



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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New Residents, please register at Town Hall to obtain your membership number. The number is required to use the Somerset pool.

No registrations will be issued at the pool; they are only done at Town Hall.



Summer Brown Bag Lunch Set For Friday, June 24

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

The next quarterly **Brown Bag Lunch**—where residents can meet and dine informally with elected officials and neighbors—has been scheduled for **Friday, June 24** from

Noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. Come talk about your summer plans or comment on the latest actions of the Town Council.

As always, please bring some **food to share** and encourage at least one friend to attend. We will provide **beverages, napkins, and utensils**. If there are any questions, please call me at **301-657-2229**.

Pool Project Update:



Pool Slated To Open June 18!

By Alan Proctor, Contract Officer and Council member

Contractor **Therrien Waddell** and its team have advised us they expect the renovated pool facility to be ready for community use on **Saturday, June 18**. This date, which is later than initially planned, may be subject to further change in the event of any remaining unexpected delays in finishing the work or getting signoffs on **11 permits** outstanding from the **County** and other regulatory authorities. Also, keep in mind that some minor work may remain after the opening day, including paving the upper and lower parking lots.

Rest assured that the project team is focused on an opening date of **June 18!** We all are eager to have the pool facility back in use for the community, and look forward to the swim team's warm-ups for their first home meet on **Saturday, June 25**.

The renovation effort will be the culmination of more than five years of work by the Council, pool committee, residents, various planning committees, consultants, and contractors. The project as completed delivers on decisions and priorities set by the Town Council in **March 2008**. Here are some of the features of the new facility you will see when you check it out:

Designed for every Town resident, whether you swim or not! The new facility is designed to welcome residents and friends of all ages and capabilities in a wide range of Town activities, and is now fully **ADA compliant**. There is a lot of pool and poolside activity, but we are looking forward to providing support for Town summer activities that engage non-swimmers, as well – particularly

continued on page 4

Calendar

Monday, June 6

Council Meeting

Monday, June 20

MVA Mobile Office

Friday, June 24

Brown Bag Lunch

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

Teamwork

Within days, the Town will be celebrating the opening of our spectacular new pool house and Somerset social and recreational life will once again be centered at that site.

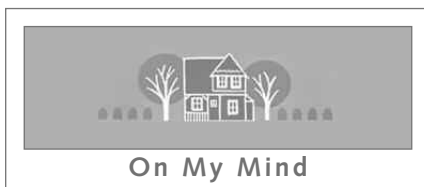
Many thought that this day would never come! While we all regret that a few days will have been lost and the project will not be completed as originally hoped, once the swim season is in high gear surely this will all be forgotten. Not only will we not have to face this problem again for **40 years**, it's often relatively cold outside in early June anyway.

In hindsight, perhaps the construction timeline was too ambitious, dare I say impossible, given the unknowns of **Metro Washington weather, Montgomery County** regulatory issues, and unforeseen physical conditions in the parkland. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that the delay would have been greater if it wasn't for the incredible efforts of our Town Council team, along with our dedicated staff. I am so impressed with their efforts.

The undertaking to rebuild completely our second-most important Town structure is one of the most significant in our history. However, the long-term benefits will be great, and will justify the endless meetings, phone calls, and site visits over the past nine months. The attention to detail paid by our consultant, **Lou Balodemas** and the creative design of **Mark McInturff and Company** have resulted in a building which is practically a masterpiece.

Along the way, there literally have been hundreds of decisions involved, from big to small, and I felt it was important for the Council to be involved in almost every one of them. While not every member got what they wanted, it was impressive to watch the way the discussions took place, the level of collegiality and respect, and the way they made final decisions. This was the work of an amazing team, led by Council member **Alan Proctor**.

This is all very encouraging as we move forward on other issues the Council and I must work on in the near future, including the consideration of our sign requirements, tree policies, construction codes and management, parking controls, completion of the street paving, and yes, even to finally address the future of the Town Hall.



