of its significant achievements. I outlined and then helped to negotiate the Erdenheim Farm Preservation Agreement. I played a central role in defeating ruinous proposals for high-rise apartments and offices at Corson's Quarry. I helped draft the WTRA's Smart Growth Principles that have been signed by all this year's candidates, and I helped convince the present Supervisors to pursue the WTRA action plan.

With the Planning Commission, I am implementing the WTRA action plan. I have worked to rewrite the township's Comprehensive Plan, and identified a way to nearly double the parkland contribution we will require of future developers. I helped draft and pass the township's new Tree and Stream Protection ordinances. I am working with a team of environmental and planning experts to draft our township's Growing Greener zoning.

I helped develop the Vision Plan for Bethlehem Pike, and I have worked with residents of Conshohocken, Cedar Grove, Spring Mill and Maple Meadows to discourage the issuance of wetland zoning variances for offices at Cedar Grove Park. I believe I am well qualified to lead Whitemarsh Township.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

As sprawl consumes the region, open space can become the distinguishing feature of a vibrant and desirable Whitemarsh. Permanently preserved open space will help us keep tax rates low and property values high. Here are some specific steps we should take:

Form an Open Space Committee to educate the public about the economic benefits of preserving open space, establish public priorities, and measure support for open space financing.

Start using the space we have. Townships spend millions to buy what Whitemarsh has but rarely uses – hundreds of acres of public parkland just outside our central neighborhoods.

Build inexpensive trails to link our public lands to our neighborhoods, and publish a Whitemarsh trail/open space map so residents know what's out there.

Focus on our central neighborhoods by creating pocket parks in upper Lafayette Hill, south of Ridge Pike, Plymouth Meeting and Conshohocken.

Most open space preservation can occur without any taxpayer money. Here's how:

Pass Growing Greener zoning and develop a map of desirable open spaces. This will allow us to use future development to preserve connected natural greenways throughout the township. Growing Greener requires builders to set aside a minimum of 50% of their tracts as open space, involves no public maintenance costs, and generates new tax revenues.

Enforce the developer parkland contributions called for in the new Draft Comprehensive Plan. This will grow the township park system at no public cost.

Enforce our zoning. PECO power lines, radio tower fields, etc., are critical open space buffers for the neighborhoods around them. Keep these spaces open by opposing supplemental uses of these properties, such as the mini-storage units proposed for Butler Pike.

"Stay Green." Some generous Whitemarsh landowners have permanently preserved land by donating or selling conservation easements. Whitemarsh can do more to recognize and support such decisions, and find ways to encourage others to do the same.

Tax financing to preserve Erdenheim Farm. This utilizes the development's own tax revenues to preserve the target open space.



Jim Corr (R)

Resident of: Lafayette Hill

Years in township: 9

Education: Bachelor of Business Administration, University of Notre Dame; Master of Government Administration, University of Pennsylvania

Occupation: Certified Public Accountant in public and private accounting and financial management (14 years)

Community Service/Activities: Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission – Commissioner (2 years); William Jeanes Library – Board of Directors and former president (5 years); Montgomery Early Learning Centers – Board of Directors; Big Brother – volunteer; Whitemarsh Little League tee-ball – coach

1) Challenges

I am running for Supervisor because I believe Whitemarsh is a great place to live – and it can be even better with the right leadership. Since there are five Supervisors, teamwork is an essential part of leading the township. I believe that, over the next five years, the Supervisors must adopt the following priorities and courses of action:

COMBATTING SUBURBAN SPRAWL—We must maintain and expand our inventory of open space. Where development does occur, it should be well planned to maximize green space and minimize traffic congestion and infrastructure demands. But fighting sprawl requires more than just preserving open space. We must continue to refine our zoning and sub development ordinances, and to vigorously enforce those ordinances. We should also promote alternatives to automobile transportation, including walking and the Schuylkill Valley Metro.

PRESERVING THE TOWNSHIP'S FISCAL HEALTH—The financial health of our township is excellent and it will take work to keep it that way. We must enact sound, responsible budgets. Those budgets should leverage, as much as possible, alternative funding sources for township recreational institutions (library, parks, arts center), and for open space preservation, thereby keeping taxes low.

