



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Pool Project Update:



Pool Facility Renovation Continues

By Alan Proctor, Contract Officer and Council member



Excavation for New Baby Pool Being Built with a "Beach Entrance" for Easier Access.

Neither lots of rain nor record cold have blocked progress on the pool facility renovation, but weather conditions over the past few weeks have certainly slowed and complicated the work.

Contractor **Therrien Waddell** has completed the following work over the past month:

- **Foundation and piers** have been completed for the work outside of the building footprint
- **Installation of fieldstone** has been completed for the new east terrace wall
- **Masonry block walls** have been installed for the new outdoor grill area
- **Existing floor slab** under the old women's locker room has been demolished
- **New foundations** to support the new slab have been installed
- **Framing** is being installed to pour the replacement slab
- **Plumbing rough** in is underway for the new pool house
- **Excavation** of the new wading pool and pool house addition has been started
- **Installation of new pool deck drains** is underway

For next month, the following activities are planned:

- **Excavation for the building** addition will be completed
- **Foundations and foundation walls** will be installed
- **New elevated slab** over the existing equipment room will be installed
- **Steel framing** for the renovated pool house will be installed
- **Rough carpentry framing** will start
- **Fieldstone walls** will be completed for the new tree planter and grill on the new deck



Framing to Replace the New Concrete Slab that Failed Under the Old Women's Bathroom.

- **Mechanical and plumbing rough** in will continue
- **Installation of wading pool water lines** will be completed

To date preexisting soil conditions have posed some problems for the contractor and his ability to install the foundations as originally scheduled. As predicted by our pre-construction

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Calendar

Friday, December 31

Town Hall Office Closed,
New Year Holiday

Monday, January 3

Council Meeting

Monday, January 17

Montgomery County
Day of Service

Monday, January 24

MVA Mobile Office

Sunday, January 30

Sing-a-Long

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

Caring for Others at this Critical Time

Community Service Day in Somerset was a rousing success again this year, and another reminder to me of how many **humanitarians** reside here. A spirited group, including **young people, made sandwiches, trail mix, greeting cards, and gift bags for homeless and low-income folks** in the County. We all left with warm hearts and new and renewed friendships. There was the feeling, too, that we can all do more.

In **2011**, I am hoping we can schedule several additional projects of this type and involve a large number of citizens. Along with our **Helping Hand** group, I truly want Somerset to be known as a **“community of care”** for our own and for our neighbors in adjoining and faraway parts of **Montgomery County**.

Last year at this time, I announced that I would be setting up a **Somerset community fund** with a governing body of residents who will make decisions on contributions to nonprofit organizations. Before the end of the year, I will be making my own five-figure contribution to get things started, and I hope that others will follow at appropriate levels as the mission of the fund is publicized.

With the economy bad and not getting much better this past year, and recent predictions of high unemployment continuing for up to five years, there will continue to be great need, even in a relatively wealthy County like ours.

I also want to remind everyone to be generous during this season to those who work for you and those who provide service, because so many of them are struggling day to day.

If we all work just a little harder on this and increase our gifts even marginally, we can make a big impact. Thanks to everyone who is willing and able to join in this effort.

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



**Holiday Best Wishes To All,
Safe Travels and Blessings
For A Productive New Year!**



Volunteer For Montgomery County MLK Day Of Service



The **Montgomery County Volunteer Center** is hosting its annual large service event and volunteer fair at the **Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center** again this year from **1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.**

Mayor Slavin is organizing a group to go to the Conference Center on **January 17** to participate in the **MLK Day of**

Service and would like to have 15 volunteers attending. Please contact Mayor Slavin to sign up!

Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to advancing equality, social justice, and opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a perfect union and taught us that everyone can play a role in making America a better country. Each of us can contribute to strengthening our community by serving in Dr. King's honor on the **King Holiday** and throughout the year.



Make January 17 a day **ON**, not a day off.

Thank You for Giving Council Members Your Preferences On Trash Collection



By Marnie Shaul, Council member

At the **December meeting**, the **Council** discussed how the switch to once-a-week trash collection was working. Based on the preferences provided by residents, the Council decided to continue with **once a week collection**.

Although a few residents expressed a preference for collection twice a week, most residents we heard from were happy with the **lower cost** and **reduced environmental impact** from **once-a-week collection**. In addition, residents said that the large blue bins that the Town provided for single stream recycling made it easier to reduce the amount of trash they generated. Some residents also commented positively on the quality of the service once the new firm had gotten through a transition period.

