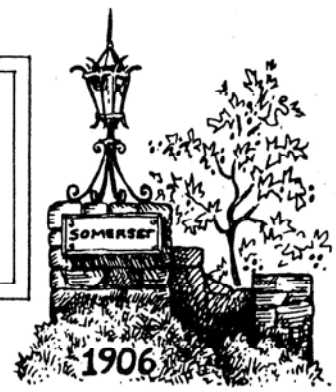




SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 51, No.2

August 23, 2006

1906 – 2006 Celebrating One Hundred Years A Town

In This Issue:

Calendar	1
Mayor's Den	1-4
Volunteer Opportunities.....	4-5
Town Hall Tid Bits	5
Permits Granted	6
Council Activity.....	6
On My Mind	7
Flood Insurance.....	7
New Residents' Welcoming Party	8
Brown Bag Lunch.....	9
Somerset Life	
All About People	9
Classifieds.....	10
Town Council Meeting Agenda.....	11
Inserts	
Welcome Party Flyer	
Yoga Flyer	

Calendar

Wednesday, August 30

Westbard Area Development Forum

Tuesday, September 5

Town Council Meeting

Sunday, September 10

New Residents' Welcoming Party

Monday, September 25

MVA Mobile Office at Friendship Heights

Friday, September 29

Brown Bag Lunch

Saturday, October 7

Heritage Fair at the Leland Community Center

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to www.townofsomerset.com and click on "Calendar"

Mayor's Den

By Walter Behr

Sprucing Up Somerset

The latest improvement in the Somerset streetscape is, of course, the curb repairs, milling, and repaving of Essex and parts of Warwick and Dorset. This work should be completed by Labor Day, but beautification is not limited to these three streets.

Have you noticed the fire hydrants, Postal Service mailboxes and storm drain inlets? At our request, WSSC painted all fire hydrants, and the Postal Service painted or replaced faded and disfigured mailboxes. Our Town maintenance men get credit for painting the soiled and partially rusted steel-edges of all 55 of Somerset's storm drain inlets.

Improvements have not been limited to the streets. If you are a tennis player, you have experienced the conversion of the tired-looking green and brown surface to vibrant blue and light green (just like the U.S. Open championship courts).

Superficial Solution to a Nagging Problem

More than a year ago, stormwater jumping the Wisconsin Avenue curb caused serious damage to landscaping in Capello Park, which is between Cumberland and Dorset Avenues. After numerous conversations about the problem with State Highway Administration (SHA) officials, they have contracted for improvements that should prevent a recurrence.

Early next month, the contractor will install a curb on the park side of the Wisconsin Avenue sidewalk south of Cumberland to prevent water that washes over the sidewalk from getting into the park. Also, a new inlet will be built at the downhill end of the new curb to collect the water and divert it into the existing inlet in the street. Finally, the project will include replacing 80 feet of sidewalk in that stretch, some of which was severely cracked by the flooding.

Cause of Problem Discovered Year Ago

More than a year ago we observed that the first Wisconsin Avenue storm drain inlet north of Cumberland was not working. Water gushing down Wisconsin simply bypassed - and continues to bypass - the inlet at Drummond. SHA televised the outflow pipe, which goes under Wisconsin Avenue into Chevy Chase Club property. They discovered that the pipe had been cemented closed.

Ever since, SHA and the Club have been talking intermittently about how to dispose of the water - after the concrete is removed. The goal is to find a solution that will do minimum damage to the golf course at the lowest possible price.

State Highway and Club officials will meet after Labor Day to discuss two concept solutions designed by SHA engineers. It is safe to say that the underlying problem, i.e., the concrete at the end of the pipe, will not be eliminated for many months. In the meantime, the new curb and inlet should prevent another untoward incident in our park.

If Electric Service Fails --

So far this storm season we have been very fortunate since we have not suffered any electric power failures. However, in case our luck changes, the following information from Pepco - in question and answer form - should be very useful.

Why do I have to report my outage on an automated line?

Our automated system is designed to speed the restoration process by automatically feeding your outage information into our computer system so crews can be assigned. It takes and analyzes the information more quickly than a person and handles up to 100,000 calls an hour, which reduces busy signals and hold times.