MAINTAINING OUR PUBLIC SAFETY FORCES—We are fortunate to live in a very safe township, which is largely a credit to our world-class local police force and volunteer fire units. We must give the new police chief our total support and be open to recommendations on how to keep our public safety forces the most modern and prepared they can be. This includes devoting appropriate township resources to our police and fire units, and regularly updating an emergency preparedness plan.

REVITALIZATION OF GERMANTOWN PIKE IN LAFAYETTE HILL—Germantown Pike serves as the gateway to our township for many visitors, and is a hub of shopping and recreation for township residents. Despite several planning efforts and good intentions, this area has never realized its full potential. It is time for us to get serious about transforming Germantown Pike into the pedestrian-friendly town center it can be. While this transformation will not likely be completed in the next five years, it will never happen unless we take action. We should begin by establishing a committee of business owners, residents, and government representatives to update the plan for redevelopment of this area. The plan must lay out goals, a timetable, and financing alternatives available from local, county, state, and other sources.

2) Qualifications

My background combines professional achievement and public service. I am a CPA with 14 years' experience in accounting and financial management – expertise I will bring to township government. I have also gained experience in the public sector. I obtained a Master of Government Administration degree from Penn. As a consultant with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp., I worked on Philadelphia economic development projects utilizing tax increment financing and other public/private financing tools. I have been actively involved in Whitemarsh community service since I moved here nine years ago - including as member of the Planning Commission, Director of the Jeanes Library, and a little league coach. I have the personal and professional experience needed to lead our local government, and I have demonstrated my commitment to Whitemarsh through volunteerism. I am now prepared to take that commitment to the next level by serving as an elected Supervisor. I invite you to visit www.gop4bos.com to learn more about my qualifications.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

Whitemarsh is blessed with wonderful open space – both public and private – that is rare for a suburb so close to a major city. In the past, preserving open space did not require much planning. We have learned in the recent past – particularly from Erdenheim Farm and Corson's Quarry – that open space preservation requires proactive, intelligent planning and strategizing.

The township Supervisors recently took an excellent first step by re-establishing the dormant open space committee. We must now task the committee with thoroughly updating the township's open space plan. The plan should identify parcels targeted for acquisition, financing mechanisms available, and set short and long term goals. With proper planning, we will not be in the position of scrambling to react to proposed development of large open tracts in 5, 15, or 30 years.

In the meantime, we must appoint the most qualified candidates to township boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Zoning Board, Environmental Advisory Board, and Shade Tree Commission. The Supervisors must set the tone that open space is a priority by devoting appropriate township resources to open space maintenance and preservation. We must also continue to work with township organizations, such as the WTRA, and neighborhood groups which have talent and knowledge to offer.

Whenever possible, we should leverage resources – including talent and money – from county and state government, and non-profit groups to preserve open space. In particular, it is important that we support and utilize the county open space fund and the bond referendum on the November ballot. Where development does occur, we must minimize the impact as much as possible, pass incremental infrastructure costs on to developers, and enforce strict zoning rules, such as Growing Greener, which incorporate open space preservation.



Ron DeRosa (R)

Resident of: Lafayette Hill

Years in township: 25

Education: Bachelor of Technology, Water Resources Engineering, Penn State University, 1974

Occupation: registered professional engineer; former Director of Administration Services for local consulting engineering firm specializing in water and wastewater engineering; currently Administrative Office Manager, Montgomery Township Municipal Sewer Authority

Community Service/Activities: active in local Republican politics (15 years); The Republican Club – various Board positions; Whitmarsh Township Republican Committee – Committeeman (13 years); Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors - Supervisor (4 years) and currently Chairman

1) Challenges

CONTINUED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DELIVERING FIRST-CLASS SERVICES IS A PRIORITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT—In 1996 the owner of a home assessed at \$250,000 paid \$473 in Township real estate taxes. In 2003, that same home paid \$510, a \$37 increase. During this time we have continually improved the services provided; more police with the equipment necessary to protect us, better parks, township streets resurfaced, to name a few. This has been accomplished by enacting responsible budgets and living within the budget, securing alternative funds from other public and private sectors, increasing the fees for services when necessary and sound township management. For the last 4 years I have been part of this process and I will continue this tradition. The earned income tax passed this year was a tough discussion for me. I don't like raising taxes. However, the projected income of over 1 million dollars was needed to fund township services and provide a stable source of revenue without burdening our senior citizens. We are on target with this projection with over 50% of revenue generated to date coming from residents who already paid the tax to other municipalities.

