

"Where People and Trees Have Deep Roots and Grow Strong"



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



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Somerset Community Lends a "Helping Hand"



By **Barbara Zeughauser**, *Trent Street*

Many years ago, Helping Hand was established as a neighbor-to-neighbor service for Somerset Town residents who decided to age in place, but to do that needed a little bit of help from neighbors. Over the years, Helping Hand volunteers have run errands, done grocery shopping, picked up prescriptions, and provided rides to medical appointments.

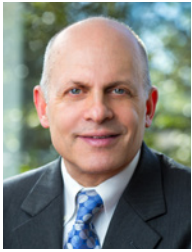
With the current global health crisis now affecting our own Town, Helping Hand recently has taken a few steps to ensure that the community continues to look out for its neighbors. First, Helping Hand posted a request, on the community and Town listservs, for volunteers to lend a hand to older, at-risk residents, or self-quarantined residents who may feel uncomfortable going to the store. And just as you might expect, we received a remarkable response, and now have close to 40 volunteers. Once again, Somerset residents are ready to share their time with simple acts of kindness and caring towards their neighbors. Second, Helping Hand recently (via posts

on the two listservs) asked residents to call or email if they were in need of assistance. Third, letters were hand delivered to those residents who might not have access to the Internet but might need some help. So far, we've received requests to do grocery shopping, and something as small as opening a prescription bottle. Although we know it's hard to ask for help, we're planning to reach out again to our at-risk neighbors over the course of the next several days and weeks.

If you or a neighbor could use a helping hand, please reach out. Feel free to email us at **HHSomerset@gmail.com**, or call **James Berry** at 301- 656-6069, **Lucy Freeman** at 301-654-8115, **Kathleen Kenyon** at 301- 656-8581, or **Barbara Zeughauser** at 301- 951-8560. We are fortunate to live in a community where so many are ready and willing to step forward and lend a hand. With heartfelt thanks to longtime resident **Zola Schneider** (Warwick) for starting Helping Hand so many years ago.



Please note: All dates and events listed in this issue are subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.



ON MY MIND

Building Code Review Plans

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, *Warwick Place*

When laws are made, no one expects them to stay in their enacted form forever. The beauty of our democracy and the legislative process is that we can change our rules to adapt to the times and changing conditions, all the while maintaining our quality of life.

More specifically, I think we can all agree that the stormwater management requirements under which our Town currently operates are not as effective as most of us would like them to be. Elected bodies in jurisdictions all over the country have come to similar conclusions.

In Somerset, our history, at least since I have been Mayor, has been to go through an elaborate process whenever we make changes to our code, regulations or rules. In order to make the wisest possible decisions, we try to gather as much information as we can and obtain wide public input from those interested.

The Town Council recently completed a multi-year project to thoroughly update our code. In my view, all of the changes made were obvious and basically put the code in compliance with how we currently operate. During the years of the project, the Council agreed that certain provisions of the code, such as those involving building applications, would require further study and review.

Some of our surrounding municipalities have recently taken on this task by forming study groups and committees with experts, citizens and staff to take a hard look at possible changes and resulting impacts. I am currently working with our Town Attorney and Manager to make a specific proposal to the Council on how we might go about this. Stay tuned.

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SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

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Update: Proposal to Revise Town Building Regulations

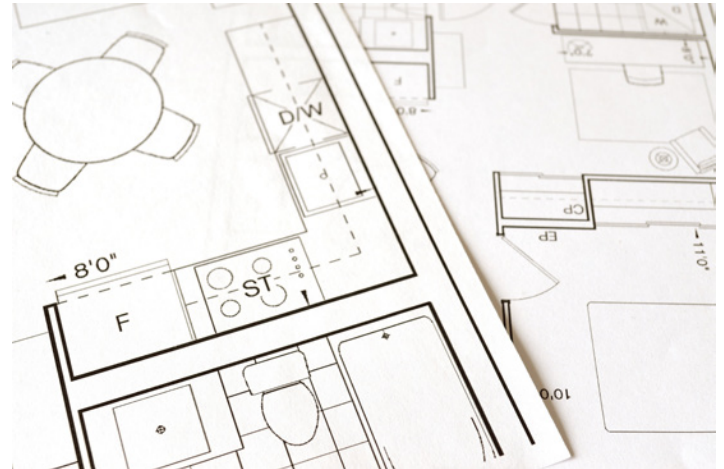
By Council Member Steve Surko, Uppingham Street

Last month, I proposed that we revise our Building Regulations to better preserve the existing Town character and more clearly protect enjoyment of our property. My initial proposal was to recognize that box or bay windows and covered porches are part of the physical structure of a house. The objective was to control lot coverage because of implications for tree removal and stormwater retention and to protect the open space between houses.

