



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Council to Take Up Green Roof, Storm Water Management in May

By Tom Eldridge, Contract Officer



At the April 14, 2009 special Council Meeting, **McInturff Architects** and **Vika Engineering** presented the preliminary cost estimates for the bathhouse renovation, prepared with the assistance of professional cost estimators. Information on these estimates is posted on the Town website. The Council will take up and possibly make decisions about aspects of this project, including whether to put a green roof on the bathhouse, at its regular

meeting on May 4. All residents are welcome to attend.

The estimates presented at the April 14 meeting reflect costs of **\$2,582,266** to construct the schematic design developed by the architects since the contract began in January 2009, based on the **Facility Design Criteria** (FDC) (or program) approved by the Council in March 2008, and with input from several public Town Meetings held this year. The amount included in the budget in the FDC is **\$2.7 million**.

This estimate includes the construction costs to renovate the entire bathhouse, add a storm shelter, make it ADA compliant, move the baby pool, landscape the site, perform some storm water management, pay all soft costs such as architect and engineering fees, project management and testing, and also includes a 10 percent contingency and 2 percent escalation to bid cost (to estimate the cost when we plan to bid the project out for construction in Spring 2009).

The estimate does not include furnishings, a green roof on the bathhouse (estimated to cost **\$248,000**), and other further storm water management actions to reduce or eliminate runoff from the site into the creek.

At the meeting, residents and the Council asked for additional information on the feasibility of a green roof, and on the relative benefits in terms of the impact on the creek, from the green roof, and other possible options for reducing impervious surfaces both on the pool side and the parking lot side of the site.

Among the options for which residents and the Council requested additional information in addition to the green roof were:

- Removing some of the concrete pool deck near the picnic area

Calendar

Sunday, May 3

Community Sing-along

Monday, May 4

Town Council Meeting

Friday, May 15

Special Trash Pickup

Friday, May 22

Swim Team Sign-up

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 **Town Calendar**.

- Building up to four bio-retention facilities on the site to filter and slow storm water
- Moving the parking lot away from the creek to the west by ten feet
- Replacing the parking lot with pervious alternatives such as grasscrete

In order to adhere to the schedule agreed to as part of the contract with the architects, the Council will take up the question of the green roof at its regular meeting on May 4. The bathhouse has failed structurally and is shored up. The schedule for the bathhouse renovation calls for the project to begin construction in September 2010, at the close of the 2010 pool season.



On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Z. Slavin

Traffic Calming and the Legislative Process

Several years ago, a number of active citizens in Town began to raise their voices about serious problems with speeding and stop sign violations. These residents had a deep concern for public safety, especially for our children. Unfortunately, there was a realization that while commuters were guilty, often the violators were our own residents. We all knew that Somerset was unwilling and financially unable to hire enough police to write the number of necessary tickets. Something else needed to be done to calm traffic.

After many months of advocacy, study, an RFP process, consultant's report, three public forums, two elections where it was a major issue, numerous Journal articles, and literally thousands of emails and personal conversations, at the April 2009 meeting the Council, by a 4-1 vote, passed a new traffic calming policy that hopefully will result in alleviating the problems. I congratulate the Council for their diligence and hard work, and truly I believe that each member voted for the best interests of the Town.

We all know that when it comes to speed bumps and humps, there are a lot of emotions involved. The views of those who are adamantly opposed to these devices require respect. I think the Council is open-minded on the subject, and a review process has already been set up. If the new policies do not work well, I am certain that adjustments will be made in the future. This is a nice compromise.

A number of residents have written to me critical of the Council's decision, which is their right, but also critical of the process. There was a feeling that Council members had made up their minds before the night of the final vote. To this I respond that perhaps this means the process was successful. When the Council takes a final action, our Somerset tradition has always been to allow the public to actively engage in the discussion of the motion. The purpose this serves is to allow Council members the opportunity to hear from those who might not have weighed in in advance and/or to get new information.

But the Council is a legislative body and not a judicial one, and we want to encourage our decision-makers to take an extended period to formulate a position. To me, it does not serve any purpose to create a court-like setting at the time of a final vote where those members of the public who happen to have the time to attend that night "duke it out" with each other (and sometimes the Council) before the decision-makers act. This creates unnecessary conflict in a community and does not lead to good decision making.

