



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Somerset's Annual Flu Clinic a Big Success!

By Barbara Marblestone, Trent Street

Nearly 100 doses of vaccine were administered at the Town Hall on September 27th by Medstar visiting nurses. Clearly, many Town residents appreciate the convenience of this annual preventive healthcare event, and enjoy chatting with neighbors at the same time!

If you noticed the smooth and efficient operation of this year's clinic, you will want to thank **Lucy Freeman** (Dorset), a longtime clinic volunteer, who generously offered to supervise this year's clinic with the enthusiastic help of **Nicole Ventura**, the Town's Administrative Assistant. Other volunteers included **Sue Besharov** (Cumberland), **Janet Fernandez** (Essex), **Joan Krash** (Essex), **Lucky Marmon** (Cumberland), **Sue Schneider** (Greystone), and Council Vice President **Marnie Shaul** (Uppingham). Their efforts are much appreciated. Wishing you a healthy winter!

Renovation of Somerset's Tennis Courts Under Consideration



Somerset's Tennis Courts Renovation.

By Matt Fink, Chair, Tennis Committee, Dorset Avenue

The Town's Tennis Committee has begun to consider the renovation of the tennis courts, one of Somerset's valuable assets. The courts were constructed in 1966 with a stone and asphalt base underlying an asphalt surface. Cushioning material was installed on top of the surface in 2001.

Residents are now complaining about increasing soft spots. Different theories have been offered as to the cause: the underlying base is decaying, the surface is separating from the base, the cushioning material is deteriorating, water is damaging the courts.

The Tennis Committee thought it would be advisable for the Town Council to retain an independent consultant to determine the likely cause of the problem, consider possible solutions and, if the Council approves, prepare specifications for renovation and solicit bids. The Committee identified several candidates and recommended that the Council retain Mr. G. Douglas White, a principal with Thomas Downey, Ltd., consulting engineers. Mr. White has worked on a number of tennis court projects and recently provided engineering advice to

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Calendar

Monday, November 4
Council Meeting

Monday, November 25
MVA Mobile Office

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

The Best Way to Help the Less Fortunate

Since I was a boy growing up in Montgomery County, I have had the privilege of witnessing an amazing transformation. In the 50's and 60's, the County was a classic "bedroom" community; now, it is a blend of suburban, urban and rural. We have beautiful residential neighborhoods and vibrant downtowns.

Unfortunately, not all the changes have been positive. For instance, as I travel out and about the County, not one day goes by that I am not approached by a street person asking for change. And while I know the correct response is "sorry, no," there is always a pang of guilt and a wish that the person would go away. But the First Amendment and the manners I was taught by my parents raise an interesting conflict. However, we must be educated by the facts: these folks use the money to support addictions, the locations they are populating cause traffic and safety problems, and many are not truly homeless.

I am pleased that the County, working with advocates and social service providers, has begun a new initiative to encourage all of us to use our cell phones to contribute \$5 each time we are approached by a panhandler. You can text "SHARE" on your cell phone and make this contribution to the Community Foundation for Montgomery County, a non-profit, non-government organization that distributes proceeds to grassroots efforts in the County.

So in order for this initiative to be effective, we must ALL participate. We must understand that there is no need for anyone to be begging because there are services available 24/7 to provide help.

And if you feel that bad, know that others are empathetic, and then make a real contribution by volunteering your time and talent to Interfaith Works, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless or the scores of other effective organizations that are giving a hand up, not a hand out.



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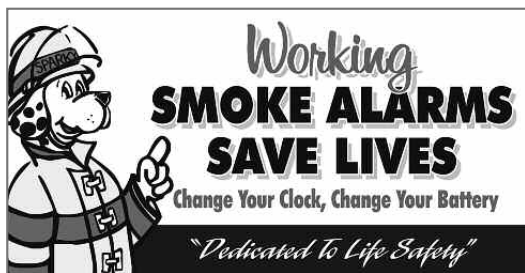
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Deadline for copy and ads is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.

Is Your Smoke Alarm Protecting You and Your Family?

By Gail Werner, Representative to Bethesda Fire Department, Surrey Street

Many of us think that because our smoke alarms are properly installed and we have changed the batteries, they will alert us in time if a fire should erupt in our homes. But this may not be the case. If your fire alarm is ten years old or more, it may be inadequate and should be replaced.

House fires are rare, but they do occur, especially in older homes. In the years that I have lived in Somerset, there have been four fires on my block or adjacent blocks. Smoke alarms are an important defense, as a few seconds of warning may make the difference between life and death. However, the sensors and sound generators on



smoke alarms get dirty from years of dust and kitchen smoke. They

cannot be cleaned. In contrast, new alarms have improved features and up-to-date technology. Batteries in the new alarms last for ten years, so you do not have to change the batteries every year. Some battery-operated alarms can communicate with each other, and some wired alarms can communicate with battery-operated ones. Some newer alarms have a nuisance button that can shut off an alarm without the need to disable it. These newer alarms mean more protection for your home and family, and more convenience as well.

