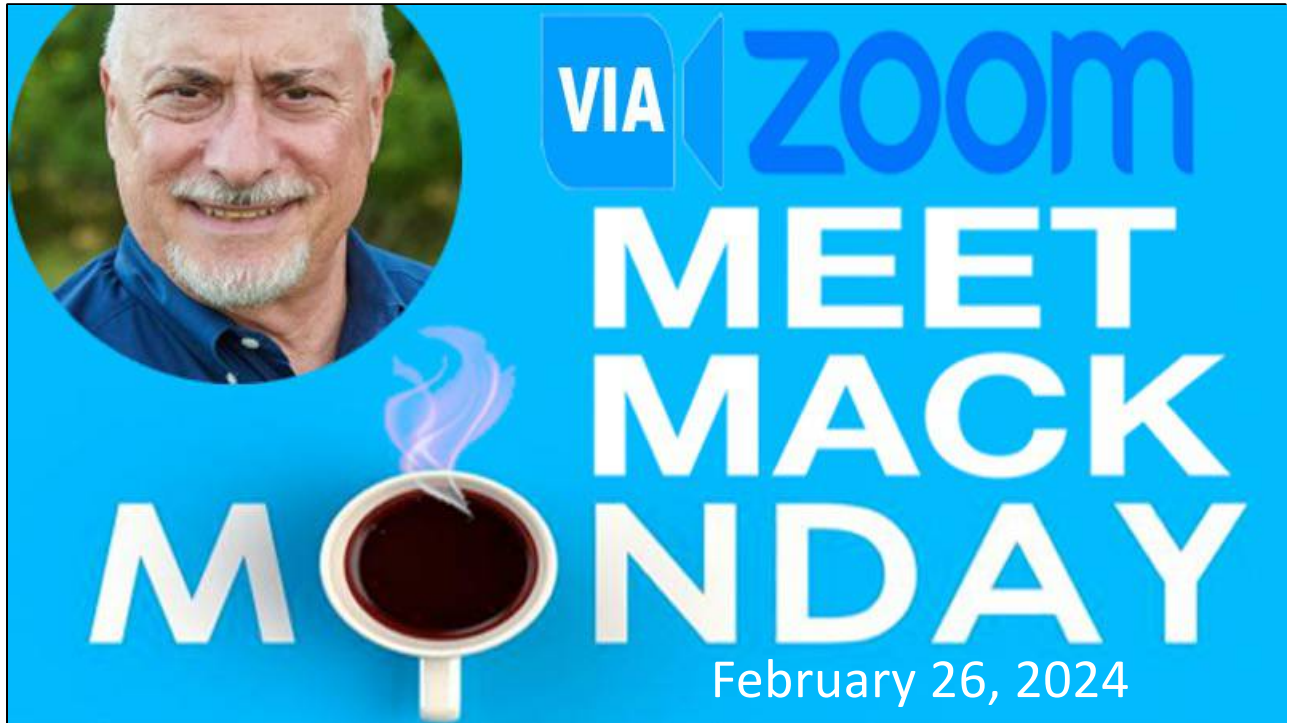


February 26, 2024, Meet Mack Monday



Welcome to the February 26 2024, Meet Mack Monday Zoom meeting presentation!

I'm John Mack, your host and a Newtown Township Supervisor.

The goal of Meet Mack Monday Zoom meetings is to inform residents of township issues that impact them and to get feedback and comments from residents about such issues. This helps me keep better informed of residents' concerns when I vote on the issues at Board of Supervisors meetings.



Your Host
John Mack
Newtown
Supervisor

26 Feb 2024 Meet Mack Monday Agenda

- LED Streetlight Project – What's the Savings?
- Trash Collection Rising Rates – Time for a Change?
- Borscht Belt Neon Sign Decision Update
- Newtown Place Apartments – Revised Plan
- Single-Use Plastics Ban – What You Need to Know
- Bucks NAACP Race & Policing Report Briefing Summary
- Short Updates
 - Mack's Pothole Patrol: If You See Something, Say Something!
 - Human Relations Commission Report: Proposed Mural Project
 - What's With Wawa on Bypass?
- Privilege of the Floor – **What's on your mind?**