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



Stop Sign On Lower Trent

By Marnie Shaul, Council member

At its **June Council** meeting, the Council will be considering placing a stop sign at the curve in the **5400 block** of **Trent Street**. Like other Council Members, I applaud the efforts of residents in this block to give the Council a widely shared recommendation of how to protect pedestrians better, especially children, on a street where there are no sidewalks. Because a **mid-block stop sign** is somewhat unusual, I may propose an amendment that would allow the proposal for the stop sign to terminate at the end of one year. At the end of the year, if residents find that the stop sign is effective, I would support a permanent placement. This fiscal year, the Council set aside funds for a traffic study to review what is already in place and consider other suggestions made by residents to improve safety in Somerset. The study could also evaluate other options for Trent Street.



Don't Miss our Piano Dedication and Sing-Along June 5 At Town Hall

By Cathy Pickar, Council member

Please join the “**Sometimes Somerset Singers**” and its latest addition, the children, on **Sunday, June 5** at **4:30 p.m.** to sing along and pay tribute to residents **Keith Robinson** and **Bill McPherrin** for their generous gift of a grand piano for the Town Hall. Help us celebrate the dedication of the piano as we have fun singing around its shapely elegance and warm resonance. ***Want a special song to be sung?*** Bring the words for folks to follow along. Among the guitarists, harmonica and panpipe players, and **Cathy Pickar** at piano, we will probably be able to plunk out your tune. If, however, you want to sing “**Your Fault**” from **Sondheim’s *Into the Woods***, give Cathy a heads up.



Stop Sign & Piano Dedication

in connection with the new pavilion and sun porch areas. We will know we have succeeded when we bring even more Town residents together for a broader array of activities at the pool.

Completely renovated facility. The restrooms, changing areas, and office area have all been completely renovated. The location of the men's and women's rooms are now switched; women now turn right, men to the left. *Don't forget!*

New pavilion area, with serving kitchen and storm protection. The new pavilion area adjacent to the pool house area is the largest new feature. It will provide a large covered area for a range of activities, old and new, including safe shelter in the event of storms. The new venue has a serving kitchen. Although it has no stove or oven, it does include a refrigerator, freezer, and warming oven space for holding food properly for serving, as well as a sink for cleanup. The serving kitchen will provide the swim team with much better space for preparing snacks during swim meets and other events, and it will be available to support residents' ad hoc activities and other Town events. The pool committee looks forward to your ideas for other new ways to use the pavilion space. *Expanded movie nights? Ping-pong protected from rain and sun? Mid-morning gatherings for around-home adults for coffee and conversation? Friday-afternoon wine and cheese gatherings?*

New sun porch, with built-in gas barbeque and eating area. There is a new raised sun porch on the pool side of the pavilion designed for informal gathering and eating with direct access to a large gas-fired grill that will make it a perfect and easy place for family barbeques.

New baby pool, with beach entrance and warm water. The baby pool has been relocated to the east end of the pool house – to your right as you walk into the pool area from the pool house. It features a “*beach entrance*” that makes it safer and easier for children to enter the pool, and a number of gentle “*water features*” that add interest for small kids. The water will heat as needed, just like in the main pool, but with an independent system. Access is improved because the pool is now on the same plane as the pool deck. As always, use of the baby pool is completely “*at your own risk,*” and that County and Town rules require that an adult be in direct attendance to supervise a child's use of the baby pool. Use of the baby pool is limited exclusively to small children.

Widened east terrace, with shade pergola. The raised east terrace has been widened to accommodate more lounges, chairs and tables. A new pergola

provides additional shade at the north end of the pool facility. I am guessing that this will become a favorite area for sunning, and a perfect vantage for point to watch the **Somerset Dolphins** and **Minis**.

Major environmental improvements.

The project has implemented a number of targeted environment improvements. Three facilities have been installed for managing stormwater runoff from the site on both sides of the stream. Included is a major stream-level pond to the right (*south*) of the pool house that provides a more friendly wildlife habitat. Gone is the practice of discharging thousands of gallons of chlorinated pool backwash water directly into the stream, which amazingly is still legal under County law despite being environmentally terrible. We have also increased the setback and protected area along both sides of the stream, and will plant additional trees to enhance root protection of the banks and protection of the stream.