Maryland changed its smoke alarm law in 2013 to reflect best practices based on experience with fires, improved technology and revised building codes. All new construction

needs to meet these higher standards. Many older homes will need to meet the higher standards by 2018. Why wait when you can act now and offer your family better protection.

You can find more information on the requirements of the new law, decide what alarm is best for your home, obtain installation advice and charts, and view the fact sheets on which this article is based at www.bethesdafire.org. Established in 1926, the Bethesda Fire Department maintains three stations, including the one at Bradley and Wisconsin.

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Somerset's Tennis Courts



Renovation of Tennis Courts Under Consideration *from page 1*

our neighbor, Somerset House, in connection with the renovation of its courts. At its meeting on Monday, October 7, the Council approved the retention of Mr. White for a fee of up to \$9,500.

If the Town decides to proceed with renovation, there will be a number of issues. Many types of surfaces and cushioning materials are available. Which type should Somerset use? The courts are not locked. Despite warning signs, bicycles, roller skates, and skate boards have appeared on the courts. In order to protect the new surface, should we move to a lock and key system?

The Tennis Committee will hold one or more Town meetings to hear residents' views. Please feel free to contact me at any time at mainsailmd@verizon.net.



Utility Projects

WSSC has received an extension until early November for completion of its work within the Town. WSSC is also in the process of developing plans for work in the environmentally sensitive areas in

Somerset. These plans had not been submitted to the Town as of mid-October. An agreement with Washington Gas was approved at the October 7, 2013 Council Meeting. Washington Gas is scheduled to begin work on Essex Avenue at the end of October.



Town Hall Interior Work

A contract has been approved to complete interior work within the Town Hall, including interior painting, acoustical panels, floor refinishing, signage and general electrical upgrades.

From October 1, 2013 through November 30, 2013, no rentals of the Town Hall or exercise classes will be taking place. The November Council Meeting will be held at the Somerset Elementary School. Please contact the Town Hall with any specific questions.

Fall Leaf Collection



The Town will begin vacuuming leaves at the end of October and will continue until mid-December. As we did last year, we have developed a schedule for collection that divides the Town into quadrants. This helps our staff with scheduling collections and gives residents an opportunity to plan for the collections. The insert to this month's Journal identifies these quadrants and provides leaf collection dates.

Please be sure that **all leaves are raked to the curb. Do not rake or blow your leaves into the street.** Please make sure that there are **no cans, sticks, bottles or rocks in your leaf pile.** It is also important that you **do not block leaf piles with your car** between the hours of **9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday**, during leaf collection periods. Our crew cannot do its work if there is a car blocking the pile.

Update on the Town's New Website

The Town's new website, powered by Civic Plus, is scheduled to go live towards the end of November. The endeavor has been led by Council Member **Cathy Pickar** (Dorset) and the Town's Ad Hoc Communications Committee that includes **Barbara Marenus** (Surrey), **Diane Horn** (Surrey), and the Town Manager. The new site is designed to improve Town communications and will reflect up-to-date website technology.



Halloween Safety Reminders

Here are a variety of suggestions for ensuring the safety of children on Halloween:

- Children should carry flashlights when trick or treating, walk on sidewalks where available, and cross the street at the corner or at a crosswalk.
- Wear brightly colored or reflective costumes that are not too long.
- Face makeup is preferable to wearing a mask. If a child is wearing a mask, it should not impair the child's vision.
- A parent, other family adult, or responsible older sibling should always accompany younger children.
- Older children should plan out a trick or treating route with their parents, wear a watch, carry a cell phone, and return home at an agreed upon time.
- Children should never approach a home without lights.
- Children should not eat any collected candy until an adult has inspected it.
- Unwrapped or partially wrapped candy should be thrown away.
- Yards should be clear of items such as ladders and hoses that could trip young children.
- Battery Jack O' Lantern candles are preferable to using a real flame.
- If candles are used in pumpkins, place the pumpkins away from where trick or treaters will be walking or standing.
- Keep paper or cloth yard decorations away from burning candles.
- Motorists are advised to drive slower and with extra caution through neighborhoods on Halloween.

