



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Fall Brown Bag Lunch Set For Friday November 19

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

The Quarterly Brown Bag lunch for the fall season has been set for **Friday, November 19** from **Noon to 1:00 p.m.** at the Town Hall. As always, this is a great opportunity to chat with your elected officials and meet a neighbor or two. Given that the election will be over by then, there should be a lot to talk about! Please bring a covered dish or a sandwich to share. Soft drinks, ice, napkins, and utensils are provided. Any questions? Call me on **301-654-6767**. Bring a friend.



Removing Some Pool Decking to Increase Setback from the Stream.

- Started demolition of the existing wood deck and benches that are being removed to increase the setback of the pool facility from the stream
- Started installation of storm drain piping and utility structures

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Pool Project Update:



Pool Facility Renovation Starts

By Alan Proctor, Contract Officer and Council member



Construction Fencing and a Pedestrian Walkway Installed.

The pool facility renovation project has started and is moving into high gear to assure that we get foundation work and the roof of the new **Pool House** structure erected before winter weather sets in.

Over the past month, contractor **Therrien Waddell** has done the following:

- Installed safety fencing and pedestrian walkways around the site
- Completed demolition of portions of the old Pool House that are being replaced (existing roof timbers were removed and salvaged for constructing the new shade pavilion at the **East Terrace**)
- Installed sediment and erosion control measures around the site
- Completed root pruning and tree protection

Calendar

Monday, November 1

Council Meeting

Thursday, November 11

Town Hall Office Closed,
Veteran's Day

Friday, November 19

Brown Bag Lunch

Sunday, November 21

A Wider Circle Collection

Monday, November 22

MVA Mobile Office

Thursday, November 25

Town Hall Office Closed,
Thanksgiving Day

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**.



On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Committees Work

Earlier this month the Town Council passed a resolution declaring November as **Municipal Government Works Month**. Indeed, our Somerset government “works” and it “works” well, and is one of the major reasons why our Town is such a great place to live.

However, the Council, staff, and I could not accomplish all that we do without the recommendations, research, and actions from one important source: **our Town committees**.

At this time, our most active committees involve themselves with pool management, the environment, special events, and the annual audit, to name a few. The successful pool season this year, new trash contract, stellar financial reports, and friendly newcomers’ party could not have happened without the input from these bodies and the hard working leaders of each. Because of all they do, Somerset is able to save the expense of more staff or the ubiquitous consulting contracts that are so prevalent in other municipalities of our size in the State.

We do have many long time residents on our committees now, but the nice thing is that we don’t have a waiting period of any kind, and I am always prepared to appoint residents from the newcomer ranks. From what I could see at the welcoming party, each of our newest neighbors has brought talents from former communities.

In the coming months, the Council and I are going to be looking at reorganizing and empowering the influential **Parks and Natural Resources Committee**, which is so vital to a tree-loving Town like ours. The governing structure of the **Somerset Swim Team** is being reviewed and will be updated to ensure there are no exposed liabilities, that participation will increase, and leadership transition is facilitated. New volunteers will be needed.

So, whether you moved here recently or have lived here for a generation and not previously been active, I urge you to get in touch with me to see where you can be of help. More information about committees is available on our website.



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

Council to Review Weekly Garbage Pickup At December Council Meeting

By Marnie Shaul, Council member



The Council will be reconsidering **once-a-week garbage pickup** at the **December Council meeting**, and although that is a month away, I decided to write a brief article now to be sure that residents have sufficient time to contact Council members about their views.

Some history: at its April meeting, the Council approved a refuse and recycling contract with **Unity Disposal and Recycling, LLC**. Key components of the

contract were **single stream recycling** (all recyclables can go in one bin) and once-a-week pickup of residents' garbage and yard waste. Because of residents' concerns and varying Council views, the motion the Council approved was for once-a-week pickup of garbage for the first six months of the contract, with a decision on whether to continue once-a-week garbage pickup after six months.

A number of issues were raised at the time the Council voted, including preferences for service levels and costs—the additional pickup would cost about **\$20,000** per year. Other considerations were the environmental impact of additional trucks through Town with a second pickup and the potential for less garbage as a result of more material recycled because single stream bins encourage recycling.

Now that we have all had six months to experience how the once-a-week garbage pickup is working, I think we are in a good position to make an assessment. So, if you favor once or twice-a-week garbage pickup, please let Council members know. It's also helpful for us to know your reasons. You can reach us at Council@townofsomerset.com.