LED Streetlight Project



For background, see:
<https://sco.lt/5QG6a>

- On 14 February 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved moving forward to replace all 1,613 streetlights with LED lights
- "Hybrid Approach:" 4000 K pure white lights for major roads and warmer, 3000 K lights for local roads and residential roads; see https://rebrand.ly/RSLPP_Specs
- **Cost: \$720,373** after PECO rebates; paid for by 1 Mil debt service tax for loan to cover cost
- Annual savings: \$43,679 (estimated payback period is 16.5 years)

Back in the spring/summer of 2020, the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors (BOS) engaged Econsult Solutions, Inc. (ESI) to develop a comprehensive multi-year financial management plan. As part of this process, Newtown asked residents to respond to the Newtown Township Citizen Survey. 545 responses were collected, including over 300 open-ended comments. Snow removal, street cleaning, street lighting, and street maintenance were among the services receiving the worst ratings. See the results here: https://www.johnmacknewtown.info/svy_infra.html

At the 9 September 2020 BOS meeting, I proposed that Newtown consider an LED Street Light Proposal: I received an email from Lou Nazirides of Facility Solution Group on an LED streetlight proposal. I met with Mr. Nazirides who wanted to make a presentation to the BOS. I said there is a lot in the plan that could save money and I asked the BOS for their thoughts. Mr. Fisher replied he is always interested in learning but doesn't know if we are in a place for this now. Mr. Davis said it sounds like a good idea, but we don't have the money to put out now and Mr. Oxley concurs with Messrs. Fisher and Davis. Mr. Calabro agrees with rest and suggested pushing it back to the beginning of year.

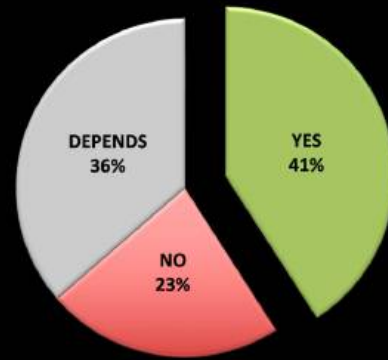


Trash Collection - Time for a Change?

- My HOA informed me that Waste Management (WM) *and other trash haulers* are **moving away from residential business** and focusing on commercial business where it can generate HIGHER PROFITS
- WM recently effectively doubled my fee: About \$98/quarter for 1X per week pickup
- **NOW may be a good time for the township to take over trash pickup for ALL residents**
- How much would it cost?

Single Hauler Trash Survey

88 Township Residents Responded
as of 2/16/2024



TAKE THE SURVEY:

https://rebrand.ly/Trash_Survey

I was told that Northampton usually “contracts jointly with Lower Southampton and Upper Southampton.” However, a Whitehall press release says this contract covers only the 12,800 homes in Northampton. That would work out to be \$726.56 per household per year (v.s. about \$346 per year if South and North Hampton were included in the contract). For comparison, I pay Waste Management (WM) \$98.99 per quarter or \$395.96 per year for **1X per week pickup**.



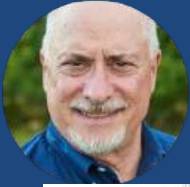
Borscht Belt Deli Neon Sign Decision Update



For background, see 22 January 2024 MMM: <https://sco.lt/8yAlkK>

- On 1 February 2024, the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) denied Borscht Belt Deli's appeal of violation regarding neon sign
- Borscht Belt may appeal ZHB decision to BC Court of Common Pleas by **18 March 2024**
- **If appeal is not filed, the sign must be removed**
- Meanwhile, co-owner Mike Dalewitz has applied to be a member of the Newtown Human Relations Commission (HRC) – BOS needs to vote on his application
- **BOS to discuss updating the JMZO signage ordinance at 18 March 2024 Work Session**

Mr. Dalewitz was emailed the official 17-page written decision of the ZHB on 15 February 2024. The supervisors received it via email on 22 February 2024. I mentioned Mr. Dalewitz's application at the 21 February 2024 HRC meeting. The members were OK with his participation if the BOS approves his application.

