

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

Proposed Property Tax Rate Remains 5 Cents

For the second year in a row, I am proposing a real property tax rate of 5 cents on each \$100 of assessed value of house and lot. This translates into a tax of \$250 for property assessed at \$500,000. The proposed rate for “personal” property, which applies to utility companies and businesses with a Somerset address, remains at 22 cents, the same rate homeowners paid last year and this year.

A public hearing on the suggested tax rates and budget is scheduled for 9:05 p.m. at the Town Council meeting on Monday, May 6. Tax rates and budget will be adopted by the Town Council on June 3.

EVERYTHING HAPPENS IN SPRING

April 27, Saturday, 9 a.m. Town Hall parking lot Parks & Natural Resources Committee meeting

May 1, Wednesday, 4:30 p.m.

Deadline to register for special trash pickup (301-657-3211)

May 3, Friday, 7 a.m.

Special trash pickup

May 4, Saturday, 1:30 – 5:30 p.m., Town Hall Health & Fitness Fair (see flyer)

May 6, Monday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall

Council meeting; budget and tax rate hearing

May 7, Tuesday,

Amvets will collect usable items. Must call 301-953-0090.

May 13, Monday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall

Public meeting, Long-Range Planning/Facilities

May 19, Sunday, 1 p.m., swimming pool

Pool Committee meeting

May 20, Monday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall

Public meeting, Long-Range Planning/Development

May 24, Friday, 6:30 p.m., swimming pool

Swim team pizza party

May 25, Saturday, 10:00 a.m., swimming pool

Opening day, raft night

May 26, Sunday, 5:00 p.m., tennis courts

Round robin. Call 301-654-7152

June 1, Saturday, 11:00 a.m., baby pool

Party for babies and pre-schoolers (see flyer)

June 10, Monday, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall

Public meeting, Long-Range Planning/Governance

General Fund and Capital Project Fund budgets are summarized on pages 10 and 11 of this *Town Journal* along with end of year fund balances and operating surpluses. Copies of the complete budget and explanatory notes are available at the Town Hall.

A Few Highlights

On the **revenue** side, our largest source of income by far is a portion of State and County income tax paid by Somerset residents that is returned to the Town by Annapolis. As mentioned in last month's *Town Journal*, the \$406,000 we expect this fiscal year (which ends on June 30) is 38 percent lower than last year's \$660,000. In accordance with advice from the State, we are budgeting \$420,000 for next fiscal year (FY-03).

On the **expense** side, proposed salary increases average 7.5 percent, with individual raises varying from 3 to 20 percent, both for maintenance men.

\$300,000 Budgeted for Remodeling Town Hall

Far and away the largest proposed capital expense is \$300,000 to improve the Town Hall. The proposal includes making access to the second floor comply with the building code, improving the second floor for storage of Town records, modernizing the upstairs bathroom, installing a sprinkler system throughout the building, upgrading heating and air conditioning, slightly enlarging the cramped office and conference room and repairing and painting the outside of the structure. Please note that the proposed budget does not include a line item for security although it does provide \$70,000 for contingencies.

Proposed expenditures for the new fiscal year would exceed expected income by \$324,000, still leaving us with a fund balance, or surplus, of over \$1.1 million.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Election Results

In the April 1 Town election, Walter Behr was reelected to a two-year term as Mayor with 116 votes. Peter Gubser was reelected to the Town Council with 95 votes, and Jeffrey Slavin was elected to the Council for his first term with 115 votes. Council terms are also two years. Thanks to Board of Supervisors of Elections members Tracy Truman, chairman; Ellie Fink and Bonnie Thomson for conducting the election without a hitch.

Special Trash Pickup May 3

The Town Council, at its April 1 meeting, approved a special trash pickup on **Friday, May 3**, for residents who have large items that cannot go in the regular trash. The Town now provides this service twice a year at no cost to residents. Those wishing to participate need only notify Tom at Town Hall no later than **May 1**. This will be your reservation for the special collection service by our contractor, J&J Inc. **ITEMS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP WITHOUT A RESERVATION.**

Special trash should not be placed at the curb earlier than the night before the pickup. Special trash is defined as refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, freezers, stoves, hot water heaters, other major appliances; furniture or parts thereof; large toys, bicycles, swing sets (broken down into smaller parts); bathtubs, sinks and toilets; and iron pipe, gutter/downspouts and fence pieces under six feet long. If items are in bundles, they must be light enough for two men to carry.

Lawn mowers and other power equipment must be emptied of gas and oil. Refrigerators and freezers must have the Freon removed by an authorized agent and tagged appropriately. Propane tanks must be removed from grills.

Items that will not be picked up include: parts of junked cars, boats or trailers (including batteries and tires); loose glass; firewood, tree stumps, tree limbs or lumber; bricks and concrete blocks; paint cans; flammable or hazardous liquids or solids (including propane canisters); ammunition or explosives; large rocks; and dead animals.

