

Planning Committee Submits Final Report;

Identified 50 Recommendations

On October 21, at a special Town meeting, the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) presented its final report to the Mayor, Council and residents. The report is available for reading in the Town office or on the Web site at <http://www.townofsomerset.com/lrpc/report.html> (for easy access by everyone, it is downloadable in several formats).

The LRPC mission was to strengthen and support municipal government through development of guidelines for Mayor and Council for maintenance, change and future growth within the Town of Somerset. To this end, we have identified 50 recommendations, prioritized them in tiers and included with each recommendation suggested ideas and possible Council actions that were discussed and generally agreed on by the LRPC.

Working together, residents from throughout the Town have volunteered hundreds of hours to focus on the future of the Town. The result represents a dedicated effort to anticipate issues which we can start to address now for the long-range benefit of all.

Committee Would Modify Monoculture Plan for Street Trees

This report identifies and ranks areas of concern. It recommends specific actions to address those concerns. It is now up to the Town Council to take up the challenge by proposing measures to implement the recommendations. The Town can then debate the merits of the proposals and use its democratic processes to act on them. The first three recommendations are:

1. To protect sections of the Town from losing their street trees, the Council should implement a tree replacement system to promote diversity of species on each street or block throughout the Town over the next 20 to 40 years.
2. The Council should authorize hiring a consultant, who
 - is an expert in Montgomery County residential building ordinances,
 - will assist in reviewing permit applications,
 - will undertake field inspections during construction,

- will time inspections in agreement with the homeowner,
- will be part or full time.

Additionally:

- inspections will be a condition of getting a permit,
- some or all costs of inspector to be borne by applicant for permit.

permit
consistent
process including County and Town Code interpretation, and
enforcement of our Town Code.]

3. The Council should authorize drafting an ordinance that would limit the size of new construction as a function of the width of the lot. The limits should be determined by a formula relating house size to side setback.

[The goal here is to find ways to allow personal expression while taking into account surrounding houses, streetscape and Town ambiance.]

The next tier of recommendations includes Town Hall renovation, elected official orientation within a short time after election and prior to any voting, and embracing, via resolution, the concept of undergrounding utility wires.

Somerset enjoys great prosperity and stability, anchored by a strong Mayor and Council, vibrant Townspeople and outstanding amenities. It is tempting to leave well enough alone. But nothing lasts forever. If we don't prepare now for the future, as it arrives we may lose the opportunities which we now have.

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

Kudos to Long-Range Planners

Council members and I are extremely grateful to the residents who each spent hundreds of hours over the past 15 months studying, listening, conferring and producing the comprehensive Long-Range Planning Committee Final Report.

Nat Finkelstein chaired the committee, and **Gayley Knight** served as vice-chair. Subcommittee leaders were: Budget - **Jeffrey Slavin**; Development - **Howard Byron**; Facilities - **Tom Eldridge**; and Governance - **David Lynn**. Other members were **Walt Auburn**, **Sue Besharov**, **Bridget Cowie**, **Kaz Fatoohi**, **Richard Furcolo**, **Marc Geoffrey**, **Bonnie Lewin**, **Rob McGarrah**, **Andrew Resnick**, **Lesley Simmons**, **Bill Spitzer**, and **Phyllis Wiesenfelder**.

The committee and the entire Town are indebted to **Ann Bisconti** for donating her time and expertise preparing and analyzing the survey sent to all adult residents.

Interested in Town Hall Remodeling?

Following presentation and discussion of the Long-Range Planning Committee Final Report at a special Town Council meeting on October 21, the Council took its first step toward implementation. The Council decided to act at the November 4 meeting to authorize a pro tem Town Hall Remodeling Committee.

If you are interested in serving, please submit your name and a brief statement of your qualifications to Tom Carter at the Town Hall by **Friday, November 22**.

Town Wins 4th Landscape Award

Somerset has won the top award in its category in the Keep Montgomery County Beautiful contest. Our entry was the Greystone/River Road entrance, and the category was for municipal street plantings in median strips, near traffic ramps and next to sidewalks.

I am extremely grateful to **Judy Bowles**, who prepared our application; **Judy Frankel** and **Corrie Morsey** for assisting with background information; and **Ruth Ephraim**, whose excellent photographs were an essential part of our application. Thanks, also, to Council member **Jeffrey Slavin**, who represented Somerset at an October 16 ceremony in the County Council Office Building in Rockville and received an 8" x 10" photograph of our entry, a fancy blue ribbon and a certificate. Awards are on display in the Town Hall conference room.

