

Amity finalizes plans for historic parking lot

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By Denise Larive

For Journal Register News Service

Walkers, runners, bicyclists and history and nature lovers will soon have a place to park their vehicles at Morlatton Village, Old Philadelphia Pike, in Amity Township.

The Amity Township Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the construction and license agreements for the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County to construct a stone parking lot in the area.

Construction is expected to begin March 1.

Trust representative, Larry Ward, said the trust has secured \$40,000 in grant money to clear the site and purchase the construction materials.

The construction agreement states that the township supports the construction of 100 parking spaces.

It will supply the labor and equipment to transport and install the parking lot-grade stone and will attempt to plow the lot of snow at its earliest opportunity.

The license agreement permits the Trust's use of the lot, and its entrance and trails for 100 days each year for 25-years.

Township Solicitor Brian F. Boland said the Historic Preservation Trust will schedule its events and then allow use of the area by residents on unscheduled days.

Morlatton Village is Berks County's first settlement built along the Schuylkill River by Swedish settlers through a land grant from William Penn in 1701.

It is located in the area of the Thun Trail section of the Schuylkill River Trail.

The village contains the oldest documented dwelling built by Mouns Jones in 1716.

Other historic buildings are the White Horse Tavern, 1750-1762, the George Douglass Mansion, 1763, from which Douglassville attained its name, and the Covered-Bridge Keeper's House, 1780.

Located along Route 422 eastbound is the county's oldest church, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, built also by the Swedish settlers in 1720.