



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Pool House Refinancing

Somerset May Refinance Loan

By Council Member Marnie Shaul

Good news for Somerset! **Municipal interest rates** have dropped significantly since Somerset got its loan for the **pool house renovation** in July 2010.

The financial advisor who helped us obtain a competitive loan package last year told us if we

refinance, we can realize a substantial savings over the life of the loan, even after paying the costs to issue a new tax-exempt bond. Over the next couple of months, the Council will consider whether to go ahead with the refinancing.

If the Council decides to undertake a new loan, we will need to follow the same steps as we did last time:

- **Hiring bond counsel** and a financial advisor
- **Passing an ordinance** to issue a general obligation bond
- **Having the financial advisor** solicit bids from banks
- **Selecting the bid** with the most favorable terms, including both length of issue and interest rate

Because of the timing of the process, one or more special meetings may be required, which will be publicized.

Last month, the *Washington Post* reported that **The Chevy Chase Club** intends to use methyl bromide on their **golf greens** before a ban on the substance takes effect in **January 2013**.

Their proposed use of the toxin became known only after a concerned club member notified an environmental organization. The Club revealed that they have used methyl bromide multiple times over the past few years **without notifying** the surrounding communities, despite their being in close proximity to **eight** elementary and pre-schools and hundreds of homes, including **45** that surround the course.

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Chevy Chase Club's Proposed Use of Methyl Bromide On Their Golf Course

By Ellen Globokar, Dorset Avenue

Methyl bromide is an odorless **pesticide/herbicide** that has been **banned** throughout the world. It is a **neurotoxin**, and production has been banned in the U.S. for several years. Effects of the chemical range from **lung damage** from inhalation to contributing to **ozone depletion**.

Calendar

Monday, November 7

Town Council Meeting

Monday, November 21

MVA Mobile Office

Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25

Office Closed For
Thanksgiving Holiday

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**.

The Preliminary Agenda for each month's Town Council meeting is posted on the Town website (www.townofsomerset.com) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.



On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Brown Bag Lunches a Rousing Success

Almost ten years ago, former Council member **Anne Proctor** (yes, wife of current Council member Alan) came up with a great idea to improve communication in Town and help build community, and our quarterly **Brown Bag Lunch** activity was born. When I was elected to the seat Anne vacated, I pledged to continue this practice and a decade later, I am happy to say I consider it one of my proudest accomplishments. I always attend, and there are usually two or more Council members present.

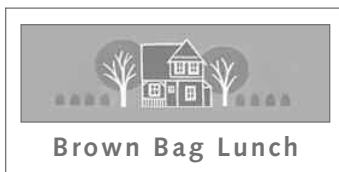
As a way for residents to get to know their **elected officials** better, talk about issues on a casual, yet sometimes intense basis, form new friendships and renew old ones, getting together to share a meal turns out to be the tried-and-true best method. In addition, because the group has always been well represented by longtime residents and those of our “**most experienced**” generation, I am constantly amazed at the amount of wisdom that is regularly imparted.

In late September we had our **largest turnout** ever, and the food people brought created a beautiful, buffet-like spread. We keep the lunch to one hour and the first half is talk among ourselves, followed by a group conversation. This time the topics were especially lively and I was peppered with a number of questions, particularly about the new format for Town meeting agendas and the Town's position on noisy generators. It was important for Council members and me to hear what people are really thinking and feeling, outside of the official-ness of the meeting night. In addition, long-term residents met other long-term residents for the first time, and old friends got caught up on children, grandchildren, and even great-grand.

I hope the folks present were satisfied with our answers that afternoon. At the same time, I appreciated knowing of their **skepticism**. The concerns are legitimate and I am glad we had this forum to hear them. By addressing these views I know it created a better meeting the following Monday, and will lead to a better policy on generators. In fact, one of my harshest critics in Town gave me a compliment when she called out “**good meeting**” after the Council session the following Monday.

The Brown Bag Lunch clearly gives our elected officers a unique opportunity to listen and learn.

I can't wait for the next one.



Brown Bag Lunch

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The **Town Journal** is the official publication of The Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.
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Maxine Finkelstein, Editor
Deadline for ads and copy is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.

Permits Granted



Trees

4513 Cumberland Avenue, Silver Maple. The tree has decay at the base of the trunk and is hazardous.

4804 Falstone, Red Oak. The tree is in rapid decline with many dead branches. There is a large cavity mid-trunk that makes the tree hazardous.

