



# SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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## Pool Project Update:



## Pool facility Renovation Is Rolling!

By Alan Proctor, Contract Officer and Council Member



Construction of One of 3 Bio-Retention Facilities to Manage Storm Water Runoff.

The **pool facility renovation project** is picking up the pace as weather has improved and we're finally finished with foundation work and up, out of the ground. The building structure is now framed in and the roof is being applied, while framing for interior walls and other work is beginning. We had quite a show for a couple of days in **late February** when the roof trusses were delivered, assembled, and installed with a large crane. If you missed the scene in person, we have some pictures on the project website. Work has also started on the **three bio-retention facilities** that are being installed on the pool house and upper parking lot sites to capture and eliminate most of the stormwater runoff from the site.

**Stormwater** will be piped into these facilities where it is slowly absorbed into the ground and

filtered through the soil, instead of just rushing into the stream.

**The following work has been completed over the past month (mid-February through mid-March):**

- **Completion** of steel framing
- **Installation** of wood framing
- **Installation** of wood trusses and roofing
- **Mechanical/electrical/plumbing**
- **Rough-in** of interior partitions
- **Wiring** infrastructure for the entire building

**Please Note:** Due to inclement weather this winter and spring, there is a possibility our Town Swimming Pool will not open by Memorial Day Weekend. Council members are meeting with the contractor and our consultant at least twice a month to check progress. Because Memorial Day is rapidly approaching, we will keep residents updated through email blasts from the Town Hall.



Inward-look View of New Covered Pavilion Area.

- **Installation** of three new bio retention ponds begun
  - **Installation** of added floor drains
  - **Patching** of existing pool house slab
- The following work is planned for the coming month:**
- **Backfilling** basement wall addition
  - **Complete** installation of bio retention ponds

*continued on page 4*

## Calendar

### Monday, April 4

Council Meeting

### Tuesday, April 5

Election Day

### Friday and Saturday

April 8 and 9

SES Book Sale

### Sunday, April 10

Invasive Plant Dig

### Monday, April 25

MVA Mobile Office

### Tuesday, March 22

Voter Registration Deadline

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com) and click on Town Calendar.



# On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

## Town Budgeting Proceeds with Many Benefits

Earlier this month, as required annually in the **Town Charter**, I submitted a **Five-Year Fiscal Plan** to the Council. This plan reflects an analysis of the sources and uses of available funds in the upcoming years. It is used as a guideline for preparing yearly budgets. The contributions to this plan by Council and Staff are enormous.

At the next Council meeting, I will be introducing the proposed **Fiscal Year (FY) 11 budget**, which will be voted on in **May**. I am pleased to report that I am recommending no change in the **property tax rate**. This proved a little more difficult than expected because the income tax revenues we receive from the **State of Maryland** will not be as robust as previously anticipated.

During the process of developing this budget, the Council and I again this year held an intense work session where we reviewed the numbers line by line. We had convened such a meeting for the first time last year, and it has once again proven to be an excellent way for us to come to basic agreement on the figures in advance, thereby avoiding any unnecessary conflicts.

It all goes to show that our residents are getting great value for their tax dollars, because our engaged elected officials take our budget process seriously, and we all look for **cost savings** and **efficiencies** wherever possible. Our tax rate will continue to be **lower** than neighboring municipalities, and we will be able to deliver the core services like building inspection and tree protection to the greatest degree. In addition, our residents will be able to enjoy the many benefits of **free pool membership, low guest fees, outstanding tennis courts, low cost use of the Town Hall, and a spectacular new pool house.**

In such an overall bad economy, I am thankful we continue to be blessed with such a high quality of life in Somerset, while at the same time remaining financially responsible.



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



## Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Update

*The Mayor and Council convened a budget workshop in mid-March to discuss the FY 2012 budget.*

**Revenue Highlight:** The FY12 budget maintains the property tax rate at **8 cents**. Somerset predicts a property tax revenue growth rate of one percent.

This is based on the current assessable net real property base growth rate from FY11 to FY12, \$393,900 in property tax revenue. The budget projects an income tax revenue growth rate of **3 percent**, \$478,531 in income tax revenue. The Town anticipates a **25 percent** decline in County revenues distributed to Somerset for services provided by the Town that would otherwise be provided by the County.

**Operating Expense Highlights:** Personnel expenses will be lowered in FY12 based on a **salary savings** as a result of the retirement of the former Clerk-Treasurer, compared to the compensation provided to the current and any future Clerk-Treasurer. The budget includes a **one percent salary increase** for Town employees. The Town staff has created an accounting system that tracks Town expenses at a greater level and has improved the Town's ability to track specific expenses. Certain categories have seen minor increases due to the Town's increased ability to track expenses. Other categories have experienced decreases due to changes in vendor contracts and a need to cut back spending because of declining revenues.

**Capital Expense Highlights:** The FY12 Capital budget anticipates spending more than \$300,000 to repave the following Town streets identified as roads in need of repair: Deal Place, Devon Lane, Grantham Avenue, Greystone Street, Surrey Street, and Warwick Lane. This expense includes replacement of curbs and select sections of sidewalk along the streets (those that currently have sidewalks), milling, paving, and speed humps. The Town expects to make minor repairs to the Town Hall based on recommendations given to the Town during a recent energy audit.

**Combined Fund Balance Summary:** The combined fund balance shows a decline because of funds that were spent in Fiscal Year 2011 to pay for the **pool house renovation project**. The FY12 combined fund balance will also decrease as a result of low revenue growth and the cost of repaving six Town streets.