Cyber Security—Choosing A Good Password and Protecting It

By Birdie Pieczenik, Chairperson, Security Committee

Everyone reading this column has read news stories about **stolen credit card numbers** and **spreading email viruses**. Maybe you have been a victim yourself!

Most people use passwords that are based on personal information and are easy to remember. However, that also makes it easy for an attacker to guess or “**crack**” them. For example, a four-digit **PIN**: is yours a combination of the month, day, or year of your birthday or the last four digits of your social security number, your address or phone number? Think about how easy it is to find out this information. What about your email password? If it is a word found in the dictionary, it may be susceptible to “**dictionary**” attacks that attempt to guess passwords based on words in the dictionary.

This is the first of periodic articles that will contain tips for cyber security, preventing, detecting, and responding to personal computer attacks.

Tips for choosing your password:

1. Use a combination of numbers, special characters, and both upper and lower-case letters.

2. Do not use passwords based on personal information that can be easily accessed or guessed.
3. Longer passwords are more secure than shorter ones because there are more characters to guess
4. Consider using a phrase instead of a word, but avoid common phrases, famous quotations, and song lyrics.
5. Use unique words and phrases for each of your separate accounts. Develop a mnemonic for remembering complex passwords.

Tips for protecting your password:

1. **Do NOT** write it down and leave it in your desk, next to your computer, or taped to your computer.

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Your Library Needs You!



By Barbara Marblestone,
Trent Street

The Bethesda Chapter of The Friends of the Library needs assistance for their on-going used book sale. They need volunteers every day to process and organize donated books. This service benefits the library by adding donations either directly to the library collection or by using proceeds from sales to purchase additional books.

This is a great volunteer opportunity!

Scheduling is flexible, training is available at your convenience, you get first pick of the great books that come in, and you get free parking on your volunteer days. To sign up or for more information, please contact **Alixandra Sebrechts** at booksalevolunteers@gmail.com. We are looking for book lovers who can commit a couple of hours regularly each week or every two weeks, mornings or afternoons. Adults and students (at least 14 years of age) are welcome

In the next month, the contractor will be focused on the following:

- Completion of site demolition
- Excavation for the addition to the Pool House
- Installation of foundations for the expansion of the East terrace and new sun deck
- Installation of plumbing piping and deck drains

The Mayor and Town Council remain focused on assuring that the project



Pool House? What Pool House? Sometimes You Have to Move Backward to Move Forward.

continues according to plan, remaining on time and on budget. The whole project team holds

regular bi-monthly meetings to review the overall plan and to discuss details and other issues that may have arisen and not been resolved, and the Town Council has started holding occasional special meetings to provide a similar opportunity for the full Council and community to have an update with the project team.

As always, the contractor is working hard to assure that they and all of their employees and subcontractors abide by all of our construction guidelines, and to minimize noise and disturbance for the community. Should you have feedback or questions you would like to share on this or any other aspect of the project, please call the Town Hall. If you have questions, you may also want to check the project website where we will post answers to frequent questions. I am also available if you have questions or other feedback, as we make every effort to make this a well-run project that produces a great result for the Town.



Permits Granted



The Mayor issued the following permits during the past month. (The Town Council approves Building permits.)

Dumpster Permit

Makarand Dehejia, 5411 Surrey Street, permit to use a dumpster at their residence.

Tree Permits

Hedyeh Esfahanian-Behbehani requested removal of a dead 35.5-inch red oak tree, located at 4814 Falstone Avenue. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal. Applicant will plant a replacement canopy tree.

Narieman Nik requested the removal of a dead 36-inch pine and 10-inch unknown tree, located at 4718 Dorset Avenue. Town Arborist recommended both trees for removal.

Florence Gang requested the removal of a dead 20-inch red oak tree, located at 4901 Falstone Avenue. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal.

Joan Burka, requested the removal of a dead 12-inch flowering dogwood tree, located at 5401 Uppingham Street. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal. Applicant will replace dead tree with an ornamental tree.

Tim Ringland, requested the removal of a 10-inch mulberry tree, located at 4727 Essex Avenue. Tree was in poor condition and leaning towards the residence. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal.

New Street Trees to Be Planted

The following are trees and locations to be planted this fall.

Yoshino Cherry, Tree #376 located 4710 Falstone Avenue

Scarlet Oak, Tree #313 located at 4815 Essex Avenue and Tree #283, located at 4715 Essex Avenue.

