

# ROSS



## T O W N S H I P

# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

*A newsletter with community information for all township residents*

Volume 15 Issue 1



The Ross Township Board of Trustees and Ross Local School District Board of Education cordially invite you to join them in a Public Forum to discuss the future of development in Ross Township with particular emphasis on a proposal to develop

### **THE BURNS FARM**



**The Forum will be held on the evening of  
Tuesday, April 20, 2022 in the Ross High School  
Auditorium commencing at 6:30 p.m.**



#### **Important Information Below:**

Please read to become familiar with these issues.

## **THE FUTURE OF ROSS TOWNSHIP**

The year 2019 was a pivotal year for the future of Ross Township. That year, Ross Trustees saw various changes on the horizon which led to their study of ways to solve future traffic issues resulting from these probable changes. The proposed development of the Burns Farm, the 2022 grand opening of the massive Spooky Nook (Hamilton) Sports Complex and other potential developments along S.R. 128 are examples of those future changes. While traffic problems resulting from increasing volume and accident rates on S.R. 128 are the responsibility of the Ohio Department of Transportation, ODOT requires local community funding for project engineering and construction financing. The Board of Trustees had to decide where that funding would come from and there were only two options: future developments or you, the taxpayer.

After reviewing all available possible remedies, the Board entered into two very important contractual agreements. Trustees entered into contracts with Bradley Payne Advisors and the law firm of Frost Brown Todd. Bradley Payne Advisors is a firm that specializes in municipal tax consulting. The company advised the Board on various types of taxing mechanisms available to the Township while Frost Brown Todd advised the Board on all legal aspects relating to the various strategies. Through the advice of the two firms, the Board determined to

utilize three distinctive types of taxing strategies (see inside), where appropriate, for future development.

While the strategies will be discussed in detail at the Forum, it is important to note that all three have one important purpose. Each strategy, separately or in combination, is designed to ensure that future developments within the Township will pay the bulk of the added cost for the expansion of Township and School Board services necessitated by those developments. In doing so, current Ross taxpayers are not unduly burdened with these future costs.

### **SPOOKY NOOK SPORTS COMPLEX - HAMILTON**

In March of 2019, after studying a prospectus for the City of Hamilton's Spooky Nook development, Trustee Willsey and the Township Administrator went to Spooky Nook-Pennsylvania to see how the new Hamilton Spooky Nook business might affect Ross Township. What they saw was a hugely successful and impressive operation which has changed the business landscape over a 25 mile radius. They met the Spooky Nook owner for a guided tour through the massive 17 acre athletic complex and learned that the previous weekend volleyball tournament had attracted 36,000 visitors. They also toured Lancaster, PA,

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# THE FUTURE OF ROSS TOWNSHIP Continued from Page 1

a scant 8 miles from Spooky Nook-Pennsylvania (the exact distance Ross will be from Spooky Nook-Hamilton), where they spoke with local business owners and learned that Spooky Nook-Pennsylvania has completely renewed the economic depressed business landscape by creating an untold number of new business startups.

Upon their return to Ross, a navigational search was performed from mid-western cities like Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Indianapolis, etc. to the Spooky Nook-Hamilton location. It showed that the route takes incoming athletes and their families along I-74 to New Haven Road in Harrison to State Route 128, then directly through Ross Township to Spooky Nook-Hamilton. It was clear that Hamilton's big project would have a significant increase on traffic in our community.

## THE BURNS FARM: A HISTORIC PROPERTY WITH A VISIONARY FUTURE



The beautiful 350 acre Burns Farm overlooking the heart of Ross at the intersection of US 27 and SR 128 is part of the original 1500 acre tract purchased in 1805 by Revolutionary War veteran and early Cincinnati settler David Everett Wade. He would become the first of seven generations to benefit from his foresight. In 1815, as vast forests were being cleared in the area, his second son, Nehemiah Wade, moved his new bride to the Wade property in what was then Venice and served the community as a Justice of the Peace and a founder of the Venice Presbyterian Church before becoming a Judge in the Hamilton Court of Common Pleas.