Mr. Jerald Boyd, CEO of Unity Disposal & Recycling (our new trash collection company) attended the Town Council meeting. He said he was happy that Somerset had selected his company and appreciated the feedback the firm has received from residents on ways to improve its service. He complimented the Council on its high level of interest in the collection of trash and recycling, especially compared to other jurisdictions. He also provided some data on the amount of trash and recycled materials his company has collected since May. The amount of recycled material has generally been growing month by month, and he said Somerset residents are doing a good job of recycling. Somerset residents are still generating more trash than recycled material, but over time that may change as residents continue to gain more experience with **single stream recycling** (everything in one big bin).

Sing Along with Us

By Cathy Pickar, Council member



We are starting a new Somerset Tradition on **January 30!**

Come celebrate **"Winter Light"**

with food and song in a sing-along and performance by **The Somerset Singers** on **January 30** from **4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.** at The Town Hall. **RSVP** is required because space is limited. Read on and learn about the hottest event happening in Somerset on January 30. **Admission is free!**

In addition to joining the Somerset Singers in renditions of some old favorites, and perhaps learning some new ones, you will hear our spoofs (all in good fun) on lively community issues. Join in on **"Once You're On the List Serve"** to the tune of **"Once in Love with Amy"** from the Broadway musical **Where's Charley**, and, for those of you familiar with **Gilbert and Sullivan**, we have our own **"Little List"** of folks **"who won't be missed."**

We hope that you will come to listen, to sing, and to laugh with us at this first **Somerset Winter Light** celebration.

Space is limited due to fire regulations. It is essential that you let us know if you plan to attend.

To reserve seat(s), please send an email to **SomersetSingers@yahoo.com** giving your name and the number of people who will be attending. Be sure to bring the e-mail you receive confirming your reservation.





Piers for the New Deck that Adjoins the Grill Area Next to the Pavilion.

testing on the site, we did encounter some “bad soils” in areas under the pool deck where new foundations and piers are being installed—essentially unstable dirt that was filled in over preexisting soil in the past; approximately **90 cubic** yards of soil were determined to be unusable for supporting the designed foundations and had to be removed and replaced with acceptable concrete backfill. This additional work delayed the contractor about a week from the original project plan. Recent weather conditions have also slowed production on site to some degree. These complications are to be expected and were anticipated when the contractor generated his original schedule, which builds in some time for delays and specified completion by early **May** to provide an extra margin of error that will assure an on-time opening at the end of the month.

Be assured that the contractor and the entire team remain focused on opening the renovated pool facility on time next **Memorial Day**. The contractor is continuing work whenever possible, including work on **Saturdays** where practical, and remains committed to an on-time opening. The Council is also continuing to follow the project closely at both regular monthly Council meetings and special mid-month reviews specifically focused on the pool renovation project. The Council reviews and discusses project plan updates, proposed change orders, materials submittals, and any other questions that come up, including

feedback and questions from residents. The whole project team also holds regular bi-monthly meetings on site for detailed review of the project plan and to discuss details and other issues that need to be addressed.

For more information and pictures on the project, check out the project web site that is linked from the Town web site, or directly accessible at <http://townofsomerset.proctors.us>.



Income Tax Revenues Likely To Fall Again

By Marnie Shaul, Council member

The State of Maryland’s Comptroller’s Office recently told me that Somerset’s income tax revenues are estimated to

be about **\$456,000** in the current fiscal year (FY11). This is about 6 percent less than Somerset received in FY10 (**\$486,657**). It is also the lowest amount of income tax revenue Somerset has received since **FY03 (\$426,000)**, unadjusted for inflation. Municipal revenues are based on the prior tax year and most filings are completed by the **October 15** extension date; in this case, October 2010 for the **2009** tax year, with minor variations in the final FY11 figure because of such things as late filings and delinquent taxes paid.

The Comptroller’s Office said that income tax revenue declines are typical this year for Maryland jurisdictions, and the Office thinks income tax revenues will not rise much in the next few years. When the Town Council prepared Somerset’s **FY11 budget** in the spring, it was conservative in estimating revenues, so the projected decline will not have a major negative effect on the Town’s operating budget. However, it means that the Council will need to exercise continued vigilance during the remaining six months of FY11 to keep operating expenditures within expected revenues. The Town **Clerk-Treasurer** prepares a monthly financial report for the Council to review and provide guidance about spending levels.