Amvets Collection May 7

In addition to the special trash pickup on May 3, residents have an opportunity to dispose of anything in usable condition, including furniture and clothing, on Tuesday, May 7. Amvets will collect items left at your front door and leave a receipt. **However, you must call them at 301-953-0090.**

Amvets will not take tires, car sets, halogen lamps, lawn mowers with gas, TVs older than 10 years or major appliances.

Don't Dump, Donate Program

Montgomery County has a program to recycle construction materials for use in low-income housing. If you have any reusable construction materials, you may take them to the Shady Grove side of the Transfer Station at 16101 Frederick Road in Derwood between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Help Protect Town Trees

Please, when watering your yard, include any Town trees located in the vicinity. During this period of drought they can use all the water we can provide.

It is also important when mulching your trees to make a well around the bottom of the trunk. This will help in two ways, capturing more water and eliminating a breeding ground at the tree's base for unwanted pests. If your yard is manicured by a landscaping service, we ask you to share this information regarding mulch placement with them. What looks pretty is not always best for the tree. Thanks for your help.

Grasscycling

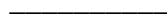
Several copies of the grasscycling video are available at the Town office for your use. The video demonstrates the benefits of leaving your grass clippings on the lawn. Please call Tom at 301-657-3211 if you would like to borrow one.



Parking

Please refrain from parking cars opposite other residents' driveways. Drivers who park in these locations not only inconvenience their neighbors who are trying to back out onto the street, but also place their own vehicles in greater likelihood of damage.

Please report all illegally parked cars directly to the police at 301-279-8000. You do NOT have to give your name to file a report.



Odd Jobs Listing

We are changing our ODD JOB HELPERS listing for the lawn mowing months to indicate those who will cut grass. We will publish the snow shovelers only in the winter editions of the *Town Journal*. Notices have been sent to all snow shovelers asking them if they want to be on the grass cutting list. Anyone else interested may add his/her name by calling Tom at 301-657-3211.



Permits Granted

The following permits were issued by the Mayor during the past month. (Building permits are approved by the Town Council.)

Trees: Jim and Dabney Goold, 5812 Surrey Street, to remove a storm-damaged white pine from their back yard.

Sarah and Bill Kingdom, 4807 Grantham Avenue, to remove a storm-damaged walnut in their back yard.

Samira and Ted Woodings, 4932 Dorset Avenue, to remove a sweet gum tree from their front yard.

Steven R. Mann, 5413 Surrey Street, to remove a storm-damaged Bradford pear tree from his right side yard.

Dumpster: Douglas Miller, 5706 Warwick Place, to place a dumpster in the street.

Fence: Vicki Blooston, 4821 Cumberland Avenue, to enclose her back yard with a chain link fence.

Legislation

At the April 1 meeting, the Town Council:


1. Passed an ordinance amending the Town Code to formalize the requirement for notice of committee meetings on the Town Hall bulletin board and on the Town e-mail network.
2. Passed an ordinance amending the Town Code to require applicants for tree removal permits to supply the name of the contractor and the Maryland tree expert number or evidence of liability and property damage insurance.
3. Introduced an ordinance amending the Town Code to require permits for removing dead trees 4 inches or more in diameter measured 4 feet from the ground.

Council Activity

At the April 1 regular meeting, the Council:

1. Transferred \$1,000 from Capital Projects Fund Contingency to Capital Projects Fund Streets.
2. Set the spring large item pickup by our trash hauler on Friday, May 3.
3. Set the September Council meeting date for Tuesday, September 3.
4. Approved building and tree removal permit applications by Steve and Michelle Friedman, 4908 Essex Avenue, to add a family room to the rear of their house. The tree removal permit requires replacement of a tree in their front yard and one in their back yard.
5. Approved the building permit application by Larry and Barbara Hoover, 4822 Cumberland Avenue, to add a deck to the rear of their house.
6. Heard a report by Howard Byron on recommendations of the Planning Board's Transportation Task Force for the Intercounty Connector Highway and the Purple Rail Line.
7. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments of Mark London, chairman; Ann Brown, Bridget Cowie, Lucky Marman; Morton Mintz and Trey Sunderland to the Tennis Committee.

8. Approved the Security Committee's request for \$2,500 to use a computer programmer to input and analyze responses to the Crime/Security Survey.
9. Discussed a request to restrict parking of recreational and commercial vehicles, trailer and boats on Town streets.
10. Granted an appeal by Bahram and Miriam Soroush, 4519 Dorset Avenue, of the decision by the Mayor rejecting their application for a permit to remove an ash tree from their front yard. The Council action requires the Soroushes to replace the tree somewhere in their yard. Vote: Eldridge, Frankel and Gubser for; Proctor opposed; Kessler abstained.
11. Authorized the Mayor to decide on a course of action regarding cleaning or tiling the two dressing room floors at the pool bathhouse, with the cost not to exceed the tiling bid of \$13,000.
12. Held until the May meeting the request by the Swimming Pool Committee for \$2,500 to be used for miscellaneous expenditures, primarily social events and aerobics classes.
13. Answered inquiry by Montgomery Municipal Cable regarding our desire for TV coverage of regular Council meetings and special events.
14. Approved the building permit application by Ann and Ken Brown, 4713 Trent Court, to enclose their porch and replace their air conditioner.