Eighteen residents shared their thoughts on the community-run Somerset list serve or emailed me directly. Just about everyone shared their visions for the Town, which was great. I would characterize the response as: 11 in favor, 2 against, and 8 interested in more study and community discussion prior to revising the Town's Building Regulations. (Several individuals who were either in favor of or against my proposal were also interested in more study and engagement). Although not a statistically significant sample, I feel that the responses probably captured the range of opinions held by residents, and clearly an effective study is desirable as well.

I raised this topic during the Work Session preceding the Town Council meeting on March 2. The Mayor agreed that a working group or ad hoc committee might be useful to gather and share information with the Town. He tasked me to explore options — with a focus on what neighboring jurisdictions have done — for his consideration.

I want to share my findings here and assure residents that this effort will first ground itself in a thorough problem definition on which we reach a shared community understanding. And we should take advantage of hard-earned knowledge gained from neighboring jurisdictions as they faced similar challenges.



Our Town Attorney reports that the Town of Chevy Chase and the Village of Martin's Additions relied upon a resident committee to prepare the initial recommendations. The committee was supported by a "character study" performed by a professional planner who subcontracted with an architectural firm (such a study documents the architectural style, lot coverage, and landscaping of an area block by block). Chevy Chase View used the same professional planner, but did not form a committee. Instead, the Council did the assessment itself. Due in part to the divisive nature of the project, Chevy Chase View ended up not adopting additional regulations. Section 5 of the Village of Chevy Chase had assistance from their building permit administrator, who helped write new regulations. Section 3 and Garrett Park used the expertise of resident architects to help craft their regulations. In the Town of Chevy Chase and Martin's Additions, detailed regulations were adopted to address "mansionization," after the state granted such authority to municipalities to do so in 2006.

I have also spoken with the former Mayor of the Town of Chevy Chase to get her insights on the process they used.

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APRIL CALENDAR

MONDAY, APRIL 6

Town Council Meeting
Somerset Town Hall at 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

MVA Mobile Office
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Friendship Heights

**Please note all calendar items are subject to change as the COVID-19 situation evolves.*

Update: Proposal to Revise Town Building Regulations

Of particular note, she described how their Visioning Committee held a series of focus groups to develop a comprehensive assessment of residents' feelings about the character of the town and future development and crafted a Strategic Plan (<http://www.townofchevy Chase.org/190/Strategic-Plan>).

I think it makes sense for Somerset to consider developing a Strategic Plan to guide any revisions to our Building Regulations.

I expect that the Town Council will discuss this topic during the Work Session before our next monthly meeting.

Residents are generally welcome to attend and share their opinions on any subject during the Public Comment time at the start of a Council Meeting, but precautions to the novel coronavirus pandemic may impact the scheduled April 6 meeting.

Again, I welcome your thoughts on how Somerset should tackle this issue. You may e-mail me at ssurko@townofsomerset.com. And if you wish your comments to be considered by the Council as a whole, please copy the Town Manager and Mayor on your correspondence.

IN MEMORIAM

James (Jim) Mahoney

James Mahoney, Jr. ("Jim") of Cumberland Avenue passed away on February 6, 2020. He was 88 years old and is survived by his wife of 57 years, Virginia (Ginny) Mahoney, their three children, and five grandchildren. Jim and Ginny have lived in Somerset for 53 years, and Ginny still resides here.

Born in Philadelphia on March 22, 1931, Jim graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1958 and moved to Washington, D.C. to work in exhibition design at the Smithsonian Institution. At the Smithsonian he met Ginny, a fellow graphic designer.

Jim would spend the next 27 years at the Smithsonian, enjoying a varied career in museum exhibitions at the Museum of History and Technology, the National

Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of American History. In 1973, he was appointed Director of the newly established Office of Exhibits Central that was tasked with supporting exhibition needs and programming for the Smithsonian's many museums, bureaus, program offices and traveling exhibits.

