

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



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



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August 2020

Complete the Census

Help Put Somerset in the Top 10 Maryland Municipalities

By Council President Marnie Shaul, Uppingham Street

News about the 2020 census has been overshadowed by the coronavirus. But, according to online census data, even during the pandemic, about 85% of Somerset residents have already answered the census questionnaire, mostly online. Now we'd like to up our response rate to over 90% and need your help to do that.

The U.S. Constitution requires a decennial census, which is a population count. The first census was done in 1790. These days, the results of the census are used in a variety of ways, including the distribution of federal funds for projects such as improving highway systems and grants for special education. Census data also determine the number of Congressional seats for each state. State and local officials use census counts to draw boundaries for Congressional, state legislative, and school districts.

Maryland has 157 municipalities, and 2000 Census data showed that 91% of Somerset residents participated, putting Somerset in the top 10 of Maryland municipalities and ranking us 6th in participation. However, in 2010, only 78% of Somerset residents participated in the census and Somerset dropped to 55th in rank.



The goal of the census is to count every single person living in the United States. To increase national participation, as of July 16 census takers began following up with non-respondents. They will continue this work until October 31st.

If you haven't already done so, you can go online to take the census now. It's easy to fill out the form. Please go to **my2020census.gov** and help Somerset achieve a 90%, or higher, response rate.

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ON MY MIND

Time for Action on Black Lives Matter

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, Warwick Place

As the Black Lives Matter movement has gained steam, broad support and validation in recent months, I feel it is incumbent upon all elected officials to find ways to respond to this crying need for social change. This must be done at the federal, state, county, and, yes, even at the municipal level.

One of the greatest history lessons learned these past months has been how symbols and statues have been used to oppress people and contribute to inequalities between groups of citizens. For example, those Confederate statues which have been torn down were not really erected to honor the soldiers—rather, there was a more sinister purpose.

In Maryland for years forward thinking officials such as Montgomery County's own State Senator Cheryl Kagan have been leading efforts to replace our outdated and offensive state song "Maryland My Maryland" with its pro-Confederate tilt. I cringe at the memory of being taught the lyrics of this tune as a student at Radnor Elementary School in the 60s. I will be encouraging everyone to support future efforts to legislate this song out of our lives.

Here in Somerset, I applaud our students who placed notices on stop signs and trees to confront us with facts about our demographics and recent police actions in the nation which have contributed to racial disparities. These same students are now taking positive steps to create opportunities for conversations about these important issues and begin the long road to equality.

I plan to devote time in the coming year to assisting these young people to engage Somerset residents in working on long-term solutions. We don't want to just put a band-aid on it, check a box and move on to the next topic of the day. In addition to encouraging conversation and the exchange of ideas, we need to examine Somerset's culture to show the world what values are important to us.



Online Updates to the Town Directory Due on July 31

Please be sure to complete the online questionnaire that was emailed to all Town residents in mid-July. This is the first time that the Town is collecting data online, and **all residents are urged to respond even if your information is unchanged from previous years.** If you are a new resident, we can only include you in the Directory if you provide this information.

The form can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/somersetdir>

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Stormwater Management Study Committee Proposed to Town Council

By Council Member Steve Surko, Uppingham Street

Background:

In November 2019, the Town Council was asked by Mayor Slavin to take a closer look at building regulations in the Town Code. On May 6, 2020, the Mayor posted his recommendation for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Study Stormwater Management and Protection of the Tree Canopy (SMTc) Committee on the Town of Somerset listserv. Soon thereafter, I wrote an article for the June *Town Journal* to provide an update on this topic, and solicited feedback from residents.

The Town Council discussed the establishment of the SMTc Committee on June 1 and July 6. Recognizing the need for more in-depth discussions, Council President **Marnie Shaul** scheduled a mid-month working session on July 22. This article was submitted for publication

before the working session, and revisions to the proposed Stormwater Study Committee charter, as presented below, may emerge from the working session. To see any such revisions, consult materials posted for the next Town Council meeting that will be held on August 3.