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met in regular session on October 7, 2013. The Council took the following actions:

1. Adoption of Resolution proclaiming November to be Municipal Government Works Month.
2. Approval of an emergency HVAC Unit application submitted by 4701 Cumberland Avenue.
3. Approval of a building permit application submitted for 5524 Greystone Street to enclose a portion of their existing pergola.
4. Approval of a building permit application submitted for 5500 Uppingham Street to raise and slope the sunroom (porch) roof.
5. Tabled a generator installation application for 4806 Essex Avenue until the November Council Meeting.
6. Tabled a generator installation application for 4515 Cumberland Avenue until the November Council Meeting.
7. Approval of a 6-month generator permit extension for 5403 Trent Street.
8. Approval of applications for demolition, building, curb cut dumpster, retaining wall, tree removal and reforestation permits for 5606 Warwick Place.
9. Approval of an application submitted by 4712 Cumberland Avenue by the Local Advisory Panel to the Historic Preservation Commission.
10. Approval of the removal of the following 6 trees at 5401 Uppingham Street: 1 Magnolia, 1 Holly, 2 Cherry, 1 White Pine and 1 Birch.
11. Approval of a tree reforestation plan amendment for 5513 Uppingham Street. The applicant has chosen to donate a canopy tree to be placed in the Town right of way in lieu of planting a canopy tree in the rear yard.
12. Approval of a site plan amendment for 5513 Uppingham Street to move the location of the generator from the side yard to the rear yard.
13. Approval of a permit application submitted by Washington Gas to replace approximately 1545' of Bare Steel Main and service lines on Essex Avenue from Warwick Place to the Essex Avenue cul-de-sac.
14. Approval of a permit extension to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to November 7, 2013 to complete sewer main work within the Town.
15. Approval of a 3 year snow removal contract with Mulheron Tree Experts.
16. Approval of a payment to Balodemas Architects in the amount of \$10,175 for interior cosmetic work to be completed in the Town Hall.

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By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

For the third year in a row, I am pleased to report that Council Member **Barbara Condos** (Falstone), **Nicole Ventura**, our Town Hall administrative assistant, and I participated in the Walk and Ride challenge in the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District, and **Barbara** was a winner! For three weeks, **Barbara, Nicole, and I** wore pedometers and kept a record of the total number of steps we took each day. The overall goal was to promote walking

and get people out of their cars. It was a lot of exercise and a lot of fun. In week three, Barbara's name was randomly drawn from a group of competitors who logged between 25,000 and 49,999 steps over those seven days, and she won a goodie bag from the Commuter Services store. Good show, Barbara. Next year, I hope that we can expand the effort and maybe have two teams (which can include Town residents). Please get in touch with me if you want to participate.



State Senator Brian Frosh and Mayor Slavin at Bikeshare Program Inauguration.

Also, I recently biked to Rockville to join State and County officials for the inauguration of the **Bikeshare** program in Maryland. **County Executive Ike Leggett** presided at the press conference where he thanked our own **State Senator Brian Frosh** (Grantham) for his major role in obtaining funding. There are several stations in the Friendship Heights area. We were joined by Somerset's leading bike advocate **Steve Friedman** (Essex).

We have been working with Congressman Chris Van Hollen's office regarding the terrible mail service we have been getting, and as a result our mail service seems to have improved somewhat. Nonetheless, we are still getting a number of complaints daily. Accordingly, I am still collecting letters from individuals

with their specific concerns, and I plan to forward this correspondence to Congressman Van Hollen as I receive them. The more people I hear from, the better.

Our Town, over many years, has publicized the County's strict leash law but, in spite of this, there are a number of dog owners who ignore our requests to adhere to the law. And we get a lot of folks calling us about resulting problems—poop not picked up, dog fights, dogs scaring children, etc. Since the Council, staff, police and I can't cover the whole Town at one time, we need the help of residents to report these violations. Unfortunately, we often hear about the same violators over and over. Of course, some of them do not live in Town so we don't have as much control over them. I want to continue to ask residents to call the Town Hall to let us know when they see a dog being walked unleashed.

Several months ago, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the Committee for Montgomery, a coalition of leaders representing the public, private and nonprofit sectors in our County. The mission of the organization is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to the County, including education, health, economics and transportation. Each year, there is a legislative breakfast in advance of the opening of the General Assembly. This year, there will be a lot of excitement at the breakfast since there will be a gubernatorial debate with all of the candidates from both parties. I have personally purchased a table of 10 and invited the Council Members and the Town manager to attend. I will have at least 3 additional seats and want to offer them to any interested Town resident on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested, please contact me at mayor@townofsomerset.com. For more information about the organization, go to www.committeeformontgomery.org. The breakfast is Monday, December 16, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel.

Due to the closure of the Town Hall this month for painting and re-finishing floors, the quarterly Brown Bag Lunch will be delayed until December.

Happy Halloween to Everyone!