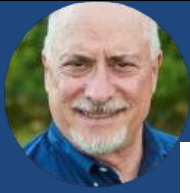


Newtown Place Revised Plan



- 120 Units vs 145 previously: density = 20 dwelling units/acre whereas 3.9 is current limit in R-2 district
- **Some** members of Planning Commission have concerns:
 - Inadequate parking
 - Impact on traffic
 - Buildings height
- **Should BOS have opportunity to directly hear from the developer?**

Developer would like to come before BOS to present the plan and get feedback. My view is that the BOS has only gotten comments through the PC Chair Peggy Driscoll who is very much opposed to the plan. The developer has already met with the PC twice. If the Newtown BOS is to decide whether or not to bring the B-11 amendment to the JMZO before the JZC, which must approve it, then the BOS should have an unbiased view of the plan and have the opportunity to ask questions of the developer and/or make suggestions for changes.



Newtown Place Streetscape

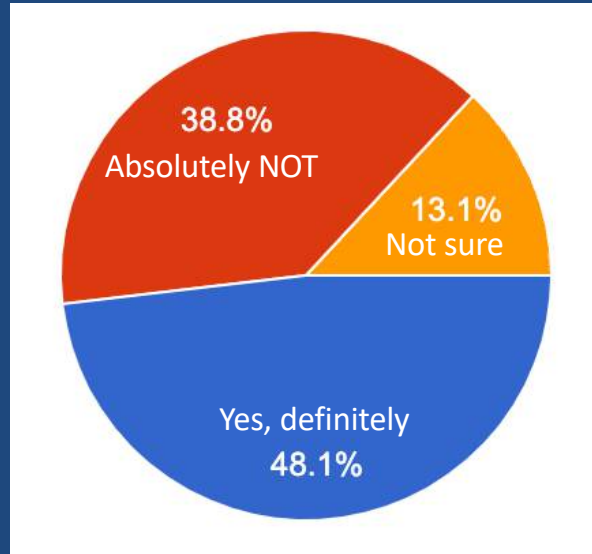


- This is the concept of the of the suggested 300-foot long “streetscape” of “midrise” apartment buildings – part of proposed “**Parking Core Apartment Building**”. View is along South Sycamore Street.
- Developer seeks amendment to the JMZO to include a new “B-11” use. For background, see: https://rebrand.ly/RevBET_Plan



Single-Use Plastics Ban Survey

- 214 responses to my survey as of 2/26/24
- Over 100 comments*
- TAKE SURVEY:
<https://forms.gle/mDdy8QUJCHoqaZy18>



*See comments: https://rebrand.ly/PlasticBagBan_Comments



**NEWTOWN
TOWNSHIP**
BARREN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Plastic Waste Reduction Program

**Beginning
April 9, 2024**

Newtown Township retail establishments are prohibited by Ordinance No. 2023-O-6 from providing customers with single-use plastic carry out bags or non-recyclable paper bags. Plastic straws and utensils to be provided on request only.



Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags are Not Allowed



Recyclable Paper Bags are Allowed for a Fee of at Least \$0.10 Each.



Reusable Bags with Stitched Handles are Allowed

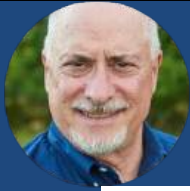
Learn more at newtownpa.gov or by scanning here:



Plastic Ban Toolkit

- Retail establishments must display “Plastic Waste Reduction Program” poster *at cash register* beginning March 10, 2024
- Toolkit includes:
 - Business Preparation Checklist
 - FAQs
 - Cheat Sheet: Items that don’t need bagging
 - Vendors of “Compliant Bags”
 - Employee Training Sheet

Find Toolkit here:
https://rebrand.ly/PlasticOrd_Toolkit



The “Reusable” Bag Problem



- It is claimed that these bags can be more harmful to environment if NOT re-used*
- Can leave behind germs like E. coli or Salmonella
- Businesses can provide customers with a Reusable Bag that has stitched handles, made of cloth or other machine washable fabric, or made of Polypropylene that can be hand washed and disinfected

*See this study commissioned by the Plastic Bag Alliance:
<https://sco.lt/7X8Wpc>

At a recent Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) meeting, I learned that EAC plans to keep a database of businesses and their compliance status. In addition to making sure that single-use plastic bags are not being used, the EACH intends to ensure that proper reusable bags are provided. This seems to me to be a difficult task for the Council and I suggested that perhaps they can enlist the help of volunteers such as high school students. This would also help educate the public as students will share what they learn with their parents.