## Five-Year Plan Update

By Josh Russin, Clerk-Treasurer

The annual fiscal year budget process begins with the creation of a **Five-Year Fiscal Plan**. This Plan provides a blueprint for the Mayor and Council to help forecast future expenses and revenues of the community.

The Mayor's Five-Year Plan presented at the **March Town Council Meeting** was based on income tax revenue information provided by the **Maryland Comptroller's Office**. Previously, the Maryland Comptroller's Office informed Town staff that Somerset would receive \$376,486 in income tax payments in **Fiscal Year (FY)11**, which is substantially less than the \$500,000 the

Comptroller anticipated the Town would receive in FY11. The State Comptroller's Office informed Somerset on March 9, 2011 that they did not include income tax payments distributions to be made to the Town for the month of June 2011. The State anticipates Somerset will receive \$750 in March and \$90,000 in June 2011. As a result, the Town will receive a total income tax payment of \$467,236 for the Fiscal Year, a **4.1 percent decrease** from FY 2010. The **Montgomery County Treasury Division** informed Somerset that the County anticipates minor income tax revenue growth in FY12. Neither the Comptroller's Office nor the County's Treasury Division provided an income tax revenue forecast for the region. The Town predicts a modest three percent income tax revenue growth rate from FY12 through FY16.

The Mayor's Five-Year Plan operated with the assumption of this revenue decline and a drop in the Town's **Combined Fund Balance**. Because of the data the Town had at that time, the Plan originally outlined a **two-cent increase** in the property tax rate for next fiscal year. Based on the new income tax revenue information provided by the State, the Mayor's Five Year Plan maintains the existing eight-cent property tax rate for Fiscal Year 2012. The revised income tax data revenue is added into the Five Year Plan. The Five-Year Plan in **FY13** calls for a one-cent increase, coinciding with the original increase proposed in the Five Year Plan assembled last year. The Mayor's 2011 Plan calls for another one-cent increase in FY16. Again, the Five-Year Plan is a road map for the Mayor and Council to help assemble a budget and helps the Town's leaders determine future expenses and liabilities. The Plan is not a binding document because Town priorities may be adjusted, and the Town's revenue collections could change significantly depending on economic conditions.

- **Complete** installation of wood framing
- **Installation** of interior masonry partitions
- **Finalize** wiring infrastructure for the entire building
- **Installation** of siding and sheathing for interior and exterior partitions
- **Installation** of piers to support new railing at East Terrace
- **Installation** of steel columns and timber framing salvaged from existing pool house structure at the new shade pavilion
- **Installation** of new gas line service

For more information and pictures on the project, please see the project website linked from the Town website or directly accessible at <http://townof.somerset.proctors.us>.

## Security Committee Report

By Birdie Pieczenik, Chairperson, Security Committee

When economic times are tough, there is usually a **rise** in both **petty** and **serious crimes**. Somerset, however, has fared very well with no serious crime, but we can always do better.

As I walk around Town, I see many houses that have **exterior lights** on all night. Keeping lights on makes a big and important difference for dog walkers, strolling residents, residents left off at their house after an evening out, and for potential crimes of opportunity. Leaving lights on, all around your house, **ALL** night long, is probably the cheapest security measure you can invest in for both yourself and your neighbors.

During the day, **eyes on the street** and the use of common sense can go far in securing the safety of our kids and adults. Everyone in Town should consider it his or her civic duty to call **a neighbor, the Town office, or the police** if any activity by anyone seems suspicious.

As of this writing, I do not know anything more than you do about the rape and murder that took place in **Bethesda Row** during the first week in March, an area that is usually well populated. It should serve to remind us that our community antenna must stay up, and our actions as residents need to reflect concern for both our neighbors and ourselves.

During the month of February, several residents and non-residents were given citations and warnings about failing to stop at stop signs. Several citations were issued for parking in “**No Parking Fire Lanes**” or at “**No Parking Anytime**” signs.



### Security Committee Report



## Somerset Dolphins Swim Team!

By Ann Brown, Trent Court

Summer is around the corner, and that means it’s time to start thinking about **Swim Team**. Should your child join the **Somerset Dolphins**? Team members

(and parents) have had many very positive and enthusiastic responses to the Dolphin experience.

Whether you are new to the neighborhood, a returning swimmer, or someone who has just never tried swim team, we hope you will join the team this year and help continue the fun and success of our neighborhood swim team.

#### *Some important things to know:*

- **Pizza Party and team sign-up Friday, May 20** from **6:00 p.m.** to **8:00 p.m.** Meet the coaches, ask questions, sign up for the team, and buy swimsuits and goggles. Anyone who is interested in joining the team or just learning more is encouraged to attend.
- **Swim practice starts Tuesday, May 31.** The team has practices Monday through Friday mornings from **8:30 a.m.** to **10:00 a.m.** (after school is finished for the year) and afternoons (from **4:00 p.m.** to **5:00 p.m.** and **5:00 p.m.** to **6:00 p.m.**). Can’t make every practice? Don’t worry! Come as often as your schedule allows.
- **Swim meets are every Saturday morning** from **June 18** to **July 23**. We also have four **Wednesday night meets** and **two big relay carnivals**. Going to summer camp? Family vacation? That’s okay—swim when you are in Town!
- **The Minis**—a developmental program for **kids 4 to 7 years old** who are able to **swim 15 yards**. They practice three days a week for half an hour starting after **MCPS schools** let out. There is also one mini meet. Mini swimmers are an important part of the swim team and are encouraged to attend all team social events. They get a trophy at the end of season.
- **Weekly social events** include the **spaghetti dinner, laser tag, the ever-popular breakfast** with the coaches and more! 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 up to **age 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’s skills**.