Jim remained active after retiring in 1986, serving as a consultant for the National Museums of Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait, in the development of the Ak-Chin Him-Dak Eco-Museum, in Arizona, and teaching in the Graduate Museum Studies Program at George Washington University. He enjoyed spending time with family as well as painting, drawing and pursuing new ambitions, including sculpture.



Somerset Residents Recommend...

In this monthly feature, residents highlight their favorite places to go and things to do in our area. If you'd like to submit an article or an idea, please get in touch with the editors at bmarenius@gmail.com or mary.p.wisniewski@gmail.com.

In this installment, Somerset resident David Kaufman recommends the interesting and enriching French classes offered at Alliance Française.

Expanding Horizons – *en français*

By David Kaufman, Trent Street

Alliance Française of Washington, D.C. (www.francedc.org) is a non-profit organization that has promoted French culture and language for many years. With its main location in the Kalorama neighborhood at 2142 Wyoming Ave. NW, it is reasonable driving distance from Somerset, and not too long a walk from the Red Line (about equidistant between Woodley Park and Dupont Circle stations).

Alliance is consistently cited by *City Paper* as one of the best cultural institutions in the Metro area. I have been a member for at least 25 years, having started at the 200 level. Language classes range from the 100 level for complete beginners to the 500 level for advanced students. For the last several years I have been part of a 500-level class in French literature, where we have read a wide range of works, from the 17th century poems of La Fontaine through Balzac, Hugo, and such 20th century writers as Camus and Modiano.

There are also classes for every interest, including the well-known "Press" class, where the students read and discuss the latest headlines from *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* (which are often the same headlines we see in *The Washington Post*, just with a slightly different perspective).

Aside from offering language classes at all levels for adults and children, Alliance presents ongoing cultural events, such as its annual francophone film festival, occasional wine-and-cheese (or cognac – and-cheese) soirées, tours of Washington museums with a French outlook, as well as live music events featuring francophone musicians.

Alliance also has a modern and well-stocked library, where one can borrow books and movies in French (and where most of the movies come with English subtitles), and also purchase used books for a dollar. In particular, intermediate-level students can check out "*roman policiers*" (mystery novels), which are exciting and also easy reading for native English speakers.

Alliance is a welcoming and fun community, and it is well worth the membership for those with the time or the inclination to expand their horizons. Memberships start at \$60 for an individual, and a \$100 family membership includes two adults and four children. Higher-level memberships with extensive benefits and privileges are available as well.



Alliance Française

Getting Ready for the 2020 Pool Season

By Matt Zaft, Chair, Pool Committee, Dorset Avenue

By the time you read this article, we will be getting close to the pool opening on Saturday, May 16. Some important information and dates to note in advance follow:

- **Lost & Found:** A big thank you in advance to **Barbara Condos** (Falstone) and **Barbara Zeughauser** (Trent) who have agreed to again this year pick up and donate unclaimed items. They will do so twice a month.
- **Rules on Guest Age and Deep Water Test:** Please make sure everyone is familiar both with the new rule regarding the minimum age to bring a guest to the pool and the long standing (but often not enforced) rule requiring all minors to have passed the deep water test PRIOR to being allowed at the pool unattended.
- **Morning Swim:** Memorial Day to Labor Day, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Both free form lap swimming and a Master's Workout run by Dolphin's Head Coach Kristina Lenox. The cost is again \$100 for the entire summer if you sign up by May 22. Drop-ins are welcome at a cost of \$5.00 plus a guest fee if you are not a Town resident (all guests must come with a resident). Fees are taken from pool accounts. Contact **Matt Zaft** (matthew.zaft@morganstanley.com) or **Debbie Heller** (debbielheller@gmail.com) with any questions.
- **Water Aerobics:** Tentatively scheduled for June 15 to August 21, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.. Contact **Lucy Freeman** (dorset4708@yahoo.com) with any questions.
- **Swim Team Kick-Off Party:** Sunday, May 17 at 5:30 p.m.
- **Swim Team Time Trials:** Saturday, June 6 at 8 a.m.
- **Home Swim Meets and Pool Hours:**
 - Wednesday, June 10—pool closes at 4:30.
 - Saturday, June 20—pool opens at noon.
 - Wednesday, June 24 —pool closes at 4:30.
 - Saturday, July 11—pool opens at noon.
 - Wednesday, July 15 —pool closes at 4:30.
- **Swim Team Banquet:** Saturday July 18 at 5:30—pool closes at 4:30.
- **Late Night Swims:** the pool will stay open an hour later on Saturday, June 20 and Saturday, July 11. We may add one night in August.

