



# NEWS

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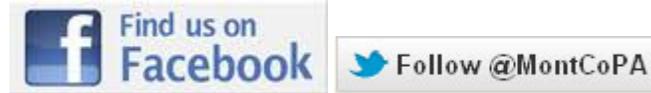
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**RELEASE: November 13, 2014**

## **Three Outstanding Projects and an Exceptional Community Leader Receive 2014 Montgomery Awards**

**Norristown, PA (November 13, 2014)** – Three outstanding projects and their creators and an exceptional community leader were honored yesterday at the annual Montgomery Awards ceremony sponsored by the Montgomery County Planning Commission. This annual program recognizes the best in planning, design, and advocacy in Montgomery County and acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.

The three projects receiving awards were the Beaumont House Restoration in Lower Gwynedd Township, the Fort Washington Office Park Resilient Infrastructure project in Upper Dublin Township, and Towamencin Town Square Phase I in Towamencin Township.

The program was expanded in 2014 with the addition of the Planning Advocate Award. This award recognizes citizens, appointed/elected officials or boards, and community organizations that have made significant and sustained contributions to advancing or promoting planning in Montgomery County. Luanne B. Stauffer, president of the Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce, was the 2014 recipient of this award.

**Beaumont House Restoration** received a 2014 Montgomery Award for successful historic preservation and restoration, coordinated transportation improvements, strong community involvement, and extensive collaboration. This restoration is an excellent example of an adaptive reuse. Through an exceptional public-private partnership, this project helped preserve the historic character of the area while accommodating necessary transportation improvements.

The Beaumont House is located within the Gwynedd Corners Historic District. The district, located at the intersection of Sumneytown Pike and Route 202, is an example of a historic crossroads village. It

includes 18 historic structures including two churches, the William Penn Inn, the meeting house, a school house, and a blacksmith shop. The Beaumont House, a historic stone structure, has been an icon in the area for many years. Built in 1817, it was part of the original 68 acres bequeathed to Gwynedd Friends.

The preservation of the Beaumont House was initiated during the planning process for the future widening of Route 202. During extensive public outreach, concerns were expressed about safety at the Meetinghouse Road intersection. Due to its skewed configuration, the intersection lacks sufficient sight distance. To improve safety, the intersection needed to be relocated 800 feet north to provide for a perpendicular intersection. The new realignment would eliminate the skewed intersection and create a cul-de-sac on Meetinghouse Road. PennDOT's proposed widening would have had a significant impact on the Beaumont House. Representatives from Foulkeways proposed to repurchase, relocate, and renovate the Beaumont House. The house was repurchased in 2005, and in 2006 the 500-ton house was moved 150-feet away from Route 202. By relocating the house, the widening of Route 202 could be shifted further away from the Gwynedd Friends property to minimize impacts on this property. Foulkeways renovated the Beaumont House into guest quarters for friends and family. The first and second floors were designed to accommodate six new guest suites. The renovations were completed to add modern conveniences and provide accessibility. This public-private effort has preserved a historic property and integrated it into its original setting while accomplishing important community improvements.

The **Fort Washington Office Park Resilient Infrastructure project** earned a 2014 Montgomery Award for creative vision, environmental mitigation, economic reinvestment, and successful collaboration. This innovative project, involving substantial investment and a comprehensive approach to the sustainable redevelopment of a significant regional office park, will achieve a major community vision.

The 536-acre Fort Washington Office Park is a major employment center for Upper Dublin Township. Approximately 65 percent of the office park is located within the 100-year floodplain. In recent years, the office park has faced challenges including serious flooding, substantial property damage, and rising office vacancies. It has also struggled with excessive storm water runoff and an inadequate transportation system. Upper Dublin has invested substantial resources to provide solutions to these challenges. Multiple studies were completed, including a 2008 redevelopment plan by Temple University's Center for Sustainable Communities (CSC). Subsequent engineering studies focused on storm water, transportation, and zoning solutions. In 2010, the township adopted its first comprehensive plan, which identified the revitalization of the office park as a top priority.