Where we are now:

Based on feedback from residents and fellow Council Members, I recommend that we refocus the effort. In particular, while our tree canopy is inextricably linked to stormwater control, the Parks and Natural Resources Committee (PNRC) has been exploring the loss of tree canopy and considering options for a while now, and it does not make sense to short circuit that effort. With this in mind, I have drafted the following charter that aims to tackle the vexing issue of stormwater management in Somerset:

A Proposed Charter for the Stormwater Management Study Committee

Establishment

The Stormwater Study Committee ("Study Committee") has been established by the Mayor, according to Section 13-1 of the Town of Somerset Code, in order to:

- **identify any problems in the Town Code associated with stormwater management, particularly with regard to the health, safety, general welfare, and enjoyment of residents' property;**
- **analyze the efficacy, costs, and benefits of possible solutions; and**
- **submit a report to the Mayor and Town Council.**

The Study Committee shall remain in existence until it submits its report to the Town Council, not to exceed one year, but may be continued by the Mayor with a revised charter.

Composition and Appointment Terms

The Study Committee shall consist of an odd number of members. There shall be a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 9 members, ideally to include a real estate professional, an attorney with expertise in land use law, a person with expertise regarding trees, a person with expertise in stormwater management, a person with expertise in conservation landscape design, and other residents with the time and interest to work on this intensive and time-limited study. Members and the committee chairperson shall be nominated by the Mayor (striving for diversity) and approved by the Town Council, according to Sections 13-2 and 13-4 of the Town Code. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor.

The Study Committee shall have one Council Member liaison and one Council Member alternate, according to Section 13-5 of the Town Code. Liaisons are not voting members of the Study Committee.

Continued on page 4

Stormwater Committee Charter *Continued*

The Study Committee shall have one member of the Environment Committee and one member of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee designated as non-voting liaisons.

If the Study Committee determines that the support of a consultant is necessary, the chairperson shall submit a cost estimate along with the relevant credentials of possible consultants to the Mayor and Town Council. The Town Council will select one consultant to support the Study Committee.

The chairperson may establish subcommittees and assign subcommittee chairpersons. Subcommittees shall conform to all requirements for meetings and records.

The Study Committee may also establish working groups to gather information.

Duties

The Study Committee will have the following duties:

1. To clearly and specifically define the problems associated with stormwater management in the Town Code.
2. To clearly catalog the approaches taken by other comparable jurisdictions to the problems identified in item 1.
3. In an article in the *Town Journal* published within four months of the Study Committee's first meeting, to disseminate to the public a discussion of the problems as defined in item 1 and the approaches catalogued in item 2.
4. To prioritize possible approaches Somerset might take to solving the problems defined in item 1.
5. To analyze how each of the top-priority approaches may impact:
 - a. Stormwater run-off;
 - b. The tree canopy;
 - c. Town Code and administration; and
 - d. Property values.
6. In an article in the *Town Journal* published within eight months of the Study Committee's first meeting, to disseminate to the public the analysis in item 5.
7. To hold at least one Town Forum for discussion of the analysis in item 5.
8. To submit the findings of the study and analysis of options to the Mayor and Town Council within 12 months of the Study Committee's first meeting.

Meetings

The Study Committee must meet at least once a month and the Chairperson must be present.

Meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act. With the assistance of the Town Manager, public notice and an agenda shall be issued prior to the holding of a meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be promptly prepared, as required by the Act. Once approved by the Committee, the meeting minutes shall be given to the Town Manager.

As required by the Act, at least one member of the Committee shall complete the online training offered by the Open Meetings Compliance Board. The trainee shall inform the Town Manager once the training has been completed. All members are encouraged to complete the training. The training is available here: https://www.igsr.umd.edu/VLC/OMA/class_oma_title.php.

Records

Records of the Committee shall be retained in accordance with the Maryland Public Information Act. Committee members shall review the Town's Document Retention Schedule and make sure certain records are retained in accordance therewith.