NAACP
Bucks County Branch

**RACE &
POLICING IN
BUCKS COUNTY**

"2023 Report on Reimagining Public Safety"

A summary of a briefing held at Bucks County
Community College on 15 February 2024

On 15 February 2024, I attended a Bucks County NAACP "Briefing" on Race & Policing in Bucks County. At the briefing was Karen Downer, President, NAACP Bucks County, Helen Tai, former PA State Representative, and member of the Bucks NAACP Criminal Justice and Education Committee, as well as other dignitaries including perhaps a dozen police officers from neighboring communities.



Key Findings



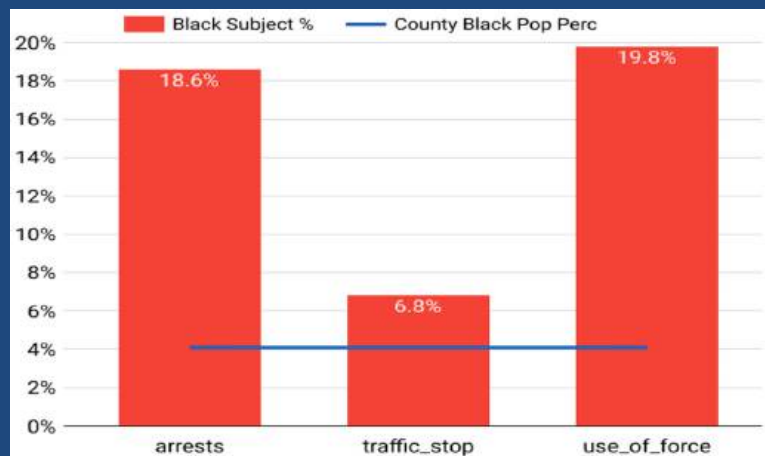
Limited data was made available for review

There are no publicly available data sources for use of force incidents, traffic stops, and complaints against police. Fewer than half of Bucks County police departments were able or willing to share any of this information with the NAACP, and much of what they did share did not include the race of the people involved. Arrest data by race is publicly available via the Uniform Crime Reporting database, maintained by the PA State Police.

I audio recorded the 15-minute "Key Findings" session presented by John Blevins who is a member of the Bucks County NAACP's Criminal Justice and Education Committee. I selected what I considered the most appropriate graphics and data from the BC NAACP's "2023 Report on Reimagining Public Safety", which you can find here: https://rebrand.ly/NAACP_RIPS Although Mr. Blevins did not include results from any specific police agency, I added some specific data and information from the Report regarding Newtown Township. Specific data are available in the Appendices of the Report, which can be found here: https://rebrand.ly/RIPS_appen



Enforcement Equity



Specific data and information from the Report regarding Newtown Township are available in the Appendices of the Report, which can be found here:
https://rebrand.ly/RIPS_appen



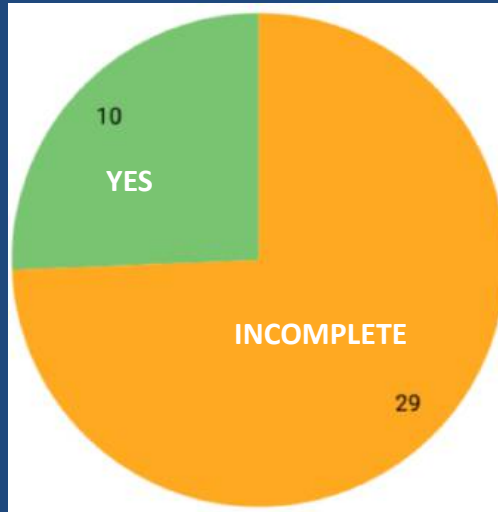
Handling of Complaints

Meet NAACP criteria for removing barriers to reporting misconduct?

Newtown Township PD:

No complaint form on website;
interview notes do not specify
whether remote or anonymous
complaints may be made and no
information on alternative paths.

NOTE: Body cameras have been
purchased



In June 2023, the NT BOS authorized the NTPD to purchase body worn cameras for Police from Axon Enterprises, Inc. in the amount of \$393,112.77



Human Resources Commission Report

Proposed Mural project



- At the 21 February 2024 HRC meeting, Barbara Simmons, a member of the NAACP Bucks County Executive Board, informed members about Bucks County's "Love Is the Answer Mural Program"
- Ms. Simmons discussed my idea of having the HRC sponsor a series of canvas murals attached to the chain link fence on the PennDOT walking bridge from the George School to the Township
- This would involve police departments of 3 communities: Newtown Township, Newtown Borough, and Middletown
- PennDOT had a new banner/mural ban for some time (related to fear of free speech issues). PennDOT is supposedly drafting a new policy for this issue.

