

Plumstead encourages voters to support referendum

\$4.5 million bond issue would be used for multi-use park

Rebecca Fink

Plumstead supervisors are asking township residents whether or not they want to fund land preservation purchases. The bond referendum on the Nov. 3 ballot will ask for \$4.5 million for land preservation.

The funds would enable the township to purchase and develop its first multi-use park, including sports fields and walking trails. The bond will affect residents' taxes and help the township's effort to compete for Bucks County Land Preservation funds.

In 2005, Plumstead voters approved an \$8 million bond for open space purchases, and added \$6 million in 2001 and \$4 million in 1996. The township has used these and Bucks County funds to purchase con-

servation easements, parkland and open space totaling over 3,000 acres.

Supervisor Tom Alvare explained that voters need to be aware of the net tax savings from preserving open space. Since land preservation reduces the number of homes built, fewer tax dollars are necessary for schools and public work services. Municipal purchase of residentially zoned land will be less costly to the community than the cost of services resulting from development.

"The opportunity to purchase land is now, since interest rates are low and properties cost less per acre," said Alvare. "Residents need to understand the quality of life benefits as well. With less development the township can protect natural resources and

avoid the unsolvable water supply problem."

"Residents can pay taxes to preserve township land or pay school taxes to build and maintain Central Bucks schools," said Housley Carr. "The current bad economy presents this opportunity to buy and preserve."

Neighboring townships have aggressively purchased and preserved open space. Buckingham voters approved three open space bonds totaling 33.5 million, and Solebury has passed three for \$26 million. Bedminster Township has preserved over 5,000 acres with funds from three voter-approved bonds.

Supervisor Frank Froio said he is pro-open space and at the same time wants to maintain the trust of landowners. "We need to be open and honest with property owners and educate voters on the referendum question so they can make informed decisions," said Froio.