Latest News From Town Hall

By Josh Russin, Clerk-Treasure



Office Schedule

Town Hall will be closed on **Thursday, November 11** in observance of **Veterans Day** and on **Thursday, November 25** in observance of **Thanksgiving**.

Town Trees and Grounds

Don't forget to help us when it has not rained in several days by watering the Town trees in your yard. We have lost many trees from lack of water during the previous years of drought and we do not want the current drought to claim additional trees.



Pool Invoices

Many residents have received the **second round of pool invoices**. These invoices included any unpaid pool expenses from the first billing cycle. If you receive more than one invoice per household, please send your check and invoices to Town Hall so we can credit your account correctly.

A Wider Circle Returns to Somerset

As many residents may have observed, **A Wider Circle**, a local non-profit, did not drive through Somerset the day before the bulk trash pickup earlier in the month. A Wider Circle will be hosting a collection drive on **Sunday, November 21** from **Noon until 2:00 p.m.** Donations to A Wider Circle are **tax deductible**. If you have larger items, the truck will be able to accommodate about five pickups at peoples' houses after the event between **2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** It would be best to



call in, **301-608-3504**, if you would like to request a pickup for that afternoon, or any other time you may have items to donate to help furnish the homes.

Included is the complete wish list of items their families' request:

- **Beds** (mattresses, box springs, & frames)—Almost every family that they serve needs beds. Please donate only those that are without rips or stains.
- **Dressers**—as with beds, almost every one of their families needs dressers.
- **Kitchen tables** and chairs—families prefer sets (single kitchen or dining room chairs rarely find homes).
- **Baby items**—strollers, highchairs, changing tables, cribs, car seats, infant and toddler clothing
- **End tables** and coffee tables
- **Sofas**—as long as they are in great shape
- **Televisions**—with remote, and color and cable-ready are best
- **Lamps**—with shade

- **Kitchen items**—sets of dishes, silverware, pots & pans, toasters and microwaves
- **Fans & Air Conditioning Units**—these often go into the homes of low-income seniors for whom they may be life saving. Please ensure that they are in good working order and are cleaned/dusted.
- **New cleaning products**—detergent, dish soap, household cleaners
- **Vacuum cleaners**—as long as they are models for which families can still buy the required bags
- **Towels**—all sizes are needed
- **Bedding**—comforters, blankets, and sheet sets
- **Plastic comforter bags**—with the zippers, to help keep the bedding clean
- **Rope**—our clients often need rope to tie items down for transport
- **Baskets**—the diameter of a basketball or larger, please.
- **“Healthy Basics”**—Healthy non-perishable foods and personal care items.

Additional information may be found at their Web site: <http://www.awidercircle.org/index-1.html> or call **301-657-1010**.



Leaf Collection

Vacuuming of leaves piled on the grass near the curb will start on **Monday, October 25**. The Town maintenance personnel will be picking up the leaves and the Town is determining a possible alternative location to store the leaves in lieu of the original storage site; the pool upper parking lot. Please do not put leaves in the street. If residents hire a lawn service company, please remind them of this request.

We also ask that you ensure the piles consist of leaves. Please do not include sticks, stones, bricks or other sharp

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Journal Preparation

By Maxine Finkelstein, Editor

If you have an announcement or article that is dated, please be sure to put it into the Journal enough in advance for it to be in residents' hands by the date of your event. The deadline for the Journal is the **15th** of the month, and it takes about a week to get it into the mail. Since we use bulk mailing, the **USPS** gives us a low priority and it can take an additional week to get into mailboxes.

Please use this information in your calculations as to when you need to submit articles so people are informed of the dates in time.

If you need information on how to submit an article, please consult the **Journal Guidelines** on the Town website, www.townofsomerset.com, or contact me.

Lastest News From Town Hall from page 5



debris because these items will damage the blades to the machinery. Residents who prefer to bag their leaves or dispose of them in a mulch pile in their yards can continue to do this.

Yard Refuse

Remember that your yard refuse containers must be marked to indicate they contain yard refuse. Josh has these stickers at Town Hall.

Calendars

2011 **League of Women Voter** calendars are now available at the Town Hall.

MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in **Friendship Heights** on **Monday, November 22** from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Town Directory

It is time for us to begin working on the **2011 Town Directory** and we know there are a lot of incorrect email addresses in the current directory. If you are new to Somerset or if you wish to amend your family's entry, please send us an email containing the information you wish to be included in your listing. You can use the format in the current directory as your guideline; otherwise, we suggest you consider including the following as applicable:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Children: _____

Address: _____

Tel #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: _____

Please provide the information in an email to clerk@townofsomerset.com no later than **November 24**, which will help ensure the accuracy of the listing.



