



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

*“Where People Have Deep Roots
and Grow Strong”*

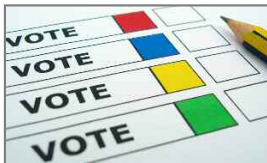


Volume 60 • No. 12

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Town Election Scheduled for Monday, March 23rd



By Phyllis Wiesenfelder, Chair, Board of Supervisors of Elections, Cumberland Avenue

It is that time of year again and Town residents will have an opportunity to vote for **three Town Council seats** in the upcoming election on **Monday, March 23, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Somerset Town Hall**. Nominations for the three Council seats will be accepted at the Town Council meeting scheduled for Monday, February 2, 2015. Additional nominations may be

made if 20 registered voters sign a petition and it is filed with the Clerk-Treasurer not less than 21 days before the election.

The Town Charter requires its elected officials to be:

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

If you are registered in Montgomery County, you are automatically registered in Somerset and can vote in the Town election. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you may vote in the Town election by filling out a voter registration form. You can register in person at the Town Hall on Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by sending a completed registration form to the Town Hall. If you would like a registration form, please call the Town Hall at **301-657-3211** or email Town Manager **Rich Charnovich** at manager@townofsomerset.com. The deadline for registering to vote is Wednesday, March 9, 2015.



PEPCO Tree Removal and Trimming Process

By Rich Charnovich, Town Manager

As many of you have seen, PEPCO's contractor has been in Somerset removing and trimming some Town trees. Given the Town's recent heightened concerns and interest in PEPCO's tree removal and trimming process, as seen on numerous recent Somerset listserv posts, I would like to provide some information about how these processes work. There will be further articles on this topic in the Journal as events warrant.

1. Public Tree Removals

No public trees can be removed without approval of the Town Council. Several months ago, PEPCO proposed removing about 100 Town trees. Dr. Tolbert Feather, the Town's arborist, inspected every tree that PEPCO proposed removing and recommended the removal of only 15 of the trees based on his assessment of their condition. Once the arborist recommended a tree's removal, the homeowner nearest the public tree and adjacent

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Calendar

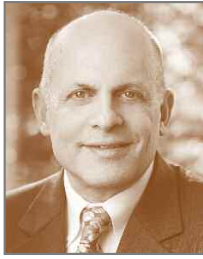
Sunday, February 8

Art Show Reception at Town Hall

Monday, February 23

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.



On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Remembering Mayor Emeritus Walter Behr and Two Other Somerset Residents

Many Town residents attended a beautiful service at Temple Sinai recently to memorialize the passing of my predecessor **Walter Behr** (Grantham), which featured moving eulogies

by his accomplished children who all grew up in Somerset. Walter left an indelible footprint on our municipality. He laid the groundwork for the modern Town government, and hired excellent employees like Tom Carter, Enrique Cabrera and Larry Plummer. I will remember him for this tenacious, hard-working style and perfect attendance. He was truly a credit to the senior citizens of our Town as he served in office until he was past 90 years of age.



Walter Behr, Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, and Barbara Behr at July 4th event

Our former leader also was an excellent writer, having personally edited this Journal for years. He was a well-known figure throughout the County and State, and taught us the importance of being involved throughout the region. I was

proud to proclaim him Mayor Emeritus following his retirement in 2008 and initiate naming the tennis courts in his honor. While the meeting room at Town Hall is also dedicated to him, we will soon find another significant way to recognize his accomplishments. I know that he would be particularly pleased that his obituary made the front page of the Washington Post Metro section.

In a strange coincidence, I also attended two other funeral services at the same synagogue soon after Walter's. They were for two former residents who will always remain in our hearts, **Matthew Ornstein** and **Frank Rich, Sr.**

Matthew Ornstein grew up on Surrey Street and attended Somerset Elementary School. He was a beloved member of the Somerset family. While his life was cut short, his legacy includes teaching us the value of friendship and reminding us about the importance of laughter.

Frank Rich, Sr., the prominent D.C. businessman and civic leader, lived on Warwick Place and Trent Street during the early days of his married life. His lifelong commitment to racial equality reflects one of the core values Somerseters have traditionally cherished.

We mourn the passing of these three individuals and will never forget the difference they made in so many lives of our friends and neighbors here in Town.

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Barbara Marenus, Editor – bmarenus@gmail.com

The **Town Journal** is the official publication of The Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.
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www.townofsomerset.com

If you prefer to receive the Journal via email, please provide your request to manager@townofsomerset.com or call the Town Hall at 301-657-3211.