17. Approval of PCO 8 in the amount of \$726 to add fabric liner to the acoustical panels that will be located in the Council meeting room.
18. Approval of PCO 4R in the amount of \$1,755 to allow the Town office to maintain computer networking during the renovation work that includes data/phone cabling, jacks, etc.
19. Approval to enter into an agreement with Thomas Downey, LTD Consulting at a cost not to exceed \$9,500. The purpose is to research and provide services in relation to the future resurfacing of the Town's tennis courts.
20. In addition to the Council actions, Mayor Slavin provided his report to the Council, and Town Manager Charnovich provided the Financial Report to the Council. Town Inspector Plummer provided a report to the Council on the construction projects at 5513 Uppingham Street and 5529 Uppingham Street. Representatives from the 4701 Willard Avenue Project provided an update on the construction work there to the Council.

E-Journal Sign Up

We would like to encourage residents 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 manager@townofsomerset.com or at 301-657-3211.



General Permits



Tree Removal Permits

- 4810 Cumberland Avenue, Canadian Hemlock
- 4908 Essex Avenue, Red Maple
- 5525 Trent Street, Crabapple
- 5701 Warwick Place, Scarlet Oak

Fence Permits

- 4507 Dorset Avenue, 6' pressure treated pine and cedar, rear yard and one side yard
- 5409 Surrey Street, 5' fence located along the perimeter of the backyard, above the wall
- 4808 Grantham Avenue, pressure treated pine solid board located on the side and rear yard

Driveway Apron Permit

- 4812 Essex Avenue, installation of a new curb apron

A Reminder from the Bethesda Fire Department:

Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Make Sure Your Smoke Alarms Perform as Intended
– When You Need Them The Most –

- **TEST** smoke alarms monthly
- Change the **BATTERIES** every year
- Beware of **CHIRPING** smoke alarms
– it's time to replace the batteries
- Replace older smoke alarms – **REPLACE**
alarms that are more than 10 years old
- Know the **SOUND** of the smoke alarm and
what to do if the alarm goes off



**Remember, Only Working Smoke
Alarms Can Save Your Life!**

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting

Somerset Elementary School, November 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.*

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on Monday, November 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Somerset Elementary School. Agenda updates are posted on the Town website: www.townofsomerset.com.

Audit Committee Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Council Meeting Convened – 7:00 p.m.

* For this month only, the Council Meeting will take place at the Somerset Elementary School, start at 7:00 p.m. and end by 10:00 p.m.

Comments: Public Comment Period – 7:00 p.m.

CONSENT

1. **Motion:** To consider approval of the August 5, 2013 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.
2. **Motion:** To consider approval of the September 3, 2013 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.
3. **Motion:** To consider approval of the October 7, 2013 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

NON-CONSENT

1. **Discussion:** Town Manager's November Financial Report – 7:25 p.m.
2. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the FY13 Audit as recommended by the Town Audit Committee – 7:30 p.m.
3. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a 20 KW generator installation application submitted by David and Samantha Sapin, 4806 Essex Avenue, contingent upon the generator passing the required noise levels – 7:40 p.m.
4. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a 20 KW generator installation application submitted by Brian and Meredith Davis, 4515 Cumberland Avenue, contingent upon the generator passing the required noise levels – 7:55 p.m.
5. **Discussion:** Status update on construction project at 5513 Uppingham Street – 8:00 p.m.
6. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the removal of an 18" Norway maple tree located in the wooded area behind 5615 Warwick Place, as recommended by the Town Arborist – 8:05 p.m.
7. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider a request from the Parks and Natural Resources Committee for funding to host a forum in February related to conservation landscaping – 8:10 p.m.
8. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider taking a position on the Zoning Rewrite that is currently being completed by Montgomery County officials – 8:15 p.m.
9. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider confirmation approval of PCO 9R in relation to the Town Hall interior renovation project in the amount of \$1,447.80. The scope of work is to provide AS cable hanging system in lieu of Ogee wood trim in the council meeting room – 8:25 p.m.



Council Members: Barbara Zeughouser, Cathy Pickar, Marnie Shaul, Franny Peale, Barbara Condos

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10. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider confirmation approval of PCO 10 in relation to the Town Hall interior renovation project in the amount of \$1,089.00. The scope of work is to replace the existing closet doors in the Mayor's office and pantry area – 8:30 p.m.
11. **Discussion:** Mayor's Report – 8:35 p.m.
12. **Adjourn:** – 8:40 p.m.

Council work session will take place after the Regular Meeting if time permits.

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.

* Please note the Public Comment Period at 7:30 p.m. may run less than 20 minutes. 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 since discussions sometimes run ahead of schedule.

This is a preliminary Agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two to three 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 contact Rich Charnovich at Town Hall if you are interested in what has been added, or consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town website/email blasts for the most up-to-date Agenda.