By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

While Council member **Bill Farley** (Grantham) was not successful in his quest for a party nomination for a seat in the **Maryland General Assembly** last month, I was so impressed with the vigor of his campaign and the way he addressed issues. He garnered a lot of support in Somerset and the nearby areas, and he should be especially proud of that. Bill has a bright future in the State, and I wish him well. For now, I am glad he has re-directed his energy to the Council

and his chairmanship of the **Friendship Heights Transportation Management District Advisory Committee**.

Several residents who live near our elementary school have reported a high-pitched noise coming from the building's **HVAC system**, and we have been working with the principal to get the problem addressed. Others have expressed a concern about the light pollution, and we will be asking if anything can or should be done about it. All residents are encouraged to get in touch with me whenever issues like this arise.

Last month I wrote about the lighting on the path between **Warwick Place** and **Friendship Heights**. We have obtained the cooperation of the management of the building at **4615 North Park Avenue** and their lights that illuminate the path seem to be more regular now. We are currently working on a replacement for the lights on the **old Pool House**, and the solution should be in place within the next month. We will meet with officials from the **Village of Friendship Heights** in the near future to try to iron out an agreement to ensure safe passage on the trail when the snowstorms begin.

While the County's **Community Service Day** takes place in October, once again the Town will have its own event closer to the holidays. More information will be available in November.

The winner of the local "**If I Were Mayor, I Would**" essay contest went on the police ride-a-long recently with one of our officers and received his savings bond. Next year's contest has already been announced and the topic is available on the **Maryland Municipal League** (MML) website. I hope that all Town fourth graders, whether in public, private, or parochial schools, will be participating and in that way learning about the importance of our local governments.

Later this month I will be attending the **MML Fall Legislative Conference** in Annapolis where the League will be deciding what its legislative priorities are to be in the upcoming session of the Maryland General Assembly. There will also be a meeting of the **Maryland Mayors Association**. In December, the **Montgomery Chapter** will be hosting its annual legislative dinner where we invite our **Senators** and **Delegates** with the hope of influencing them. In the last two years, most of the League's effort has been made in ensuring that municipalities receive the revenues they need and are entitled to from the State. Given the tightened budget, the Council's efforts and mine to stay involved with the MML are well worth it.

Cyber Security from page 3

2. Don't tell anyone your password(s).
3. Watch out for attackers trying to trick you through phone calls or email messages requesting that you reveal your passwords or account information.
4. If your internet service provider (ISP) offers choices of authentication systems, look for ones that use Kerberos, challenge/response, or public key encryption rather than simple passwords.
5. Remember that programs that offer the option of "remembering" your password have varying degrees of security protecting that information.
6. Always remember to log out when you are using a public computer (at the library, an internet café, or even a shared computer at your office). Many programs use weak encryption to protect the information stored.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that these techniques will prevent an attacker from learning your password, but they will make it more difficult. It's the same idea as locking your car when you leave it unattended—which more of you seem to be doing these days.



Security Report

Several citations and tickets issued for parking in a no-parking site, parking in a fire lane, and violating the two-hour parking limit. Two abandoned vehicles were investigated.

More serious: an attempted daytime burglary in **Friendship Heights** (no additional information) and a daytime burglary of a residence on **Morgan Drive** (suspects seen by neighbor exiting a home—owners not there—through rear sliding glass doors with armful of electronics).

Somerset's Helping Hand—A Friendly and Convenient Neighborhood Service

By Barbara Marblestone, Trent Street

(Recently written up in *The Washington Post* and *BCC Gazette*)



Somerset's Helping Hand Service

Caring neighbors are abundant in the Town of Somerset, so you might wonder:

Why do we need **Helping Hand**, an intra-community outreach committee? Isn't it redundant? Not according to Helping Hand statistics. Since the group formed in 2007, committee members have served many residents, and the number of committed volunteers has grown to nearly 40. The committee's successes have validated the vision of neighbors organized to reach out to assist each other when, from time-to-time, their usual resources become temporarily insufficient.