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

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Monday thru Friday
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Fax: 301-657-2773
TTY users call Maryland Relay



New Website Up and Running

If you have not already done so, please visit the Town's new and friendly website at townofsomerset.com and take a look at all the new features.

Town Election

The election for three Council members will be held on **Monday, March 23, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.** Please mark your calendars!

5-Year Fiscal Plan

In the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Slavin on the Town's 5-year fiscal plan. This document will be presented to the Council at its March 2, 2015 meeting. Although this document is not legally binding, it provides the Town with a useful outline for its revenues, expenditures and capital expenditures in the short and longer term. I always welcome comments from Town residents on what could be included in the 5-year plan as it is being developed.

Tax Season Approaching



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

Town Code and Charter Update

In January, 2015, the Town began a 12-18 month project to review and make needed changes to its Town Code and Charter. There will be plenty of opportunity for public

input; please follow future Town Council agendas as this topic develops in coming months.

Sledding Hill on Cumberland Avenue

In around 1978, the Town established an Ordinance (Section 9-301) creating a sledding hill on Cumberland Avenue during winter storms. Now in 2015, there are various administrative and safety concerns that make the management of this law increasingly difficult. I personally welcome comments from you with your perspectives (pro and con) on the sledding hill. You can email your comments to me at manager@townofsomerset.com



Private and Town Tree Removal and Trimming Reminder

This is a reminder that the Town of Somerset must approve any trees to be removed within the Town, whether they are Town trees 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. Please also note tree trimming on private property does not require a permit.

HVAC, Generator, Portable Storage, and Dumpster Permits



HVAC unit

I don't think all residents realize that a Town permit is required to install or replace any type of HVAC unit or emergency generator for your home. Noise level requirements must also be met for these units to protect your neighbors. Please contact the Town Hall or visit the Town website to obtain the specific requirements for

the installation of HVAC units or generators. Also, permits are required for temporary dumpsters on private property as well as portable storage units. Please contact the Town Hall or view the Town Code, which can be located on the Town website, for these requirements.

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met in regular session on January 5, 2015. The Council took the following actions:

1. Approval of the December 1, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes.
2. Approval of the 2015 Election date: March 23, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.
3. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Dr. Alexis Carmer to serve as Pool Chairperson for the Pool Committee, term ending December 31, 2015.
4. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Frank Joseph to serve on the Tennis Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2017.
5. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Howard Waltzman to serve on the Tennis Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2017.
6. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Jeff Macher to serve on the Batting Cage Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2016.
7. Approval of the Mayor's nomination of Sherry Bindeman Kahn to the Board of Supervisors of Elections for a term to expire December 31, 2017.
8. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Bill Marmon to the Board of Supervisor of Elections for a term to expire December 31, 2017.
9. Approval of a Town of Somerset Memorial/Gift Donation Policy.
10. Approval of a gift donation application submitted by Jeffrey Slavin to donate a dog waste disposal unit to be placed in the Town of Founders Park.
11. Approval of a pool management contract with Community Pools as reviewed by the Town Attorney.
12. Approval to authorize Mayor Slavin to send a letter to the Bethesda Planning Board in relation to the Bethesda Fire Department at 6600 Wisconsin Avenue.
13. In addition to the Council actions, Mayor Slavin provided his report to the Council and Town Manager Charnovich provided the Financial Report. At the beginning of the meeting, the Council and Mayor held a closed session to discuss a legal matter. Following the advice of legal counsel, it was determined the variance item on the Agenda for 4919 Cumberland Avenue did not need to be acted on by the Council since Montgomery County had already issued a variance. Discussion took place concerning the upcoming refuse and recycling RFP. Leadership from the Swim Team Committee attended the meeting to present and discuss their 2015 budget. Brookfield Office Properties attended the meeting to discuss the proposed re-design of the Bethesda Metro Center's outdoor plaza.

Save the Date

Town Art Show Reception on Sunday, February 8th

By Florence Gang, Falstone Avenue

Dear Friends,

Please join me for the reception of my art show at Somerset Town Hall on **Sunday, February 8 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

If you can't make the reception, you can see my work at the Somerset Town Hall from Thursday, January 15 through Wednesday, March 18. The Town Hall is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

At the reception, I will be offering a number of unframed works at significantly lowered prices.

I hope that you can make it to the reception and the show.