Permits Granted



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

Tree Permits

Helen and Earl Colson requested the removal of a **36” Ash tree**, located at 4725 Dorset Avenue. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal. Tree has a cavity high in the main trunk of the tree and was recommended for removal because it was hazardous. Applicant will plant a new canopy tree at or near the same location.

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Latest News From Town Hall

By Josh Russin, Clerk-Treasure



Tax season is approaching—remember: 'TOWN OF SOMERSET'!

Somerset's largest source of revenue is the portion of the State income tax paid by Town residents. Unfortunately, Somerset will not get its share of income taxes

Town of Somerset Here

unless our name appears on the Maryland income tax form in the box marked, "City, Town, or Taxing Area." Please do not forget to complete this section when filing your taxes.



Christmas Tree Pick Up

Somerset's refuse and recycling contractor, **Unity Disposal**, will be picking up Christmas trees on **Friday, January 7, 2011**. Please remember to set out your trees for pickup the night before.

Reminder to Residents and Contractors

The Town would like to remind residents and their contractors that if a truck will be **obstructing** the road for a period of time that they must close the street to through traffic, set up traffic cones and signage stating the road is temporarily closed. **Road flaggers** should be posted to direct motorists. The Town would like to encourage residents to alert your neighbors if you have a contractor who will temporarily block the road. There are a number of construction projects taking place in the Town limits and we want to ensure that residents can safely travel through the Town.

If you typically travel down a road that has many construction vehicles, we encourage you to build extra time into your travel itinerary in case there are delays.



Town Journal and Weekly E-Blast

We would like to urge as many residents as possible to receive their **Town Journal electronically**. As a **Tree City USA** and a **PLANT Maryland Community**, Somerset wants to reduce its

impact on the environment by encouraging residents to receive their copy of the **Town Journal** by email. If you are not currently on the **Town Journal** email distribution list and would like to receive an electronic copy, please contact **Town Hall** at clerk@townofsomerset.com or at **301-657-3211**. Please let us know if you would like to receive the weekly e-blast.



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, January 24** from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

A Plan for the Next Pepco Outage

By **Zola Schneider**, **Warwick Place**



Somerset's Helping Hand wants to enlist residents who have four-wheel drive vehicles and could be on call volunteers during

paralyzing extended power outages to transport stranded neighbors to close-by places like our **Town Hall, hotels, shelters, doctors' offices, or pharmacies**.

Please let us know if you are willing to be included on a list of potential drivers by contacting **Zola Dincin Schneider** at zdi.schneider@verizon.net, 301-654-7481; or **Barbara Zeughauer** at bzeug@comcast.net, 301-951-8560.

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By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Caring for Others at this Critical Time

Community Service Day in Somerset was a rousing success again this year, and another reminder to me of how many humanitarians reside here. A spirited group, including young people, made sandwiches, trail mix, greeting cards, and gift bags for homeless and low-income folks in the County. We all left with warm hearts and new and renewed friendships. There was the feeling, too, that we can all do more.

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I also want to remind everyone to be generous during this season to those who work for you and those who provide service, because so many of them are struggling day to day.

If we all work just a little harder on this and increase our gifts even marginally, we can make a big impact. Thanks to everyone who is willing and able to join in this effort.

Holiday best wishes to all, safe travels and blessings for a productive new year.

Permits Granted from page 4

Joyce Lasky Reed Trust requested the removal of a dead **18” American Holly**, located at 4607 Dorset Avenue. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal.

Brian Pilot requested the removal of a **16” Virginia Pine** at 5518 Greystone Street. Town Arborist recommended tree for removal. Tree was dead and hazardous. The Applicant may plant a tree that can tolerate shade or partial sun exposure, such as a holly, dogwood, or redbud.

Clare Cushman and **Amedee Prouvost** requested the removal of an **84” Norway spruce**, a **29” Purpleleaf Plum** and a **44” Redbud** located at 4717 Essex Avenue. Town Arborist recommended trees for removal. The Norway spruce was deemed hazardous. The Purpleleaf Plum has begun to decline while the Redbud was 75 percent dead and deemed hazardous. The applicants will replace the Redbud and Purpleleaf Plum tree. The Applicant’s landscape plan includes extensive landscape improvements with the additional of evergreens, ornamental trees and a canopy tree.