 Text Box: Congratulations to Malini Jadeja of Dorset Avenue! County Executive Doug Duncan has appointed her to the Board of Directors of the Glen Echo Partnership for Arts and Culture, Inc.

Making Waves

Town Pool Preparing to Open

By Norman Schneider, Chairman, Pool Committee

If you wander by the pool during the next few weeks, you'll see lots of work going on as we get ready to open for the season on Saturday, May 25. We hope to have an environment where everyone in Town can enjoy swimming, relaxing, meeting old and new friends, picnicking and playing. The pool is operated for the benefit of all Town residents by a professional staff, and it is the responsibility of all of us to insure that things run smoothly. The pool is heated and should be warm enough for a swim from opening day. As always, if you have any questions concerning some aspect of the pool, either policy or practice, please contact me or other members of the Pool Committee.

Some Rules and Regulations

Questions frequently come up concerning pool usage. The key to a successful summer is to be courteous to others when at the pool. The complete Pool Rules are available at the Town's Website and at the desk.

Lap swimming is available at all hours the pool is open, including during swim team practice. If you want to use a lane or if they become crowded, please ask the staff to open an additional lane, but remember that lanes can be -- and should be -- shared.

Limited parking is available in the upper parking lot. Bike racks are available. Only disabled resident may use the parking area next to the pool. Except for special needs, it is not permissible to drop off or pick up across the bridge. Remember when backing out of your space that there are youngsters walking or biking to and from the pool and they may not be watching for you.

There is a beautiful picnic area at the far end of the enclosure and you are welcome to use it without reservations for a small group. If you want to bring a larger group to the pool, please contact the pool manager so that such events can be approved (groups larger than 15 are generally not manageable) and so that extra pool staff can be added if necessary. All food must be brought in along the upper walkway. Glass containers are not permitted. There will be several grill nights throughout the summer when you are welcome to bring your own food to be grilled, but generally cooking is not allowed in the picnic area. The pool staff will be keeping the refrigerator and freezers stocked with sodas and ice cream, but there will be no other food sold at the pool. Pizza (or other) deliveries can be made to the front desk and the staff will call you when your order arrives. Except for food being brought to the picnic area, no food is allowed inside the pool enclosure.

Prior to swimming or diving in the deep end, children under 14 must take a "deep-water test" annually so that the staff can evaluate each swimmer. Please remember that all children in diapers must have rubber pants that keep the diaper in.

Remember to Register

All users of the pool must sign in at the front desk. Although the pool is free to all Town residents, you must sign up, list your household members' ages and have your picture taken for identification purposes at the pool. These ID's are kept at the pool to insure that only residents and their guests are signing in and also as an aid to the staff in learning everyone's name. You need to update your file only if you have added members to your household. Unfortunately, we will be unable to register people at the pool, so please contact Tom Carter at the Town Hall for times you may register there. Guest passes (\$10.00 for five visits) may be purchased at the pool by check only. As a convenience, these passes can be kept at the pool, but you must accompany your guests to the pool when using the passes.

Staff and Committee Members

The staff this year will be led by Teri Tomlin, who will be our new pool manager. Teri is a nurse for the Montgomery County schools and has been the manager at Little Falls pool (and occasionally a substitute at our facility). This summer she will be splitting her time between us

and Little Falls, but will be at the Somerset pool for several hours each day she is working. For our assistant manager, we have Jenny Jaskiewitz, and we will see Carlos Gonzales, Colin Snow, Katie Steller and Tristin Kessler return as pool operators. Adam Bookman, Theresa Hamm and Brooks Lape will return, and they'll be joined by Julie Hoppack and Ben Sullivan as lifeguards. We anticipate that this will be a nice mix of old and new staff, with several Town residents working again this year.

In addition to me, the committee members for this year are: Josh Bobeck, Adam Bookman, Ann Brown, Eileen Coen, Bridget Cowie, Toni Farrell, Florence Gang, Rick Kessler, Ruth Koffsky, Sarah Morse and Alan Proctor. I can be reached during business hours at (202) 347-5141 and at nschneider@kamerowlaw.com or at home at (301) 652-5509 and at kaneschn@mindspring.com. It is generally easiest to reach me during the day at my office.

We look forward to another successful summer at the pool. Come and join us.

Swim Team to Start Season With Pizza

By Sarah Morse, Swim Team Representative

New swimmers, returning swimmers and developmental swimmers: Somerset's swim team, "The Dolphins" will start the season with a **pizza party and team sign-up Friday, May 24, at 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Everyone is invited to meet the coaches, ask questions, sign up for the team and buy uniforms. Our heated pool will be open only for the swim team, so anyone who is interested in joining the team is encouraged to attend.

Pizza parties, uniforms, coaches... You may be wondering just what is the Somerset swim team. The Somerset Dolphins are a member of the Montgomery County Swim League. The team has practices every day in the morning and afternoon. There are meets every Saturday morning from June 22 to July 27. We also have three Wednesday night B-meets and one big relay carnival. At the end of the season, we have a banquet with trophies, skits and swimming. We also have weekly social events.