That is all for now but keep an eye on the listservs for more information, updates, and ideas.



The Life – or House – You Save May Be Your Own

By **Jon Medalia**, *Surrey Street* and **John Barry**, *Cumberland Avenue*

While conducting a survey for the Budget Committee of Somerset houses sold over the last several years, we were struck by the difficulty of seeing many house numbers — and this was during the day. Some numbers were small, or in a color that didn't contrast with the house. Few were lighted or had reflective material. We couldn't even find several numbers.

This is a real problem. In the event of an emergency, first responders would lose valuable seconds, or minutes, looking for your house. As Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service says, "In an emergency, police, fire and rescue workers depend on house numbers to find YOU as quickly as possible. Finding your home — especially at night — can be challenging if address numbers are unreadable, hidden, unlighted or have missing numbers and may delay emergency responders from getting to you as quickly as possible." This has become even more important now due to the pandemic.

It's the law! Montgomery County requires that "Numbers must be visible from the street. Residential home numbering must be at least 5 inches high... Numbers should be placed on a contrasting background, with a reflective coating on the numbers for easy visibility at



night." Three-inch numbers in place before April 1988 can remain.

Numbers painted on curbs do not suffice. Due to repaving, some curbs are not high enough to display a number. A car, leaves, or snow may block the number. So place the number on your house or a sign.

This issue is more than hypothetical. In Dallas, Texas, JR's Demolition demolished the wrong house this past February. Said Bobby Lindamood, JR's owner, "We made a mistake and thought we had the right property... Unfortunately, this home did not have any house numbers on it and any street curb address was covered by water and debris from the recent heavy rain events."

Attention High School Class of 2020!

Please join your fellow Somerset Elementary alums and families for a potluck get-together at the Town Hall on Sunday, May 3 from 5 to 7 p.m. This will be a great chance to reconnect and reminisce with old pals from elementary school before many head off to college in the fall.

This gathering is intended for all former Somerset students who are graduating high school this year, regardless of where you currently live or attend school. If you know former classmates who may not be aware of this invitation, please pass it along to them. Hope to see many of the "old gang" in May!



Raking Lawns in the Spring



This weekend, with spring making an early entrance in my yard — new grass growing, shrubs budding, some leaves appearing on trees — I finally raked the leaves that were lying all over the back yard. What a lazy soul I must be!

Not exactly! As I wrote in the fall, leaves do a lot of good when left on the ground over the winter. They provide a place for bees and other bugs to lay their eggs. Many of the grubs that emerge become food for birds who are seeking concentrated protein to give them the strength to lay eggs and to build nests. Leaves also protect what they cover from hard frosts. Of course, this winter we saw no hard frosts. It turns out that the leaves proved valuable in another way this year.

We had almost no snow this winter. But we had plenty of rain. At other times of year mature trees, large shrubs, and other greenery soak up a lot of the water that would otherwise flood our basements or tumble down our hilly streets. In winter, though, roots are growing much more slowly. Plant life needs a lot less water. That pattern well suits a snowy winter when the water sits on top in frozen form and ground is hard with frost. That does not describe the winter we just experienced.

So what's a tree to do? In a normal winter, snow melts occasionally and water drips through to the roots. Trees

collect what roots need and all is good. When there is no snow, trees rely on the leaves they dropped. These leaves soak up water and release it slowly into the ground where it feeds the roots.

So my lazy habit of not raking my leaves in the fall is allowing the roots of trees and other plants to soak up water. This year, more than ever, that is how they obtained it. My grass is growing — so are the weeds — and the big oak in my back yard is beginning to waken up. If I had raked my leaves in the fall, rain water would have flown over my dormant grass and down the hill beyond my yard. I do not know if it would have done damage along its path. I do know, or strongly suspect, that it has done some good being held by those leaves that I neglected to rake.

And if there is a lesson in my intentional negligence it is that with a warm winter behind us and warming winters likely to be in our future, leaving leaves around over the winter becomes a sensible adaption to our changing climate.