I welcome your comments on the Stormwater Study Committee. Please feel free to communicate directly with me (or other Council Members) and the Town Manager if you wish your comments to be formally presented to the Council. Although the Town Council will have discussed the Stormwater Study Committee on July 22, your comments will be invaluable when the Town Council considers the charter at its meeting on August 3.

And anyone interested in serving on the Study Committee (including those who have expressed an interest in the past) should contact the Mayor directly. Please let him know why you want to volunteer and confirm that you have the time available to dedicate to the effort. From the Mayor: "I am looking for people who will have an open mind to interpreting the research so it doesn't matter what their current views are!"

AUGUST CALENDAR

MONDAY, AUGUST 3

Town Council Zoom Meeting
7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

Pool Committee Zoom Meeting
7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

Communications Committee
Zoom Meeting
3:00 p.m.

Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just an Email or Phone Call Away



If you need a ride, someone to pick up some groceries or a prescription, a ride to the Metro, or even if you just want to get to a friend's house, please contact **Somerset Helping Hand**. We have a list of 30 Somerset volunteers who can help.

Send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com or call **Barbara Zeughauser** at 301-951-8560, **Kathleen Kenyon** at 301-656-8581 or **Jim Berry** at 301-656-6089.

If you would like to add your name to the volunteer list, please send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com.

Pepco Says LED Streetlights Are Coming

By Council President Marnie Shaul, *Uppingham Street*

In late June, **Mayor Slavin, Town Manager Matt Trollingier, Council Member Robin Barr** (Essex) and I met with Pepco regarding opportunities for enhancing the streetlighting throughout the Town of Somerset. We were pleased to learn that Pepco is planning a project to enhance the streetlights owned by the company across its Maryland service area.

As part of this project, which will require approval from the Maryland Public Service Commission, the company is planning to replace existing streetlights with new LED smart streetlights. Not only will these streetlights be more energy efficient and last longer, but the smart nodes that will be installed have the ability to provide a host of community services.

We will be working closely with Pepco to provide more information about this project and its benefits in the coming months.

Somerset has been actively pursuing conversion of our streetlights to LED lights for at least ten years in order to provide better lighting in town and reduce our energy use. In response to our interest, Pepco chose Somerset for a pilot program and installed ten LED streetlights on Dorset Avenue near Little Falls Parkway about ten years ago. Those lights are still in place and have required no maintenance.

More recently Somerset worked with a professional lighting consultant who helped us select five different LED lights for our own pilot program to determine the sort of LED bulb our residents preferred. In 2019 Somerset was ready to select a bulb until we learned that the installation costs were much more than we had anticipated — \$2,500 a pole. At that point we postponed installation indefinitely but hoped that Pepco would eventually make installation of LED lighting more attractive for municipalities. Our ongoing conversations with Pepco about our interest in converting our streetlights makes Somerset an attractive partner as Pepco moves ahead with its project.

In Case You've Been Wondering . . .