New Management Company for the Town Pool

By Barbara Condos, Council Member, Falstone Avenue

On the recommendation of the Pool Committee, the Town Council has awarded the pool management contract for the 2015 season to Community Pool Services, LLC, of Rockville, Maryland. The pool is scheduled to open May 16, 2015, something to look forward to during the current string of cold gray days. Persons looking for summer employment at the Pool this coming season should contact Community Pools at www.communitypools.com or at 1-800-966-2500.

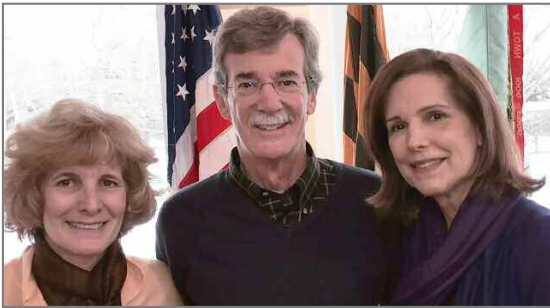


By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

The Council and I want to extend thanks to the large number of residents who contributed to our holiday fund for Town employees, now in its third year of operation. Because of the extreme generosity of our residents, we were able to give generous checks to our valued staff, and these gifts exceeded what we were able to provide in 2013. We must always remember

that our employees work hard, are deserving, and are all subject to the high cost of living in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Some of us attended the wonderful ceremony earlier this month as we watched Maryland's Governor O'Malley swear in our own former **State Senator Brian Frosh** (Grantham) to the important office of **Maryland Attorney General**. The significance of this achievement cannot be overestimated! The following Sunday, we sponsored a well-attended open house gathering at the Town Hall to give all residents an opportunity to thank Brian for his many years of public service and wish him well in his new endeavor.



Brian Frosh with sister Wendy Frosh (left) and Marcy Frosh



PEPCO Tree Removal and Trimming Process *from page 1*

homeowners were notified by letter that the tree was recommended for removal and told when the Council would be considering the recommendation. The Town trees proposed for removal were also listed on the preliminary Council agenda published in the December 2014 Journal and on the website prior to the Council meeting. The trees ultimately approved for removal were listed in the January 2015 Town Journal under Council meeting actions.

2. Public Tree Trimming

Dr. Feather has completed multiple walk-throughs and discussed pruning standards with PEPCO's arborist on trees owned by the Town. Dr. Feather has summarized PEPCO's clearance pruning standards, as follows.

"The clearance criteria for high voltage (in Town 3 parallel lines) are: no vegetation is allowed above the wires and there must be 15' minimum clearance to the side and below the wires. This is part of MD state code. However, in practice the Town has requested, and PEPCO has agreed, that vegetation be left above these wires.

"The clearance criterion for lower voltage (in Town single or 2 parallel lines) is to clear vegetation from the wires that will grow back within a four-year cycle. This is usually clearing 10' above, to the side, and below the wires.

"PEPCO is required by state code to follow all pruning standards applicable for Maryland Licensed Tree Experts that includes the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A-300 pruning standards."

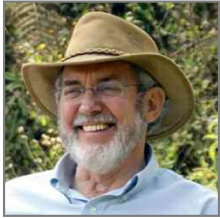
3. Private Tree Removals

Pepco works directly with private property owners, who have the right to either agree to removal or disagree and not have their tree considered for removal. If a private property owner decides on removal, the owner applies to the Town for a permit. The process for private tree removal is the same whether the proposal is initiated by PEPCO or the private property owner. For one or two private trees, the private property owner applies, the Town arborist assesses the tree and makes a recommendation, and then the Mayor either approves or disapproves the application. For three or more trees, the Council has approval authority after the arborist's review. The private trees that were approved for removal in Somerset were listed under Council Meeting Actions in the January 2015 Town Journal.

4. Private tree trimming

PEPCO works with private property owners in advance. The Town does not regulate tree trimming on private property. The Town staff, our consulting arborist, and I have spent significant time working with PEPCO over the past few months on its four-year pruning plan. If you would like to learn more about PEPCO's ongoing tree plan, you can visit the PEPCO website at Pepco.com.

All the required processes for public removals, private removals, and the trimming of public trees have been followed. Should you have questions, they should be directed to me at manager@townofsomerset.com so they can be answered promptly and accurately. I appreciate the concern residents have shown about protecting Somerset's tree canopy and look forward to working with all of you on this important issue.