At the same ceremony, 16-year-old **Oren Hirsch** of Dorset Avenue won a first-place award in the County's companion photography contest, in the County at Work category. Oren received a \$250 check for his picture of a Ride-On bus, entitled "Gillig Phantom 5352-A."

Database for Major Disaster

Attention, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians and other professionals who might be of service in Somerset or the larger community in case of a major disaster!

We are establishing a database for possible use in time of emergency. If you would like to register, please call, e-mail or write Tom at the Town Hall.

Open Space in Friendship Heights Saved

The 10-lot Wohlfarth property in Friendship Heights is being purchased by Montgomery County, the Planning Board and Chevy Chase Village for \$5 million. It will be annexed by the Village and developed as a park, open to the public, after the occupant of the one house on the property vacates it.

It is located on Western Avenue next to the Friendship Heights Center.

Chevy Chase Village has agreed to reimburse the Planning Board for 25 percent of the purchase price, \$1,250,000, over the next nine years, using Program Open Space funding from the State of Maryland and Village tax revenue.

Names in the News

Congratulations to **Haley Proctor**, who has been selected as a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist based on results of a test taken last year. He is one of 16,000 students nationwide who will compete for 8,000 scholarships worth \$30 million.

Congratulations and thanks to **Nat Finkelstein**, who was recently elected vice president of Montgomery Municipal Cable, the station sponsored by the County's smaller municipalities, including Somerset.

Florence Gang will exhibit paintings at a solo show in Baltimore at Lucinda Gallery, 929 South Charles Street, from November 2 to 30. The opening reception is Sunday, November 3, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Lila Snow has resumed "The Art Scene" on Channel 16, Montgomery Municipal Cable, Monday evenings at 7 o'clock. She reviews films, visual art, theater and books.

My gratitude to **Barbara Marblestone** for organizing and supervising crowd control at the Town Hall so that flu shot administration could proceed smoothly, and thank you to the residents who assisted: **Barbara Behr, Jack Carroll, Lorraine Glixon, Diane and Sanford Kay, Etsu Masaoks, Jeffrey Slavin and Corrine Stevens.**

Let's Demonstrate Commitment to Needy

By Council member Jeffrey Slavin

On the weekend before Thanksgiving and in the spirit of the holiday season, our Town will once again demonstrate our commitment to those in need by sponsoring several projects at the Town Hall, **Saturday, November 23**, from 3 to 6.

Please join your neighbors of all ages to help make sandwiches and goody baskets for those less fortunate living in the vicinity. It will be easy and fun. The Town will provide sandwich ingredients --- all you need do is donate your time! This year our efforts will benefit the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place and the Gude Drive Men's Shelter.

We would also like to collect toiletries (such as those small products we pick up at hotels) and canned goods. And since there will be Thanksgiving celebrations the following week, baked items are encouraged. Assistance will be needed in delivery, too. Come by any time that afternoon and bring what you can.

Whether you can stay for several minutes or several hours, please consider taking part in this worthwhile effort! Bring your classmates, your Cub Scouts, team, your Brownies. Community service is a rewarding experience. If you have questions or want to sign up in advance, call me at 301-654-6767 or e-mail: jzslavin@aol.com. Sarah Morse of Dorset Avenue is also taking a leadership role on this project; she can be reached at 301-907-3298 or e-mail: momomorse@hotmail.com.

Pizza Party and Movie Night to Follow

Following everyone's participation in Community Service Day, the Town will say "thank you" by hosting a pizza and movie night starting at 6 sharp. This will be a great opportunity to continue the fellowship, break bread and enjoy a family oriented film. Please encourage your neighbors. If there are questions, call Sarah Morse at 301-907-3298.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Recycle Phone Books

Remember that your old telephone books can be placed in paper bags in your blue bins every Tuesday for recycling.

Leaf Pickup Underway

Vacuumping of leaves piled on the grass near the curb has begun and will continue into December. PLEASE DO NOT PUT LEAVES IN THE STREET. KINDLY INFORM YOUR LAWN SERVICE OF THIS REQUEST.

We also ask that you ensure the piles consist only of leaves – NO STICKS, STONES, BRICKS OR OTHER DENSE OR SHARP DEBRIS. These materials will damage the machinery blades.