4819 Cumberland Avenue, White Oak. The tree has a healthy canopy but has extensive decay at the base of the tree that has compromised at least 1/3 of the structure of the tree. The tree is hazardous.

5411 Surrey Street, Hemlock. The Hemlock is struggling and is close to the corner of the house.

4900 Cumberland Avenue, Tulip Poplar. The tree is in decline and creating a hazardous condition.

4721 Dorset Avenue, Pine Tree. The top of the tree has died, and removal of the tree is due to hazardous conditions.

Fences

5526 Greystone Street. Fence is being replaced along the back of the property, wood panels of 8' height (Stockade Fence).

Driveway Aprons

5527 Warwick Place

4722 Dorset Avenue

5525 Warwick Place

4920 Dorset Avenue

4902 Cumberland Avenue

4707 Trent Court

4818 Cumberland Avenue

5707 Trent Street

4818 Cumberland Avenue

Chevy Chase Club *from page 1*

On **October 6**, public officials and environmental experts from **Somerset, Chevy Chase Village, the Town of Chevy Chase, Chevy Chase Section 3, and Chevy Chase West**, met with the Club's president, president-elect, and other members of Chevy Chase Club to discuss the communities' opposition to the Club's proposed use of methyl bromide. Despite insisting that they are a good neighbor, the Club leadership stated that they were **going forward**. After the Club gave their explanation of how they had reached their decision, environmental experts gave many reasons why the use of methyl bromide is **dangerous** in a densely populated area close to schools and homes. Community officials said it was **unacceptable** for the club to use methyl bromide and stated that their residents were very concerned. The Club said it would review the material presented but gave no commitments.

George Wyeth, chair of **Somerset's Environmental Committee**, began a petition drive to urge the Club not to use methyl bromide. Petitions were presented to the Club. Since then, the Club has written the surrounding communities and said, "**The health and safety of the families in our community is our highest priority.**" The Club committed to consider additional scientific evidence and alternatives and said they will get back to the communities by the end of October.

Two meetings have been held at the Town Hall to discuss **response and strategy**. The next few weeks are critical. Despite numerous **negative press** stories in both print and electronic media, there are no signs that the Club intends to reverse their decision. We need to keep the pressure on. Here is how you can help.

- **Watch the listserv** for calls for volunteers and upcoming meetings. **PARTICIPATE.**
- **Inform and educate** your neighbors who live in Somerset and surrounding communities.
- **Circulate a petition.** **Steve Arkin** has offered to coordinate the petition drive. Please contact him at sarkin@deloitte.com.
- **Contact your elected officials**—Federal, State, and County to ask for their help in stopping the use of methyl bromide at the Chevy Chase Club
- **Urge your child's elementary school or preschool** to send a letter to the Club. Somerset's PTA did so. This will have enormous impact. (Please let us know if you are willing to be the contact for a particular school and we will provide information for you.)
- **Volunteer**—we will be needing people to put up yard signs, staff tables at neighborhood events, circulate petitions, and plan events. Be available for reporters. **Maura Vanderzon, Maxine Finkelstein, and Mayor Slavin** have all made themselves available to the press. If your child needs to fulfill service hours, this is a great way to impact their community.

Contact **Steve** (sarkin@deloitte.com), **George** (george.wyeth@verizon.net), or me (eglobokar@gmail.com) if you are willing to volunteer.

Notes from the Manager's Desk

By Rich Charnovich, Town Manager



Town Hall Top 10 List

Each month I will do my best to inform our residents about 10 important issues I see happening right now within the Town of Somerset. Let's just hope that **Dave Letterman** doesn't find out that I "borrowed" his idea! As always, if anyone has any questions regarding Town operations, please feel free to contact me at Town Hall at *manager@townofsomerset.com* or 301-657-3211.

E-Journal Sign-Up

Please contact the Town Hall to opt into the **E-version** of the Town Journal and save a tree. Remember, we are a tree city!



Pepco

Recently, the Town of Somerset has approved two permit applications for **Pepco** to perform reliability work within the Town. Work has begun in the Town on one of the permit applications as well as on Pepco's **4-year** tree pruning program. If anyone would like specific details on the two permits that have been approved, please contact me. In addition to these permits, Town officials have scheduled a meeting through the **Ad Hoc Pepco Committee** on **November 16, 2011** to discuss reliability concerns and measures that can be taken in the future to help limit power outages within the Town.