There are no tryouts for the team. All children 5 to 18 who live in the Town and can pass the deep-water test may join. The emphasis is on having fun and developing each swimmer. We want this to be an enjoyable community activity, not an elite group of really fast swimmers.

It is not necessary for every swimmer to come to practice every day and participate in all the meets. The team is a huge time commitment and some kids can't go to everything. There are several practices during the day, so that team members can work them into their schedules.

For children who cannot pass the deep-water test, there is a developmental team, the Minis. Mini swimmers must be between 5 and 9 years old and able to swim 15 yards. They practice three days a week. There is also one Mini meet. Mini swimmers are an important part of the swim team and should attend all the social events. They get a trophy at the end of the season.

The swim team is the best neighborhood activity in Town for children. Because it takes 36 parents to run a meet, it provides a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to meet their neighbors. Weekly social events help strengthen community ties and integrate the children into the neighborhood. We invite everyone to check it out. Any questions? Please call Sarah Morse (301) 907-3298 if you can't make the pizza party on Friday, May 24.

Somerset Dolphins Calendar

Friday, May 24: 6:30 - 8:30, Pre-season pizza party and team sign up.

Tuesday, May 28: Practice starts.

Saturday, June 15: Time trials, early in the morning.

Saturday, June 22: Meet away with Palisades.

Thursday, June 20: School's Out Party, Pizza and Ice Cream pig out.

Friday, June 21: Morning practice begins! Breakfast with the coaches every day until June 28.

Wednesday, June 26: 6:30 p.m. B-Meet with Lakelands.

Saturday, June 29: 9:00 a.m. Home meet with Quail Valley.

Saturday, July 6: 9:00 a.m. Away meet with Fallsmead.

Sunday, July 7: 9:00 a.m. Relay carnival.

Monday, July 8: Picture day after pm practice.

Wednesday, July 10: 6:30 a.m. Away meet against Eastgate.

Saturday, July 13: 9:00 a.m. Home meet with Ashton.

Saturday, July 20: 9:00 a.m. Away meet with Glenmont.

Wednesday, July 24: 6:30 a.m. B-Meet with Little Falls.

Saturday, July 27: 8:00 a.m. Divisionals

Saturday, July 2, 6:00 p.m. Team Banquet!

NOTE: This calendar is subject to change and additions. Watch for signs and flyers!

Babies, Preschoolers Will Party

On Saturday, June 1, 11:00 to 1:00, the Town will host a pool party for babies and preschoolers. The party will feature fun and games in the baby pool, followed by pizza and the very popular ice-your-own cupcakes at the picnic area. Families participating are asked to donate a new or used pool toy to the baby pool. Toys will be kept in a tub at the baby pool for all to enjoy. Users are asked to return toys to the tub.

For more information, to volunteer to help with the party and/or to RSVP, call Bridget Cowie, 301-654-7152. See enclosed flier for details.

Never a Dull Moment at Pool

The Pool Committee has planned a full summer of events - potlucks, movie nights, aerobic classes, swim lessons and parties. Mark you calendars for these events for May and the first week of June. A full season calendar will be included in the *May Town Journal*.

Friday, May 24: Swim team pre-season registration/welcome-back party 6:30 to 8:30. Pool open for swim team use only.

Saturday, May 25: Pool opens for the season at 10:00 a.m. Raft night, 6:15 to closing (10:00).

Monday, May 27: Grill night, 5:00 to closing (8:00 p.m.).

Tuesday, May 28: Swim team practice starts, weekdays, 4:00 - 6:00.

Saturday, June 1: Tot party, 11:00 - 1:00.

Tuesday, June 4: Water aerobic classes begin, 1:00. Contact Florence Gang for details (301) 656-3430.

Saturday, June 8: Raft night.

Pool Hours: May 25-June 19 Monday - Thursday, 1:00 - 8:00; Friday, 1:00 - 9:00; Saturday, 10:00 - 10:00; Sunday, 10:00 - 8:00.

Tennis Committee Encourages Greater Use of Courts

By Mark London, Chairman, Tennis Committee

A Tennis Committee has been formed to help Town residents maximize their enjoyment of one of Somerset's most valuable assets -- our tennis courts. The committee consists of Mark London, chairman, 301-652-6275, shark@londonandmead.com, Ann Brown, Bridget Cowie, Lucky Marmon, Morton Mintz and Trey Sunderland.

The committee will review the tennis court regulations and attempt to streamline and simplify them. In addition, the committee will encourage and assist residents in organizing tennis activities by publishing a calendar of scheduled events and names of instructors in the *Town Journal*.

Use of Courts

We ask everyone who uses the courts to take care of them, which includes avoiding soles that scuff, cleaning up after playing (often tops of cans are left out), etc. Also, we would appreciate your watchfulness over outsiders using the courts. Even the pros who give lessons know (or should know) that a Somerset resident must be part of the playing group. Please help us make sure that this Town resource is used exclusively by Town residents and their guests.