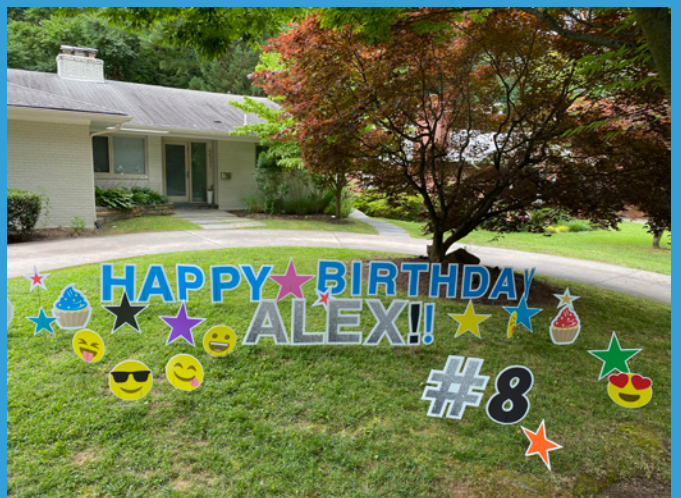
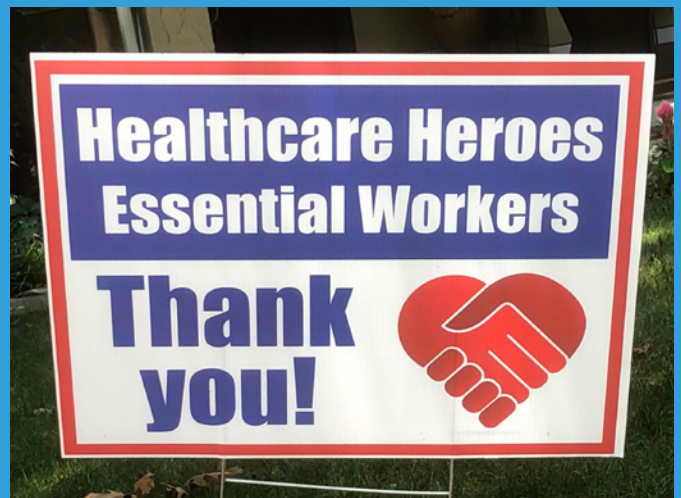
What do all the little numbered orange marks on our sidewalks mean?



They identify areas marked by Town staff as potential tripping hazards and are scheduled to be repaired by a company called Precision Concrete Cutting.

Summer 2020 in Somerset

Signs of gratitude and signs of celebration sprang up in Somerset during this challenging pandemic summer.



Somerset's Embodiment of the Suffragist Spirit



By **Ilene Ringel Heller**, *Uppingham Street*

August 26 marks the 100th anniversary of the day that the 19th Amendment was officially adopted, giving women the long-sought right to vote. It is fitting, therefore, that in marking this important date we pay tribute to our own **Nancy Soreng** (Uppingham). In its latest newsletter, The League of Women Voters (LWV) stated that "[t]his year as we celebrate the fortitude and enduring commitment of the suffragists who went on to create the League of Women Voters, there is perhaps no one who embodies the spirit of these formidable women more than Nancy Soreng."

As you may recall from a prior story about Nancy in the February 2019 *All About People* column in the *Town Journal*, LWV previously honored Nancy by announcing the creation of the Nancy Soreng Young Professional Advancement Fund which provides stipends to interns, enabling the League to attract interns from all socioeconomic levels. Developing diversity and equity at the League is one of Nancy's goals. You may also recall that Nancy moderated a May 12th candidate forum in Somerset, something she has done for the County, the 8th Congressional District and Friendship Heights. The latest accolades follow Nancy's decision to step down from the Maryland State Board of the LWV.

But stepping down from this Board hardly means an end to Nancy's work. Nancy, who has served twice as president of the Maryland State League, continues to be a board member of the National Capital Area LWV. She is actively working to ensure that the 2020 election process works well, collaborating with the Police Accountability Project to develop legislation and joining other volunteers to push other legislative priorities through Annapolis.

Nancy was born in Ohio and lived in Oregon, New Mexico, Virginia and New York before coming to Somerset. (Metro was a deciding factor!) She majored in elementary education at Portland State, but never taught. Instead, she became involved in non-profit administration. Now she jokes that she does that without pay. Nancy lives with her husband, Rob, a retired botanist for the Smithsonian, and has two adult daughters who live in California and Arizona.

Nancy says she "is not happy being in the spotlight," and was resistant to our doing a second story about her. She is committed to "making people understand that what they can do can make a difference." She urges everyone to turn to **Vote411.org**, LWV's online voter's guide, which will be live in October.

IN MEMORIAM • 1927–2020

Lila Snow

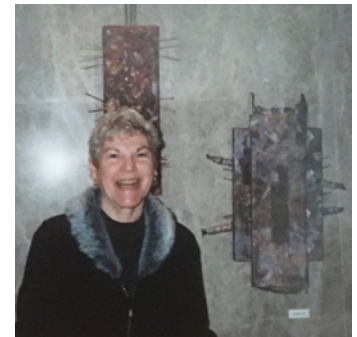
Artist and Somerset resident Lila Snow died at home on July 13. She was born in Harlem, N.Y. on September 15, 1927, and raised in Brooklyn, where she was a double-dutch jump rope champion.