TRAFFIC—Traffic will not go away. Whitmarsh Township is a thoroughfare for us and residents of other communities. Our two lane country roads are very special; however, the intersections fail. I will continue to work with state and county transportation officials to improve our intersections in an effort to improve the traffic flow.

IMPROVE/ENFORCE ZONING ORDINANCES—Believe it or not, development in Whitmarsh Township has been slower than most neighboring communities. We have a well-earned reputation for tough enforcement of our zoning and land development ordinances. We need to continue to improve our ordinances and I will insist on tough enforcement.

2) Qualifications

Professionally, I have managed a department of 12 people with an annual budget of over 2 million dollars. This department provided computer services for a company of 1,100 employees in 12 offices. Additionally, my engineering background contributes to my understanding of development, environmental and traffic issues. Personally, through my involvement in local politics, I have worked hard to elect qualified candidates at all levels of government.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

Open space preservation is a priority. You, the citizens, have voiced this concern and I, as a Supervisor, have listened. During the last four years I have voted to 1) establish a Township Open Space Fund with an initial allocation of \$256,000, 2) hire a consultant to work with the Planning Commission to incorporate the Growing Greener principles into the subdivision process, 3) establish a Riparian Corridor Conversation District, 4) establish a TIF district to provide funding for the preservation of Erdenheim Farm, 5) re-establish the Open Space Committee expanding the membership to include five representatives from the community and 6) the adoption of a Tree Protection Ordinance. As we develop the 2004 Township budget, I will work hard to include additional money for the open space fund. I will work to encourage voters to say YES to the county's Open Space question on the November ballot and once passed, will work to secure funds for Whitemarsh. I will work to encourage the acquisition and maintenance of open space in a manner that is economically feasible, equitable and available to all residents.

I hope this gives you a better understanding of who and what I am. I ask for your vote for myself and for my running mates Nicole Fumo and Jim Corr.



Nicole Fumo (R)

Resident of: Whitemarsh Valley Farms

Years in township: 4+

Education: B.A., History (Dean's List), Wake Forest University; post-graduate work in financial and managerial accounting, Villanova University; J.D., Beasley School of Law, Temple University

Occupation: Associate in a business transaction law firm focusing on business representation, tax, real estate and estate planning

Community Service/Activities: Montgomery County Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving ("MADD") – volunteer; Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of Easter Seals – volunteer; Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community Association – member; Montgomery County Lands Trust – member; the Natural Lands Trust – member; the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association – member; Friends of the Wissahickon – member; Whitemarsh Township Residents Association – contributor

1) Challenges

The four major issues facing Whitemarsh citizens are (1) preserving the fiscal health of the Township while providing first-class Township services to the Township residents; (2) preserving open space; (3) handling future development; and (4) revitalizing Germantown Pike.

FISCAL HEALTH—Providing vital services at a reasonable cost must be the first priority for a Township Supervisor. We must have the best public safety services from our police, fire fighters and ambulance services. The trash must be picked up and our roads must be maintained. Our water and sewer systems must work effectively.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION—As effectively set forth in the publication of the Montgomery County Lands Trust: "Saving Land Saves Money," I believe saving land saves money in the long term. In the short term, it means two things: (1) voters should approve the Open Space Bond Referendum on the ballot this year; and (2) we should reallocate resources in our township budget for open space preservation *without further tax increases*.

I propose that a line item in the budget should be established to use taxpayer dollars to preserve and conserve open space in the Township. Additional funding sources must be identified and pursued, such as County and Commonwealth sources, particularly the County Open Space Fund if the Bond Referendum is approved by the voters. I believe that spending money now to preserve open space is an investment in Whitemarsh's future.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT—Historically, developers have had the upper hand in determining land-use policy. As a result, Whitemarsh faces the prospect of over-development and over-crowding that has plagued many inner ring suburbs. While I have great respect for private property and free market prerogatives, I believe that we must balance the interests of the landowners with those of the citizens.