When the Council members do their homework, study an issue, and listen to

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TTY users call Maryland Relay

Maxine Finkelstein, Editor

Deadline for ads and copy is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.

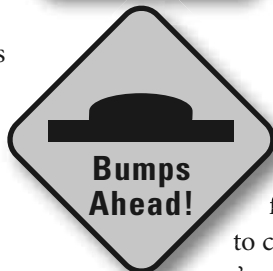
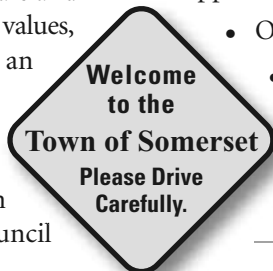
the residents in advance, there should not be a problem if they have made up their mind how to vote before the final debate on a policy or a code amendment. It is up to the citizens to share their views to all, whether at public hearings, by email or telephone calls, or letters to the Journal. It is the responsibility of the decision-makers to publicize proposed actions well in advance and as widely as possible. The process is not perfect, and like any democratic process, it will always be a work in progress. I know the Council and I appreciate any and all recommendations to make it better.

15 MPH Speed Limit

By Alan Proctor, Council member

As the Council has worked through the challenges of managing our streets and traffic to preserve the safe and calm streets our community values, I've become convinced that an additional strategy is to reduce the speed limit in town to 15 miles per hour. I plan to propose legislation to this effect at the May Council meeting. Here's why I think this makes sense:

- **Balance of interest between neighbors and drivers.** 15 MPH speed limit strikes a reasonable balance between the interests of neighbors (who have cars driving by their property and family, and want to protect both), and drivers (who are navigating their vehicles around and through town, and seek to do so efficiently).
- **Better for neighbors.** For neighbors, 15 MPH feels like a



Swimming Pool Rules

By Michelle Edson, Pool Committee Chair

The Pool Committee has recommended changes to the swimming pool rules to be voted on by the Council at the May meeting. The major change is with lap swimming. **Please read the proposed rules listed below regarding lap lanes and send your comments to the Council.**

- Lap swimmers, including children who have passed the deep water test, should and are expected to seek unoccupied lanes for swimming before seeking to share a lane. All lap swimmers should be willing to share their lane with a new lap swimmer.
- When a new swimmer wishes to enter a lane currently occupied by another swimmer he/she should first gain the other swimmers' attention, and by voice or gesture indicate his/her intent and show how he/she wishes to be accommodated, i.e., clock-wise rotation or dividing the lane in half with each swimmer staying in the indicated half lane. If this does not work, the new swimmer should seek the guard or pool manager's intervention.
- When all the lanes have two swimmers each, a new swimmer may seek to become a third swimmer in a lane. Lap lanes are meant to accommodate three or more swimmers, as they do at every pool; the goal is to find swimmers of the same "speed." When three or more join a lane, all shall swim counter-clockwise.
- At times when the lanes are especially crowded, lap swimmers should voluntarily restrict their continuous use of a lane to 30 minutes to give new swimmers opportunity to swim laps.
 - One lap lane must be available during swim team practice.
 - Closing of the diving well will be left to the discretion the pool manager on duty.
 - Pool kickboards and foot fins are reserved for lap swimming, swim team practice, and lessons.

calmer, friendlier, and safer speed for vehicles to drive past their homes and families.

- **Better for drivers.** For drivers, 15 MPH is a safer speed for vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, and others. We have narrow, congested streets that are frequently limited to just one lane, and the lower speed has little or no effect on the time it takes to drive from one place to another. All drivers face a series of stop signs that should cause cars to come to a complete stop and speed humps that are designed to require cars to slow to 15 mph so there is very little opportunity to drive more than 15 mph between humps and stop signs. Slow down a bit and enjoy where you are.
- **Safer actual speeds.** 15 MPH produces safer speed because some people invariably drive 5 to 10 MPH over the speed limit.
- **Improves compliance with stop signs.** 15 MPH speed limit facilitates and encourages compliance with stop signs because it's easier to come to a full stop at a stop sign if you're driving 15 MPH than if you're driving 20 MPH.

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2009 Swim Team

By Sarah Morse, Dorset Avenue

New, returning, and developmental swimmers: Somerset's swim team, **The Dolphins**, starts the season with a

Pizza Party and team sign-up Friday, May 22, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet the coaches, ask questions, sign-up for the team, and buy uniforms.