She earned a degree in chemistry from Brooklyn College and worked in the field briefly before studying art at The Corcoran School and American University, as well as studying languages in Geneva, Paris, Rome, Bologna and Sendai.

In 1963, she and her husband, physicist George A. Snow, who had at one time served on the Somerset Town Council, moved into a house on Essex Avenue, where they raised their three children. George Snow died in 2000. They were married for 52 years.

Snow had many well received exhibitions of her art both at home and abroad. Her work is in permanent collections in Argentina, Italy, Japan and here in the United States at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American University Museum, Radford University, The University of Maryland, University College, and the Philadelphia Museum of Judaica. In September 2015 Lila had a show at the Somerset Town Hall.

The Washington Post art critic Michael Welzenbach noted, "When a number of Lila Snow's wall constructions are on exhibit together, they give the impression of a miniature museum dedicated to the turbulent history of the 20th century as perceived through the artist's eyes." Nancy G. Heller said of Snow's work in *Sculpture Magazine*, "Her assemblages transform humble materials into



objects of breathtaking beauty, often emotionally powerful and always intellectually stimulating."

Snow performed as a standup comedian in New York City, Princeton, Aspen and Washington, D.C. She hosted "The Art Scene" on Montgomery Municipal Cable TV (MMCTV) Channel 16 for many years and co-taught, with her husband, the first Women's Studies course at the University of Maryland.

Snow is the author of a memoir, *With A Name Like Tuchmacher...* In 2003 she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Brooklyn College.

Snow is survived by three children, Zachary Snow, of Rhinebeck, N.Y., Andrew Snow of Chevy Chase, and Sara Snow of Vancouver, Canada, as well as eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Gifts honoring Lila's memory in support of Washington artists can be made to the American University Museum at giving.american.edu, or by mail via American University Office of Development, **P.O. Box 96609, Washington, DC 20077-7992**. Please note "In memory of Lila Snow" in the correspondence.



A Canoe Trip Across Washington, DC — and Environmental Racism

On July 4th, my sons Benjamin (24), Ari (17) and I decided to canoe down the Anacostia River, putting in at Bladensburg Waterfront Park. I started in the middle, enjoying the sites without paddling! Our goal was to canoe with the out-moving tide to where it joins the Potomac River and then turn north and paddle with the changing tide to Fletcher's Boat House. My original interest was to see Anacostia by water, as we had been impressed by all the new bike trails that now surround this river, and show off the newly restored wetlands.

But with every slow-moving journey, the unexpected arrives at every river bend. We arrived at the Park seeing docks, storage facilities, a boat ramp and other amenities. It was definitely upscale and gentrified with both Black and white boaters. As we know, gentrification is not necessarily a good thing for a city, as many times the underserved are pushed out to the suburbs. As I said hello to people, I wondered whether all of these upgrades were done in a balanced manner, i.e., serving all citizens equally. We put in and discovered that our small canoe was very tipsy and so decided that even micro-movements in the boat had to be pre-approved by the family collective. Otherwise, we were sliding into the dirty, smelly water.

Plastic bottles bobbed all around us and a plethora of plastic trash lined the banks. Having spent many months on the wilderness rivers of Maine and Canada during my lifetime, I took a deep breath of patience and hoped that the filth was only temporary. But it wasn't. After the first mile, we became the only boat on the river, alone in the silence and baking sun. We began to pass people with their fishing rods extending into the slime. As we had

many friendly exchanges with them, we saw that all of the fishermen were Black.