The system works by matching your phone number to your account, so it's important we have your current phone number on file. If you report your outage from another number, you will be asked to provide your address or account number. You can update your phone number at any time by calling 202-835-1007.

Why does power restoration sometimes take so long?

When many trees and poles are down, repairs take longer because we must first survey the damage to determine the number of crews and type of equipment needed, and make the area safe from downed power lines.

Next, we clear debris and damaged equipment so that crews and replacement materials can get into the area. Broken poles must be removed and replaced, a process that can take up to an entire day.

Sometimes, broken poles and downed spans of wire are in locations that are not accessible by bucket truck. These repairs take longer, and require our crews to climb each pole to replace the equipment and power lines.

Also, as crews work, they may uncover additional problems that extend the restoration time.

Everyone in my neighborhood has power back but me. Why?

If power has been restored in your neighborhood but not to your home, you should call 1-877-PEPCO-62 and report the outage again. There could be a separate problem in the neighborhood or even at your individual service connection.

When can I get an estimated restoration time?

Generally, we will have estimated restoration times once crews complete damage assessment. As soon as the storm passes, our damage assessment crews begin determining the extent of the damage so we can prioritize the work.

In many cases, we need to remove trees and debris to get access to damaged equipment and determine what needs to be fixed. This can sometimes take several hours or, following a large storm, up to a day after the storm passes.

Why do estimated restoration times sometimes change?

Sometimes, when crews are making repairs they will uncover additional problems that require more time to fix. Or, a new problem can occur elsewhere; this is often the case when we have a lengthy period of bad weather because trees are weakened and may continue falling some time after the initial storm has passed.

Why does Pepco call to ask if my service is restored?

In most cases the repair of a major feeder line will restore power to all of the customers served by that feeder. But sometimes, a separate problem elsewhere will prevent restoration of your service.

We won't necessarily know about this separate problem unless we find out that there are still outages in that area, and we want to resolve this while the crew is still nearby. So we may call a sample of the customers who are served by the restored feeder to make sure their power has been restored.

New Giant to Open in September

Following is a rundown of the status of construction projects in Friendship Heights:

Chevy Chase Land Company. Most stores are open. Wisconsin Circle has been reopened and it is anticipated that Giant will open shortly after Labor Day. Potomac Pizza and Giffords Ice Cream are open. Three new restaurants will open at various times after Labor Day: Famosa (white tablecloth Italian), M Café and Sushi Ko (have a location in Georgetown). Parking is \$5.00 an hour but with validation this is greatly reduced. There are also 20-minute kiss-and-ride locations on site.

Bloomingtondale's. The new Bloomingtondale's store located at Western Avenue and Friendship Boulevard should open next spring. Two miscellaneous retail areas are under construction behind Bloomingtondale's; stores there should also open next spring.

Hechts. The Hechts store will shut down by Labor Day. Demolition of the parking lot should start soon and demolition of Hechts should start in January. Excavation of the site will begin in early 2007.

Metro Entrance in Front of Hechts. The Metro entrance in front of Hechts will be closed during demolition. Residents may access Metro on the other side of Wisconsin Avenue.

New Construction on Hechts Site. Once excavation is completed and concrete is poured for the several floors of underground parking, construction will begin on the Recreation Center, located next to Bloomingdale's along Friendship Boulevard. (It will be 24,000 square feet, about the size of the Leland Center.) At the corner of Friendship Boulevard and Willard Avenue, a 15-story apartment building will be constructed. Behind the new apartment building and along Willard Avenue, a 12-story office building will be built. Additional miscellaneous retail will also be constructed on the site, including a Whole Foods. These buildings should open in late 2008.

New Restaurant in JBG Building. A new restaurant has opened in the JBG office building at 4445 Willard Avenue. It is called Lia's.

Volunteer Opportunities

Applicants sought for Nominating Committee for Board of Trustees of Montgomery College Deadline 5:00 p.m., August 31, 2006. County residents who are registered voters and have knowledge of and interest in meeting higher education needs of the county, and who have demonstrated an active interest in civic affairs may apply.

Applicants should send a letter expressing interest, including a resume listing professional and civic experience, addressed to Council President George L. Leventhal, County Council Office, Stella B. Werner Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850. For further information or a copy of the press release please call 240-777-7900.