We are following the same procedure as last year. Each morning the maintenance men survey the Town streets and start vacuuming where the biggest piles exist. They then move on to the next biggest piles, and so on. Through streets will still be done regularly to keep the traffic moving smoothly.

Residents who prefer to bag their leaves or dispose of them in a mulch pile in their yards are urged to do so. Leaves in PAPER BAGS or REUSABLE CONTAINERS will be picked up on TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS by our trash company, J&J Inc. Please place in front yards near the curb. Plastic bags may NOT be used. Leaf burning is prohibited because it would pollute the air and could spread out of control.

Town Maintenance Vehicles

Please use caution when driving behind the Town tractors and trucks. They are often moving very slowly as the men work alongside or in front of the vehicles. Kindly resist riding on their bumpers; give them some space and yourself room to see around them so you are sure it is safe to pass. At this time of year, the vehicles will often be stopped while picking up leaves. It is not feasible for them to move out of the way immediately. If they did, they would never finish their work. You might save time by using another street to go around them.

Directory Revision

If you are new to the community, if you wish to be included in the Town Directory for the first time, or if you wish to amend your family's entry, please complete and return the postcard enclosed with this *Town Journal* to the Town Hall at 4510 Cumberland Avenue **no later than November 27**. If you do not return this card, your name will appear as it does in the present directory. Here is your chance to add your e-mail addresses as well. Children may be listed, too. If you are new in Town and have not completed a similar form from your newcomer's packet, you must complete this card to be added to the 2003 version. Questions? Please call Tom at 301-657-3211.

2003 Calendars

2003 League of Women Voters calendars are still available at the Town Hall for \$5, or call Betty Palmer at 301-654-1115.

Permits Granted

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

Trees: Laura Long, 4914 Essex Avenue, to remove a diseased oak tree in her back yard.

Julie Greenberg and George Wyeth, 4717 Falstone Avenue, to remove two mulberry trees from their back yard.

Fence: Robert Merzi and Virginia Biggar, 4505 Cumberland Avenue, to erect a fence in their side yard.

Dumpster: Gayley and Paul Knight, 4808 Cumberland Avenue, to park a dumpster on the street, across from their home.

Legislation

At the October 7 meeting, the Council:

1. Decided to take no action to revise the Town's sign legislation.
2. Postponed action on an amendment to the Town Code to clarify the requirement for two authorized signatures on Town checks and to establish a procedure for review of bank statements by the Vice President of the Town Council pending a recommendation by our auditor.
3. Approved a Town Code amendment to impose a fee of 50 percent of the original permit fee for a six-month extension of building permits. (Vote: Frankel, Eldridge and Kessler for; Gubser and Slavin opposed.)
4. Dropped action on a proposed amendment to the Town Code to eliminate the requirement on tree removal applications for signatures of neighbors who cannot see the subject tree(s) from their property. (All opposed.)
5. Approved legislation to establish a formal Town History Committee composed of five members for three-year terms. (Initial appointments will be for staggered terms: two-year terms for two appointees and three-year terms for the other three members.)

Council Activity

At the October 7 regular meeting, the Council:

1. Heard the independent auditor's report for fiscal year 2002 presented by Jim Lindsey and Bob Diss of Lindsey & Salita.
2. Approved a building permit for Patty Friedman and Blair Levin, 4811 Grantham Avenue, to add to their kitchen in the front and add a screened porch to the rear of their house.
3. Approved a building permit for Kurt and Judy Shaffert, 5517 Uppingham Street, to extend their kitchen to the rear and build a deck behind it.
4. Heard a presentation by Gwen Wright, staff director, County Historic Preservation Commission, on HPC standards and procedures.
5. Heard an introduction of the Long-Range Planning Committee Report by Chairman Nat Finkelstein.
6. Agreed to establish rules for Town tent rental, to rent only to residents, to set a \$300 deposit regardless of the size of tent erected, and to charge no rental fee. The Mayor will draft an amendment to the Town Code and rules for the Council to consider at the next meeting.
7. Approved the purchase of a Green Machine street sweeper from Applied Sweepers, Inc. For \$21,000. (Vote: Eldridge, Frankel and Kessler for; Gubser and Slavin opposed.)
8. Heard a report by Jeffrey Slavin on the Maryland Municipal League's Fall Conference.

At the October 21 special meeting, the Town Council discussed the final report from the Long-Range Planning Committee.