Pizza Parties, uniforms, coaches—you may be wondering just what the Somerset Swim Team is. The Somerset Dolphins is a member of the Montgomery County Swim League. The team has practices Monday through Friday in the morning (after school is finished for the year) and in the afternoon (from 4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.). There are meets every Saturday morning from June 20 to July 25. We have four Wednesday night meets, two big relay carnivals, and weekly social events like spaghetti dinner, laser tag, and the ever-popular breakfast with the coaches! On July 25, at the end of the season, we have a banquet with trophies, skits and swimming.

There are no try-outs for the team. All children ages 6 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.

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 kids can work them into their schedule.

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 3 days a week beginning after MCPS schools let out, and there is one mini meet. Mini swimmers are an important part of the swim team and should attend all the social events. A trophy is awarded at the end of season.

The swim team provides a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to meet their neighbors and strengthen community ties. Any questions? Please call **Sarah Morse, 301-907-3298**.



15 MPH Speed Limit *from page 3*

- **Reduces pollution.** 15 MPH speed limit reduces pollution. Studies show that gasoline engines pollute most when they are accelerating. With a 15 MPH speed limit, drivers can proceed without slowing between stop signs, since humps are designed for cars to pass over smoothly at 15 MPH. If you try to drive 20 MPH between stop signs, you find yourself constantly slowing for each speed hump and accelerating after you've passed over it, over and over again.
- **Reduces cut-throughs.** The lower 15 MPH speed limit, coupled with strict and effective enforcement, is likely to further deter cut-through traffic, which is a key objective and interest of the town.

Somerset Elementary School Kindergarten Registration and Orientation

If you have a child turning 5 by September 1, 2009, please contact the Somerset ES office now to be added to the kindergarten list so you can be placed on the schedule for registration and orientation.

Call **Somerset Elementary School, 301-657-4985**, Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Registration/orientation sessions for entering kindergarteners and parents will be scheduled by the school for either May 5th or May 6th, 2009. Your schedule and registration materials will be sent to you in the middle of April.

Somerset Dolphins—Save these Dates

Friday, May 23: Preseason Pizza party and registration, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 29: Practice Starts. Ages 11 and up: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; ages 10 and younger: 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 7: Time Trials, 8:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 12: Morning practice begin—All ages: 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 14: First Saturday Meet

Monday, June 16: Minis (developmental team) start: 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 18: First Wednesday Night meet

Check the calendar at the pool or on the team website, www.townofsomerset/swimteam for the complete list of swim season events.

Town Hall Tidbits | By Tom Carter, Clerk-Treasurer



Special Trash Pickup May 15

The Town Council has authorized a special trash collection Friday, May 15, at Town expense. Those wishing to participate need only notify Tom at Town Hall no later than May 13. This will be your reservation for the special collection service by our contractor, **J&J Inc.**

Once again, we are coordinating with the non-profit organization, A Wider Circle, to allow them to come through Town the night before to pick up any usable home items, such as dressers, tables and chairs, and mattresses that have no rips or stains—which they will distribute to local families in need. If you intend on putting anything of this nature out, please do so early on Thursday, May 14, as the truck for A Wider Circle will be going through Town between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. that evening. These items should also be separated from the regular pickup items for J&J. J&J will be running two trucks through Town: **one for metal and electronics** (computers, etc.), and **one for the remainder of the trash**. These items should also be separated from each other. Collection by J&J will start at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, so be sure to have your items out early that morning or the night before.



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, gutters/downspouts, or fence pieces under six feet long. Refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners must be emptied of Freon in order to be picked up. If items are in bundles, they must be light enough for two men to carry. 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; paint cans; flammable or hazardous liquids or solids; ammunition or explosives; large rocks; and dead animals.

Donations to A Wider Circle are tax deductible. More information, including a complete wish list of items their families request, may be found at their Web site <http://www.awidercircle.org/index-1.html>, or call 301-657-1010.

Street Sweeping

GroupCAM will begin sweeping Town streets in mid-to late May. A broadcast e-mail will be sent notifying residents of the exact date they will start. GroupCAM does not set a schedule and simply comes through several times until they can finish the job. Residents are asked to park their cars in their driveways during the week of sweeping. Houses where they have not been able to clean after that week will receive notices to move their cars.