Leaf Removal Program Beginning November 1, 2011

The Town will begin vacuuming leaves **November 1, 2011** and continue until mid-December. **Vacuum trucks** pick up continuously, street by street. All leaves should be raked to the curb. Please ***do not*** rake your leaves into the street. Make sure that cans, sticks, bottles, rocks or other debris do not contaminate your leaves. Also, ***do not*** park your car in front of the leaf piles, as this prevents our crew from picking them up. A notice will remain on our weekly email blast informing residents of the leaf removal program.

Town Directory Update

The Town is currently working on the **2012 Town Directory** and we know there are many incorrect email addresses in the current Directory. Please email these changes to *town@townofsomerset.com*. If you are new to Somerset or if you wish to amend your family's entry, please send us an email containing the information you wish to be included in your listing. You can use the format in the current directory as your guideline; otherwise, we suggest you consider including the following as applicable:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Children: _____

Address: _____

Tel #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email Address: _____

Please provide the information by email no later than **December 15**, which will help ensure the accuracy of the listing.

Register Your Emergency Phone Number On Your Driver's License

Thanks to a new option now available from the **Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)**, Maryland drivers can add three emergency contacts to their driver's license so police will know who to call if an accident occurs. The emergency contact information is stored electronically on an individual's driver's license and will be available only to authorized law enforcement personnel. The information can be added online—in less than 10 minutes—by going to MVA's website at *www.mva.maryland.gov*, clicking "**On-line Transactions**," then clicking "**More**" and then, "**Emergency Contacts**."

East Wisconsin Avenue Proposed Sidewalk

I had the opportunity to attend a public hearing on this particular project recently. The **Maryland Highway Administration** is proposing to construct a 6' sidewalk from **Grafton Road to Bradley Boulevard** along the east side of **Wisconsin Avenue** (approximately 3500 feet). At this point, the project is scheduled to begin no earlier than the spring of **2012**. If you have any questions about this project, please contact **Kate Mazzara** at 301-513-7346, or *kmazzara@sha.state.md.us*

Curb Cut Policy

The Town Council recently enacted a **curb cut policy**. For the near to immediate future, only one curb cut will be permitted per property. No requests will be accepted to consider the approval of two or more cuts. In addition, any application to widen an existing curb cut cannot exceed 20 feet. If anyone has questions regarding this policy, please contact me.

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Council Regular Meeting Actions – September 6, 2011 Meeting

The Town Council met in regular session on September 6, 2011. The Council took the following actions:

1. Approval of the September 6, 2011 Council Meeting Minutes and September 7, 2011 Closed Session Meeting Minutes.
2. Approval of various project change orders for the swimming pool project.
3. Approval of Payment 13 to Therrien Waddell for \$35,459.08, contingent upon substantial completion of the remaining punch list items by October 15, 2011.
4. Approval of the following Town trees to be removed as per the recommendation of the Town Arborist:
 - Capello Park–Red Maple, White Pine, and five dead trees in the naturalized area on the corner of Wisconsin and Dorset Avenue.
 - 4824 Cumberland Avenue–nine Hemlock and one Dogwood.
 - 4515 Cumberland Avenue–three Pines, one Magnolia, one Cedar, two Leyland cypress, and one Maple.
5. Approval of the following Town trees to be planted consistent with the current Tree Planting Plan: Scarlet Oak at 4715 Essex, Scarlet Oak at 4812 Essex, Scarlet Oak at 4816 Essex, Scarlet Oak at 4818 Essex, Yoshino Cherry at 4810 Falstone, Red Oak at 4803 Grantham, Willow Oak at 5712 Surrey, Red Sunset Maple at 5501 Trent, Zelkova at 5712 Warwick.
6. Approval of a Generator Permit and recommendation to the Historic Preservation Commission for a generator to be located at 5807 Surrey Street. The applicant has stated that they will build a wall, or if necessary, a shed to abate the generator's noise.
7. Approval of a 6-month generator extension for the permit currently in place at 4809 Grantham Avenue. The permit will expire on April 3, 2012.
8. Approval of a Resolution proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month.
9. Approval of a Contract for leaf removal services from the upper pool parking lot for Calendar Year 2011 with Wray Brothers Landscapes for \$22,500, as recommended by the Town Manager.