We invite everyone to check it out. Please contact **Ann Brown, [abrown@annbrowncommunications.com](mailto:abrown@annbrowncommunications.com)**, or **301-633-4193** with any questions.

# Latest News From Town Hall

By Josh Russin, Clerk-Treasure



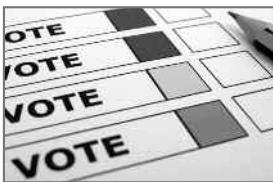
## Town Election 2011—Voters Have the Opportunity to Select Three Council Members

Town residents have an opportunity to exercise one of their civic duties by voting in the upcoming **Town Elections!** Election Day is **Tuesday, April 5**, from **5 p.m.–9:00 p.m.** for three Council members. At the Monday, March 7 Council

meeting, nominations for the incumbents and other candidates were accepted for the two-year terms. Current Council members **Bill Farley, Marnie Shaul,** and **Bill Farley** were nominated by Town residents to run for Town Council.

*The Town Charter requires its elected officials to be:*

- **Citizens** of the United States
- **Residents** of Somerset for at least 18 months preceding the election
- **Qualified** voters in the Town of Somerset and the State of Maryland



**Voter Registration** deadline is **Tuesday, March 22** (registration closes 14 days before Election Day).

Residents can register directly at the Town Hall **Monday through Friday** from **9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** or by mail by sending completed registration forms to **4510 Cumberland Avenue**. The Town has

registration forms at the Town Hall. Please contact the Town staff if you need a form mailed to you at [clerk@townofsomerset.com](mailto:clerk@townofsomerset.com) or at **301-657-3211**. If you are a registered voter in **Montgomery County**, you are eligible to vote in the Town.

*To be a qualified voter in Somerset, a resident must be:*

- **At least 18 years old** by April 5, 2011
- **A resident of Somerset** for 14 days preceding the election (in this case Tuesday, March 22)
- **A citizen of the United State** or an alien legally authorized to reside in the country
- **Registered to vote** in the Town of Somerset and/or Montgomery County.



## Special Trash Pick-Up

The Town of Somerset's special trash pickup service will take place on **Friday, May 13**. Residents do not need to notify the Town Hall about signing up for **bulk trash pick-up**. The Town's refuse and recycling contractor, **Unity Disposal** is providing this service.

**Bulk 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 (if the set is disassembled), bathtubs, sinks and toilets; iron pipes, down spouts or fence pieces** that are less than **six feet long**.

**Freon** found in refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners must be removed before they are picked up. Bundled items must be light enough for two people to carry.

*The following items will not be picked up:* car, boat and boat parts, trailers, batteries, tires, loose glass, firewood, tree stumps, tree limbs, lumber, paint cans, flammable or hazardous liquids or solids, ammunition, large rocks, or dead animals.

## 2011 User Fees

The Mayor and Council will set the **tennis court, batting cage,** and **swimming pool user fees** for the 2011 calendar year at the April Council meeting.

## Parking Along Town Streets

The Town would like to remind residents not to park **unregistered** vehicles or cars with **expired tags** on public streets. **Montgomery County Police** will be ticketing residents for this violation.



## Calendars

2011 League of Women Voters calendars are available at the Town Hall.

## MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in **Friendship Heights** on **Monday, April 25** from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**



## Town Recycling Rate is Climbing, with Room For Improvement

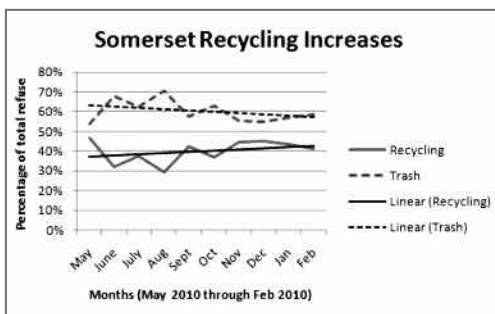
By George Wyeth, Falstone Avenue

Although there have been ups and downs, **recycling** in Somerset is substantial, and has been growing, according to statistics from the new hauler, **Unity**, as shown in the graph below. Of all the waste disposed of by **Somerset households**, a little less than half has gone into recycling in recent months, a higher share than was seen earlier in 2010.

From **November** through **February**, recycling

represented between **41 and 45 percent** of all disposal. In June through **October**, the recycling share was between **29 and 42 percent**. Therefore, recycling appears to be gradually increasing over time, although not uniformly (the February number of 41 percent was slightly lower than the 45 percent in November and December). The highest recycling rate was actually the first month of the new contract, at **47 percent** in **May 2010**. It is possible that the distribution of the larger and more portable bins stimulated a wave of recycling that month.

At the same time, Unity reports that it still sees a good deal of potentially recyclable material in the trash, so there is room for more recycling. To encourage continued growth, the **Environment Committee** will periodically report recycling rates in the **Journal**. The committee also publishes a list of materials that may (or may not) be recycled on the Town website: check out <http://www.townofsomerset.com/environment/Recycling.html>.



## Invasive Plants In Somerset

By Patty Friedman, Grantham Avenue

Invasive plants grow in yards and woods throughout Somerset. These **non-native plants** spread **aggressively**, reproduce **quickly**, and thrive in **disturbed** areas, crowding out the native species. The most common here include **English Ivy, Bamboo, Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Knotweed, Porcelain Berry, Burning Bush, and Garlic Mustard**.