Dina Levine requested a **reduction** in the quantity of replacement trees from the **three canopy trees** that were previously approved by the Council to two trees at 4807 Falstone Avenue. The reduction in the number of replacement trees was recommended by the Town Arborist due to the existing number of canopy trees found in the rear yard.

Dumpster Permit

Walter Bastian requested a dumpster at 5612 Warwick Place. The Mayor authorized the permit for **60 days**. The permit expires on **January 23, 2011**.

Portable Storage Unit Permit

David Kass and **Iris Amdur** requested a portable storage unit at 5701 Warwick Place. The Mayor authorized the permit for **30 days**. The permit expires on **January 1, 2011**.

Council Activity

November 22 – Special Council Meeting

Pool House Renovation Project Update

1. Town of Somerset pool renovation project consultant and project manager Lou Balodemas gave an update on the current construction project schedule.
2. **Completed Work:** Sediment control, tree protection, pool house demolition, wading pool demolition. The wood deck demolition is near completion. The concrete block east retaining wall is completed. The footings for the roof columns, the new wood deck, and the planters are underway. The plumbing installation is underway.
3. **Schedule for the Month:** Complete the installation of footings, foundations, basement, stone facing at east retaining wall, plumbing rough in at pool house and wading pool shell.
4. **Approved Project Change Order (PCOs) to Date:** \$32,658. The majority of these were a result of changes required by the County that came up during the inspection and permitting process. Some of the PCOs were the result of unforeseen subsurface conditions that were discovered during excavation.
5. **Contract Cost:** The original construction contract with Therrien Waddell (TW) was \$1,879,443. The new contract total that includes the approved PCOs is \$1,912,101. There are several pending PCO approvals that will increase the cost of the project. The new total is \$2,559,940. The Town has currently paid \$717,902. The remaining balance is \$1,842,038.
6. The contract duration is 284 days that began on July 26, 2010. The project completion date is May 6, 2011. The current PCOs do not include any extensions of the contract. TW has used seven out of fifteen weather days. The contractor may request additional days because of the number of PCOs created because of the County permit and inspection requirements.
7. **Phase II Status:** Phase II Site approval including the Forest Conservation Plan is on the County Planning Board agenda for December 2.
8. **Pool Path:** The Town has removed the slate stepping stones near the pool parking lot and has installed mulch and temporary lights. The current project plan calls for a new sidewalk in this area. Mr. Balodemas recommended the Council revisit the installation of a sidewalk and permanent lighting because of the impact it will have on the neighboring resident and the removal of existing plantings.
9. **Pool house Flooring:** At the urging of Council member Pickar and pool management contractor Clark Baugher, Council member Shaul and Mr. Balodemas visited the Chevy Chase Recreation Association (CCRA) to view their recently renovated pool house. CCRA is removing a coating they installed over the locker room concrete floors because of drainage and traction issues, and are replacing them with a non-slip epoxy coating. The Town is considering using a smaller size tile than is currently listed in the contract.
10. **Concrete Repairs:** The Council decided to approve \$15,000 to repair the entire concrete slab under the demolished wood deck because the concrete is worn and the steel bolts embedded in the concrete are hazardous; using a patch has a high probability of spalling. This improvement was not included in the original construction plan.
11. **Storm Shelter:** Mr. Balodemas suggested the Council revisit the storm shelter. The County informed Mr. Balodemas that a storm shelter might not be enough to avoid the closure of the pool in the event of inclement weather.

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12. **Water Sub-Meter:** The project team is reviewing the new water/sewer setup to ensure the Town can continue to operate a sub-meter to avoid paying for water that is not returned to the sewer system.

