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**Battle to Save Mineral Hill is Won**

*County Council purchases world-famous geologic site along Ridley Creek*

Mineral Hill, a world-renowned natural resource in Delaware County, is now preserved by Delaware County Council, which purchased the 46.2-acre landmark, famous among rock buffs for its wealth of stone specimens and crystals.

County Council announced Tuesday, Nov. 9, that the “Battle To Save Mineral Hill” has been won and the Mineral Hill property in Middletown will soon become Delaware County’s 12<sup>th</sup> park, adding to the county’s 616 acres of open space.

While the preservation of open space within the developed areas of Middletown, Media and Upper Providence is significant, Mineral Hill is historically, geologically and environmentally significant, making its purchase a “trifecta” in conservation accomplishments.

County Council Vice-Chairman Christine Fizzano Cannon spearheaded the three-year project on behalf of Delaware County Council. She said the purchase from Elwyn was finalized on Sept. 23 and stressed that no county tax dollars were used. Instead, the \$650,000 purchase price was funded through three sources:

- A Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant of \$358,435;
- The Natural Lands Trust contributed \$60,000 in federal funds from the United States Army Corps of Engineers;
- Middletown Township contributed the remainder of the purchase price from its Park Facilities Fund, which is funded through fees paid by developers to Middletown in lieu of providing recreational facilities at their developments, and from proceeds raised through open space fund-raising events.

Ms. Fizzano Cannon is a former member of Middletown Township Council where she led the effort to preserve 22 acres at the former Sleighton School for a park and was instrumental in working with her colleagues to preserve 76 acres at the Smedley tract, which is a short distance from Mineral Hill.

Mineral Hill is a scenic, wooded property on Baltimore Pike just west of Ridley Creek, near the intersection of Elwyn Road and Baltimore Pike. The preservation of Mineral Hill expands the open space along Ridley Creek, as it is adjacent to Memorial Park in Middletown Township and Scott Park and the Lavin tract in Upper Providence.

“Mineral Hill is a gem in so many ways that Council is thrilled that we can acquire this property and preserve it for generations to come,” said Vice-Chair Fizzano Cannon. “In challenging economic times, it’s not easy to address conservation and preservation issues, but through our partnerships with Middletown, the Natural Lands Trust and other organizations, we are preserving this landmark without expending county tax dollars.”

The purchase was announced at a press conference held at Memorial Park at the bottom of the hill between Media and Middletown. The press and guests were given tours of the site via four-wheel drive vehicles. The Mineral Hill acreage is in a natural state and not accessible to the public at present.

There are many steep-sloped areas and the land has several tributaries that feed into Ridley Creek. There is an interesting rock formation at the former Crump’s Quarry site, where they used to mine serpentine, a unique green building stone used in houses in the area.

The Parks and Recreation Department will now determine what work needs to be done to make Mineral Hill accessible for passive recreation. There are several trails in Mineral Hill and they will be linked to neighboring Millennium Trail.

Together with the existing Middletown and Upper Providence parks, the Mineral Hill site will complete a 100-acre natural oasis that serves to protect the Crum-Ridley-Creek Watershed, provide a habitat for wildlife, and preserve a wooded area that benefits air quality, reduces noise pollution and provides a green buffer along two major highways.

“Mineral Hill has a long and significant history that will be of interest to all residents, particularly students interested in mineralogy,” Ms. Fizzano Cannon said. “Council is pleased and proud we can preserve it as one of the county’s treasures, and we look forward to preparing to open Mineral Hill to the public as a county park.”

The Council Vice-Chair said there are many mineral specimens from Mineral Hill on display at the Delaware County Institute of Science in Media.

J. Roger Mitchell, a curator at the Institute of Science, displayed some of the rock specimens he has found on Mineral Hill and said the site is a mecca for abundant and unusual minerals such as feldspar, amazonite, chromite crystals and deweylite.

“Not many people realize that Mineral Hill is famous among rock buffs,” Mitchell said at the press conference. “Nor do they know that the land’s most unusual natural resources are underground and in stream beds. Science museums all over the world have minerals from right here, at Mineral Hill.”