The **County** has certified several Town residents as “**weed warriors**” committed to preventing the spread of these invasive species, but more volunteers are needed. **Bring clippers!**

This is a great time of year to get into the woods as **poison ivy** (which is not an invasive species) has not leafed out yet and wildflowers will bloom soon. I would like to get a group of volunteers to work on the ivy strangling trees in the woods. The trees covered with ivy in yards should also have the vines severed in two

places at least a foot apart to kill the ivy growth. Don't strip the ivy from the tree as that can damage the bark. The growth of ivy around the tree can look pretty but it can have devastating consequences for the tree and the environment. It would be great if people chose alternatives to English Ivy as a ground cover!

Please join me for a communal effort to tackle the invasive plants in the woods. We'll meet at the pool parking lot at **9:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 10**. Feel free to call **301-657-8921** or email me at [levinfried@gmail.com](mailto:levinfried@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



## Somerset Elementary School Used Book Sale

By Rebecca Pilot, Greystone Street

That springtime tradition, the **Somerset Elementary School Used Book and Bake Sale**, is scheduled for **Friday, April 8 (7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)** and **Saturday, April 9 (9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)** in the **All Purpose Room of Somerset Elementary School**.

Beyond providing an opportunity for some wonderful, **leisurely browsing** among **bargain** books, the book sale is your opportunity to **clean off** bookshelves and make room for new **literary treasures** or simply **beach reading**.

All donations to the Used Book Sale (**childrens' and adult books, videos, games, audio tapes, and CDs**) will be accepted on the stage of the APR starting **Monday, April 4** through **Thursday, April 7** and should be **packed** in good, strong **cardboard boxes** or **double bagged in paper bags**. (**Please NO encyclopedias, old textbooks, pre-2008 travel guides, or magazines**). If you would like to give credit to a Somerset student for your book contributions, find out who her or his teacher is and mark it on the box. The two classes that donate the most items to the sale will be rewarded with an ice cream party. During the week of the sale, we always need lots of volunteers to sort books, and we need help at the sale itself.

Please contact **Karen Spangler** at **301-215-9064** for further information.



By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

It is with deep regret that we have accepted the unexpected resignation of our hard working Clerk-Treasurer **Josh Russin**, who will be leaving his position as of **April 5, 2011**. Josh was recruited for the prestigious position of **Executive Assistant to the Mayor of the City of Frederick**, where he lives, and the larger responsibilities, higher salary, shorter commute, and opportunity for future advancement were obvious things he could not pass up. Josh has made a significant impact during his tenure here and the **Council, Staff**, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him. He will leave a great legacy to Somerset through his many accomplishments, including overseeing the implementation of a vastly improved financial reporting system, re-writing of the Town's personnel manual, and further professionalizing the Council's policies and procedures. We will honor him appropriately before his departure. In the meantime, we are already at work recruiting candidates to be interviewed for this important position, and the ad hoc **Personnel Committee** consisting of Council members **Marnie Shaul, Barbara Zeughauser**, and I are in high gear.

The season has begun for the exciting "**If I Were Mayor... I Would**" essay contest for all of **Maryland's fourth graders**. Submissions are due on **April 1, 2011**. Council members Shaul, Zeughauser, and I were at **Somerset Elementary School** earlier this month to promote the contest, give a quiz on municipal government, and distribute prizes. Students from the School have participated in recent years and two years ago even produced a regional winner! In addition to the regional State winner, who would be from **Montgomery or Howard County**, the Town will be selecting its own honoree from among the essays at our School or from any other Town of Somerset fourth grader who participates. We would like to encourage students in private and parochial schools to go to the website at [www.mdmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmunicipal.org) to learn about the contest and get pen and paper ready.

In my walks with dog **Molly** over the past several weeks, I have noticed an **increase** in the **amount of litter** on all of our streets, but particularly in the proximity of **construction sites** (not surprisingly). As the good weather is impending and plants and flowers are coming in bloom, it would be nice to see an improvement in this area. I would like to encourage everyone, especially the dog walkers, to take the extra effort to pick up unsightly trash and place it in the many receptacles we have strategically placed around Town. This includes trash actually in the street. Let's be a model community in this regard.

**Good News!** The **Maryland Urban & Community Forest Committee** has awarded Somerset the top honor a municipality can receive from the Committee: the **Green Level 2010 PLANT Award**. The Town applied for this award in **December 2010**. This designation is separate from the **Tree City USA award**.

I have named an ad hoc committee to work on problems with our **power company** because of the most recent difficult power outages. I will look forward to receiving their recommendations on how to best use our resources to accomplish better electric service. In particular, the committee will review pending legislation in the State Legislature and collaborate with a similar commission that was recently appointed by County Executive **Ike Leggett**. I thank **Ellen Globokar** (Dorset) for chairing this group.

Local non-profit group **A Wider Circle**, which we work with on a semi-regular basis, is holding an event next month that affords us all another way to support their invaluable work. They will be hosting their **third annual fun run** on **Saturday morning, April 9, 2011** at **Candy Cane City/Meadowbrook Park in Chevy Chase**. This year they are featuring a **5k walk/run, 1-mile walk/run**, and a **50-meter tot trot**. More information and sign-up at [www.awidercircle.org/therace.html](http://www.awidercircle.org/therace.html). Or, you can volunteer by emailing the race coordinator **Katherine** at [therace@awidercircle.org](mailto:therace@awidercircle.org).