Somerset Grand Slam Round Robins

In response to the success of last year's tennis round robins, three dates have been chosen for adult round robins this spring and summer. The tournaments are open to all Town residents on a first-come, first-served basis. Players of all ability levels are invited to participate and join in a potluck picnic following the 2-hour tournament. If you are interested in participating in any of the events, please contact Bridget Cowie **bmcecowie@aol.com** or 301-654-7152. The round robin dates are Sunday, May 26, 5:00 p.m., Saturday, June 29, 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, August 31, 5:00 p.m.

Lessons, Other Activities

For residents who are interested in adult or child tennis lessons, the committee will publish the names and contact information for any instructor recommended by a Town resident. Please contact Mark London if you have had experience with an instructor who is interested in teaching at our courts. One resource currently available for group or private lessons (children and adults) is Dan Kelly at TennisLink **tennislink@aol.com**.

The Tennis Committee will be happy to assist residents interested in organizing other activities at the tennis courts. Activities could include a tennis ladder, a round robin tournament for teens, a bulletin board and/or Web page for matching players according to ability and schedule, etc. Please contact Mark London to let him know what your interests are.

Anniversary Exhibit Opens at Brookside Gardens

To help celebrate “75 Years, Turning Visions into Reality,” The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) invites local residents, businesses and families to enjoy a “then and now” exhibit on the Commission's 75-year history. The exhibit at Brookside Gardens Visitors Center on display daily through Monday, May 27. Located within the 50-acre horticultural display gardens at 1800 Glenallan Avenue in Wheaton, Brookside Gardens Visitors Center is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

American Hollies Featured in Mini Park

By Corrie Morsey, Chairman, Parks and Natural Resources Committee

The primary focus of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee at its meeting on April 16 was maintenance of the Mini Park, located on Dorset Avenue at the intersection with “Little” Surrey. Most of the proposed work has already been implemented by the Town staff. Still to come is some professional pruning and the removal of a Nellie Stevens holly to allow more light and room for the American hollies to grow. (The original landscape design, done by former resident Eleanor Weinstein, contained only American hollies. The Nellie Stevens were planted to fill in voids until the American hollies grew.) In the fall more daffodils and day lilies will be incorporated in the park.

Also under discussion was reforestation of Vinton Park by eradicating bamboo from the parkland and planting in the “bowl” area, which is across from the pool bathhouse and adjacent to the overflow channel of the erosion control project. The committee touched on a request by residents for a barrier between the rear of their property at 4519 Dorset Avenue and the tennis courts.

It was decided to address these two matters on-site when the committee meets Saturday, April 27, at 9:00 a.m. in the Town Hall parking lot. As always, these meetings are open to all residents of Somerset.

Planning Committee Wants Your Input

Survey Response Fantastic

By Long-Range Planning Committee

A hearty thanks to all Town residents who took the time to participate in our Town's future through the questionnaire sent out in March. About half of all adult residents responded: 373 total, which is fantastic. The Town owes particular thanks to resident Ann Bisconti, of Bisconti Research, who donated her time and that of her staff to make sure the document and results were as professional as possible.

Over the next few months we will highlight parts of the questionnaire in a series of articles in the *Town Journal* and on the Website.

As the Long-Range Planning Committee continues its work, a series of public meetings will be held in the Town Hall on three Monday evenings in May and early June. The chairs of the four subcommittees (Budget, Governance, Facilities and Development) will present their analysis of

the survey of Town residents, along with preliminary recommendations, and will hear comments and take questions from residents.

Tabulation of the questionnaire, which was presented at the April Town Council meeting, will also be available. Questionnaire results, the underlying focus group report, and committee minutes and research papers are available for perusal on the Town Website www.townofsomerset.com and at the Town Hall. Subcommittee preliminary reports and recommendations will be available on the Web and at the Town Hall after the public meetings.

Included in the meetings will be a discussion of how the budget impacts on committee recommendations. One of the mandates of this committee is to give residents an opportunity for input. It is important to get feedback at this last stage before we adjourn for the summer. The final report with recommendations will be presented to the Town Council in October.

Dates of the public meetings are Monday, May 13: Facilities; Monday, May 20: Development; and Monday, June 10: Governance. The meetings will begin at 7:30 and will be facilitated. Budget will be a part of each of these discussions.

Save May 13 for Facilities Discussion

By Council Member Tom Eldridge

Based on all research to date, including the Town survey, reports of focus groups held prior to the survey, and input from Town staff and residents, the Facilities Subcommittee of the Long-Range Planning Committee will be making recommendations on the topics listed in the agenda below. These recommendations will be contained in a final report completed by the fall. The subcommittee wants input from Town residents on this report, and a public meeting is set for May 13 to get that input. The meeting will be from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Please review the agenda below, attend the meeting to express your views on the topics of interest, and, if you wish, provide written comments so that your views will be heard, and the final recommendations will reflect the consensus of the community.