Don't Dump, Donate Program

Montgomery County has a program to recycle usable 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 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazardous waste may be dropped off at **Silver Spring International Middle School**, 313 Wayne Avenue (at Dale Drive), in Silver Spring on Saturday, May 16, and at Westland Middle School, 5511 Massachusetts Avenue (west of Little Falls Parkway), on Saturday, June 13.

The following materials will be accepted between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.: pesticides, oil-based paint, brake fluid, fuels, herbicides, solvents, antifreeze, photographic chemicals, paint thinners, motor oil, auto batteries, and household batteries.

PLEASE NO LATEX PAINT:

Tens-of-thousands of tax-dollars are spent each year disposing of latex paint, which is not hazardous. In fact, latex paint can be safely dried up and put out for regular refuse collection. Simply remove the lid and place it in a safe, well ventilated area. Cans that are one-fourth or less full will dry in a few days. For cans with greater volume, add mulch, cat litter, shredded paper, or waste paint hardener available at area hardware stores.



For more information, call 240-777-6410 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/swstmpl.asp?url=/content/dep/solid_waste/collection_services/hw/hhw/index.asp

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.

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By Jeffrey Z. Slavin, Mayor

Important Reminder: The Council will take action on the proposed FY-10 Budget at the next meeting, May 4. The proposed property tax increase may be necessary in order to maintain the Council-approved schedules for renovating the bathhouse and the completion of street paving. Budget numbers are available on the Town website and in previous Journals. Please make your views known on this issue by calls, letters or emails.

It was energizing to swear in new Council members **Barbara Zeughauser** and **Bill Farley**, because I know these valuable citizens have a lot of experience and new ideas to bring to Town government, and I look forward to working with them. It was also a pleasure to welcome back Council Vice President **Marnie Shaul**, because she has established an enviable record in her first term in office. Realizing that the recent election was essentially uncontested, I am impressed that all three candidates spent the last month reaching out to voters by going door to door and standing out in the cold on election night for four hours to greet as many people as possible. Having conversed with so many residents recently will be of major help to them all, since the Council faces critical decisions in upcoming months, especially related to the budget and major expenditures.

Additional help was provided by Marnie and me on April 5 at a lengthy orientation meeting with the new members to talk about the nuts and bolts of serving on the Council. This orientation was specifically recommended some years ago in the Town's Long-Range Plan, and I believe is the first time it has been held.

Kudos to Council member **Cathy Pickar** for the incredible leadership she has shown in shepherding the new traffic calming plan through the political minefields in Town. And thanks to the unusually large number of residents who sent well written, thoughtful views to all the decision makers and the respectful manner in which Council members responded. It is good that the Council will hold off on consideration of closing the alley between the Village of Drummond and Town until our neighbor's council has a chance to make a recommendation.

All are aware that our large street paving project is almost complete, and we appreciate everyone's cooperation. In connection with this, the Staff, especially Code Enforcement Officer **Larry Plummer**, under the advice of our Town Attorney, have identified more than thirty driveway aprons that are in violation of the Code due to disrepair and will need to be replaced. As most of you know, the aprons are the financial responsibility of the individual homeowners, so I will be seeking guidance from the Council on how to proceed. We will need to come up with a time-limit policy, decide standards and oversight, and suggest means. With new roads in place, and given that a nice-looking streetscape is one of our goals, we must enforce our apron law. While we probably should have addressed this long ago, Larry assures me that the installation of new aprons, if done properly and with the correct advice, can have minimal impact on the new paving work.

The Maryland Municipal League's Ocean City Convention will take place again this year in late June, and Tom and I, along with several Council members, are planning to attend. The League provides vital assistance to the Town, and I urge anyone interested to become more familiar with the organization at www.mdmunicipal.org.

The April MML Chapter meeting took place at the Takoma Park Town Hall. It was a joint meeting with the Prince George's Chapter, and the topic was the **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission**. If you have been following the saga of this agency in the news, you are probably aware that there have been problems there between the two county's board members. The speaker was one of the top staffers at the WSSC and the ensuing discussion was lively.

Council Vice President Shaul and I visited recently with all the 4th graders at Somerset Elementary School to give them a quiz about municipalities in the State and about Somerset, and to urge them to enter the MML sponsored "**If I Were More, I Would . . .**" contest. The League selects one winner from each region, but this year our Town will select its own winner from 4th grade entrants at Somerset and any other schools. I will be asking several Council members to read all the essays and make a selection, and the winner will get recognition at several public events, as well as a police ride-along with one of Somerset's officers. Appropriately, the essay topic this year has a "**green**" theme. I want to put all of next year's 4th graders on notice now to get their study guides ready!