Two Somerset residents have donated a beautiful high-quality **baby grand piano** to the Town, which will be used for special events. There will be a dedication ceremony and mini-concert **June 5 at 4:30 p.m.** at Town Hall, along with a presentation by the **Sometimes Somerset Singers**.

As a reminder, March is **Women's History Month**. I would like to encourage everyone to take the time to educate themselves on the contributions women have made to the greatness of our **Country**. I attended a recent forum at the **Women & Politics Institute** at **American University** and enjoyed a panel discussion featuring former Congresswomen **Elizabeth Holtzman** and **Montgomery County's own Connie Morella**. I wanted to let **Somerset's High School** and **College students** know about the **Institute's Summer Session**, offering college credit that will address women's political participation over time, and other public policy outcomes. Applications are due **April 1** and all the information you need is available at [www.american.edu/spa/wpi](http://www.american.edu/spa/wpi).

**Don't forget to vote in the April 5 Town Election or obtain an absentee ballot.**

**Happy Easter and Passover** for those who celebrate, and **safe travels** to all on **spring vacations** this month.

## Candidates' Statements



Town Council



*Dear Neighbors,*

Thank you for a wonderful two years! I sincerely enjoy being a member of the Town Council. As with any worthwhile experience, it was plenty of work, challenging at times, but extremely gratifying.

I sought office to work to ensure that the Town remained a great place to live and keep the Council fair and open. I promised to listen to all points of view before making decisions. Most importantly, I promised not to be divisive and to work collaboratively with the Mayor and the other Council members.

I have really come to appreciate the Mayor and other Council members who donate so much of their time to make decisions making our Town a wonderful place to live for years to come. I am proud of what we have achieved. We have made our Town greener by increasing recycling, reducing waste, and making our Town a test case for new lighting. As the Chair of the Friendship Heights Transportation Advisory Committee, I have made recommendations to the County that encourage greener transportation.

I have listened to my neighbors as issues have come before the Council. On a few occasions, I have changed my position on issues after receiving wise and helpful input from the community.

For the next two years, I plan to continue to work to maintain the friendly and open character of our Town. I want to thank everyone for the honor of serving these past two years and I look forward to working with you in the years to come.



Candidate — Bill Farley



## Candidates' Statements *(continued)*



Town Council



### *Dear Neighbors,*

My decision to run for re-election to the Town Council reflects my affection for this special place where I have lived for 21 years. It is also an acknowledgement that some tasks I care most about are yet unfinished.

The pool house renovation project and our struggle with declining revenues are primary unfinished agenda items. During the past two years I contributed to making progress on these tasks by:

- Developing a financial package for the pool house project.
- Selecting a firm to build the project and monitoring construction costs.
- Developing and overseeing the Town's budget.

These challenging times have been made more difficult because of the retirement of two long-term employees. To ease this transition, I worked with the Mayor and other Council Members in:

- Hiring staff.
- Revamping the Town's accounting system.
- Rewriting the Town's personnel manual.

In addition, I have:

- Provided leadership as Council Vice-President.
- Served on multiple Town Committees: Environment, Parks and Natural Resources, and Audit.
- Served as the Town's Representative to Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights to monitor and shape development in our area.

If re-elected, I will support finishing the pool house project and repaving roads. I will work to have a sound operating budget that maintains critical Town services despite reductions in some revenue sources. I will support initiatives to keep our streets safe for pedestrians and protect our environment/trees.

I would be grateful for your vote on April 5.



C a n d i d a t e — M a r n i e S h a u l

## Candidates' Statements *(continued)*



Town Council



Barbara Zeughauser

### *Dear Neighbors,*

I have served on our Town Council for the past two years. This experience has reinforced what I've learned from living in Somerset for 25 years; Somerset is an incredibly special community. As I walk our streets with my dog, Coby, I've spoken with many of you about our joint concerns. Being a member of the Council allows me to ensure that these concerns are heard and addressed. I find this process rewarding and one that I hope to continue as I run for re-election this spring.

When I first ran for office, I believed it was critical for the Council to listen to the Community. Since I began serving on the Council, I agreed to head-up the ad hoc Communications Committee to look at additional ways to share information within the Town and rewrite our Town Handbook to make it more user friendly; worked to maintain our critical Town services, despite our tight financial condition; protected our trees, including serving as Council liaison to the Parks and Natural Resources Committee; served on the ad hoc Personnel Committee to hire a Clerk-Treasurer, enhance our Town Staff and rewrite our Employee Personnel Manual; and actively participated in pool renovation meetings.

If re-elected, I plan to continue my active role on the Council. There are many challenges ahead and I will stay focused so that sound decisions can and will be made for the Town of Somerset.

I hope that I have earned your vote on Tuesday, April 5.



Candidate — Barbara Zeughauser

# Council Activity

## ***Approval of Minutes for Regular Council Meeting January 3, 2011***

Council member Marnie Shaul moved to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2011, regular Council meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

## ***Approval of Minutes for Special Council Meeting January 13, 2011***

Council member Marnie Shaul moved to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2011, 3:00 p.m. special Council meeting. Vote: Pickar, Shaul, and Zeughauser in the affirmative, Farley and Proctor abstained. Motion passed 3-0 with two abstentions.

## ***Approval of Minutes for Special Council Meeting January 13, 2011***

Council member Barbara Zeughauser moved to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2011, 9:00 p.m. special Council meeting. Vote: Pickar, Shaul, and Zeughauser in the affirmative, Farley and Proctor abstained. Motion passed 3-0 with two abstentions.