Pool committee positioned to carry on! The Town Council and the project team have worked very hard to complete this once-in-a-generation project. I know that everyone is eager to try it out, and hope that when you do you will agree that it was worth the wait! Soon, the project team will pass the baton to the pool committee to fully realize, with your input, the benefits of this special new resource.



Pool Slated To Open June 18!



Code Amendment On Retaining Walls

By Marnie Shaul, Council member

At its June meeting, the Council will consider a technical correction to the **Code** regarding **retaining walls**. For most construction projects that cross the Town right-of-way, the Town Code requires the resident **pay a bond** at the time of the application so any damage to the Town's property, such as **curbs** and **sidewalks**, is assured of being repaired. The Town deposits the check and the money is returned to the applicant at the satisfactory completion of the project as determined by the Town's **building inspector**. The code on retaining walls omitted the bond, and the amendment would correct this by requiring a bond of **\$1,000**.



Code Amendment on Retaining Walls

Permits Granted



The Mayor issued the following permits during the past month. The Town Council issues building permits.

Tree Removal

The following Street Trees were approved for removal at the request of WSSC:

4715 Cumberland Avenue Tree # 39–15” dbh (diameter at breast height) **Willow Oak**

4718 Cumberland Avenue Tree # 60–14” dbh **Willow Oak**

4902 Cumberland Avenue Tree # 100–19” dbh **Red Maple**–The canopy is dead and dying. The base of the tree is growing in the pavement

5811 Warwick Place Tree # 803–26” dbh **Pin Oak**–A crack is developing between main branches.

4509 Cumberland Avenue Tree #28–20” dbh **Sugar Maple**–The Canopy is dead or dying. The base of the trunk has a large wound.

4509 Cumberland Avenue Tree #26–9” dbh **Maple**. The tree is dead.

5511 Trent Street Tree # 647 -18” dbh **Bradford Pear**–The tree is dead.

4717 Essex Street Tree # 285 **Red Oak**–8” dbh–The Tree is dead.

Private Trees

4817 Essex Avenue 6” (dbh) **Maple** in the back yard. Girdling roots, hollow at base.

4513 Cumberland Avenue 22” **Red Oak** (dbh) in the backyard. The tree is dead and hazardous.

Fence Permits

4509 Dorset Avenue–a waiver was approved to construct 22 meters of fence with the unfinished side toward the neighbor. This request was made by the neighbor in order to preserve landscaping in that area.

4819 Essex–Construct a fence 42” in height along the western property boundary. Two finished sides.

5408 Surrey Street–Construct a 5’ flat board fence along portions of the east and west property line.

Generator

5603 Surrey Street–install a 20kW air-cooled gas generator on the backside of the property.



Permits Granted

Latest News From Town Hall

By Jerry Schiro, Acting Clerk-Treasurer



Change in Building Permit Application Process

The Town Council is working to improve the permit application process in a more consistent format with the **Town Code**. Previously, in order to accommodate our residents the staff would accept applications for **Town Building Permits** prior to the issuance of a **Montgomery County Building Permit**. The Council then approved Town permits contingent on the County permits being approved. This practice can lead to delays in the approval process, since the County's review of a building project can require changes to the plans, requiring the application to be resubmitted to the Town Council. The current practice requires approved County building permits at the time of application with the Town.

Update on WSSC

WSSC is wrapping up the **sewer main** replacement project. The streets will be restored in the next few weeks.



Street Sweeping

The Town Council approved a **street sweeping contract** for this year. Because of additional revenue received from the state, we will be sweeping twice this year. Once the **WSSC** work is finalized, we will conduct the first sweeping. We will be posting signs prior to the sweeping and placing notification in the email blast. We appreciate residents' cooperation by removing cars from the street until the sweeping is complete.

Street Tree Watering

Although we have experienced an **extremely wet spring**, the drier summer months are approaching. Again, we ask cooperation from residents by watering the street trees during extended dry periods.

Tennis Court Screening

The **Leyland Cypress** trees along the western side of the tennis courts have been removed and replaced with **Foster Hollies**. The Leyland Cypress' were declining. The new Foster Hollies are beautiful and certainly enhance the landscaping around the courts.