Applicants sought for Board of Appeals Deadline 5:00 p.m., September 18, 2006. The County Council is seeking applicants for a four-year term on the County Board of Appeals. This position can be filled by a Republican or a voter who declines to affiliate with a party, or is a member of another party officially recognized by the Board of Elections. Members of the Board receive \$14,330 annually, with the Chairman receiving \$20,515. Letters expressing interest, including a resume listing professional and civic experience, addressed to Council President George L. Leventhal, County Council Office, Stella B. Werner Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850. For further information on the duties of the Board of Appeals or a copy of the press release call 240-777-7900.

County Holds September Training Classes for Citizens Interested in Becoming Community Safety Advocates

Montgomery County is opening up a new training class in September for residents who are interested in serving as front-line emergency response assistants during large emergencies. The training program will certify participants -- who attend all seven classes -- to be community emergency response team (CERT) members.

The classes will be held on September 6 from 7 – 8:30 p.m.; September 12, 14, 19, and 21 from 7 – 9:30 p.m.; and September 16 and 23 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Montgomery County Public Service Training Academy, located at 9710 Great Seneca Highway in Rockville. CERT participants will learn to:

- Prepare for the hazards that threaten their communities.
- Apply safety principles.
- Locate and turn off utilities.
- Extinguish small fires.
- Identify hazardous materials situations.
- Triage and treat victims.
- Set up a medical treatment area.
- Understand the psychological impact of a disaster on themselves and others.
- Apply response skills in a disaster simulation.
- Serve as Community Safety Advocates for the department in the area of emergency preparedness.

Space is limited and participants must be at least 18 years old

The class is free and participants will be provided with protective equipment such as a hard hat, vest, goggles/eye protection; work gloves, and a flashlight.

For more information, call Battalion Chief Brian S. Geraci at the County's Homeland Security Department at 240-777-2202, or email him at brian.geraci@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Back to School Classic 8 KM Race

Don't forget the 8-kilometer race through the streets of Somerset sponsored by the Somerset Elementary School PTA on Sunday, October 15. The intersections of Dorset and Cumberland Avenues with Wisconsin Avenue and Greystone Street with River Road will be closed from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Runners can register on line at runwashington.com.

Town Trees and Grounds

Don't forget to help us by watering the Town trees in your yards when no rain has fallen in several days.

Recycle Bins

Please be sure you wash out your blue recycle bins occasionally. If they are not relatively clean, our trash haulers can refuse to pick them up.

Recycles

Newspapers and flattened cardboard no larger than 3' x 3' x 6" should be placed in paper bags or bundles. Magazines, mixed paper and telephone books should be placed in paper bags. Paper products may be mixed. J&J will not take cardboard boxes that have not been flattened.

Remember that your yard refuse containers must be marked to indicate they contain yard refuse. Tom has a few of these stickers at Town Hall or you may call 240-777-6400 and request some from the County.

MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on Monday, September 25, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Centennial Sales

We still have centennial t-shirts (\$10 ea.), mugs (\$8 ea.), stamps (\$13 per sheet) and books (\$20 ea.) for sale at the Town Hall. Unfortunately, we are out of large t-shirts, but these seem to run large, so a medium may fit you.

Permits Granted

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

Trees: Walter Nolte, 5613 Warwick Place, to remove a dying, strangled corkscrew willow in his front yard.

Marshall Laskey, 5611 Warwick Place, to remove a huge, diseased, partially dead red oak and smaller dead white oak, both in his back yard.

Curbs: James Mahoney, 4905 Cumberland Avenue, to replace his driveway apron

Council Activity

At the August 7 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Authorized the following transfers:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
\$2,000	GF Contingency	GF Misc./Engineer
\$3,000	GF Contingency	GF Tree Contract

2. Heard the Mayor's announcement of his emergency expenditure of \$1,499.89 for repairs to the shower in the ladies' room at pool.

3. Renewed Town membership in Montgomery Municipal Cable Television by contributing the entire franchise fee payment from the County, which is based on number of Somerset cable subscribers.

4. Approved a resolution authorizing the Somerset Elementary School PTA's request to close the River Road and Wisconsin Avenue entrances on October 15 from 7:45 to 9:30 a.m. for their annual 8-kilometer race.