So with my big leaf pile now gathered, I will mulch them all. That gives me a comfortable supply of mulch for bedding as the calendar moves on to the season of hope and planting. And, of course, some serious yard work ahead!



All About People

By Eugene Tillman, Warwick Place

This issue's column marks the conclusion of my two-year run as the writer for All About People. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to connect with many of you, and I hope I've contributed to enriching (or at least informing!) our community. I know the Journal's co-editors and Mayor are giving thought to new ways to bring forward "people news" of interest; so standby for more on that front.

I want to leave you with a story shared by our neighbor **Sally Rosenberg** (Warwick). It concerns a theater business, Ladybug Productions, which Sally co-owns with **Jill Lesser** (Trent). The story starts with a desire to produce a musical based on a children's book, *Invincible*, written by Sally and published in 2006 by Imagination Stage. That raised the question of how to undertake a theatrical production, which led to a connection with a Broadway producer, which then led to the formation of Ladybug. We'll come back to all of that but first a few words on Sally's book.

Invincible is about ten-year-old identical twins who grow up cloistered in a castle because of their parents' fears of exposing them to the outside world. Lena is wheelchair-bound but adventurous and without fear. Meg is able bodied but challenged with anxiety. The approach of birthday 11 (a palindrome which carries important magical significance) takes the twins on a quest outside the castle spearheaded by Lena. The experience ultimately helps the entire family embrace what's possible instead of accepting a life based on perceived limits.

The book had dual inspirations: first, local family friends who wouldn't accept a predicted life of little or no opportunity for their twin daughter with cerebral palsy. Over time, Sally came to appreciate a more deep-seated inspiration: growing up with a disabled aunt at a time when her relative had no prospect for integration into everyday life and the outside world. As Sally explained, "I essentially rewrote my aunt's story of isolation and unhappiness by creating a character who broke into, and insisted on being part of, the world outside the castle."

Over the past decade, Sally had thought about bringing *Invincible* to the stage. A few years ago, she shared her vision with Jill who wanted to be part of that effort. Breaking into the theater world is a bit of a black box, so Sally and Jill were fortunate to connect with Ken Davenport, a producer who was "trying to lift the curtain [!] on the business of theater and Broadway." After attending one of his producers' conferences, Ken invited Sally and Jill

to join a coaching group which included monthly sessions with him. Through Ken, Sally and Jill had the opportunity to become executive producers of an original musical called *Gettin' the Band Back Together*. Their responsibility was to find backers who, in return for their investment, would be invited behind the scenes and have a financial upside if the show succeeded. At that point, Sally and Jill needed a business structure and formed Ladybug Productions as a partnership between the two of them (<https://www.ladybugp.com>).

I asked about the choice of "ladybug" for the name, and Sally explained it recognizes the influential women in their lives. For Sally, it carries strong associations with her late mother (who often wore ladybug pins), and for Jill, it connects to a first cousin who died young. Keen observers will have noticed the ladybug weather vane on Sally's house.

Sally grew up with theater as her primary extracurricular activity and passion. She acted in high school and college performances and did some directing. "Then, I went to law school!" Her interest rekindled 20-plus years ago when she joined the board of Imagination Stage in Bethesda. On Jill's side, her father was in the entertainment industry, her mother wrote plays, and her son Simon was in musical theater and performed professionally while growing up. They are both "drawn to the power of this art form to explore the human condition and serve as an agent of change and self-realization. The ability of live theater to alter people's lenses for how they see the world is unmatched." Sally and Jill both have full-time jobs but are able to moonlight and develop this new chapter in their lives, "which will soon be the main chapter."

Back to *Invincible*, Sally and Jill believe the time is right to bring the story to the stage given the increasing awareness of the needs of the disabled. The production process is now in full swing under the Ladybug umbrella (<https://invinciblethemusical.com>). The creative team is led by Mark Sonnenblick, a lyricist and composer who emerged

Continued on page 10

All About People

on the New York scene in 2018 with his first off-Broadway show. While Sally's book focused on an eight- to-ten-year-old readership, the musical will be geared to general family audiences. Per Sally, "It will seek to give voice to the different perspectives of family members and the impact of their experiences dealing with disability."