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Manager's Desk from page 4

Enforcement of Generator Noise Regulations

Many homes in the Town either already have generators installed or will be applying to install **emergency generators**. Most of these generators have been unable to pass the county noise level requirements. Please be advised that the Town staff and I will be requesting that mitigation measures be taken to meet the **noise level** requirements. This is a very sensitive issue, and we realize that many homes need the generators for various reasons medical or otherwise, but we also must be mindful that the noise of these generators can affect our neighbors.

Private And Town Tree Removal Process

This is just a reminder that the Town of Somerset must approve any trees to be removed within the Town, whether they are **public** or **privately** owned. Please make sure that you contact the Town Hall to obtain a permit in advance of removing any trees from your property. Violators of this Ordinance are subject to fines in accordance with the Town Code.

Pool Guest Fees in Arrears

There are currently approximately **28 households** in arrears on their Town Pool guest fees account. Please keep in mind that this pool season, the Town has required that all guest fees be ***Prepaid***. Please contact Town Hall either via phone or email if you feel your account may be in arrears. Town staff will continue to send out notices to those who need to bring their account current.

Dog Regulations

Please keep two things in mind regarding the walking of dogs within the community. **1. Per Montgomery County leash regulations**, make sure your dog is on a leash when being walked around the neighborhood. This is important to ensure the safety of pedestrians walking, as well as that of other animals in the neighborhood. **2. Per the Town Code**, please make sure that dog waste is disposed of properly and is not left on sidewalks or on private properties within the Town. The Town continues to receive complaints about this, and we want to make sure it is curtailed to keep the community looking beautiful.

2012 League of Women Voter Calendars Available at Town Hall

Calendars cost \$7 each. Purchases can be made by cash or check for the exact amount. Proceeds benefit the **League of Women Voters**. Please contact Town Hall at **301-657-3211** for further information.



By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

On the afternoon of the last Town meeting, the Council and I dedicated the new pool house in a brief, but meaningful, ceremony attended by Council members, our architects, contractors, Town attorney, staff, and a few residents. **Maryland Municipal Channel 16** recorded the event and many residents who were unable to attend subsequently watched it on television. We were pleased to greet Mayor Emeritus **Walter Behr** (Grantham) who has lived in Somerset for over half a century and has always had a keen interest in the swimming pool property. The ultimate success of this project is a real tribute to the unified efforts of all of us, particularly the hard-working Council members who made all of the decisions and provided expert oversight once construction began. We are also greatly in debt to our architect/consultant **Lou Balodemas**, and Pool Committee Chair **Barbara Condos** (Falstone). Now, for the next generation, our residents will be able to better enjoy our magnificent pool site, create lifetime friendships, support our wonderful swim team, get needed exercise, and bond as a community. For those who were unable to attend, we will plan a lively kickoff celebration at the pool house in the **spring of 2012**.

Most of the residents I know are appalled at the decision of the nearby **Chevy Chase Club** to make use—in the very near future—of the chemical methyl bromide to “improve” the condition of their golf courses. As of this writing, and in spite of widespread opposition from the surrounding community and a very negative editorial in the *Washington Post*, the Club has not changed its stance and is still making excuses. Thanks to Environmental Committee Chair **George Wyeth** (Falstone) we now have a petition that I am hoping hundreds will sign. We are planning to present these petitions to the Club at various times in the near future.

The **State Highway Administration** is proposing to install sidewalks on the east side of **Wisconsin Avenue** between **Grafton Street** and **Bradley Lane**. This is welcome news for many residents who have been asking about this possibility for many years. A Public Meeting on this topic took place at the **Chevy Chase Village Hall** recently and there appeared to be little opposition. I encourage all supporters of this idea to send me an email and I will present a collection of them to our **State House District 16** delegation.

Our esteemed Information Technology Coordinator **Gayley Knight**, a former resident, who has brought the Town into the **21st Century** as far as our website, e-blasts, computer hardware and the like, has announced she will be ending her association with us in the very near future. We are so appreciative of the countless hours of work Gayley dedicated to Somerset, many of them on a pro bono basis. Gratefully, she has put vital systems in place that will make her successor’s job a lot easier. Now our Town Manager, **Rich Charnovich**, will write a job description and the **Ad Hoc Personnel Committee** will go about interviewing candidates to take this position. All residents are encouraged to help us identify the right person for the job.

