



## Brown Township, Franklin County Spring 2003

### Development Strategy Emerging *By Tracy Hatmaker*

From August 2000 thru July of 2002 a group of Brown Township residents, appointed by the Trustees, volunteered many hours of their time to study the issue of agricultural preservation in Brown Township. The Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee, as it was called, submitted a report to the Board of Trustees last summer that endorsed a new way of thinking about development in Brown Township. This approach balances development pressure with the desire to conserve open space and agriculture. This form of development would allow smaller lots so that large tracts of open space could be preserved for agriculture and other uses. The thinking is that smaller lots could be laid out to provide views of protected open space and give residents the openness of the country without all of the maintenance worries.

However, such a shift in thinking about development means that the Township has more work to do. The following questions must be answered if we want to follow our citizen committee's advice:

- How much and what kind of open space should be protected?
- Where should this open space be located?
- How many of these smaller lots should be permitted in a given area?
- Should more lots be tolerated in one part of the Township than in another?

In order to do this, the Trustees have asked another group of residents (many of whom were part of the last planning committee) to provide some answers in the form of an update to the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan. Such a plan update would:

- Identify the regulatory tools necessary for making open space development feasible.
- Decide on design guidelines for open space development.
- Put in place a township-wide strategy for employing conservation development.

An open space and conservation strategy for Brown Township must consider related community concerns, as well as natural conditions. The project will consider desirable development densities on a township scale in light of the presence of natural resources and public facilities. The end product will be a future land use map showing development types and densities for each area within the township,

along with development policies and regulations that would lead to appropriate open space development in each area.

Tools that make a new approach to land use possible go beyond regulations to involve systems and technologies addressing wastewater treatment, proper roads networks and other facilities. This part of the project will be a challenge, since conventional styles of development are in part a result of how these public and semi-public facilities are perceived and managed.

Design guidelines will focus upon conservation development, water quality issues and the aesthetics of commercial and employment development. Design guidelines for conservation development will consider the community's ideas about gross site density, facilities design, resource preservation and lot layout. Even more basic to the planning effort, conservation development guidelines must address the use, nature and scale of the open space to be preserved. This aspect of the plan may result in recommendations for more than one type of conservation development.

The update is targeted for completion before the end of 2003 and will provide numerous chances for public input. The following residents have agreed to serve on the committee:

- Larry Baumgartner
- Tom Crook
- Harold Jerman
- Paul Lambert
- Cheryl Lorson
- Doug Maggied
- Joe Martin, Chair
- Donna Palmer
- Steve Rider
- Dick Stahl

The Committee also includes:

- Ron Williams, Brown Township Trustee
- Tracy Hatmaker, Franklin County Development Department Planner
- Tim Peterkoski, Ohio Department of Nature Resources
- Anthony Sasson, The Nature Conservancy and Brown Township Resident
- Dan O'Brien, Planned Development Corporation and Brown Township landowner

Public review and comment will be accommodated at the following tentative meetings:

4/29/03 Public Meeting 7:00 pm - Review committee direction and area planning maps

6/9/03 Trustees Meeting 7:30 pm - Review public facilities draft document

7/15/03 Trustees Meeting 7:30 pm - Discuss public facilities document

7/29/03 Public Meeting 7:00 pm - Review land use issues

8/11/03 Trustees Meeting 7:30 pm - Review land use document and map

9/8/03 Trustees Meeting 7:30 pm - Review and discuss draft document

9/16/03 Public Meeting 7:00 pm - Present update document

## **Prairie Oaks Metro Park: A Bit of Natural Heritage** ***By Leslie Phillips***

Let's imagine that you were among the one of the earliest settlers in this area of known as the Northwest Territory. Brown Township would certainly look very different than what we see today. As one traveled west through eastern Brown Township one might have experience the overwhelming extensiveness of the huge oak, walnut, and hickory forest with an occasional thinning. Especially entering Madison County, one might come upon openings of thick, almost impassible fields of tall grasses and other hardy vegetation. Many of our early ancestors of Brown Township settled along the rich bottomland of one of the clearest and diverse streams on this area, the Darby Creek, which had rich bottomland for farming.

Fortunately, our life here in Brown Township is much easier than that of our ancestors. But, one can still experience a tiny bit of our natural heritage at Prairie Oaks Metro Park. While certainly not the original, mammoth trees that once stood along the Darby Creek, Sycamore Plains Trail (at 2009 Amity Rd.) entertains one with some very impressionable size sycamores, hickories, and oak trees. Along the still rich bottomland, the Darby Creek separates the Brown Township side of Prairie Oaks from the Jefferson Twp (Madison Co.) side. Like the early settlers, the pristine waterway of the now state and national designated scenic river, the Darby Creek still attracts our curiosity and contains one of the most diverse water life of Ohio.

2002 had huge accomplishments for Prairie Oaks Metro Parks with the construction and opening of the 2 picnic areas each with a group picnic shelter and a restroom, 3 wetlands, and almost 2.5 miles of nature trails. While still in it infancy stage, about 200 acres of native prairie has been planted throughout this area of the park. Huge sycamore trees are a common sight along the Darby Creek as well. This new entrance is at: 3225 Plain City-Georgesville Rd.

Planned for 2003 is the construction of a park office-maintenance shop with a staging area for the bridle trail. Planning will take place for a multi-use trail and a pedestrian bridge across the Darby Creek connecting the Franklin and Madison County sides of the park.

If anyone has any questions about the park or upcoming programs, please contact the Metro Park District Office at 891-0700.

## **EMS Billing** ***By Vince Papa***

The subject of EMS Billing has come to the forefront as an issue in Central Ohio. Across the country, many areas have a long-standing history of utilizing additional fees for service, related to their EMS operations. The economic decline has forced many communities, which have not charged for EMS services, to implement a billing policy to supplement their budgets.

The Norwich Township Fire Department provides fire and Emergency Medical Services to the residents of Hilliard, Norwich Township and Brown Township. The department is funded by tax

supported levies and has taken the stance that it will not charge additional fees for services, as the residents are already paying for it. You, as a resident, may end up with a bill for service if you are treated and transported by a mutual aid agency. The department maintains agreements with surrounding area fire departments to provide coverage to residents. In the event the Norwich Township Fire Department's resources are committed to other emergencies, they will utilize a mutual aid agency. If this agency charges a fee for service, it cannot be waived, and you will receive a bill.

If you have questions on this issue or you receive a bill for service and have questions, do not hesitate to contact Assistant Chief David Long of the Norwich Township Fire Department at 876-7694.

## **Public Meeting!**

Comprehensive Plan Update

Tuesday April 29, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

Township Meeting Room - Walker & Roberts Roads

- Meet the committee members
- Review the maps
- Provide your comments, ideas and feedback

## **Read it On-Line**

<http://www.brown.twp.franklin.oh.us>

General township information and past newsletters are available on the Brown Township website. In the PLANNING section, you will also find the Brown Township Comprehensive Plan, its 1998 update, the 2001 Residents Survey Results and the 2002 Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee Report. Visit the site and leave your comments!