An initial project was the construction of two large flood retarding structures (FRS) along the Pine Run and Rapp Run. These innovative dam structures consist of a concrete labyrinth spillway with abutments on either side. Both have extensive landscaping with wetland plantings and new trees. A flood warning system was also developed. The township received an \$11.83 million H2O PA grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for construction. A transfer of development rights program (TDR) was created as an incentive for property owners to relocate from the floodplain. Another goal was to create a multimodal transportation system. Virginia Drive was proposed to be rebuilt, including raising the roadway and bridges out of the floodplain, incorporating storm water management, and narrowing the roadway from four lanes to three. Access improvements being considered include a new slip ramp at the Fort Washington Interchange and a full movement interchange at Virginia Drive. Extending Montgomery County's Cross County Trail through the park and connecting to Fort Washington train station has also been proposed.

Upper Dublin Township has provided a creative reimagining of Fort Washington Office Park for the twenty-first century. This exceptional project, with its creative planning vision, sustainable design principles, and successful initiatives, provides the initial groundwork for reinvestment to create a vibrant office park in the community.

**Towamencin Town Square Phase I**, an exceptional mixed-use project, received a 2014 Montgomery Award for innovative community vision and planning, extensive collaboration, effective site planning, and positive reinvestment and economic development. This project demonstrates how a successful public-private partnership can result in a well-designed development that accomplishes an important community vision.

The project marks the beginning of the transformation of Kulpsville in Towamencin Township. The township had a vision for the redevelopment of the Village of Kulpsville to encourage future development and economic reinvestment. In 1996, the township created the Towamencin Village Overlay District and master plan. The goal of the master plan was to develop a comprehensive land use and transportation plan for the village. It would allow a mix of uses, create a pedestrian-friendly environment, and utilize a design manual for future development. The township also worked to complete many transportation improvements surrounding the village including the construction of a pedestrian bridge over Forty Foot Road.

Phase I includes the Bridgeview Apartments, The Culinary Arts Institute of Montgomery County Community College, and a new Courtyard Marriott. The site design incorporated many village design elements. Bridgewater Apartments contains 180 luxury apartments with over 10,000 square feet of amenity space including a resort-style pool and amphitheater built at the foot of the pedestrian bridge.

The Culinary Arts Institute of Montgomery County Community College features four state-of-the-art kitchens, three classrooms, an outdoor patio, and a recently opened retail bakery café. The Courtyard Marriott is conveniently located adjacent to the turnpike and contains 135 rooms with over 4,000 square feet of meeting space, a fitness center and indoor pool, and two on-site restaurants.

This outstanding mixed-use development, involving substantial investment, has brought new development and economic reinvestment to this key area of the township. This project has created an appealing and walkable community that is an asset to the township.

**Luanne B. Stauffer**, president, Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce, received the 2014 Planning Advocate Award. Luanne is an exceptional leader who has a sustained legacy of achievements in planning, collaboration, and community improvements. She has been an ardent advocate for the Upper Perkiomen Valley region for over 30 years, providing leadership in the community and economic planning within the region. Luanne's involvement and activities come from her enthusiasm for her community and vision of achieving fair and reasonable planning for the future of the region.

Among Luanne's many contributions are her continued support of the Upper Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission; her leadership in PerkUp, a regional economic development plan; the GreenUp Plan, an extension of PerkUp that focuses on helping to transform the area into an inviting and memorable tourist destination; and recent successful workforce initiatives in the region.

Luanne has been involved in numerous professional and civic endeavors including St. Luke's University Health Network Board of Trustees, Montco Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Upper Perkiomen Valley Community Service Coalition, Perkiomen School Board of Trustees, Upper Perkiomen School District, Pennsylvania Rural Leadership Program, Upper Perkiomen Valley Library Board of Directors, Montgomery County-Norristown Public Library Board of Directors, and the Upper Hanover Open Space Task Force.

The cornerstones of Luanne's success are her outstanding collaboration skills and her ability to foster relationship building and education about the many aspects involved in making planning decisions in a community. She has been the go-to person in helping to effectively bring the many stakeholders and divergent groups within the community together whenever important community and economic planning issues have developed.

Luanne is a respected community leader who has worked successfully with local municipal governments, county government, state and federal legislators, local businesses, non-profit

organizations, social service organizations, and health care provider systems. Her consensus-building approach creates community trust and idea sharing that goes well beyond the completion of a project. She successfully keeps the line of communication and interaction going to help improve relationships and the exchange of ideas for the betterment of the future of the region.

Visit [www.montcopa.org/MontgomeryAwards](http://www.montcopa.org/MontgomeryAwards) for more on the 2014 winners, the awards program, and a searchable database of all award recipients. For further information, contact Rita McKelvey at [rmckelve@montcopa.org](mailto:rmckelve@montcopa.org) or 610-278-3753.