For example, you are to be away for several days and you learn the person who usually checks for your mail and newspaper, waters the plants, and replaces the trash bin will be away. Or you are about to be discharged from the hospital/rehab center and will need a ride home, and someone to stay with you in case the pre-arranged home health aide is late arriving. You may wish to have particular food and sundries on hand and the thermostat reset. In addition, you would really welcome a neighbor's regular chat and check-in call until you are feeling stronger.

If you're feeling unsteady and a ceiling light fixture needs a new bulb or the comfortable shoes you need are stored high on a closet shelf? Maybe you can't drive to the hairdresser or barber and would like a ride. Or, you may need someone to pick up a new prescription for your sick child, your usual backup person is unavailable, and you would rather not uproot all your children and pack them into the car in order to pick up the prescription.

These are just a few examples of the neighborly services Somerset's Helping Hand has provided. Helping Hand continues to stand ready to assist residents. Think **HELPING HAND** when you have a short-term need and give us a chance to respond. Contact **Zola Schneider** at 301-654-7481 or zdi.schneider@verizon.net, or **Barbara Zeughouser** at 301-951-8560 or bzeug@comcast.net, daytime or evenings, preferably in advance of the time of need (although Helping Hand has handled urgent emergencies, too). Via a follow-up call, either Zola or Barbara will update you on the response underway. Caller names are kept confidential.

Whether you are stumped, overwhelmed, reluctant to impose on another's time, or just plain stubborn, do remember Somerset's Helping Hand is on call for assistance.

Think HELPING HAND When



You Have a Short-term Need!

Council Activity

At the October 4 regular Council meeting, the Town Council:

Revised September 29, 2010*

1. Approved the minutes of the September 7, 2010 regular meeting.
2. Discussed financial report and action on Corporate Resolution and Certificate of Incumbency from SunTrust Bank. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
3. Suggestions and questions from residents. None.
4. Update from Pepco regarding Service Reliability Plan.
5. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Walter Behr, 4809 Grantham Avenue, to install an emergency generator at the rear of the residence. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.*
6. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Babak Bagheri and Pouneh Razavi, 5610 Warwick Place, to demolish existing structure, construct new two-story house, approval of the removal of trees with implementation of tree protection and tree replacement plan, and approval of dumpster permit. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
7. Fact finding hearing and action on modification of building permit application by James Gibson, 5603 Surrey Street, to increase height of garage from the 10 feet in height and 5-foot side and rear setback previously approved to a height of 11.5 feet garage roof height and a 7-foot side and rear setback. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
8. Action on recommendation by Acting Town Arborist to remove dead cherry tree, Town Tree #376 located at 4710 Falstone, dead red oak and Town Tree #313 located at 4815 Essex Avenue. Both trees can be removed by Town staff. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
9. Action on outstanding tree bids to remove trees that were approved by Council at the July and August 2010 Council meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.
10. Action on three-year snow removal contract for calendar year 2010 to 2013. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
11. Action on contract to repair broken curbs. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
12. Action on resolution calling for the State of Maryland to reinstate Highway User Revenues (HUR) and State Aid for Police Protection. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
13. Action on resolution declaring November 2010 Municipal Government Works Month. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.**
14. Action on resolution supporting “Rebuilding Together Montgomery County” Fiscal Year 2011 Community Investment Tax Credit Program in support of Volunteer Home Repair Programs. No action was taken**
15. Update on Pool House renovation project.*
16. Mayor’s report.
17. Adjournment–10:10 p.m.

*Original item 5 was removed at the request of Town staff to continue developing an adequate request for proposal (RFP). Agenda Items 11 to 17, Council member Bill Farley was absent from the meeting.

**Indicates item was added to the agenda.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, November 1, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting of Town Council

1. Approval of minutes of the October 4, 2010 Regular Council Meeting–7:30 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes of the October 18, 2010 Special Council meeting–7:35 p.m.
3. Discussion of FY 10 annual audit by Bob Diss and Jim Lindsey of Lindsey and Associates and Town Audit Committee–7:40 p.m.
4. Discussion of financial report for fiscal year to date–8:00 p.m.
5. Update on Pool House renovation project–8:20 p.m.*
6. Suggestions and questions from residents–8:40 p.m.
7. Fact-finding hearing and action on building permit application by James and Dabney Goold, 5812 Surrey Street, to install new air conditioning and heating unit to replace existing broken unit–8:50 p.m.
8. Action on new pool management contract for Calendar Year (CY) 2011–9:00 p.m.
9. Mayor’s report–9:15 p.m.
10. Adjournment–9:20 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.