When Judge Wade inherited his acreage upon his father's death in 1842 he built the gracious "Elmwood" home on SR128 and in 1845 his son, Nehemiah Chambers Wade, built the hillside homestead "Sunnyside" that remains a Ross landmark today. It has been noted as one of the few remaining Ohio Homesteads – a designation for farm homes still owned by descendants of the original homesteaders. His son, Nehemiah Adam Wade, was the first child born at Sunnyside and he continued the farming tradition; he married neighbor Nannie Sellers and they had an only child Jessie May Wade in 1885. Jessie married Paul Burns in 1906 and their son Wade Burns was born in 1909, the third generation to be born in the homestead. Over time the farm became known as the Burns Farm. Continuously farmed for over 200 years, the land yielded crops including wheat, corn, soybeans, sod and even tobacco.

Wade inherited the 202 acre farm from his mother in 1938 and he moved with his young wife Frances Ada Diegmann to the farm, raised their children Nancy Jo and Tom there and became very active in the community. The 202 acre farm passed down by

Wade's great-grandfather was preserved intact until 1955 when lots were sold along School Road (to fund the children's college education); later 3 acres were sold to Ross Christian Church in 1971. In 1969 Wade bought the adjoining farm from his cousin Mary Wade after US27 was routed through her property; her remaining 150 acres become part of Burns Farm. Both Wade (who died in 1996) and Fran (who died in 2004) loved their home and their Ross community. Tom Wade Burns (who died in 2020) and his wife Katherine lived on the farm for much of the last 26 years. Nancy survives as the last Wade descendent who grew up on the farm; as the bittersweet decision to sell the farm has been made, she continues to work with the township to ensure that the farm is developed in a comprehensive, cohesive manner.

The Burns Farm is so key to the future of Ross that the current Ross Township Land Use Plan adopted in 2008 designates the property as a Downtown Regional Center, envisioning a vibrant town center with a mix of housing options and community amenities. The 2008 recession deferred family plans to sell the property then but now there is a buyer who is committed to working with the township and the family to make this dream a reality. An experienced developer, whose own family has deep roots in Ross, he shares the Burns Family aspiration of honoring their Wade heritage and creating a visionary legacy that will benefit the community and be the pride of Ross for many generations to come.

Talks between the Township and Springboro based Centerstone Development's Ron Coffman began in the fall of 2019 with those discussions centering on the Land Use Plan, the Burns Farm and family legacy and the Township's demands for a quality development that sets the tone for high end, smart growth.

The Ross Local School District entered the discussions in early 2020 to assure that the quality education currently enjoyed by Ross students remained intact and well financed. Both the Ross Township Board of Trustees and the Ross Board of Education fully endorse the Coffman plan for development of this important tract of land. The plan also is financially beneficial to both the Township and the school system and insures that future growth pays the bulk of the cost for the increased services resulting from future developments.

## THE FORUM

Development is imminent and unstoppable. What Ross does with development is what matters. Much work has been done to set up Ross Township with a bright and prosperous future. A future where Ross residents can and will desire to spend their lives from cradle to grave, in the comfort of a tight knit and safe community. A place where property values are protected through outstanding public services, children are educated to the highest standards and citizen input is both welcomed and expected. The April 20th forum will be your opportunity to participate in your community's future. The developer's plan will be laid out, the Township and the School District will discuss how the project benefits those organizations' services and then we will have an open discussion with the public. We sincerely welcome your attendance and input.