A Somerset Sing-Along: Mark Your Calendars

By Cathy Pickar, Council member

Please join neighbors around the piano on Sunday, May 3, 5:30 p.m. at the **Somerset Town Hall for a Sing-Along of songs from the American songbook.** We will supply lyrics and leaders; you bring yourselves and any sort of joyful noises you can make.



Forty-five minutes of singing will be followed with some social time and snacks. All ages are welcome.

Traditions hold special places in today's rapidly changing world; the best traditions are the living traditions that adapt to the times, yet respect and are informed by their history. The history of sing-alongs is a rich one. Can we start (or perhaps we're reviving?) a Somerset tradition? Who knows; let's give it a try.

Some ideas to jog your thinking: Perhaps you can still sing all the verses to "Maybelline," "Little Deuce Coupe" or "I'm a Woman"? It's time to show that off; you sing the verses, we'll sing the choruses. Or, some "Sunrise, Sunset," "All that Jazz," "C is for Cookie," a little call and response with "Swing Low" or "Let My People Go," "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," classics such as "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi" (only if the women get to sing "I'm a Woman"), "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else but Me," songs from other Broadway shows: Carousel, Oklahoma, South Pacific, Cabaret, The Music Man, Annie, Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, A Little Night Music, West Side Story, The Little Mermaid, Lion King.

Surely you or members of your family have some favorites; please send them to **Cathy Pickar** at cpickar@townofsomerset.com, 301-907-4881 or **Jeanette Kreiser** at jskreiser@yahoo.com, 301-907-4881.

Have houseguests? Bring them as well.

Town Hall Tidbits from page 5

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 danger 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.

MVA Mobile Office

There will be no MVA mobile office in Friendship Heights in May.

Permit Granted



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

Fences/Walls:

Dina and Marvin Levine, 5504 Trent Street, to erect a wood fence along either side of the front of their house.



Letters to the Editor

From Caroline and Howard Cooper, Cumberland Avenue

Dear Mayor Slavin

Please add our concerns regarding the substantial prospective expenditures for the bathhouse — both the amounts and the decision-making process—to those echoed by other Somerset residents in recent issues of the Journal.

It would seem that responsible government practice would/should require a referendum when non-emergency spending is being committed to the extent proposed with the consequent resident liability resulting. What limitations exist on the Council's expenditure authority? If there are none, or they are not adequate, the problem needs to be addressed immediately.

Response from Mayor Slavin

Dear Caroline and Howard – Thanks for writing.

The way our Charter is written, the referendum is only available when citizens petition to have a vote on an ordinance, and the budget ordinance is specifically excepted.

I believe that our Council is comprised of 5 fiscally responsible individuals who will be responsive to the interests/

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Letters to the Editor from page 7

requirements/demands of the Town's populace at the time the final design of the bathhouse is voted on and subsequent construction contracts. I think they all understand that we must have balanced budget, and there are many services that could not be cut.

Let me know if you need further information from me.

From Jack Frink, Cumberland Avenue

Our Council has a decision to make that has much greater impact to the environment than the pool renovations. Pepco has offered to upgrade outdated streetlights with HPS for "free," even though HPS is less environmentally friendly than LEDs, which are widely thought to become the dominant lighting technology in a few years. See URL for DOE reports below.

A layperson's look at MD utility tariffs: If we accept the Pepco offer and later convert to LEDs, we will have to reimburse them for the cost of the "free" HPS installation, removal of the HPS lamps, purchase and installation of LED lamps.

DOE has been conducting studies of LED streetlights: http://www.ledsmagazine.com/news/5/12/13;http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/ssl/gatewaydemos_results.html, that show the advantages of LEDs over HPS.

If we accept Pepco's offer we will be locked in for decades. I believe we should wait or apply to be a DOE demonstration project at <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/ssl/gatewaydemos.html>.

From Keith Robinson, Essex Avenue

I agree with Tom Ainora's and Harry Rand's letters to the editor in the March 20th Somerset Town Journal.