Up ahead, we came upon golf carts moving along an elevated boardwalk on the Langston Golf Course. This course used to be the only place Blacks were allowed to play golf in the city. Around the next bend, we saw the back side of RFK stadium, former home of my beloved Redskins. My vote for the new name is Redtails, the nickname of the WWII Tuskegee Airmen, all Black. That would be quite appropriate, especially for a Black-dominated sport. Across the river from RFK, the **Kenilworth-Parkside Community** was chosen as one of 12 underserved neighborhoods in President Obama's Promise Neighborhoods Initiative. This thriving community provides its citizens with schools, price-controlled housing and a beautiful central park surrounding a sculpture that I created, "**Huddle Up.**"

As we approached the Potomac, the water began to clear. We saw boats designed to scoop up trash and large tree trunks from the river, the work of the Anacostia Watershed Society. Underneath our canoe is the Anacostia River Tunnel Project, an 18-mile by 23-foot diameter tunnel designed to collect sewage, especially during rainstorms, that would otherwise be dumped into the Anacostia River. This project is ongoing.

Arriving at the confluence, we saw many boats heading up the river towards the Lincoln Memorial to anchor and to watch the evening fireworks. Our paddling now became very challenging. At first, two-foot swells came at us from across the river, where National Airport is located. With



our canoe pointed directly into the waves, the bow tip barely stayed above the water's surface. Along Hains Point, boats at full speed passed us going in different directions. We stayed close to land but found ourselves battling both the boats' turbulent wakes and the power of the waves bouncing off the shoreline walls, creating an almost unmanageable checkerboard of waves. We spent the next hour hanging on for dear life until we found calmer waters under the 14th Street Bridge.

Dozens of boats lay anchored together in long lines, mostly white people partying with loud music and no masks, all enjoying "Independence Day." Paddling north and away from Georgetown, we found many more anchored boats, with people swimming and frolicking in the water. Enticed by the screams of children in the water, we pulled ashore for a swim at Seven Sisters Islands, an outcropping of large rocks in the center of the river. The mud was goopy and gross at best, but the water was fairly clean. Having grown up in D.C. in the 1960s and 70s, swimming was definitely not an option. I was happier to see that the Potomac is now cleaner.

During the next few miles, the Potomac finally becomes more wild and untouched. On the Maryland side, the C&O Canal and Crescent Trail offer the bicyclist and hiker a protected paradise. On the Virginia side, a 60' high cliff dominates close to the shore. Here we found many Hispanic and Asian citizens fishing and enjoying some peace from their busy lives. Finally, we pulled over at Fletcher's Boathouse Landing, finishing our 15-mile canoe trip across D.C. We brought our gear to the parking lot and waited for my wife, Shereen, to arrive and pick us up.

Environmental Racism is a powerful term and we definitely witnessed it during our journey that day. Like every city, D.C. has a complicated history with juxtaposing forces at work, many designed for the advancement of some and to the detriment of others. As Shereen offered us watermelon slices, we strapped down the canoe and climbed into the car with our filthy and sunburned bodies, craving a shower and an air-conditioned home. In the quiet of the car, we shared a feeling of gratefulness for all of our creature comforts and certainly a renewed focus on our underserved neighbors.



To Your Health

By Diane Horn, Certified Wellness Coach
Chair, Ad Hoc Wellness Committee, *Surrey Street*

While looking for new recipes and cooking ideas I discovered a blog called "Gimme Some Oven," written by Ali Martin. Her recipes sounded good, were beautifully photographed and had very positive reviews. I gave the two salads a try and was quite pleased with them. So I thought I'd share them. I'm saving the Blueberry Crumble Bars for a special occasion knowing I could substitute any other fresh fruit or use less sugar if I choose.

Blueberry, Corn and Avocado Chopped Salad

Salad Ingredients:

9 ounces Romaine lettuce, chopped
5 ounces crumbled feta cheese
1 large avocado, peeled, pitted and diced
1 pint (2 cups) blueberries
1 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
1 cup chopped toasted almonds
3/4 cup whole-kernel corn
1/2 cup finely-diced red onion

Lemon Dressing Ingredients:

1/3 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon coarse black pepper

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, whisk all of the dressing ingredients together until combined.
2. In a large mixing bowl, add all of the salad ingredients. Drizzle evenly with the dressing, and toss until evenly combined.
3. Serve immediately, garnished with extra crumbled feta and a crack of black pepper if desired.

