

New Civic Association Forms In Newtown

By Paul Nasella

Concerned for the future of his township and its residents, Andy Semeister knew he needed to act.

On Aug. 9, he began the Individuals Concerned for Newton Square, a non-profit civic association which exists, "for the welfare and improvement of the community and will foster individual participation and involvement to achieve these goals."

A major service Semeister and his fledgling organization will offer to residents is making the proceedings of each School Board and township meeting available online within three business days.

Semeister cited the fact that many residents are short on time and by covering meetings for citizens, it would save them both the time and aggravation of having to coordinate their own schedules to be able to attend the meetings.

Semeister also said it takes 30 to 45 days for the information of each monthly meeting to be approved and processed by the township. By posting and archiving the proceedings of each meeting on the organization's website

so quickly, it would enable residents to keep abreast of current issues.

"Any events of any of significance that has an impact," Semeister said. "I want people to be aware."

Although the organization has had 40 of its members attend its only meeting in late September, Semeister said he looks to not have meetings unless necessary, such in the case of an important vote or a certain hot button issue.

Rather, Semeister said, he looks to use the organization's newly created website, which will be up and running by the end of the month, as a forum for resident comment and debate.

There are many levels of membership residents can attain. Ad Hoc and Donor memberships are free to the public but Bronze, Silver, Gold, Gold Plus or Platinum memberships are open primarily to residents and businesses of Newtown Square and cost as little as \$24 a year.

"We hope (Individuals Concerned for Newton Square) will be the catalyst for discussion of issues of interest and importance to the community and serve as an educational

vehicle for communicating civic issues and problems to residents, neighbors and business establishments in and around Newtown Square," Semeister said.

The two big issues the organization is concerned about are education and development within the township. Semeister said many small- and middle-sized businesses within the township hire local residents but he asks, "what about the big businesses?" such as SAP and the Newtown Square Corporate Center.

Semeister proposes that instead of recruiting and training employees from outside of the township, corporations should collaborate with Marple Newtown High School by offering courses, which would teach students real-world skills needed by the corporation.

Semeister says in doing so, the corporation's recruiting and training costs would go down and the likelihood of the local students getting hired by that corporation would go up upon their graduation.

He said, if implemented, he hopes the system would

serve as an example for other local communities and businesses.

"I'm hoping in time this organization will be a model," Semeister said.

The other key issue Semeister and his Individuals Concerned for Newtown Square civic group is concerned over is development within the township.

Semeister said it took 300 years to develop the first 65 percent of the township, but will only take 15 years to develop the remaining open space left within the community.

Semeister said the concern of himself and his organization is of the stress the new development would put on the public systems infrastructure and the resulting increase in taxes that would ensue.

If you are a Newtown Square resident who is interested in becoming involved in Individuals Concerned for Newtown Square, you can contact President Andy Semeister at: www.ic4ns.org or ic4nsca.org or via mail at: A Newtown Square Civic Association, P.O. Box 405, Newtown Square, PA 19073.