

MIDDLETOWN

Township wants to IGNITE search for solutions

The new program is an effort to increase cooperation among residents and township government in solving problems like graffiti and vandalism.

By CHRIS ENGLISH COURIER TIMES

The acronym might sound like a call to arson, but it's really one for help and cooperation, said Middletown supervisors Chairwoman Lisa Pflaumer.

Township officials are looking to start a program Pflaumer has dubbed IGNITE Middletown, or Initiatives by Government and Neighborhoods to Increase Teaming Efforts. It kicks off Tuesday night with a special public meeting to discuss issues in the Cobalt Ridge and Quincy Hollow sections of Levittown.

Several other meetings could follow focusing on other sections of the township, said Pflaumer. While anyone can attend Tuesday night's meeting, residents of Cobalt Ridge and Quincy Hollow are urged to attend so the supervisors and other township officials can get feedback on issues in those sections, she said.

Pflaumer said the aim is to begin IGNITE as a pilot program in those two sections because township officials have been getting e-mails and calls in recent weeks about problems like graffiti and vandalism there.

"This is meant to be a partnership initiative to identify and discuss issues of concern in the communities and, as a result, prioritize each one of them so we can create solutions," she said. "This truly has to be a team effort. The onus can't be placed on residents alone or on government alone."

One possible outcome of the program might be the creation of more neighborhood watches or expanded roles for those that exist, said Pflaumer, though she wants to hear a lot of suggestions from residents.

"It really helps to get from their perspective what they consider to be the issues," she said. "This is a way for people to connect to their township through the use of these neighborhoodtype meetings. We want to brainstorm solutions so the township can identify things it can control and manage, and maybe create other programs or modify our processes and procedures in response to issues. Sometimes, just tweaking what we already have can make a tremendous difference."

Like Pflaumer, Supervisor Chuck Thompson said he's anxious to hear about problems and suggestions for correcting them.

"I think it's a great idea to explore ways in which we can limit the amount of graffiti and vandalism in that area," he said. "This is important for the township in terms of how we feel about ourselves and the way we present ourselves to others."