In light of the mayor's officially proposed tax increase, many of us are perplexed by the continued process of planning and spending of money we do not have for what appears to be minor upgrades and the addition of a storm shelter space. Why put the town's residents in debt for excesses we do not really need. Is the serving kitchen with food storage really necessary? Let's be fiscally responsible, by spending wisely and avoiding debt and a frivolous tax increase.

From Bill McPherrin, Essex Avenue

I am opposed to Mayor Slavin's proposed tax increase.

People have lost (or are at risk of losing) their jobs, many homeowners can't pay their mortgages; life savings have dwindled to near zero, and families are searching for ways to make ends meet. And somehow—incredibly—bathhouse renovations are critical to maintaining Somerset's infrastructure?

I hope the Council members will take a long and hard look at this proposed increase and vote against it.

Residents are invited to submit Letters to the Editor on any subject pertaining to the Town. Letters are subject to editing by the Editor. There is a limit of 150 words per letter. Any submissions are due by the Journal deadline of the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.



Letter from the Editor

By Maxine Finkelstein, Editor

Somerset residents frequently have questions regarding what goes into producing the **Somerset Town Journal** and what guidelines should be used. The rules and guidelines for the Journal have been developed from requirements of the Town Code (Section 2-402), and by consensus of the Mayor and other Town officials, with input from the editor.

The Mayor is the publisher of the Journal and I am the editor. Monthly input for the Journal comes from the Mayor, Town Clerk, members of the Town Council, Committee Chairs, and residents and employees of Somerset.

Articles by elected officials are limited to 500 words. Somerset residents who have information pertaining to the Town and its activities are welcome to submit an article of 250 words or less. If you have an opinion or issue that relates to the Town, Letters to the Editor are invited—these have a space limitation of 150 words.

Please send all input to the Journal directly to me by email at maxinea@comcast.net, in plain text or MSWord with no formatting, indentations, special fonts, or markings. The deadline for submission to the Journal is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m. I will send an acknowledgement for every article or letter I receive. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact me.

I hope you, as a Somerset resident, view the Journal as your paper, and will take advantage of it as your resource for both receiving and providing important information about our Town.



Security Report

By Birdie Pieczenik, Chairperson, Security Committee

Spring has sprung. Buds and blossoms are appearing on bushes and trees. But while daylight to enjoy those lasts longer into the evening, leaves will soon be covering

lampposts, creating shadows and darkness on sidewalks and streets. Please be careful walking and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

At midnight, while driving with my husband on Dorset Avenue, we came up behind a woman on a bicycle. **No helmet. No reflectors. No bright flashers of any sort. No way to see her!**

What foolhardiness! Just because we live in a lovely, pastoral neighborhood, we are not immune to things that go bump in the night.

Thanks to those of you who have already been contacted and have responded to your neighbor bearing an **Emergency Alert survey**. For those of you who haven't been contacted yet, do not feel deprived, there are still two more weeks to go.

Arbor Day Celebration

By Corrie Morsey, Chair, Parks and Natural Resources Committee

A few hardy souls joined Town arborist, **Barb Neal**, and maintenance foreman, Enrique Cabrera, for the hands-on demonstration of planting bare root trees. We all learned a great deal, including proper root and branch pruning, size of planting hole, soil preparation, planting depth, and proper watering techniques. At the same time, the Town benefited from the planting of four swamp oaks in the vicinity of the oxbow across from the pool bathhouse. The fortunate residents who had ordered trees were able to take them home to plant.



number of rides has already been provided during the first three months of 2009. Last-minute arrangements for dog-walking and meal preparation have also been provided when illness or injury struck suddenly. Several of the 30 volunteers have looked in on people who have recently come home from the hospital.

Your request need not be motivated by illness or disability. Helping Hands will consider any request in which a neighbor can be of service to another. It is not intended to provide services available through other resources, such as the **"Odd Job Helpers"** listed in the Town Journal. But if you're stumped, give us a call!

Asking for help is confidential and easy. Call **Zola Schneider, 301-654-7481**, zdi.schneider@verizon.net or **Barbara Zeughauser, 301-951-8560**, bzeug@comcast.net and tell Zola or Barbara what you need. An email describing the request (**you will not be identified**) is sent out to the Helping Hands network. Members reply to the email if they can meet the need willingly and effectively. One of the responders gets the assignment and is given the necessary details. Helpers accept no payment. They do their job and leave. If you should need further assistance, just call again.