A member from each of the other Long-Range Planning subcommittees of Governance, Development and Budget will attend the May 13 meeting, as will a member of the Security and Undergrounding Committees.

AGENDA

1. **Undergrounding.** We will gather information on the current state of this effort and explore the expense involved in undergrounding overhead wires and cables in future street renovations.

2. **Landscaping/Beautification.** We will gather information on the Town's current approach to landscaping and seek input on ways our approach could be improved, with associated costs.
3. **Pool.** We will gather information (including costs) and seek input on suggested improvements to the pool, including renovation of the second floor of the pool house and availability of the pool during more of the year.
4. **Town Hall.** We will gather information on staff space needs and the already drafted plans to renovate Town Hall, including cost estimates. We will also seek input on the policy allowing use of the Town Hall by non-residents for classes and events.
5. **Streets, Street Lights, Signs, Sidewalks.** We will gather information on ways the Town could change these facilities to improve safety, traffic flow and a sense of community.
6. **Catchall.** In addition to the above topics, we will consider any other facilities-related topic residents wish to raise.

2nd Somerset House on National Register

Earlier this month, the National Park Service entered the Brian Graham/Torie Clarke house at 4728 Dorset Avenue, on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the second Somerset house to win this distinction, the first being the Joe Lipscomb/Laura Will house next door at 4722 Dorset.

Development Subcommittee to Meet on May 20

By Howard Byron, Chairman, Subcommittee on Development of the LRPC

The Development Subcommittee of the Long-Range Planning Committee is holding an open meeting to discuss issues to be included in their report to the Town Council. Included will be topics raised by the committee, the focus groups conducted with Town residents and the survey sent to all citizens. You are invited to discuss these items and any additional ideas you may have. The meeting will run from 7:30 to 9:30 in the Town Hall, Monday, May 20. Some of the topics to be addressed are:

- Trees - Existing ordinances and enforcement
- Construction of new homes and renovation - Desirability of using experts to review drawings and to monitor compliance during construction
- Home based businesses - More or less restrictions
- Property value - Maintain or increase
- Historic areas - Increase awareness, add properties

- Traffic - Enable or impede, one-way streets
- Mansionization - Inhibit or allow
- Nearby development - Encourage, resist or abstain
- Undergrounding - Feasibility, cost sharing, impact on street lighting
- Sidewalks - Increase or leave as is
- Bussing - Encourage County to provide small busses for mass transit connection and local shopping

Rounded Rectangle: BRIEFING ON 2002

Residents Speak Up

Slavin Ready to Work

It was a pleasure again this year to meet so many Town residents during my door-to-door campaign for the Council. I learned a great deal and am ready to go to work on the issues of greatest concern.

I am glad so many residents were able to come to the polls on April 1.

I plan to continue to communicate with all of you on a regular basis during my term on the Council.

Jeffrey Slavin, Warwick

Place

Objects to 'Invasion of Privacy'

Since when does the Somerset *Town Journal* strive to compete with the National Enquirer? I was appalled by the invasion of privacy in the article "Three Residents Reported Income ..." in the March issue. There is absolutely no need for the residents to receive this information. I hope

the April *Journal* will include an apology to all the residents of Somerset for this most distasteful article.

Lucy Freeman, Dorset

Avenue

*Town Council members, Tom Carter and I were shocked by the projected 38 percent reduction in State income tax rebate this fiscal year compared with last year since this is by far our largest source of revenue. Tom and I called the Maryland Revenue Distribution office to be sure they had not miscalculated. They explained that the main reason for the drop was the sharply reduced income of three residents. I thought that residents deserved an explanation. **Of course, we do not know who the individuals are, and I probably should have stated this in last month's Town Journal.***

Walter Behr

Pinhole Leaks in Water Pipes: A Petition

The undersigned have petitioned the Town Council to adopt a resolution formally requesting the 16th District Delegation to the General Assembly to seek an adequately staffed and financed legislative oversight investigation -- including public hearings -- into

- (a) The causes of the pinhole leaks in copper water pipes that have plagued customers of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission;
- (b) The WSSC's responsibility, if any, for the problem;
- (c) Whether the WSSC has been fully forthcoming; and
- (d) What insurers knew and when they knew it, and the frequency of, and grounds for, cancellations of homeowners' policies after submission of damage claims.

An adaptation of the petition follows; the full text is at www.townofsomerset.com: click on "Petition on Pinhole Leaks."

Background

The problem has been thoroughly documented: (a) in six major Washington Post stories, the first on July 1, 2000, the last on April 20, 2002 - a copper-corrosion expert speculating: "WSSC customers may have gotten hit earlier and harder than those of the other utilities...another factor [that] may be in play [is] the agency's aggressive program...to clean and reline water mains with cement"; (b) at a County Council briefing and (c) in a survey of Somerset residents by Paige Whitley.

This is a real, real problem,” Montgomery County Council member Isiah Leggett acknowledged. “It's clearly not the homeowners' fault”, Councilman Derick Berlage told WSSC officials.

