

Upper Allen Township Community Group Facebook post  
Judy Bailey January 16, 2026

I want to speak about what historic preservation truly means in our community-because right now, that value is being tested.

The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document most townships use to establish goals, priorities, and planning decisions. The Upper Allen comprehensive plan exists to ensure that decisions are made for the common good—not for self-serving reasons. Core responsibilities such as fire and police protection, land use, sewer and water systems, taxation, and road maintenance are all outlined in that plan. We didn't have a bridge like this before!. Historic preservation is also specifically addressed, and Bishop Bridge is clearly identified. Demolishing it is not part of the plan. Overdevelopment is not part of the plan.

Bishop Bridge may sit at the edge of our township, shared with Monaghan, but it stands at the center of a much larger question:

Do we value the historic, scenic, and functional infrastructure that defines this place?

Or will we allow yet another historic structure to disappear? We can't tell people they can't tear down an early log cabin or apparently demolish a farm but we can have a historic bridge and water trail.

We are now being told that the \$900,000 already budgeted to repair the bridge cannot be spent. Yet nearly that same amount is spent on HVAC maintenance and now solar panels. More than \$500,000 has gone toward stormwater issues that have existed for over fifty years. Nearly \$1 million is being spent on roughly one thousand feet of trail. Let's look at this in relative terms: the bridge is a bargain at one million dollars.

Do we remember how much was spent on Grantham Pond-and that the projected \$200,000 from DCNR never materialized? We just absorbed that cost. Can we imagine what Generations Park will ultimately cost once all the "shiny things" are built?

We have a well balanced township and historic preservation is a new and valuable responsibility. If the county had not abandoned the bridge we would not have had to choose whether or not to rehab the bridge.

I will be honest: the proposal to rehabilitate the bridge was not perfect. The presentation to the board was not stellar, and mr Ross could have shown us examples of his outstanding repair work Ownership of the bridge was volleyed back and forth, unlike in other townships that successfully moved ahead with restoration.

What is most troubling is that the township is not hearing from residents that historic preservation matters to them. Instead, much of the responsibility appeared to fall on two commissioners who ran on a platform for historic preservation, while staff and some

commissioners assumed the role of judge rather than collaborator. It is true-there was no groundswell of public outcry. But who knew? During my campaign, I heard residents speak passionately about open space and historic preservation. Now, access to the creek and this historic crossing is being taken away from citizens.

If we do not act now, the bridge will not simply remain closed-it will be lost forever, a missing structure on the horizon. And if we ever decide to replace it? That cost will exceed \$2 million.

Take a drive out there. What you will see is confusing and illogical: two roads that once connected-and now do not. It is like reaching the middle of a tunnel and finding a wall.

Neighboring landowners will not be bothered by traffic or laughter from the bridge-only by cars turning around at a dead end.

*And then, quietly, the old bridge.*

*Tired, steadfast, standing watch through the night.*

*Her fate was debated by those angry at the cost of her new clothes.*

*The view from her grated metal deck, the breeze,*

*The murmur of cool water beneath-none of it mattered.*

*They felt powerful, stomping out her worth,*

*Declaring they didn't need her.*

*They had spoken. She was done.*

*But when morning comes, and truth returns like a tide,*

*They'll realize they need her more than ever.*

*For she holds no bitterness. No fear.*

*Only grace, serenity, and a playful spirit.*

*We are better planners than this.*

*We are better stewards than this.*

*And the bridge offers us more than this.*

I sense a lot of fear from the nay sayers...and I get it, our taxes are too high..There are many other ways to decrease taxes in the township and we can preserve some of the unique characteristics of the township before it turns completely into a block of houses.