MVA Mobile Office

The MVA Mobile Office will be at **Friendship Heights** on **June 20** from **10:00 a.m.** until **2:00p.m.**





By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

We must all be grateful to **President Obama** for his leadership in securing the demise of the terrorist responsible for the attacks on the **United States** on **September 11, 2001**. I hope that this long-awaited act will lead to a more productive political dialogue in this country and create a better future for all, even at the municipal level. Because so much effort and funds have recently been spent on the nation's security, the bread-and-butter issues we are working on locally have

not gotten enough attention. It is my great hope that this will all begin to change now.

It's the season for signing up all the new swimmers for the **Dolphins 2011 season**, and I am urging all of our interested young people to participate. This is one of the most exciting activities in Somerset. For further information, call **Ann Brown** (Trent) at **301-633-4193**.

As most know, **WSSC** has been performing some major emergency repairs in the northern part of Town in order to prevent those nasty sewer backups that some folks have unfortunately experienced. While this project has been a burden for everyone, especially those adjacent to the work, the Staff and I appreciate everyone's patience. Town Inspector **Larry Plummer** has done an excellent job responding to individual complaints, ensuring that any damage to Town or residents is repaired, and answering loads of questions. Once the job is done, he will still be available to work with the water company to address any lingering concerns.

The Council had authorized the use of **Capello Park** as a rest stop for a recent **Montgomery County** based **breast cancer** walk and everything seemed to proceed without a hitch. I dropped by during the morning of the walk to greet some of the walkers, and later I observed that the organization did a good job of cleaning up when they left. Since the fight against cancer is important to so many of us, it was nice that the Town could participate in a small way. I will continue to look for this kind of opportunities in which Somerset can contribute to the work of important nonprofit groups without imposing a burden on our budget.

There was a lot of traffic on the residents' listserv during this past month about how we can all best assist the tornado victims as they struggle to survive the recent natural disaster in Alabama. I applaud everyone's compassion and concern. At such an unfortunate time, it is often difficult to know what and how to contribute. A number of suggestions were made about assisting groups with which Somerset residents or their families are familiar. I have been asked repeatedly about an official Town response; after I contact some municipal leaders in **Alabama** to determine what the greatest needs are, and I will have more definitive information by the time you read this.

John Sullivan (Greystone) has taken a new job and therefore has resigned from our **Board of Elections**. We all greatly appreciated John's service and the professional expertise he brought. I am now seeking residents to apply for this important position.

I regret that the Town Journal did not arrive at most of our homes in a timely manner last month, and I am partially to blame. With the recent staff turnover, the proofreading, which I am responsible for as publisher, was delayed. This will not happen again. I have also asked our **Journal Editor** to check with the mailing house to see if there might have been any other problems.



Town Council Update

Special Council Meeting April 14 2011

The Somerset Town Council met in a Special Meeting on April 14, 2011 to hear updates on the Pool Renovation Project.

Regular Council Meeting May 2, 2011

The regular meeting of the Somerset Town Council was held on May 2, 2011. The following actions were taken:

1. Approved the Fiscal -Year 2012 Operating Budget at \$984,522 and a Capital Budget at \$423,698.
2. Approved the purchase of pool furniture up to the \$15,000 previously appropriated.
3. Approved two project change orders related to the pool house renovation related to interior construction and revisions to the planting plans for the bio-retention pond.

Introduced three ordinances to amend the Town Code. The amendments will:

1. Require a deposit in the amount of one thousand (\$1000) dollars when applying for a Wall Permit
2. Regulate curb cuts
3. Provide for the installation of stop signs on Trent Street at the mid-block of 5400 on the turn.

The amendments are on the June 6 regular Council meeting for action.