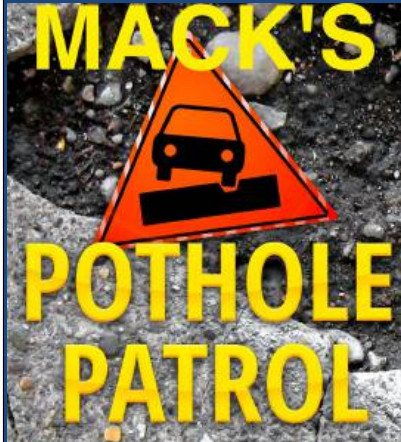


I am working with Ms. Simmons to write a letter of request to PennDOT for permission. With all the different groups that would be involved with a focus on positive messages, we might have a chance to make this a reality. This is going to be done with the support of the Department of Justice - which should help!



Potholes

I received a complaint re S. Eagle Rd. I “button-holed” the Newtown Shopping Center South site manager. Problem fixed!



Workers Repairing
Potholes on South
Eagle Drive



What about state roads in Newtown, including Durham Rd, Stoopville Rd, and Swamp Rd. According to a February 25, 2024, article in PhillyBurbs.com – “Pothole repairs on 20 Bucks County roads begin Monday; see if your road made this list” – none of these roads are on the list!



Note: Shown here is just a concept. The Newtown Twp Wawa will only have 6 fuel dispensers, **not 8** as shown in this concept.

Wawa Solar Panels



Wawa has agreed to install solar panels on BOTH sides of its proposed gas pump canopy. Recall that the settlement agreement only required solar panels on one side of the canopy.

I've been told that Provco/Wawa is finalizing plans and will then schedule a pre-construction meeting with township officials once that's complete and plans are recorded, and will begin construction shortly thereafter.



Privilege of the Floor

What's on YOUR mind?



Discussion topics included:

Payback period of LED Streetlight Program: An attendee disputed the 16.5 year payback period and suggested that it is likely to be 30 years. Keystone Lighting Solutions, which will implement the project, based it's 16.5 year payment by dividing the net investment cost of \$720,373 by \$43,679 yearly savings estimate. See the "Financial Analysis & Summary" section of the Project specification document: https://rebrand.ly/RSLLP_Specs The attendee said that this ignores the time value of money (TVM). This is the idea that money is worth more today than the same amount in the future because of the earning potential of the present money.

An attendee asked about the proposed sewage treatment plant to be located in the OR district next to the Wawa location. I noted that the Newtown Bucks County Joint Municipal Authority (NBCJMA) has made an offer to Kushner RE to purchase the land. The attendee was concerned about pollution of the water flowing through the property. I noted that If you check the JMZO, a public utility operation under an F-1 use is allowed by Special Exception in the OR district. The key feature is that it can only occupy 10% of the total property. Here's what the JMZO says: "Public Utility Operating Facility. No facility nor projected area thereof as viewed in the plan view shall occupy more than 10% of the property on which it is located." Municipal Authority Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 3:30 P.M. in the Municipal Building located at 5 South Congress Street, Newtown PA 18940. See <https://sco.lt/7OkpCC>

An attendee noted that several buildings on Sycamore St., for example Guru's, and the Arya Rug building, are in sore need of siding repair and paint. "Can the Township say anything to the property owners," he said, "given that they are eyesores?" I noted that I saw work being done on the Arya Rug building to prepare for repainting and that Guru's is on the market and there will perhaps be a new owner who will spruce up that building. I also noted that the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB: <https://newtownpa.gov/newtown-township-historical-architectural-review-board/>) advises the Board of Supervisors pertinent to the preservation of the historic aspect and nature of the structures located within the Township's Historic District.



Thank You!
Be sure to visit my website!

John MACK
Your Newtown Voice

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Thanks for listening to my presentation.

Be sure to visit my website at www.johnmacknewtown.info for more information regarding the topics just presented as well as summaries of past Meet Mack Monday meetings.

LINK: <https://www.johnmacknewtown.info/>