5. Confirmed the appointment of Jeffrey Slavin to the Audit Committee.

6. Approved a building permit for Shelton and Rory Zuckerman, 4911 Cumberland Avenue, to add a small two-story addition behind the garage, subject to receipt of a County permit and Town permit fees and deposit.

7. Recommended approval to the Historic Preservation Commission of the plans by John Stewart, 4823 Dorset Avenue, to change his attached garage to a workshop without changing the footprint of the house.

8. Approved a building permit for Michael and Cindy Yuffee, 5524 Trent Street, to demolish the existing house and construct a two-story house with attached garage, subject to receipt of a County permit and the Town permit fee and deposit; a curb permit, subject to specifications conforming to those described by the architect at the meeting; and a tree removal permit, subject to receipt of the name and Maryland tree expert license number of his contractor.

9. Deferred a decision on a permit for an already-built retaining wall in Town parkland to prevent the collapse of swimming pool wall in the back yard of Fauzia Rashid, 4602 Dorset Avenue, permit to be revocable at any time without cause, pending her inquiries regarding insurance for the wall.

10. Approved a building permit for Christopher Lane and Cynthia Chambers, 5415 Uppingham Street, to enclose their carport, extend the kitchen, erect landscape walls in the front and widen the driveway, subject to receipt of a County permit, providing tree protection and receipt of Town building and wall permit fees, deposit and late fee.

11. Approved the removal of a dying red oak in Vinton Park between and behind 5503 and 5505 Uppingham Street.

12. Authorized up to \$25,000 to replace damaged curbs on Dorset, Essex and Warwick in advance of milling and repaving by WSSC's contractor.

13. Received only one bid for repair of the Town Hall foundation and deferred a decision pending the receipt of one or more additional bids.

14. Declined to discuss personnel and procedures for locating, monitoring and publicizing the speed indicator device approved for purchase at the July Town Council meeting until the full Council was present.



On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

There was some controversy in July when the Council approved the purchase of a new traffic control device. Many decisions that we make are unanimous but this one was a divided vote and the issue came up again at the August meeting, when it was apparent that not everyone is yet "on board".

As background, you may recall that the Council decided to discontinue paying for extra police monitoring of speeding and stop sign violations, and I had argued that use of this new device that Council member Kessler had proposed purchasing could help take up the slack. I feel that anything that we can do to remind people to obey the law will help ensure the safety of our residents, especially the children, and that tickets aren't the only means.

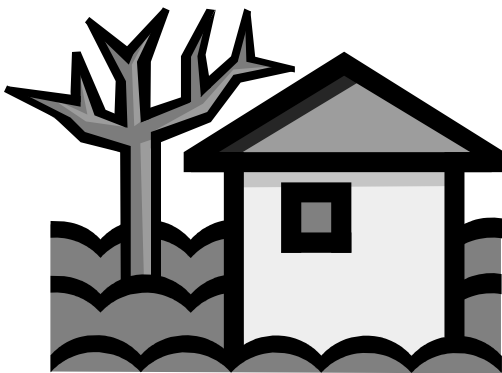
This month I had a personal experience that validated for me how much warning signs and reminders can be beneficial. One morning, I was going north on Wisconsin and turning left on Dorset into Town. There was a car in front of me and I was impatient, so I honked the horn several times. The driver didn't react to my honks, stood his ground and waited to turn when he felt it was safe. Upon arrival into Dorset, he made a quick stop, and I was still impatient so I drove around him.

Several days later I received an email from this driver, a Town resident, who had recognized my car and was expressing disappointment in my driving. I quickly thought about it and could only respond that I concurred with him, that I was in the wrong and that I was sorry. There was no excuse for what I had done.

The point of this story is that thanks to this resident's communication to me, I will be more cautious in the future, wherever I am driving. In the same manner, our new traffic control device will put people on notice instantaneously when they are breaking the law and hopefully force them to be more careful. I am anxious to see how well this works.

Full Flood Insurance Available in Month

By Council Member Judy Frankel



As previously reported in the *Town Journal*, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the Town of Somerset's application to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) on an emergency basis until September 29. After that date we will be eligible for the full program. Initial coverage would be \$35,000 building and \$10,000 contents, with an approximate premium of \$392. Full coverage after September 29 would be \$250,000 building and \$100,000 contents, with an approximate premium of \$352. There is a 30-day waiting period for the coverage to take effect and there will be deductibles.