1. Continued a hearing to extend a building permit at 4909 Essex Street until the May 16 special Council meeting.
2. Upheld an appeal from 5522 Uppingham Street resulting in a hearing being put back on the agenda for a building permit at this location.
3. Approved the a building permit at 5522 Uppingham Street to construct a two-story addition on the rear of the house, a foyer addition to the front, and the addition of a second heat pump on the site conditional on approval by Montgomery County.
4. Approved a waiver permit for 4509 Dorset Avenue to construct 22 meters of a single-sided fence with the finished side on the interior.
5. Convened as the Historic Preservation Local Advisory Panel and voted to recommend approval to M-NCPPC to grant a Historic Area Work permit at 4728 Dorset Avenue for renovations to the house, the pool house, install an in-ground pool, fence, wall and generator.
6. Approved an application for a building permit at 5528 Greystone Street to demolish and reconstruct a front wall and door.
7. Granted a Generator Permit at 5603 Surrey Street.
8. Granted permission for the Georgetown Prep Tennis Program to use the Town tennis courts for their summer youth program.
10. Approved a License Agreement for Camp Summerset 2011 to use the Town swim facilities.
11. Approved the revised draft of the Somerset Personnel Handbook.
12. Approved an expenditure of \$950 for street sweeping.
13. Approved an expenditure of \$8,000 to replace the Leyland Cypress trees on the west side of the tennis courts. The replacement trees will be Foster Hollies.



Matt Bookman Receiving Award From Army's Head Football Coach, Rich Ellerson.

Lifelong Resident Matt Bookman Honored

By Bob Bookman, Trent Street

Matt Bookman was honored by the *National Football Foundation for Academic and Football Excellence* this spring. From more than **3,000 football seniors** from private and public high schools in **Maryland, Virginia, and DC**, only **19 football seniors** were given this honor.

Coaches and the **B-CC Principal** were present as Matt received accolades for his academic and athletic excellence. Matt's teachers focused on his academic excellence and thoughtful input during class discussions. The consensus of his coaches is that he is a consummate all-around athlete and team player.

Matt accumulated many B-CC rushing records including longest run from scrimmage (**92 yards**), and won two **MVP awards**. In addition to football, Matt excelled on the **B-CC varsity basketball** and **lacrosse teams**. In lacrosse, Matt received the "**Future Super Star**" award and was varsity "**Rookie of the Year.**" As point guard on the basketball team, he was noted for the number of steals he would make, due to his lightning-fast hands and exceptional anticipation.

Matt has lived in Somerset his entire life. He has always been the fastest runner at B-CC. This fall Matt will be playing football and studying hard at **Trinity College** in **Connecticut**.



Matt Bookman Honored

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Town Council Meeting

Somerset Town Hall – Monday, June 6, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Work Session of the Town Council

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

Regular Meeting of the Town Council

1. Approval of Council Minutes – 7:30 p.m.
 - Minutes of the May 2 Regular Meeting
 - Minutes of the May 16 Special Meeting
2. Financial Report – 7:35 p.m.
3. Pool Renovation Update – 7:40 p.m.
4. Suggestions and Questions from Residents – 7:50 p.m.
5. (Tentative based on County Permit) Fact-finding hearing for a building permit for renovation at 4728 Dorset Avenue, including: interior renovations, exterior renovations not entailing expansion of the existing footprint, new in-ground pool, renovations to a sunroom, fence and wall construction, and the installation of an emergency generator – 8:00 p.m.
6. Act on increasing the Consulting Pool Project Manager's Contract to \$143,000 – 8:10 p.m.

Act on Proposed Code Amendments

- Chapter 6 Section 6-710 of the Town Code to require a deposit for a wall permit.
 - Chapter 3 Section 3-102 of the Town Code regarding curb cuts.
 - Chapter 9 Section 9-106 of the Town Code to install stop signs at the 5400 block of Trent Street at the curve – 8:20 p.m.
7. Approve the Proposed Liaison Assignments and other Town Representation for 2011 – 8:30 p.m.

Act on Alternative Council Meeting Dates to Accommodate the Fiscal Year 2012 Holiday Schedule from the normal meeting date on the first Monday of each month to the following dates:

- July 4, 2011 – July 5, 2011
 - September 5, 2011 – September 6, 2011
8. January 2, 2011–January 3, 2012 – 8:40 p.m.
 9. Mayor's Report – 8:45 p.m.
 10. Adjournment – 8:50 p.m.

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