The WSSC says it made an “aggressive investigation” but “probably never will know the exact cause of pinhole leaks.” But consider these points, made at the briefing by the copper-pipe industry association's Northeast regional manager: the alloy in the pipe has been unchanged since 1936; all WSSC failures “are...from the inside out”; the WSSC-served area is “one of the worst...in my region” and the incidence far exceeds that in other area jurisdictions not served by the WSSC and in other densely populated regional cities. Kenwood Place alone spent \$260,000 to replace copper piping in 2000 and has set aside a repair-fund reserve of \$40,000 annually for the next 17 years, a condo spokesman told the briefing.

Independent Probe Needed

We need to get to the bottom of it,” Berlage said...But Leggett said, “We have no legal authority to suggest a solution,” the Council being “part of the WSSC.” Yet Town, County or State elected officials have not sought an independent probe.

Does the Commission's “aggressive investigation” merit confidence? Consider one signatory's experience: Her first pinhole leaks occurred in 1997. The WSSC advised her in 1998 to, and she did, install a \$500 device to reduce the water pressure. Leaks recurred. A WSSC rep then blamed the victim, alleging she'd allowed another metal to contact the copper. But there'd been no first-hand observation (the affected piping was invisible), and her plumber denied such contact.

After at least a dozen more leaks, she saved from two of them samples of punctured pipe for WSSC inspection. Told of this in January 2000, the WSSC promised a consultant to investigate and a report. Neither an investigator nor a report showed up. Was this the only case of the WSSC blaming and ignoring the victim? Of not following through? Was such conduct common?

Only a let-the-chips-fall-where-they-may independent investigation by the General Assembly can resolve this whole matter so as to allay citizens' concerns.

(Signed) Morton and Anita Mintz, Dorset Ave.; Caroline and Howard Cooper, Cumberland Ave.; Leonard and Roz Harris, Trent St.; David and Barbara Marblestone, Trent St.; Leonard and Joyce Reed, Dorset Ave.; Charles and Charlotte Perret, Falstone Ave.

September 11 Schoolchildren Still Need Support

For those neighbors who have visited and supported the Pack family car washes to benefit victims of Sept. 11, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks. As many of you have heard, my mom lives very close to Ground Zero in New York, and my sister's kids go to school just three and four blocks away. The car washes have been successful, both in raising money and our

community spirit. Our own children are proud to be able to help their cousins in NYC who were among those running from their classrooms when the North Tower fell.

Our current mission is to assist the PTA at my niece's public middle school, I.S. 89. These children watched as the second plane struck the South Tower and as desperate people jumped from the buildings. The children were enveloped in toxic dust and ash. While the school has been burdened with many unplanned expenses caused by the tragedy, the PTA has not been able to keep up their usual fund raising. After more than six months in a temporary school in a basement, the students are back at their old facility. More than a third of the families were displaced or lost their homes and many have lost their jobs. My niece's teacher lost her brother.

What we would like to do now, as we did in September, is interest a company, group or individual in matching the funds we take in so that we can send money directly to the PTA at this public school. (There are many school needs simply not covered by the funds that have been distributing disaster money.) After the shocking things these students have witnessed, it would be nice if someone could say, "Here, this is for your yearbook."

Thank you for any suggestions of a sponsor or any contributions you can offer.

Gina Pack and family, Surrey Street, 301-656-6055

Town Historic District on Web

By Lesley Anne Simmons

Did you know that Charles Wise, the Town's second Clerk-Treasurer, was paid \$2 per meeting for writing minutes, drafting letters for the Town, keeping the accounts and hosting meetings of the Town Council in his front parlor? Or that Salmonella poisoning was discovered by, and named after, one of the Town's earliest residents, Dr. Daniel Salmon? Or that two of the houses in our Town are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places? Or that when the beautiful clapboard houses with graceful front porches were built on Warwick Place in the early 20th century, some older residents felt that they "cheapened the neighborhood" because they were so small?

Inspired by the approaching Preservation Week, two neighbors have joined forces to launch a new section on the Town's Web site featuring these stories and more, in a virtual tour of the Town's historic properties.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight grass-roots preservation efforts around the country. It will be observed this year the week of May 12. It has grown into an annual celebration observed from small towns to big cities, with events ranging from tours, reenactments and rallies to black-tie balls and national competitions.

[Tour a Home Demolished 40 Years Ago](#)

Lesley Simmons has written architectural descriptions and histories and taken photographs, and Gayley Knight has used them to design a virtual tour of the Town's historic district. You can even take a virtual tour of a home that was torn down almost 40 years ago. The virtual tour complements the Town Web site's excellent history of Somerset prepared by Helen Jaszi.

Each year, Preservation Week highlights a different aspect of historic preservation. This year's theme, *Preserving the Spirit of Place*, is a celebration of America's diverse history and how historic preservation helps save the heritage. Somerset's virtual tour helps to preserve the spirit of our Town by bringing to life the stories of the homes and people who have lived in them over the last century or more.