Some of us find it difficult to ask for help, but the rewards of helping flow both ways. Helpers have found that getting to know a "stranger" from Somerset, in the brief amount of time it takes to perform some small service, can be delightful. For helpers without family nearby, Helping Hands provides an outlet for the impulse to be of service and to feel a closer connection to the immediate community.

As time goes by, we hope Helping Hands will enhance Somerset's sense of community. Helping Hands stands ready to assist—right now, and welcomes new volunteers.



Somerset Helping Hand

News from Somerset's Helping Hands

By Leslie Bascom, Grantham Avenue

Have you ever needed a lift to the Metro when your car was on the fritz, or someone to run a quick errand when you were housebound?

Somerset residents who have family nearby or who know their neighbors well have an advantage: they have a network of people on whom to rely when a sudden, unexpected need arises. Not all of us have that luxury. We may "know" our neighbors, but not well enough to call on them for help.

But there's a group we all can rely on: **Helping Hands!** Members of this informal neighborhood association are Somerset residents who stand ready to assist you whenever they can, in any way they can.

In 2008, Helping Hands provided about a dozen rides to medical appointments for Somerset residents who could not drive there themselves. Three times that

Team Up For Energy Audits

By Janet Lowenthal, Deal Place

Don't go through another winter with sky-high energy bills! Sign up now for an energy audit of your home and learn what you can do to reduce those bills.

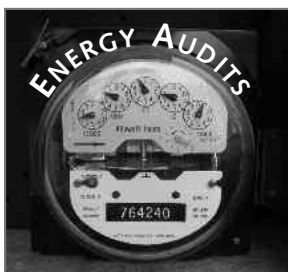
Energy audits range from \$300–400, depending on how many homeowners sign up per contractor—the more families, the greater the “bundled discount.” Over time, those up-front dollars can be recouped many times over if you make the recommended repairs, which will be done by contractors trained and certified by the **Maryland Energy Administration**.

In launching this effort, we are following in the footsteps of the Town of Chevy Chase, which has been extremely pleased with the contractors they used: **Michael Whelan, of Live Green**, and **Jim McKenna of Ardently Green**.

Recommended improvements typically include sealing air leaks, insulating attics and basements, weather-stripping windows and doors, installing efficient lighting, and upgrading appliances. Homeowners who undertake such repairs will be eligible for a Federal tax credit plus upcoming Pepco and Maryland energy efficiency incentives.

To sign up, please send me the following information at Janet.Jim@Verizon.net:

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- Home's square footage
- Year your home was built



Energy usage history from past year, in **KWH** (kilowatt hours) from Pepco, and in **Th** (therms) from Washington Gas. Pepco, **202-833-7500** will read you this information over the phone. Your gas usage over the past 12 months appears on your monthly gas bill.

Email or call me at **301-656-7666** for more information. We hope to select one or more contractors, negotiate a good price, and get started on the audits in the next several weeks

Council Activity

At the April 6 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Elected Marnie Shaul to a one-year term as Vice President of Council.
2. Approved the minutes of the March 2 regular meeting.
3. Approved the following traffic calming measures:
 - Install 9 new speeds humps and replace 5 current speed humps with 12 feet parabolic design and 3.5 inch rise, and the appropriate signage.
 - Install on a trial basis speed bumps at the intersections of Warwick and Dorset and Warwick and Essex, of a size that is appropriate for the intersections and our Town (1 1/2 inch) and to include passage room at either end that is large enough for bikes.
 - Appropriate signage to coincide with or precede installation.
 - Install stop signs on Greystone: two on Greystone at Surrey; two on Greystone at Grantham; and two at Greystone and Falstone.
 - Postpone decision on the Drummond/Warwick alley until the May meeting.