## ***Approval of Minutes for Special Council Meeting January 24, 2011***

Council member Cathy Pickar moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2011, special Council meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

## **Financial Report Update**

The Town Clerk-Treasurer updated the Operating Income/Expense Report and the Capital Income and Expense Reports from July 1, 2010 through January 31, 2011. Both reports include total expenses by category, what was budgeted, how much is remaining and the percent expended.

The Clerk-Treasurer shared with the Council the current budget outlook based on the information given to the Town by the State Comptroller's Office. The Town has witnessed an 11 percent decline in income tax revenues; a \$45,000 decrease. This revenue decline is offset by the fact that the Town will not have to pay \$44,000 toward the pool renovation loan since the Town was required to make one loan payment before the end of the fiscal year in the amount of \$30,855 and \$75,000 was budgeted to service the loan this fiscal year. The Town has received 27 percent of the budgeted income tax.

Montgomery County confirmed that Somerset has received 97 percent of its property tax revenues for the fiscal year. The Town has received \$379,312; 98 percent of property tax revenues budgeted for the fiscal year.

The Town has collected \$626,661, 62 percent of total revenues budgeted for the fiscal year out of \$1,005,034, with \$378,373 outstanding.

Additional funds may be required for snow removal and tree trimming/removal. As of February 4, 2011, the Town spent 88 percent of the snow removal budget. Depending on the winter season, additional funds may be required. The January 2011 winter storm caused approximately \$8,000 worth of tree trimming related expenses. The Town contractor gave a preliminary estimate.

To date, the Town is slightly below budget by spending approximately 54.5 percent of the funds, \$491,283 out of \$902,132 that is budgeted. The Town is 58 percent through the fiscal year.

The Council set the Fiscal Year 2012 budget workshop for Monday, March 14 at 7:30 p.m. The Five Year Budget plan will be unveiled at the March Council meeting.

Town resident David Kahn gave a presentation on his generator permit application. Mr. Kahn intends on installing a 20-kilowatt (kW) Kohler Natural Gas generator. The generator will be located on the left side of the house behind two, six-foot wooden fences. Town staff supported the location of the generator and the Town Building Inspector Larry Plummer reviewed the plans.

Council member Bill Farley moved to approve the 20 kW generator on the left side of the house, behind two, 6-foot fences. After installation, the Owner will notify the Town to test the sound level produced by the generator. If the generator exceeds the maximum allowable nighttime noise level of 55 decibels (dBAs) at the nearest property line, the Town will require the Owner install noise mitigation measures, including but not limited to fencing and landscaping. The Town will retain the Two Thousand Dollar building deposit until the generator passes the noise level test. Town noise standards under §11-301 of the Town Code are governed by the County Code, Chapter 31B-5 (1) and (2). Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

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***Building Permit for 5409 Surrey Street***

Council member Cathy Pickar moved to approve the building permit to enclose the gap between the house and the addition and the enclosure of the existing front porch because the addition follows the Town building guidelines set out in §6-312C(1) that lists the total set-back requirements buildings must follow within Town limits. The motion also includes approval of tree protection plan as outlined by the Town Arborist. Permit is good for one year after signature. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

***Generator Permit for 5532 Warwick Place***

Council member Bill Farley moved to approve the 17 kW Generac air-cooled gas engine generator at the rear of the house. After installation, the Owner will notify the Town to test the sound level produced by the generator. If the generator exceeds the maximum allowable nighttime noise level of 55 decibels (dBA) at the nearest property line, the Town will require the Owner install noise mitigation measures, including but not limited to fencing and landscaping. The Town will retain the Two Thousand Dollar building deposit until the generator passes the noise level test. Town noise standards under §11-301 of the Town Code are governed by the County Code, Chapter 31B-5 (1) and (2). Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

***Reconsideration of Previously Approved Generator Permit for 4915 Dorset Avenue***

Vote: Farley, Proctor, Shaul and Zeughauser in the affirmative and Pickar abstained. Motion passed 4-0 with one abstention.

***Reappointment of John Sullivan and Phyllis Wiesenfelder to the Town Board of Supervisors of Elections***

Council member Cathy Pickar moved to approve the reappointment of John Sullivan and Phyllis Wiesenfelder to the Town Board of Supervisors of Elections. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

***Action on Resolution Allowing Helping Hand Use of the Town Hall for a “Social Hour” During Power Outages***

Council member Alan Proctor moved to approve the resolution allowing Helping Hand use of the Town Hall for a “Social Hour” during power outages from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

***Introduction of Proposed Ordinance to Town of Somerset Code, Chapter 2, Administration and Procedures, Section 2-402(i)***

Council member Marnie Shaul agreed to introduce the proposed ordinance and the ordinance will be acted upon at the March regular Council meeting. Currently, the Five Dollar (\$5) per classified ad fee for the Town Journal is established under Section 2-402 (i) of the Town Code. The proposed ordinance will allow the Council to set the fee by a resolution. Currently the fee requires an introduction of an ordinance at a Council meeting, and a separate hearing to act on the ordinance and once passed, the ordinance goes into effect thirty-six days after the Mayor has signed the ordinance.