To accomplish that end, I believe that it is necessary to raise the bar for developers to the highest level permitted under the applicable Constitutional and statutory framework. Developers must be required to bear ALL economic costs properly allocable to their projects – be it traffic costs, road costs, school costs, environmental costs, etc. Township ordinances are in the process of being comprehensively reviewed and amended so that developers pay ALL properly allocable impact fees. This must be an ongoing process.

The Quarry litigation with Highway Materials, Inc. is the current classic example of this balancing act facing our Township leadership. The pending Quarry litigation will be costly to taxpayers. I am hopeful a fair solution to the Quarry litigation can be achieved. If elected, I will immediately look for a non-litigation

solution to the Quarry problem. I will work hard to find a win-win solution – a solution that addresses all reasonable interests of our community residents and the Township’s long-range fiscal health.

THE “PLAN FOR THE PIKE” —As I stated in my letter to the current BOS, it is important that Whitmarsh revitalize the Germantown Pike business district. See my “Plan For The Pike,” on our website at www.gop4bos.com, many of the provisions of which can be implemented with the expenditure of relatively few tax dollars.

2) Qualifications

I am fortunate to be in a position to commit the time and effort necessary to do a first-class job of being a Township Supervisor. I believe that I possess the necessary background and skills required to be an effective leader of our township, who will contribute to: (a) developing and establishing good policies, and (b) implementing those policies.

Prior to becoming an attorney, I worked for two years in quasi-governmental agencies in Philadelphia which included budget development and management responsibilities. Following those experiences, I worked in sales and marketing for the Philadelphia Phillies organization. As a result of these experiences, I have acquired skills, which make me a solid candidate for Township Supervisor. These skills include: budgeting, organization, problem-solving, accounting, the ability to work with others as a team player, creativity and perseverance.

As an attorney, some of the special skills that I possess are an attention to detail as well as creative problem-solving. My experience as a lawyer has taught me to think “outside-of-the-box” for creative solutions that yield “win-win” situations for all involved. Along with understanding finance and budgeting, my capacity to be creative and persevere to find solutions to tough problems make me a candidate for Township Supervisor worthy of voter consideration.

Last summer, in addition to attending the budget meetings, I thoroughly studied the proposed and final 2003 Whitmarsh Township budgets. I spent a significant amount of time with Township Manager, Larry Gregan, and our Township Finance Director, Tom Mullin. I will soon be analyzing the 2004 proposed budget in anticipation of under taking these responsibilities.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

Jim Corr, Ron DeRosa and I have taken an “Open Space Pledge.” You can read the text of it on our website. It is based on, and consistent with, the language of a similar pledge format promulgated by the Whitmarsh Valley Farms Community Association, Inc. and the WTRA Action Agenda. We applaud both of these community groups for the work they are doing in our community.

There are a variety of options for securing our remaining open space: (1) Outright purchase from the annual budget; (2) purchase of development rights only; (3) participation in public/private partnerships, such as that forged at the new CCRC at Erdenheim Farm via the Tax Increment Financing vehicle; (4) cooperation with conservancy entities such as the Montgomery County Lands Trust to identify conservation buyers; (5) encouragement of the philanthropic spirit in private owners to voluntarily place conservation easements on open space; and (6) other actions as outlined in our open space pledge.

We support: (1) a “YES” vote for the Open Space Bond Referendum; (2) the TIF concept which will allocate Township real estate taxes toward the purchase of open space at Erdenheim Farm; and (3) the recent BOS action to create the Township’s Open Space Committee.



Jon Weiss (D)

Resident of: Lafayette Hill

Years in township: 6

Education: B.A., Literature, UC–Santa Cruz, 1989; M.A., English, Old Dominion University, 1992; J.D., Temple University School of Law, 1996

Occupation: Attorney with Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin, a civil defense firm

Community Service/Activities: Whitmarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board –Vice-Chair; Whitmarsh Township Residents Association – active member; Cedar Grove Neighborhood Association – active member; Democratic Committeeperson

1) Challenges

The greatest challenges facing the Township all involve planning and require a clear vision and personal commitment on the part of our elected and community leaders. These challenges are:

REVERSING THE TREND OF THE LAST DECADE OF OVERLY INTENSE DEVELOPMENT— We need a definite plan to preserve our remaining open space and to protect our neighborhoods and natural features from over-development and unnecessary degradation.