The tour will be augmented with more house stories as time goes on, so visit the Web site often (at www.townofsomerset.com and click on Historic District & Tour). The histories are researched from public sources - the Town's histories written by Helen Jaszi and Dorothy O'Brien, published histories of the County and documents from the Maryland Historical Trust. Anyone wishing to contribute information about the history of their home for inclusion in the virtual tour should contact Lesley Simmons at 240-497-1876.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, May 6, 2002 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Administration of oath of office to Mayor by Clerk-Treasurer and to Councilmembers Peter Gubser and Jeffrey Slavin by Mayor – 7:30.
2. Election of Vice President of Council for one-year term – 7:35.
3. Agreement on special responsibilities of Council members – 7:40.
4. Approval of minutes of the April 1 regular meeting – 7:50.
5. Acceptance of financial report – 7:55.
6. Confirmation of Mayor's appointment of Harry Freeman to Audit Committee to fill vacancy caused by resignation of Rowland Roberts, who is moving from Somerset – 8:00.
7. Recommendation to Historic Preservation Commission and action on application by Laura Will and Joe Lipscomb for removal of four redbud trees and construction of a trellis at 4722 Dorset Avenue – 8:05.
8. Action on revised landscape plan for Rodd and Jodi Macklin, 4817 Dorset Avenue – 8:15.

9. Action on building permit application by Steven R. Mann, 5413 Surrey Street, to replace and enlarge his deck in the rear of the house – 8:25.
10. Mayor's report – 8:30.
11. Development/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:45.
12. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:55.
13. Public hearing on Mayor's proposed budget and property tax rates for FY-03 – 9:05.
14. Action on proposal by Connecting Links to manage existing Town Web site for annual fee of \$7,800 – 9:25.
15. Action on ordinance amending the Town Code to require permits for removing dead trees 4 inches or more in diameter measured 4 feet from the ground – 9:30.
16. Introduction of ordinance amending Town Code to restrict parking of recreational and commercial vehicles, trailers and boats on Town streets – 9:20.
17. Introduction of ordinance amending Town Code so that alleys are considered streets for purpose of granting fence permits – 9:45.
18. Introduction of ordinance to Town Code to require fence permit applicants to show their plans to adjoining neighbors – 9:50.
19. Action on the request by Swimming Pool Committee for \$2,500 to be used for miscellaneous expenditures, primarily social events and aerobics classes – 9:55.
20. Action on Memorandum of Understanding with County regarding emergency management – 10:05.
21. Action on request that the Town ask our General Assembly delegation to seek an investigation of pinhole leaks in water pipes and that we elicit support from other Montgomery County communities – 10:10.
22. Action on contract to paint rear of bathhouse, men's shower room, railing on east side of main pool and tennis courts fence for \$5,000 – 10:25.
23. Report by Mayor of emergency authorization of \$1,123 to repair Town pickup truck – 10:30.
24. Action on building permit application by Tim and Phyllis Alexander, 4607 Dorset Avenue, to change the front entrance of their house and construct two trellises – 10:35.
25. New business – 10:40.

Obituaries

Ira Kaye Dies at 86

Ira Kaye, who lived on Uppingham Street for 35 years, died of congestive heart failure on April 15 at Bethesda Naval Hospital. He was 86.

Ira was born in Jersey City and graduated from City College and the New York University School of Law. During World War II, he served in the Judge Advocate section of the Air Force and later in military government in Korea and Japan, retiring as a colonel.

Following military duty, he practiced law in Sumter, S.C. From 1963 until 1967, he served in the Peace Corps, as deputy director in Nepal and regional director in Bombay. Ira came to Washington in 1967 to work in the Office of Equal Opportunity and later as a rural transportation specialist in the Department of Agriculture. He retired in 1980.

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Ruth; sons, Allan and Jonnie; daughter, Emma Kaye Milden; four grandchildren; and a great-grandchild.

County Offers Home Improvement Class

The Montgomery County Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) is offering its popular and free “Spring Fix It Up” seminar on Saturday, May 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.

Homeowners will learn about home improvements, maintenance and selecting a home improvement contractor. Topics covered will include heating and air conditioning systems, roofs, decks, windows, lawn care and pest control. Speakers include experts from the Maryland Home Improvement Commission and the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

The class, which is limited to Montgomery County residents, is fee, but pre-registration is required. To register, call 240-777-3764.

For consumer information and advice, call 240-777-3636 or visit DCA's Website at hca.emontgomery.org/consumer.

Final Design for Somerset School

The rendering below by Muse Architects shows the final design for the new Somerset Elementary School. Construction documents are due in June, and demolition of the existing structure is still scheduled to begin in June of next year.

Warwick Place at its north end is shown below, with the front of the school facing it and the school bus loop in between. On the left is the media center at the end of the bus turnaround. The multi-purpose room is on the right, next to the existing play park.

Almost hidden on the north side is the gymnasium. Recently, however, the County suspended new gym construction at all elementary schools. Members of the principal's Design Advisory Committee are committed to waging an all-out effort next fall to have funding of the gym reinstated in the Fiscal Year 2004 Capital Improvement Program so that the Somerset School gym can be built with the rest of the structure.

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