***Introduction of Proposed Ordinance to Town Of Somerset Code, Chapter 8, Protection of Trees, Section 8-204, Establishing a Fee to Process and Review Tree Permits***

Council member Barbara Zeughauser agreed to introduce the proposed ordinance and the ordinance will be acted upon at the March regular Council meeting. Currently, the Town requires residents to submit tree removal and replacement permits to the Town to review. Staff resources are required to review the permits, which includes a site visit and report issued by the Town Arborist. On average, the arborist spends an hour to review and draft a report. As a result, the Town absorbs the hourly rate the arborist bills to the Town. A neighboring jurisdiction, Chevy Chase Village charges a filing fee for tree removal permits.

***Action on Proposed Ordinance to Amend the Town of Somerset Code, Chapter 4, Section 4-103, raising the amount of snowfall accumulation on sidewalks in front and on the side of properties when a town contractor will remove the snow, from two to four inches.***

Based on significant and friendly input from the community, the Mayor and Town Council did not take any action. The Town will continue the existing sidewalk and path snow removal policy of having the Town and its contractor remove The Clerk-Treasurer gave an update on the changes outlined in the PNRC. The changes proposed allow nine residents to serve three-year terms and allow the members to serve two consecutive terms. The Mayor, with Council approval, will have the authority to select the Committee chairperson. A Council member will serve in a liaison capacity to the Committee and an additional Council member will serve as an alternate. None of the Council members will count as one of the nine appointed members. The Town Attorney requested the Council formally adopt the PNRC ordinance because it was not

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drafted in proper form and adopted incorrectly. The previously approved ordinance did not contain the deleted and added text. The original PNRC ordinance was introduced at the December 2010 regular Council meeting. Council member Farley opposed the ordinance because the ordinance would establish term limits.

Council member Barbara Zeughauser moved to approve the Ordinance to amend the Town Code, Chapter 5, Parks and Natural Resources Committee, Section 5-901 (a), (b), (c), (d). Vote: Zeughauser, Proctor, Pickar, Shaul in the affirmative, Farley in the negative. Motion passed 4-1.

***Action On Resolution Calling For The Montgomery County Executive And County Council To Continue To Distribute Income Tax Receipts From County Residents Who Live In Municipalities***

The Clerk-Treasurer gave an update regarding this issue. The Town was informed that the County Office of Legislative Oversight report Number 2011-2 proposed a recommendation to have the County consider revisiting, cutting or removing altogether the seventeen percent of the county income tax receipts from county residents who live in municipalities. The resolution implores the Executive and Council to refrain from pursuing this recommendation.

Council member Cathy Pickar moved to approve the resolution. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.

## **February 22, 2011 – Special Council Meeting**

1. At the February 22 meeting, the Town Council received a pool house renovation project update from Town consultant Lou Balodemas and project architect Peter Noonan. Council members Farley and Shaul were absent. A quorum requires three or more members to be in attendance. The meeting began at 7:34 p.m.
2. Town of Somerset pool renovation consultant Lou Balodemas gave an update on the current construction project schedule.
3. Completed Work: The construction billing is 38 percent complete.
4. Council member Alan Proctor moved to approve Project Change Orders 23–26. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 3-0.
5. Council member Alan Proctor moved to approve security system contractor Vigilant Security Solutions proposal to install a security system for the pool house subject to consumer recommendations obtained by Lou Balodemas. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 3-0.
6. Adjournment – 9:20 p.m.

***At the March 7 regular Council meeting, the Town Council:***

1. Approved the minutes of the February 7, 2011 regular meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
2. Approved the minutes of the February 22, 2011 special meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
3. Nominations for three Council member positions for two-year terms. Town resident Barbara Condos nominated Barbara Zeughauser to the Council. Town resident George Wyeth seconded the nomination. Barbara Zeughauser accepted the nomination.
  - Town resident Jeffrey Slavin nominated Bill Farley to the Council. Town resident George Wyeth seconded the nomination. Bill Farley accepted the nomination.
  - Town resident George Wyeth nominated Marnie Shaul to the Council. Town resident Tracy Truman seconded the nomination. Marnie Shaul accepted the nomination.
  - No other residents were nominated.
4. Introduction of Five-Year Financial Plan. Mayor Slavin introduced the plan to the Council, covering a period spanning Fiscal Years (FY) 2012–2016.
5. The Clerk-Treasurer introduced to the Council the fifth financial report or 67 percent through the fiscal year. According to information provided by the Comptroller's Office, the Town's income tax revenue estimate to \$376,486 in FY 11. The Town has received 62 percent of budgeted revenues for the year Town. As a result of a revenue decline, the Town has made some budget adjustments; The Town anticipates spending \$859,349 while receiving \$893,495 in revenues.
6. Update on pool house renovation project. Pool house renovation contractor Jerry Therrien, Geert Visscher and Town project manager Lou Balodemas provided an update to the Mayor and Council.
7. Suggestions and questions from residents. Two residents provided comments to the Town Council.
  - Barbara Condos asked if the pool house floor tile has been selected. Mr. Balodemas showed the selected tiles.