The team hopes to have readings this year possibly at a regional theater and will then work to find a stage for the first production. Ladybug is networking with the disabilities community and would like the show to serve as an advocacy piece addressing, among other things, issues of access within the performing arts. To further that goal,

there will be a concerted effort to bring in cast members, designers, and others who have lived experience with disabilities – either directly or with close family members.

I thought this was another great story of creativity and socially-oriented entrepreneurship in our midst. Hopefully, a production of *Invincible* will come to a stage near us before too long. And finally, Ladybug is looking for other projects to co-produce and develop, so Sally and Jill would be delighted to hear from you if you have any ideas or leads.

Some Good News...



Lucy Freeman (Falstone) has added a new resident to Somerset... meet golden retriever puppy, Louie. You will surely see him on a neighborhood stroll. Welcome, Louie!

Upcoming Art Show at Town Hall on May 7

By Council Member Barbara Zeughauser,
Trent Street

Please join us at the "Gallery" at the Town Hall on **Thursday, May 7, from 6 to 8 p.m.**, for our first "after renovation" Art Opening. **Cathy Abramson** (Uppingham), **Judith Baldinger** (Warwick), **Mak** and **Ursula Dehejia** (Surrey) and **Carol Jason** (Warwick) will be exhibiting their work.

Hope to see you there!

From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



During this unprecedented global health crisis, I continue to be impressed daily with the resilience, tenacity, and creativity of Somerset residents — and their continuing interest in assisting those in need at the same time. It is a real tribute to the type of individuals who chose to live in our special town. While I am overwhelmed with the messages, announcements, and communications I have been receiving, the following poem that I found on Deepak Chopra's Instagram page and attributed to Kitty O'Meara was particularly moving:

*And the people stayed home,
And read books, and listened, and
rested, and exercised, and made art,
and played games, and learned new
ways of being, and were still. Some
meditated, some prayed, some
danced. Some met their shadows.
And the people began
to think differently.*

*And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living
in ignorant, dangerous, mindless,
and heartless ways,
the earth began to heal.*

*And when the danger passed,
and the people joined together again,
they grieved their losses, and made
new choices, and dreamed new
images, and created new ways to live
and heal the earth fully,
as they had been healed.*

As of this writing I am still promoting the Maryland Municipal League's annual "If I Were Mayor, I Would" essay contest for all of Maryland's 4th graders. The deadline for submission is the end of this month. The Council and I want to encourage our 4th graders who attend Somerset Elementary School, local private and parochial schools--and those who are home schooled--to be a part of this fun and educational project. Further information and applications are available at www.mdmunicipal.org. Any 4th grader or parent who needs more information about this exciting contest should call me soon at 202-549-2299.

The Town's budget season has begun, and the Council has already held two budget work sessions at Town Hall with the expert assistance of our Ad Hoc Budget Committee consisting of **Phil Young** (Greystone), **Robin Barr** (Essex), and **Jon Medalia** (Surrey). Thanks to all three of them for their dedication and knowledge. As a result, Somerset's annual fiscal review is now in full force. While Somerset overall is still relatively prosperous, we are not able to fund everything, so public input is very important when we set priorities. There are always a number of capital projects on the table and not enough funds available to do everything at once. The Council and I always look forward to hearing from those interested. I will be introducing the proposed budget at the next Town Meeting and the Council will give final approval in May.

Several weeks ago, I attended, on behalf of the Town, the annual Congressional City Conference of the National League of Cities at the Marriott in Woodley Park. I learned, among other things, about some of the latest national trends that could affect Somerset. I attend this conference at my own expense because I feel it is so important, and will report back when and where appropriate.

Last but not least, I want to acknowledge and offer congratulations to **Nicole Vanderzon** (Falstone) for receiving an Extraordinary Teen Award by *Bethesda* magazine. Nicole is the daughter of **Maura** and **Jim Vanderzon** and sister to **Delia**. Take a look at the March/April edition to see the great write-up on Nicole. <https://bethesdamagazine.com/march-april-2020-digital-edition>



Passover and Easter are on the horizon. I urge everyone who celebrates these important holidays to make them especially meaningful this year.



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

First, a quick word about the budget, before I delve into the topic that is on everyone's mind at the moment.