All About People

By Alan Dock, Falstone Avenue

As I write this column in the middle of January, I am reminded of the terrible tragedy that struck a neighbor of the U.S. on January 12, 2010. On that morning, five years ago, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake convulsed Port au Prince, the capital of Haiti. In a few seconds, more than 250,000 men, women and children lost their lives.

“
Have a Happy
Valentine’s
Day!
”

Some of you may wonder why I am mentioning this tragedy in a column about Somerset. **Lauren Rubenstein** (Surrey) was one of the first to respond in the aftermath of this disaster and, in her capacity as a Yoga teacher and therapist for children, went to assist with children traumatized by the earthquake. As a result, a steady chain of support has emerged from Somerset to Haiti. I have another more personal link; my wife **Mary** is the World Bank Special Envoy for Haiti, and spends most of her working weeks there.

Turning to happenings within Somerset, on your behalf I bid welcome to **Karen Lowy** and her children **Ezra** (11 years), **Elle** (8 years), and **Neve** (6 years) who are putting down roots on Essex Avenue.

News from **Ginny** and **Jim Mahoney** of Cumberland Avenue . . . daughter **Jeni Mahoney**, who grew up on Cumberland and started her education at Somerset Elementary School, is Head of the Playwriting Program at Playwrights Horizon’s Theater School at NYU’s Tisch School for the Arts, and will be having a world premiere of her play *Fata Morgana* at the Boise Contemporary Theater in Idaho, January 28th to February 21st. Other Mahoney news . . . son **Jamie** (also a Somerset elementary graduate) and wife **Leusia**, recently had their second daughter, **Petra**, welcomed to the world by older sister **Electra**. Ginny adds that they have been in Somerset, in the same house, for fifty years! There’s something about this Town that tends to make families stay.

Debbie and **Jamie Heller**, my neighbors on Falstone Avenue, just back from a month in London, are happy to announce that their grandson, **Alistair** (18 months), now has a baby sister, **Vesper**. She arrived on December 15th. Big brother has welcomed his baby sister very happily and whenever she makes a peep, he says . . . “baby?” Mom and Dad, **Heather** and **Adam**, are doing great as well. Debbie noted that “it was fun for us to be there to take care of Alistair and live in London for the month.”

Wearing another hat, as one of Somerset’s “helping hands,” I assisted **Florence Gang** (Falstone) transport a dozen of her paintings to the Town Hall to be exhibited there until March 19th. The paintings are mixed media, acrylic on canvas, and some collages. Florence has also lived in Somerset for over 50 years and has shown her artwork in numerous galleries throughout the Washington Metropolitan area, receiving several awards for her work. She was co-founder of Washington Artours, a docent at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and at the Smithsonian American Art Museum She is a graduate of American University and has taught art history. The opening **reception at the Town Hall** will be on **Sunday, February 8th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** At that time, additional unframed paintings will be offered for sale at one-time significantly reduced prices. Now’s your chance to brighten up a room with one of Florence’s spectacular abstracts!

Two items of non-news . . . First, we are still waiting to hear from WSSC on their proposed plan for accessing the work to be done along the creek (the Town’s office tells me they are calling them on a weekly basis, so we hope to have news before the March column). Second, we seem to have lost our “pipeline” to information on Somerset’s trash and recycling tonnages. Industrial unrest at the disposal plant may have something to do with that.

Those of you who follow the announcements on the Town’s web site (townofsomerset.com) will know the site has a new look. I strongly recommend you explore it and register for access to the full site. The new design greatly improves our ability to access information about the Town. Previous copies of the Somerset Town Journal are also available online going back more than ten years.

In past issues of *All About People*, I have highlighted the lives and contributions of the late **Walter Behr**, our long time mayor, and **Sarah Morse** (Dorset) our list-serve coordinator and active leader of many causes. In addition, **Dolores Bartning** (Surrey) and **Barbara Marblestone** (Trent) have written a series of articles on the lives of Somerset’s nonagenarians. **Barbara Marenus** (Surrey), editor of the Town Journal, plans to continue highlighting the lives of Town residents through occasional feature articles.

continued on page 7



Classified Ads



Miscellaneous

BOZEMAN, MONTANA: Ski Big Sky & the Bridgers! Enjoy our furnished four-bedroom+ home on 20 acres with spectacular 360 degree vistas. Only ten minutes from downtown Bozeman, 30 from skiing at Bridger Bowl, and 60 from Big Sky Ski/Resort. Hiking/biking trails everywhere! And then there's the fishing! Weekly/monthly rentals. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** for more details at srpvacationhomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