# TAX STRATEGIES

STRATEGY TYPE	DEFINITION
<p><b><i>Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</i></b></p>	<p>An economic development mechanism available to aid in financing public infrastructure improvements. Ross Trustees and Ross School District Board must jointly determine how best to administer a TIF and exercise its powers to encourage targeted development or redevelopment. Execution of a TIF does not raise taxes on Ross residents.</p> <p>The Ross Board of Trustees and the School Board of Education entered into this important and necessary agreement in 2020.</p>
<p><b><i>Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)</i></b></p>	<p>An arrangement where one or more municipalities and a township agree to work together to develop township land for commercial or industrial purposes. The benefit to the municipality is that they get a portion of the taxes levied in the JEDD without having to annex it. It creates a partnership between a municipality and a township in which each property within the JEDD has an income tax placed on to it.</p> <p>Ross Trustees decided to partner with the City of Hamilton to form a JEDD agreement to have the ability to tax future development that likely will occur in Ross resulting from Hamilton's Spooky Nook development. The JEDD was enacted in October of 2021 and is very favorable to Ross in many ways.</p> <p>Also resulting from that partnership, the City gave Ross Township one of its three membership seats on the Butler County Transportation Incentive District (TID) Board. The TID serves a group of local governments collaborating to achieve common transportation goals. As the name implies, a TID is a "district", a geographic area organized for the purpose of improving the existing local road system. The TID does not represent a single city, nor is it a large government agency. In fostering cooperation among local governments, the TID increases the impact and effectiveness of local transportation planning and funding. The cooperative structure of the TID allows Butler County communities to accomplish more together than they would if they acted alone.</p>
<p><b><i>New Community Authority (NCA)</i></b></p>	<p>NCA is a separate public body governed by its own board of trustees that may oversee, coordinate, construct and finance public infrastructure improvements and community facilities. The Authority develops procedures for forming and governing an NCA. Formation of an NCA is initiated by a petition signed by the property owners within the NCA area.</p> <p>This funding source lacks the support of the Butler County Commissioners and its creation has temporarily been denied. This funding was to be used to aid ODOT in funding traffic remediation efforts. Several options are currently under consideration to fix this issue.</p>
	<p>Lastly, it is virtually impossible to stop development completely. The best any developing community can accomplish is to manage control over how increased governmental service costs are funded resulting from that development; that's just fact. As farms and other large tracts of land are privately sold, Ross becomes a more lucrative market for development. With member presence on the TID Board combined with the intended use of TIF, JEDD and NCA funding for appropriate future developments in Ross, your Board of Trustees has been very proactive in setting a course for future developments that insures that those developments pay for the cost increase in needed governmental services that development creates. That not only includes fire, police, road maintenance, zoning and administrative services; it also includes the costs associated with educating the children and young adults within the community. The Board's vision will go a long way in keeping the burden of those future costs off the backs of the current residents of our great community and makes development pay those associated cost increases.</p>



4055 Hamilton Cleves Road  
Fairfield, Ohio 45014

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CINCINNATI OH  
PERMIT #215

## You're Invited

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### THE BURNS FARM

Tuesday, April 20 • 6:30 p.m.  
Ross High School Auditorium

# ROSS TOWNSHIP CONTACTS

## TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES:

KEITH BALLAUER..... W-863-2337x113 C-646-9242  
ELLEN YORDY ..... W-863-2337x114 C-349-9511  
THOMAS E. WILLSEY, JR..... H-738-2409 W-863-2337x110 C-200-4322

## FISCAL OFFICER:

JULIE JOYCE-SMITH  
W-863-2337x112

## ADMINISTRATOR:

Laurie Kile  
W-863-2337x111

**EMERGENCY:** .....DIAL 911

## NON-EMERGENCY:

**TOWNSHIP POLICE CHIEF** Burton Roberts..... W-863-2337x130 F-863-6378

**TOWNSHIP FIRE CHIEF** Steve Miller ..... W-863-3410x150

## TOWNSHIP ROAD SUPERINTENDANT

Paul Bulach..... W-863-2337x180

**POLICE DEPARTMENT** 4055 Hamilton Cleves Rd... W-863-2337

**FIRE STATION #1** 2565 Cincinnati-Brookville Rd. W-275-1463

**FIRE STATION #2** 1308 Ross Millville Rd. .... W-863-3410

## SCHOOL NUMBERS:

### ROSS LOCAL SCHOOLS

District Offices.....863-1253  
Morgan Elementary .....738-1986  
Elda Elementary .....738-1972  
Ross Intermediate School.....868-4550  
Ross Middle School.....863-1251  
Ross High School .....863-1252

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Stephen T. Badin High School .....863-3993  
St. Joseph Elementary .....863-8758  
St. Peter in Chains.....863-0685  
Queen of Peace Elementary .....863-8705

## OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Butler County Building & Zoning .....887-3204  
MRAA .....738-1392  
Rumpke.....800-828-8171