FY2021 Budget

The Town of Somerset's FY2021 budget is scheduled to be introduced at the April Town Council meeting. After introduction, a summary copy will be published in the May Town Journal and on the website (townofsomerset.com). Residents can email the Town Hall for a copy of the full copy of the budget if interested in the details. At the April meeting, Mayor Slavin will also discuss his five-year fiscal plan, a copy of which will also appear in the May Journal.

Coronavirus Update

With the country and the world consumed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we in your municipal government in Somerset are trying our best to be responsive and thoughtful as well. Recommendations and information are very fluid, so even as of this writing, contingency plans in the Town Hall are still up-in-the-air. We will continue to monitor the situation and respond appropriately; our office will inform residents of major changes (e.g., Town Hall closings, meeting cancellations, service schedule changes, etc.) via Constant Contact, the listserv, and the website. Please email me at manager@townofsomerset.com if you need to be added to the Constant Contact email list – this is the same list that receives the weekly announcements.

As of this writing, through Friday, April 3, in an effort to maintain the health of the public and Town staff, and consistent with County and State partners who are taking similar actions in response to the spread of COVID-19, the Town of Somerset will implement the following:

- **The Town Hall will be closed to public access. Town Staff will be on a telework (i.e., remote) schedule** when possible, and will continue to monitor and respond to emails and return calls left at the Town Hall.
- **All activities, events, and meetings at the Town Hall are canceled.** This includes all official and unofficial Town Committees.
- All trash, recycling, and compost pickups will occur as regularly scheduled.

Town officials and staff who interact with the public are adhering to prevention efforts, including avoiding handshakes, maintaining "social distance," sanitizing vehicles and work spaces, frequently washing hands, and staying home when feeling ill.

Residents should continue to stay informed. Here is a list of useful resources:

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- Maryland Department of Health: <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx>
- Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html>
- U.S. State Department Travel Advisories (specific to COVID-19): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/novel-coronavirus-hubei-province--china.html>
- U.S. State Department Travel Advisories (general): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Should you or a member of your household believe that you have symptoms (fever and cough) or if you have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should call your health care practitioner, or the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services' Disease Control Office to speak with a nurse at (240)-777-1755. If you are unable to reach MCDHHS, you can call the state's Infectious Disease Bureau at (410)-767-6700 during business hours or (410) 795-7365 after hours.

Know that whatever decisions are made, public and staff health are of the highest concern, and that we will continue to strive to be as responsive as possible. Thank you for your patience in these difficult times, and I wish you all good health. Below is information from the CDC about COVID-19, and steps to protect yourself:

Continued on page 13

Manager's Corner

Know How it Spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Take Steps to Protect Yourself

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

CLASSIFIED ADS

BOZEMAN, MONTANA: Awesome Every Season! Ski Big Sky & the Bridgers! Fly fishing. Trail rides. White-water rafting. Hiking/biking everywhere. Enjoy our 4-bedroom home on 20 acres with spectacular 360-degree vistas. Four-night minimum stay. Just four miles to downtown Bozeman. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

PARIS, FRANCE: Picturesque Day and Nite! And more affordable than ever! Enjoy our one-bedroom apartment in the 2nd arrondissement — the heart of historic Paris. Walk to the Louvre, the Pompidou Center, the Seine and two Metro stops. Four-night minimum stay. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

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 diane.b.horn@gmail.com.

SEA COLONY - BETHANY BEACH - EDGEWATER BUILDING OCEAN FRONT: 3 bedrooms and 2 full baths. Sunday to Sunday rentals - \$2,900 per week (Somerset special price) Call: 301-233-2727 **Luba Marx**

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.

GENERAL PERMITS

The following permits were granted in March, 2020:

- Demolition Permit, 4712 Essex Ave.*
- Building permit, 4809 Grantham Ave.
- Tree Removal, 4719 Dorset Ave.

