



February 2017

Call to Action - Quality of Life vs Density



The motto of the Historical Society has always been “Preserving Our Past For The Future.” In the last issue of this newsletter, we wrote “Our Heritage is at Risk”, where we encouraged everyone to work together toward the goal of preserving our cultural history and our village-like neighborhoods. Again, we feel that we have to get back on our proverbial soapbox and alert you about our concerns regarding the expansion projects that are being planned in our community.

Lower Merion is a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. It’s a living community that will continue to grow with new challenges and opportunities. It’s only natural that there will be tensions that will require debate and resolution. Since real estate is a fixed commodity, we can anticipate pressure to increase the density of residential, institutional, and commercial properties. In addition, we will need to rebuild much of our infrastructure and work to understand emerging community-based life styles.

Today’s challenge is that there are just too many (re)development projects on the drawing board. In the next 5 to 10 years, we will experience an unprecedented growth spurt and as a result could become victim to the fall-out of unintended consequences of many of these projects. One of the forces driving this stream of expansion is the desire of our local government for more tax ratables. Our suburban community will be maxed out; our real estate built out, built up, and infilled with little remaining open space, inadequate water drainage, and the ever increasing vehicular traffic. We do not fully understand the consequences that today’s decisions will have on our quality of life in the future.

You can have an informed opinion by joining your local civic association and talking with your township commissioner. Check out the township’s website at “LowerMerion.org” to get the date, time, and agenda of the various Commission, Committee, and Board of Commissioners meetings, and sit in on a Zoning Hearing Board meeting. Read your local newspapers and debate these quality of life issues with your neighbors.

Please, get informed and get involved with the challenges that we will face in the coming years. It’s that important because this decade will define the legacy that we leave for our children.

Promises, Risks, and Teamwork: Quaker Involvement in the Antebellum Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad



Come join us **Sunday, February 26th** at 12:00 noon in the [Merion Friends Meetinghouse](#) at 615 Montgomery Avenue in Merion Station. Christopher Densmore and Emma Lapsansky will speak on the dramatic strategies and techniques for helping to undermine slavery and assist fugitive slaves called upon the energies and cunning of a wide network of participants at home and abroad. This talk explores some of the Quaker input into that drama.

After the lecture, we will adjourn to the Activities Building where there will be a potluck lunch for all to enjoy. Snow date is Sunday, March 19th. Sponsored by the Merion Friends Meeting. **Free and Open to the General Public.**



Christopher Densmore is a historian and curator for the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. He specializes in the history of Quakers and slavery, in particular the underground railroad. His books include Red Jacket, a biography of the Iroquois diplomat and Quaker Crosscurrents about the Friends Yearly Meeting of New York State.

Emma Lapsansky-Werner is emeritus professor of history and emeritus curator of the Quaker collection at Haverford College. She specializes in Quaker and African-American history and the intersection of the two. Her books include Quaker Aesthetics and Back to Africa: Benjamin Coates and Colonization. She is currently recording clerk of Lansdowne Friends Meeting.



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