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- Redesign the curb at Falstone and Warwick to provide for a turning radius consistent with other intersections in Town.
 - Add rumble strips on Dorset to the approach in both directions at the intersection of Deal Place.
 - Add yellow standing pedestrian signs on a trial basis, like the one currently at Dorset and Warwick, at the Dorset/Deal, Dorset/Surrey and Dorset/Devon intersections.
 - Vote: Proctor, Pickar, Shaul and Zeughauser for; Farley opposed. Motion passed 4-1.
4. Approved a contract with Annandale Inc. to install thermoplastic pavement markings throughout Town at a cost of \$18,361.
 5. Approved the establishment of a monitoring program, as part of ongoing traffic calming, that will provide annual comparable data on speed and traffic counts.
 6. Heard the Mayor's presentation of the proposed budget and real and personal (business) property tax rates for FY-10.
 7. Extended the building permit issued to Matthew Zaft and Erin Chlopak for a new house and garage at 4820 Dorset Avenue for six months.
 8. Renewed our contract with Mother Geek Productions for managing the Town Web site for a monthly fee of \$375, to include monthly updates, weekly broadcast e-mails and a thorough review annually.
 9. Postponed action on the Swimming Pool Committee's recommendations for changes to the Pool Rules until the May meeting.
 10. Approved a contract with High Sierra to white coat the main pool for \$33,660.
 11. Approved a contract with High Sierra to install dual drain systems in the main and baby pools for \$10,100.
 12. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Derek Coen and Brian Graham to the Batting Cage Committee for two-year terms and reappointment of David Sapin as chair for one year.

At the April 14 special meeting, the Council:

1. Heard preliminary cost estimates for schematic design options at the pool bathhouse and parking lot.
2. Approved expenditure of up to \$5,600 for curb and ramp repairs at the northeast corner of Warwick Place and Dorset Avenue if recommended by one or more Council members at the April 16 meeting with the building inspector and street paving contractor.

Legislation

At the April 6 meeting, the Council:

1. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Code, Chapter 9, Section 9-101, Speed Limit, to reduce the speed limit in Town from 20 mph to 15 mph.
2. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Code, Chapter 9, Section 9-106, Stop Signs, to add the following Stop Signs:
 - Greystone Street: Northbound and Southbound at Surrey Street.
 - Greystone Street: Northbound and Southbound at Grantham Avenue.
 - Greystone Street: Northbound at the intersection of Falstone Avenue.
 - Falstone Avenue: Westbound at the intersection of Greystone Street.

At the April 14 special meeting, the Council:

1. Introduced legislation to install nine new speed humps and relocate five existing ones.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, May 4, 2009 – 7:30 p.m.

1. Presentation of Girl Scouts Bronze Cross for Lifesaving Award to Katherine Surko (5500 Uppingham Street) – 7:30 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes of the April 6 regular, and April 14 and 22 special meetings – 7:35 p.m. **
3. Discussion of financial report – 7:40 p.m.
4. Action on the following fund transfers for FY-09: – 7:45 p.m.

Amount	From	To
\$10,000	GF Contingency	GF Arborist
\$ 5,000	GF Contingency	GF Misc./Engineer

5. Agreement on special responsibilities of Council members – 7:50 p.m.
6. Suggestions and questions from residents – 7:55 p.m.
7. Action on ordinance adopting budget and real and personal (business) property tax rates for Fiscal Year 2010 – 8:00.
8. Action on Town Code amendment to add the following Stop Signs – 8:45 p.m.
 - Greystone Street: northbound and southbound at Surrey Street;
 - Northbound and Southbound at Grantham Avenue; and
 - Northbound at Falstone Avenue.
 - Falstone Avenue: westbound at Greystone Street.
9. Action on Town Code amendment to reduce speed limit in Town from 20 to 15 mph – 8:50 p.m.**
10. Action on offer by Pepco to replace mercury vapor street lights with high-pressure sodium bulbs at no cost to Town – 9:00 p.m.**
11. Recommendation for architect on whether to have a green roof on bathhouse – 9:20 p.m.**
12. Action on Swimming Pool Committee’s recommendations for changes to the Pool Rules – 9:35 p.m.
13. Fact-finding hearing and action on application with side setback waiver by Jack and Cecilia Benson, 4511 Dorset Avenue, to add a two-story addition to the west side and rear of their house – 9:50 p.m.
14. Action on one-season agreement between the Town and Camp Summerset for 2009 – 10:00 p.m.
15. Mayor’s report – 10:05 p.m.
16. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 10:10 p.m.
17. Adjournment – 10:15 p.m.



left to right: Council members Bill Farley, Barbara Zeughauser, Cathy Pickar, Vice President Marnie Shaul, Alan Proctor

“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.

Residents who wish to be present for a particular agenda item are advised to arrive 15 minutes ahead of the item’s scheduled discussion time as discussion sometimes run ahead of schedule.

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