** Associated permits (i.e., new home construction, fence, etc.) will be granted 30 days from permit decision unless a judicial appeal is taken.*

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met in regular session on March 2, 2020, and took the following actions:

1. Approval of minutes from Special Town Council meeting held on January 21, 2020, to consider construction permit at 5508 Uppingham St.
2. Approval of minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on February 3, 2020.
3. Approval of the following permits for the property located at 4809 Grantham Ave.:
 - a. Two-story rear building addition
 - b. Front porch.
4. Approval of the following permits for the property located at 4712 Essex Ave.:
 - a. Demolition permit
 - b. New home construction*
 - c. New curb cut & driveway apron
 - d. Dumpster on site
 - e. Fence installation*
 - f. Tree removal*
5. Approval of removal of dead 23" Ash public tree at 5545 Warwick Pl., in the Town park behind 5601 Warwick Pl.
6. Approval of 2020 agreements with Camp Summerset for use of the Town Pool and Town Tennis Courts.
7. Approval of the following appointments to the Board of Supervisors of Elections:
 - a. Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Chair), Cumberland Ave.
 - b. Robin Orseck, Dorset Ave.
 - c. Jim Berry, Essex Ave.
 - d. Sherry Bindeman, Essex Ave.
 - e. Lucy Freeman, Falstone Ave.
8. Approval of the following appointments to the Town Pool Committee:
 - a. Nancy Zuckerbord, Dorset Ave.
 - b. Debbie Heller, Falstone Ave.
 - c. Barbara Condos, Falstone Ave.
 - d. Matt Zaft (Chair), Dorset Ave.
 - e. Cathy Pickar, Dorset Ave.
 - f. Jennifer Bloodworth, Warwick Pl.
 - g. Debbie Berger, Cumberland Ave.
9. Approval of the following appointments to the Town Communications Committee:
 - a. John Barry, Cumberland Ave.
 - b. Cinzia Furlanetto, Dorset Ave.
 - c. Ilene Heller, Uppingham St.
 - d. Diane Horn, Surrey St.
 - e. Barbara Marenus (Chair), Surrey St.
 - f. Robin Orseck, Dorset Ave.
 - g. Mary Wisniewski, Greystone St.

**The decision of the Council shall become final unless a judicial appeal is taken within 30 days of the decision (rendered on 3/12/2020). Any person who is aggrieved by a decision of the Town Council shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Town Council to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland under the provisions of Title 7, Chapter 200, of the Maryland Rules of Procedure. In any judicial proceeding, the findings of the Town Council as to the facts, if supported by the evidence and in the absence of fraud, shall be conclusive, and the jurisdiction of said court shall be confined to questions of law.*

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting

Somerset Town Hall, April 6, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on April 6, 2020 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 (l to r): Morris Panner, Marnie Shaul, Franny Peale, Barbara Zeughauser, Stephen Surko

CONSENT

1. **Motion:** To approve minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on March 2, 2020.
2. **Motion:** Arbor Day Declaration – 7:35 p.m.

NON-CONSENT

3. **Nominations:** For two seats on Town Council & one seat for Town Mayor for the May 12, 2020 Town Election. – 7:40 p.m.
4. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of an extension to the building construction project at 5800 Deal Pl. – 7:50 p.m.
5. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a rear addition to the property located at 4721 Cumberland Ave. – 8:00 p.m.
6. **Discussion:** Update on Town Hall construction project. – 8:10 p.m.
7. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider May 2020 Block Party Application submitted by Jacqueline Quan to be held on Cumberland Ave. – 8:15 p.m.

8. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To approve contract with Wet Yet Fitness to provide Water Aerobics at the Town Pool – 8:25 p.m.
9. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To approve alarm monitoring, video monitoring and maintenance contract with SkyLine Technologies in the amount of \$7,615.50 – 8:30 p.m.
10. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To approve contract with Member Splash for Town Pool sign-in and member software in the amount of \$5,000. – 8:35 p.m.
11. **Discussion:** Introduction of FY2021 Budget – 8:50 p.m.
12. **Discussion/Motion:** To approve 2020 Town of Somerset Public events calendar, including the following:
 1. Shred Event (May 2020)
 2. Somerset Kids Pop-Up Marketplace (May 2020)
 3. Pool Opening (May 2020)
 4. Newcomers' Party (September 2020) – 9:05 p.m.
13. **Discussion:** Town Manager Administrative and Fiscal Reports – 9:15 p.m.
14. **Discussion:** Mayor's Report – 9:25 p.m.
15. **Adjourn** – 9:30 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 Matt Trollinger 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 blast for the most up-to-date Agenda.

The Mayor and Town Council may entertain a motion during the open meeting to close a portion of the meeting, in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1)(7) of the Open Meetings Act (Maryland Code, General Provisions Article), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

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.