The policy would be written by an authorized agent. Not all agents are able to do it. Since it is a federal program, everyone authorized to write a policy uses the same guidelines and appropriate premiums, which could vary according to particular circumstances. Following is a list of authorized agents in the area to whom I have spoken and who have been very helpful:

Clyde Gregory - ask for Robin: 301-650-9112

Reginald Minus - ask for Reginald: 202-722-0377

Mary Ripkin - ask for Mary: 1-410-760-4200

You can check with your personal agent, who might be able to help you.

The National Flood Insurance Program Call Center can be reached at 1-800-638-6620. I have reached FEMA on the Internet with key word "flood insurance" and at <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/>.

Another helpful office is that of John Joyce, Maryland Coordinator for the Federal Insurance Program at 1-410-537-3914. Please don't hesitate to call with any questions you may have. There is also some printed material at the Town office.

Your Presence is Requested at the Next Brown Bag Lunch--Friday, September 29

By Council member Jeffrey Slavin



Those "in the know" in Town never miss our quarterly Brown Bag lunch. This is an opportunity for anyone in Somerset to come interact with the Mayor and Council, make a new friend and enjoy a shared meal. The next lunch is scheduled for Friday, September 29 at the Town Hall. To be sure there will be a lively discussion and many will want to talk about the November election, among other things.

So, bring a sandwich or salad to share, some chips and a drink. We supply plates, napkins, glasses and ice. No RSVP is necessary but if you have questions, call me at 301-654-6767.

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. This issue edited by Lesley Simmons.

MAYOR

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

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Richard Kessler, Council V.P., 4914 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-2699
Tom Eldridge, 5605 Warwick Pl., 301-656-3354
Judy Frankel, 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875
Lesley Simmons, 4723 Cumberland Ave., 240-497-1876
Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Pl, 301-654-6767

CLERK-TREASURER

Tom Carter

TOWN HALL

Open 9 to 4:30
301-657-3211/Fax 301-657-2773
Web site: www.townofsomerset.com
E-mail: clerk@townofsomerset.com
TTY users call Maryland Relay

Deadlines: Ads, Copy

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes of the August 7 regular meeting – 7:30.
2. Action authorizing special trash pickup Friday, October 6 – 7:35.
3. Confirmation of Mayor's reappointment of Michelle Edson, Laura Levine and Laura Long and appointment of Mark Berry to Swimming Pool Committee for three-year terms and reappointment of Josh Bobeck as chair for another year – 7:40.
4. Confirmation of Mayor's reappointment of Len Harris and Birdie Pieczenik to the Security Committee and reappointment of Birdie as chair – 7:45.
5. Action on permit for already-built retaining wall in Town parkland to prevent collapse of swimming pool wall in back yard of Fauzia Rashid, 4602 Dorset Avenue, permit to be revocable at any time without cause – 7:50.
6. Recommendation to Historic Preservation Commission and fact finding hearing and action on Town building permit application by Michael and Abby Nolan, 5807 Surrey Street, to extend their kitchen to the rear – 7:55.
7. Fact finding hearing and action on Town building permit application by Mark Dutz, 5603 Warwick Place, to rebuild a one-story addition and deck at the rear of his house – 8:05.

8. ~~Action on second six-month extension of building permit for Andrew Bartley and Jill Herscot, 4909 Cumberland Avenue, to build a two-and-a-half story house with attached garage – 8:15.~~
9. Mayor's report – 8:20.
10. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:30.
11. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:40.
12. Action on bid to repair Town Hall foundation – 8:50.**
13. Introduction and discussion of draft amendments to Town Code Chapter 7, Utility Line Construction, and Chapter 11, Article I. Cable Communications – 9:05.
14. Discussion of personnel and procedure for locating, monitoring and publicizing speed indicator device – 9:35.
15. Action on proposal to fabricate and install signs indicating the location of the Town's historic district – 9:55.
16. New business – 10:00.
17. Adjournment – 10:05.

This is a preliminary agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two weeks prior to the next Town Council meeting. During this period there will likely be changes to the timing of items, and some items may be added or deleted. Please consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town web site for the most up-to-date agenda.

Items marked ** have related articles inside this issue of the Town Journal.