Quarterly Brown Bag Lunch Scheduled

By Jeffrey Slavin

As promised, the Mayor and I have scheduled another Somerset "brown bag" lunch for residents interested in having open conversations about anything on their minds --- especially Town issues and concerns. This quarterly event is set for **Friday, November 22**, noon to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Last time the table was full and the conversation was extensive. We hope to see even more of you this time.

Bring a sandwich (cut in quarters), some munchies or a side dish, and a drink. We share our food so household specialties are encouraged.

For further information, call me at 301-654-6767.

Tennis Committee Announces Tournament

By Mark London, Tennis Committee Chairman

In case you haven't noticed, the Town boasts several first-rate tennis players, some of whom aren't even old enough to drive. In order to introduce some of these players to each other and to continue to focus interest on this great pool of talent, we are announcing the first annual Somerset Tennis Tournament, one flight for men and the other for women, without regard to age.

The winners' names will be inscribed on trophies to be housed in Town Hall. We obviously understand that we are reaching the end of the tennis season, but there will be some days that are playable, so we thought we'd announce the tournament, start it now and allow it to meander through the next several months, weather permitting. It will end when all the matches are played.

To enter, please notify me on or before **November 20**. I will arrange the pairings with a goal toward competitive matches in the early rounds, which is designed to encourage players of all abilities to participate. E-mail me at shark@londonandmead.com or drop me a note at 4801 Cumberland Avenue. I will notify the participants of their opponents and leave it to them to set their matches by a specified date. A pairings sheet will be posted at the tennis courts. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Matches will be two out of three sets.

Regulation of Group Lessons Proposed

Because of numerous complaints about integrated group lessons on adjoining courts, the committee recommends that there be only one group (more than two students) lesson permitted at any one time and that the lesson must utilize court 1 or 3. The resident reserving the court must specify "group lesson" in order to alert potential users. The only exception would be for the summer camp and children's lessons ending no later than 4 p.m. Action on this proposal is scheduled for 8:55 p.m. at the Town Council meeting on November 4.

Bethesda Fire Department Is Your Department

By Nat Finkelstein, Board member, Bethesda Fire Department

An issue has arisen in Somerset regarding which fire department is responsible for the Town. The Bethesda Fire Department, (BFD), with a station at the corner of Bradley Boulevard and Wisconsin Avenue, is the first due responder for all fire calls to the Town of Somerset. BFD also provides Somerset with emergency medical service as a first due responder.

The Bethesda Fire Department, however, does not have ambulance service. Therefore, any ambulance service needed in Town is provided by Glen Echo Fire Department or the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad.

This issue has arisen in the context of fund-raising. Members of a professional fund-raising organization for Glen Echo have been making representations to Town residents that Glen Echo is the first responder for Somerset. This is not true except for ambulance service. These professional fund-raisers get a percentage of all money that is raised. Both the Rescue Squad and BFD also fund-raise, but they do not use professional fund-raisers.

Recent budget cuts have necessitated that these entities raise funds. Please understand that this money is being used to give advanced fire and rescue service as well as purchase advanced fire and rescue equipment. The support of these organizations is important.

Barnes & Noble Will Host School Book Fair

By Dania Fitzgerald

We hope you can join us.

The holidays will be here before you know it, so start making your shopping list. Everyone in Somerset and beyond is invited to support the Somerset School Book Fair at Barnes & Noble on our fair days, Saturday, November 9th through Monday, November 11th. A family evening of entertainment is being planned for Veterans' Day, Monday, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. We will be featuring student author showcase, shared poetry readings, favorite book reviews and storytelling with Mother Goose. You won't want to miss it.

Over the past five years, Somerset PTA has transformed the school media center into our very own little bookstore filled with new books. Sadly, demand always outstripped our inventory. This year was time for something new! That's why we are moving to Barnes & Noble, Bethesda. Now all our eager readers, young and old, will have a whole bookstore, complete with professional staff, available to help satisfy their need to read.

The goal of the Book Fair Committee is to continue to provide the best quality in published material for our customers while earning the highest return for Somerset Elementary. Proceeds will help fund media center acquisitions that are directly responsive to the needs and interests of our students. With so much more to choose from this year, we hope to top \$15,000 in gross sales so that Somerset will receive a whopping 25 percent net. In order for full credit to be given to Somerset, items must be purchased with special Somerset vouchers, and a few restrictions will apply. Check the flyer enclosed in this issue of the *Town Journal* for details. See you at the fair and thanks for your support!