I have worked hard as a resident and as the Vice-Chair of the Whitmarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) to revise a completely outdated 35-year-old Comprehensive Plan, which is the blueprint for the Township's future. The township has undoubtedly been harmed by its outdatedness.

The revised Comprehensive Plan which I helped draft recognizes that Whitmarsh is under continuing pressure from suburban sprawl. It sets forth a plan for the future, including drafting/strengthening ordinances to better protect Whitmarsh. The reality is that development will continue to occur. We must be prepared for that. However, any new developments should be designed with Growing Greener principles in mind.

I helped draft the stream and tree protection ordinances, which will have an immediate impact. They will prevent stream corridors from becoming developed and require developers to replant any large growth trees that are removed during construction. The end result will be less water run-off, less flooding problems, and more significant buffers between neighborhoods.

FINDING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC PROBLEMS, AND PUTTING AN END TO INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD WORSEN OUR EXISTING TRAFFIC PROBLEMS— I will create a traffic committee which, in conjunction with neighborhood groups, will provide specific recommendations. We need to be more proactive.

HAVING OPENNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND MORE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT—If the public trusts their local leaders, and feels that their input is important to the process, the public is more apt to get involved. Civic involvement can take many forms ranging from volunteerism on key township projects to keeping the elected officials aware of the residents' true concerns.

FINANCES—We need to openly and responsibly scrutinize the current budget. We recently had a tax increase without much public participation. We should also look to neighboring municipalities to see if we can share resources. For example, we may be able to share costs for disaster plans or road improvements. Finally, our commercial areas need revitalization. I have already begun to speak to business leaders in the Township for a long-term revitalization plan.

2) Qualifications

My experiences in my personal and professional life make me qualified to be a Township supervisor. My wife, Tracy, and I have two young girls. We know what is important to families, including having a vibrant community, with good services, for our children to grow up in. To help make our community better, I have been actively involved in local neighborhood and civic groups.

Over the last four years, I have attended township hearings on all of the major land development proposals in Whitemarsh. I was part of the grassroots effort which led to the creation of the Township's EAB. My efforts were recognized and I was appointed to the Township's EAB.

I opposed the original National Label plans, the proposed high-rise apartments at the Quarry, the Gambone office project on Cedar Grove, and the nearby Butler Pike Mini-Storage proposal. I was involved in the grassroots effort which led to the preservation of Erdenheim Farm. I was one of the major participants involved in re-writing our Township's outdated Comprehensive Plan and the newly passed stream and tree protection ordinances. I am currently helping draft new Growing Greener ordinances concerning sub-division developments.

In terms of my professional life, I have been practicing law for the last seven years. My job involves prioritizing issues on a daily basis and making well-reasoned arguments. I have worked with local medical professionals and health care institutions; local contractors; and large corporations. I regularly work on multi-million dollar cases. Before becoming an attorney, I taught English at the university level. My professional background is diverse and will be an asset to my ability to be a Township supervisor.

3) Specific Actions to Preserve Open Space

Many months ago, the EAB recommended that the Township re-establish its Open Space Committee.

The Township's Open Space Plan is from 1995. It needs to be updated. Specifically, we need to identify key lands for preservation and create a framework for protecting those lands. Time is of the essence, because if the Montgomery County \$150 million open space referendum passes, our Township will get an allotment of that money—provided we have identified lands. That is why the EAB has been pressing this issue for many months.

The Open Space Committee will need to identify lands for future protection or acquisition, and it will also need to set up a structure for doing that. Fortunately, we will not have to recreate the wheel. I have researched how other nearby municipalities have set up programs to acquire lands and/or acquire easements as an alternative to buying the entire property rights. Whitemarsh needs to figure out the most cost-effective way of protecting open space. This should include easements, trails to connect residents to our already existing open spaces, and obtaining matching grants from state agencies. To reduce public spending, the Committee should also look to private fundraising and volunteer-driven events.

Based upon the Open Space Committee's recommendation, I would support an open space referendum for Whitemarsh Township. I have already spoken to officials and leaders in other municipalities regarding how they ran successful open space campaigns. I have spoken to consultants and attended meetings of the Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Council—in researching of the costs of over-development versus the costs, per household, of preserving open space. Ultimately, this issue is for the voters to decide, and the public would first need to be educated on the issues. Any such plan should consider those on fixed incomes who might not be able to contribute.