PARIS, FRANCE: Paris is affordable again. Enjoy our furnished, one-bedroom, well-located apartment in the heart of historic Paris. Walk to the Louvre, the Pompidou Center, the Seine and two Metro stops. Available to rent on a weekly or monthly basis. For additional information, contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at srpvacationhomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

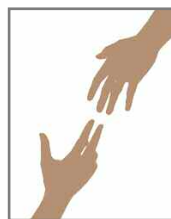
Shereen's PEACE OF MIND SOAP: Homemade soap in the neighborhood! Essential oils and dazzling colors make these soaps the perfect and unique "feel good" gift for friends and family. Also popular for teachers, bar/bat mitzvah hotel bags, wedding/bridal/baby shower favors, office parties, etc. You can choose the fragrance and color to match your occasion! Call **Shereen Rubenstein** at 301-613-3838.

HOME HEALTH-CARE AND LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING: My late wife was provided those services by a woman who is now available for other assignments in or near Somerset on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Outstanding initiative and reliability. For details, contact **Jim Wachob** at 301-656-5251 or at Jwsomerset@msn.com.

LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS COACHING: Would you like to get unstuck and upgrade your lifestyle and wellness habits? Small changes can make a lasting difference. If you are curious to see if coaching is right for you, contact Certified Wellness Coach **Diane Horn RDH CHHC** at 301-654-0310 or at diane.b.horn@gmail.com.

Ads are printed as a courtesy to Town residents. The Town makes no representations as to quality, safety or otherwise regarding the goods and services advertised. Readers should make their own inquiries. To place an ad, submit typed or neatly printed copy to the Clerk-Treasurer. Ads must include a Somerset phone number.

Price: \$5 per advertisement per issue. Check or exact change. **Fifty word** limit per advertisement.



Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just a Phone Call Away

If you need a ride, someone to pick up some groceries or a prescription, or even if you just want to get to a friend's house, give us a ring. We have a list of 30 Somerset volunteers who can help. Call **Zola Schneider** at 301-654-7481 or **Council Member Barbara Zeughauser** at 301-951-8560 and we will set it up.

All About People from page 6

At the start of this column, I briefly mentioned the interesting and most worthwhile work that **Lauren Rubenstein** (Surrey) is doing in Haiti. Who else in our community has memories of working and growing in another part of the world or is keeping the wheels of commerce, government, or industry turning smoothly? Who else is following a deeply held conviction to do something that maybe the rest of the world does not see or sees as unimportant? Who else in our Town is crafting words or creating art that will live after they have left? We would like to share those lives within our community. After all, our Town is *all about people*.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting

Somerset Town Hall, February 2, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on Monday, February 2, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Somerset Town Hall. Agenda updates are posted on the Town website: www.townofsomerset.com.

Council Work Session: 7:00 p.m.

Council Meeting Convenes: 7:30 p.m.

Comments: Public Comment Period: 7:30 p.m.*



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

CONSENT

1. **Motion:** To consider approval of the January 5, 2015 Council Meeting Minutes.
2. **Motion:** To consider approval of the January 5, 2015 Closed Meeting Minutes.
3. **Motion:** To consider changing the date of the September 2015 Council Meeting to September 8, 2105 at 7:30 p.m. due to the Labor Day holiday.

NON-CONSENT

1. **Discussion:** Town Manager's January Financial Report – 7:40 p.m.
2. **Public Hearing:** The Board of Supervisors of Elections will receive nominations for 3 Council positions for 2-year terms. The election will be on March 23, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
3. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application submitted by Rohit and Sherry Khanna, 4704 Falstone, to construct a new deck and fence – 7:50 p.m.
4. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider proposal received from Outdoor Illumination for lighting services near the Town parking lot/tennis courts – 8:00 p.m.
5. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider proposals received for pest monitoring at the Town Pool area – 8:15 p.m.
6. **Discussion:** General Code Project Update – 8:30 p.m.
7. **Discussion:** Mayor's Report – 8:40 p.m.
8. **Adjourn:** – 8:45 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.

* Residents who wish to be present for a particular Agenda item are advised to arrive 20 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.

General Permits



Tree Removal Permits

4702 Dorset Avenue, 1 Elm and
1 Red Maple

Fence Permit

5528 Trent Street, wooden fence installed at the rear property line
4712 Falstone Avenue, pressure treated pine fence on the left side of the house