County Will Inspect Child Safety Seats

Montgomery County has opened a child safety seat inspection station in the Fire and Rescue Services' Community Services Building at 14111 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. All staff members are nationally certified child passenger technicians.

The facility is open by appointment from 7 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month. Call 240-777-3636 for an appointment.

Specialists will check car seats for proper installation and age/size appropriateness. They will also determine if the seats have been damaged or recalled. Three-quarters of seats checked in the County from February 2001 to March 2002 were used incorrectly. Since 1996, there have been 15 reported crashes in which children were saved from potential injury because they were in a car seat installed by a child passenger safety technician.

Some Libraries Open on Sundays

The Davis Library on Democracy Boulevard and seven other County public libraries are now open every Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. The phone number for Davis is 240-777-0922.

To help fill the gap caused by the ongoing renovation of the Bethesda Library on Arlington Road, the bookmobile will be open in the Bethesda Library parking lot every Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. You may borrow and return books and other materials and request that items be placed on reserve.

Remember: parking meters are in effect until 2 p.m.

Obituary

Linda Orfield Dies

Linda Orfield of Savage, Maryland, who lived on Essex Avenue most of her life, died on October 11 at Georgetown Hospital of complications from major surgery. She was 60.

A graduate of Brooklyn College, Linda earned a master's degree in education for the disabled. Most of her career was with the New York City Board of Education.

She is survived by a cousin, Priscilla Heep, 80 Wooster Street, New York, N.Y. 10012

Suggested recipients of contributions in her memory are organizations promoting animal welfare, the environment and music and the arts.

The *Town Journal* is the official publication of the Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.

Post Office address: 4510 Cumberland Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. It is edited by the Mayor.

MAYOR

CLERK-TREASURER

Walter J. Behr, 4809 Grantham Ave., 301-654-1258/654-0224 Tom Carter

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

TOWN HALL

Judy Frankel, Council V.P., 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875 Open 9 to 4:30

Tom Eldridge, 4806 Essex Ave., 301-656-3354 301-657-3211/Fax 301-657-2773

Peter Gubser, 4517 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-5137 Web site:
www.townofsomerset.com

Richard Kessler, 4914 Cumberland Ave. 301-654-2699 E-mail:
clerk@townofsomerset.com

Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Pl. 301-654-6767 TTY users call
Maryland Relay

Deadlines: Ads, November 13; Copy, November 15

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Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council, Monday, November 4, 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of the October 7 regular meeting and the October 21 special meeting â 7:30.
2. Acceptance of financial report for fiscal year to date â 7:35.

3. Confirmation of Mayor's appointments to Town History Committee. For three-year terms: Lesley Simmons, chair; Donna Harman; and Zola Schneider. For two-year terms: Helen Jaszi and Joan Weiss â 7:40.
4. Action on building permit application by Jim Gillis and Alison Hooker, 4814 Essex Avenue, to renovate their first floor and add a second story â 7:45.
5. Action on building permit application by Michael and Cindy Yuffee, 5529 Trent Street, to add a partial second story, expand the garage forward and replace the deck â 7:50.
6. Mayor's report â 7:55.
7. Development/plans in the vicinity of Somerset â 8:10.
8. Suggestions and questions from residents â 8:20.
9. Action on amendment to Town Code to clarify requirement for two authorized signatures on Town checks and to establish procedure for review of bank statements by the Vice President of the Town Council â 8:30.
10. Action on recommendation of Swimming Pool Committee to extend pool management contract for 2003 season with Bethesda Aquatics at \$57,368, which represents a three percent increase over the contract for the 2002 season â 8:35.
11. Action on revision to pool rules â 8:40.
12. Action on proposal by Tennis Committee to limit group lessons â 8:55.
13. Action on snow removal and sanding contract with Mulheron Tree Experts for 2002-2003 season â 9:05.
14. Action authorizing pro tem on Town Hall Renovation Committee â 9:10.
15. Action on whether to require Verizon, at their expense, to move the service box from the pole on Dorset Avenue near the northeast corner of Dorset and Warwick Place â 9:20.
16. Introduction of Town Code amendment on policy and rates for rental of Town tent by residents and discussion of rules for rental â 9:35.
17. Action on application by Gayley and Paul Knight, 4808 Cumberland Avenue, to remove five trees in their front yard â 9:50
18. New business â 10:00.