Our beautiful new pool house provided an excellent site for the **2011 Welcoming Party** where the Council and I had the opportunity to meet many of our newest residents and hear about their families and their reasons for choosing our Town. This yearly, memorable event is a great example of the kind of Town we are, and I want to thank **Bonnie Lewin** (Cumberland) again for chairing it with the help of **Ann Brown** (Trent) and **Lyndsey Gerber** (Cumberland).

I was so pleased to see **Alex Acosta** (Essex) quoted in the *Washington Post* recently in a front page Style section article on diversity. Her words were very insightful and a reminder of all the writing talent in Town.

In mid-September a resident on **Falstone** notified me that someone threw a firecracker on her lawn one evening and the flame rose about six feet. She called police and was told there were four other similar incidents in **Bethesda** that night. Anyone with further knowledge of this incident should get in touch with me.

Finally, I am pleased to report that my next-door neighbor, **Dr. Norman Coleman** (Warwick) who was listed last month as a finalist for the federal government’s **Samuel J. Heyman Service** to America award, was honored with the award. We all send him our heartiest congratulations.

Council Meeting from page 5

10. Approval of a Resolution confirming the closure of Wisconsin Avenue and River Road entrances on Sunday, October 23, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, for the 8K road race sponsored by the Somerset Elementary School PTA.

In addition to the items approved at the Regular Meeting, the Council also heard the Financial Report from the Clerk-Treasurer, Richard Charnovich, and a Pool House renovation update from Lou Balodemas, project consultant. The Council also continued a fact-finding hearing at 4909 Essex Avenue regarding ongoing construction there.

Mayor Slavin indicated during the meeting that Town Staff is going to work to utilize the Town’s sound system during Council Meetings beginning in November.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Town Council Meeting

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

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on Monday, November 7, 2011 at the Somerset Town Hall. Agenda updates are posted on the Town website:

www.townofsomerset.com

Regular Meeting of the Town Council

1. Council Work Session – 7:00 p.m.
2. Council Meeting Convenes – 7:30 p.m.
3. Motion: To approve the following Council Meeting Minutes
 - October 3, 2011 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
 - October 24, 2011 Special Council Meeting Minutes
4. Discussion: Town Manager's November Financial Report – 7:35 p.m.
5. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of the FY11 Audit as recommended by the Town Audit Committee – 7:40 p.m.
6. Discussion: To consider introduction of a refunding Ordinance to the Town of Somerset Public Facilities Bond of 2010 – 7:50 p.m.*
7. Comments: Town Residents/Agenda Items – 8:00 p.m.
8. Comments: Town Residents/Non-Agenda Items – 8:05 p.m.
9. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider an application submitted by Bonnie and Martin Lewin, 4817 Cumberland Avenue, to install a gas Kohler 14 Res Generator. The applicants have acknowledged they may need to undertake noise reduction measures if the generator exceeds the noise standards – 8:10 p.m.
10. Discussion: Report from Ed Mulheron of Mulheron Tree Experts on upcoming winter season maintenance procedures – 8:20 p.m.
11. Discussion: Pool House Construction Update – 8:30 p.m.
12. Motion: To consider approval of PCO 79 for the Somerset Pool Renovation Project in the amount of \$1,523.83 – 8:40 p.m.
13. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider adoption of a Resolution opposing the Chevy Chase Country Club's use of Methyl Bromide to treat portions of its golf course – 8:45 p.m.*
14. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider adoption of a Resolution opposing Montgomery County Council Member George Leventhal's Bill 29-11, which would eliminate the Friendship Heights Transportation Advisory Committee – 8:55 p.m.
15. Discussion/Motion: To consider the Mayor's nomination of John Stewart (Dorset) to the Board of Supervisors of Elections – 9:00 p.m.
16. Discussion: Mayor's Report – 9:05 p.m.
17. Adjourn – 9:10 p.m.

Key

Public Hearing Item: Agenda item where public comment is permitted.

Discussion Item: Agenda item limited to discussion among the Council, Mayor and Town Staff.

Motion Item: Agenda item requesting action, limited to Council discussion.

Comments: Opinions and Questions from Town residents.

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 Zeughhauser, Cathy Pickar, Vice President Marnie Shaul, Alan Proctor