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- Town resident Lucy Freeman asked if a resident who installed a generator and has not met the County noise guidelines could operate their generator. The Town Inspector Larry Plummer responded that the resident is not supposed to and residents can file a complaint and request the County enforce the County nighttime noise standard of 55 dBA.
  - Barbara Condos asked if the Mayor and Council are still encouraging Pepco to boost their power reliability in Somerset so residents are not forced to install generators. The Council unanimously responded yes, is continuing to encourage Pepco to improve their infrastructure immediately, and has requested Pepco update the Town on their reliability plan.
8. Action on recommendation by Town Arborist to remove 14 Town trees, including four numbered Town trees and 10 unnumbered Town trees: 1) #957, a dying American Elm in Vinton Park near the corner of Wisconsin and Dorset Avenue; 2) #653, dying Flowering Cherry located at 5515 Trent Street; 3) #655, dying Flowering Cherry located at 5515 Trent Street; 4) #660, dying Flowering Cherry located at 5516 Trent Street; and the following unnumbered Town trees located in wooded areas on Town property; 5) dead 18" Black Locust located at 5402 Uppingham Street; 6) dead 6" Black Cherry located at 5411 Uppingham Street; 7) dead 6" Ash located at 5513 Uppingham Street; 8), 9), 10) Three 12" Sycamores leaning over house and shedding limbs at 5522 Warwick Place; 11) 18" American Elm leaning and co-dominant located at 5527 Warwick Place; 12) 20" Tulip because weaknesses in upper cavity and co-dominant located at 5601 Warwick Place; 13) 18" Black Locust because of decay in upper trunk located at 5609 Warwick Place; & 14) 30" Tulip with split trunk located at 5615 Warwick Place. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  9. Fact-finding hearing and action on request by Helen Colson, 4725 Dorset Avenue, to replant Red Maple Tree on Town right-of-way, on the Surrey Street side of her property in lieu of the previously approved location as approved by the Mayor. Vote: Farley, Shaul & Zeughauser in the affirmative, Proctor in the negative. Motion passed 3-1.
  10. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Alexis & Scott Carmer, 4817 Essex Avenue, to demolish existing house, install second curb cut, construct new home including site appurtenances. Application included the removal of trees. Council approved the demolition of the existing house, construction of the new home, tree replacement plan that included tree protection plan, tree replacement plan that included the planting of 17 trees and the removal of eleven trees and a parking plan. Vote: Farley, Shaul & Zeughauser in the affirmative, Proctor in the negative. Motion passed 3-1.
  11. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Cindy Finn, 5524 Trent Street, to install an emergency generator at the left side of the residence. Council approved installation of generator with the caveat that the applicant submit a sound mitigation plan and approval from the Town staff before installation. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  12. Fact-finding hearing and action on application submitted by Julie & Mark Oxley, 4515 Dorset Avenue, to install an emergency generator at the front of the house facing Dorset Avenue. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  13. Fact-finding hearing and action on application submitted by Thomas Ainora & Donald Buchanan, 5606 Warwick Place, to install an emergency generator in the rear of the residence. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  14. Fact-finding hearing and action on application submitted by Frederick & Rosemary Goodwin, 5712 Warwick Place, to install a generator at the rear of the residence. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  15. Action on proposed ordinance to Town of Somerset Code Chapter 8, Protection of Trees, Section 8-204, establishing a fee to process and review tree permits. The Council did not act on the proposed ordinance based on public feedback.
  16. Action on proposed ordinance to Town of Somerset Code Chapter 2, Administration and Procedures, Section 2-402(i) allowing the Council to set the Journal advertising fee by resolution. The Council did not act on the proposed ordinance.
  17. Action on Arbor Day proclamation. April 1, 2011, the Town of Somerset will celebrate Arbor Day. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.
  18. Discussion and possible action on request by Cub Scout Pack 52's request to have the Mayor and Council sponsor their use of the Town Hall and grounds for a Cub Scout meeting on April 26, 2011. Vote: Proctor and Shaul in the affirmative, Farley and Zeughauser in the negative. Vote: 2-2. Mayor Slavin broke the tie and the motion passed.
  19. Mayor's report was presented to the body.
  20. Adjournment – 11:00 p.m.

# Preliminary Agenda

## Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, April 4, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

### Work Session of Town Council

1. Review of Council Follow-up List – 7:00 p.m.

### Regular Meeting of Town Council

1. Approve the minutes of the March 7, 2011 regular meeting – 7:30 p.m.
2. Approve the minutes of the March 21, 2011 special meeting – 7:33 p.m.
3. Discussion of monthly Fiscal Year 2011 financial report – 7:35 p.m.
4. Public hearing on the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2012 budget – 7:45 p.m.
5. Update on pool house renovation project – 8:15 p.m.
6. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:35 p.m.
7. Fact-finding hearing regarding a request made by Alexis & Scott Carmer, 4817 Essex Avenue, for reconsideration of a second curb cut permit application and the removal of Town Tree #319, a 9" Oak – 8:45 p.m.\*
8. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Nancy Jardini and Morris Panner, 4815 Essex Avenue, to demolish existing house, construct new home, parking plan, removal of existing driveway and apron, install driveway and apron including replacing sidewalk, curb and gutters, approve the removal of eight (8) trees and proposed tree replacement plan – 9:00 p.m.\*
9. Fact-finding hearing and action on Town tree maintenance and removal contract from FY11 through FY12, with the possibility of two additional contract renewal options – 9:15 p.m.
10. Action on revised Town of Somerset Personnel Manual – 9:30 p.m.
11. Confirmation of Mayor's nomination of nine residents to the Town Parks and Natural Resources Committee with the Mayor designating Patty Friedman as the Chair and Judy Bowles as the Vice Chair of the Committee – 9:45 p.m.
12. Action on resolution to establish tennis court user fees for Calendar Year 2011 – 9:50 p.m.
13. Action on resolution to establish the pool user fee for Calendar Year 2011 – 10:00 p.m.
14. Action on National Days of Remembrance proclamation – 10:15 p.m.
15. Mayor's report – 10:20 p.m.
16. Adjournment – 10:25 p.m.

*\*Revised 03/16/2011*

*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 website 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 discussions sometimes run ahead of schedule*

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



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