December 6 – Regular Council Meeting

The following actions were taken by the Town Council:

1. Approved the minutes of the November 1, 2010 regular meeting.
2. Approved the minutes of the November 22, 2010 special Council meeting.
3. Discussion of financial report. Town Clerk-Treasurer introduced to the Council the new formatted financial reports.
4. Update on pool house renovation project.
5. Suggestions and question from residents. None.
6. Fact-finding hearing and action on tree removal application submitted by Clare Cushman and Amedee Prouvost, 4717 Essex Avenue, to remove an 84” Norway spruce, a 29” Purpleleaf Plum, a 44” Redbud, and approval of replacement plan. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.**
7. Fact-finding hearing and action on previously approved tree removal permit application that was part of a building permit application by Dina Levine, 4807 Falstone Avenue, to replace a 40” oak tree with three canopy-sized trees. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.
8. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Bruce and Barbara Tully, 5703 Warwick Place, to install an emergency generator at the residence. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0, Council President Shaul recused herself.
9. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Harold and Louise Koffsky, 4900 Falstone Avenue, to install an emergency generator at the northwest corner of the house. Application was amended to move the location of the generator to the rear yard behind the middle section of the house due to proposed generator’s proximity to the nearest property. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.
10. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Catherine Pickar, 4915 Dorset Avenue, to install an emergency generator at the residence. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 4-0, Council member Pickar recused herself.
11. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Jodi and Rodd Macklin, 4817 Dorset Avenue, to enclose a back terrace. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.
12. Discussion of Swimming Pool Committee’s proposed budget for 2011 season. Council approved \$14,000 budget for Fiscal Year 2012, which did not include additional cost associated with employee benefit cost for swim team coaches. Vote: Unanimous. Motion passed 5-0.
13. Discussion and potential action on once- versus twice-a-week garbage collection. Council received an update from Town refuse and recycling contractor Unity. Town did not take any action.
14. Action on new pool management contract for Calendar Year (CY 2011). Council approved the CY 2011 pool management contract with current management company, Georgetown Aquatics.

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Council Activity from page 8

15. Mayor's Report.
16. Adjournment – 9:23 pm.

** *Indicates item was added to the agenda*

November 22, 2010 – Special Council Meeting Agenda

1. Pool house renovation project – 6:45 p.m.
2. Subjects to be covered:
 - Comparison of project progress to project plan
 - Change order approvals
 - Recording costs and effect of change orders on timeline
 - Status of stage 2 permits
 - Keeping track of the project's budget
 - Pool Committee meeting items that relate to the pool renovation project
3. Adjournment – 7:45 p.m.

Next Pepco Outage from page 7

Helping Hand will ask the Mayor and Council if our Town Hall can be open during **extended outages** for **heat or air conditioning**, depending on the season, so residents can charge their cell phones and gather in a place where neighbors can find a friendly face. We will be asking Helping Hand, and other Somerset residents, to be available for limited daytime intervals to assist with problems.

We also would like to open our Town Hall when we have extended outages for a **Social Hour** from **5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.** so that neighbors can come together to swap tales, break the monotony, and enjoy each others' company. **BYOB!**

If you are interested, please contact us.



Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, January 3, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting of Town Council

1. Approve the minutes of the December 6, 2010 regular meeting – 7:30 p.m.
2. Approve the minutes of the December 20, 2010 special meeting – 7:35 p.m.
3. Discussion of financial report – 7:40 p.m.
4. Update on pool house renovation project – 7:50 p.m.
5. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:00 p.m.
6. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Sherry Bindeman and David Kahn, 4715 Essex Avenue, to install an emergency generator at the residence – 8:05 p.m.
7. Fact-finding hearing and action on application by Nicolas Lloreda and Alessandra Tassara, 4813 Falstone Avenue, to fill in existing carport, addition of new first floor and basement at the rear yard – 8:15 p.m.
8. Discussion of pool, batting cage, tennis user, journal ad, and facility rental fees for Calendar Year (CY 2011) – 8:30 p.m.
9. Action on reappointment of Barbara Condos as Chair of the Town Pool Committee – 8:45 p.m.
10. Approval of Town Journal printing bid for Calendar Year (CY 2011) – 8:50 p.m.
11. Public hearing and action on amendment to Town of Somerset Code Chapter 8, Protection of Trees, Section 8-204(a)(5) the diameter of trees that are measured for protection to make it consistent with existing language found in the Code – 9:00 p.m.
12. Public hearing and action on amendment to Town of Somerset Code Chapter 5, Parks and Natural Resources Committee, Section 5-901 (a), (b), (c), (d) – 9:10 p.m.
13. Action authorizing payment of \$100 annual dues to Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights for 2011 – 9:20 p.m.
14. Mayor's report – 9:25 p.m.
15. Adjournment – 9:30 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 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.