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To Your Health

Lentil Salad

Salad Ingredients:

- 1 cup uncooked lentils (either green, French green or brown lentils), rinsed and picked over
- 1 English cucumber, finely diced
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 3/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves, loosely packed
- 1/2 cup diced and drained sun-dried tomatoes

Lemon Dressing Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons freshly-squeezed lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, pressed or minced
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly-cracked black pepper

Instructions:

1. Combine the lentils in a saucepan with 3 cups of water (or veggie broth) and stir to combine. Cook over medium-high heat until the broth reaches a simmer. Then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and maintain the simmer until the lentils are tender, about 20-25 minutes depending on the type of lentils used. Use a strainer to drain and rinse the lentils in cold water for 1 minute until they are chilled, and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, as the lentils are cooking, combine all of the lemon dressing ingredients in a small bowl and whisk together until combined.
3. Add the cooked and chilled lentils, cucumber, red onion, mint and sun-dried tomatoes to a large bowl. Drizzle evenly with the lemon dressing and toss until evenly combined.
4. Enjoy immediately or refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 3-4 days.

Blueberry Crumble Bars

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (about 4 cups) fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, tightly-packed
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 1/4 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) melted butter

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8×8- or 9×9-inch square baking dish with parchment paper; set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, stir together the blueberries, brown sugar, lemon juice and cornstarch until combined. Heat over medium heat until the blueberries reach a simmer, stirring occasionally. Then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring and mashing a few of the blueberries occasionally, until the mixture is thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. Meanwhile as the berries are cooking, whisk together the oats, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt until combined. Drizzle the melted butter evenly over the mixture, then stir until completely combined.
4. Transfer half of the filling to the prepared pan, and press it evenly into the bottom of the pan to form the bottom layer of the bars. Pour the blueberry mixture on top, and spread it around evenly. Then use your fingers to crumble and evenly sprinkle the remaining oatmeal mixture on top of the blueberry layer.
5. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the blueberries are bubbling around the edges. Transfer to a cooling rack and cool until the bars reach room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until completely chilled.
6. Cut and serve chilled. Or store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

I hope you enjoy these recipes. Please feel free to share any of your own recipes. Let's pool our resources. You can send them to me at diane.b.horn@gmail.com and they can be posted in the "To Your Health" column. Take care and stay well!

From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



The weather was beautiful for our Town's July 4th Independence Day virtual video celebration, which was so nicely produced by Montgomery Municipal (MMC) Channel 16 in conjunction with our outstanding staff persons, Town Manager **Matt Trollinger** and Administrative Assistant **Linda Williams**. As always, we highlighted the accomplishments of our young people including school graduations and featured the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence. And we also had the cupcake decorating contest! Check the Town website or that of MMC at www.mmctv.org or call Matt to obtain a link to the video.

Congratulations to Council Member **Marnie Shaul** (Uppingham) for being unanimously voted to serve as President of the Town Council for the next term. Council Member **Barbara Zeughauser's** (Trent) nomination of Marnie expressed the way all of us feel about this remarkable elected official:

"Having served with Marnie for over 10 years, I am very thankful for all of her hard work as a Council Member, Council Vice President and Council President. Marnie devotes an incredible amount of time and energy to the Town and each and every year puts in an endless amount of thoughtful work for the benefit of our residents. We are very fortunate to have such a talented, respected and respectful resident who is willing to serve as Council President of our Town."

On behalf of our chapter of the Maryland Mayors Association, I recently helped convene two meetings of a large number of our County's top municipal leaders. One was an organizational meeting, and the second was a timely discussion of racism, racial disparities, racial injustice, and how our cities and towns can appropriately react. At the second meeting, we were joined by our County's Chief Equity Officer Tiffany Ward and Leon Andrews of the National League of Cities who introduced the Mayors to different opportunities and tools for municipalities to use in addressing these important issues. The group plans to meet on a monthly basis for the foreseeable future.

As is often the case in the summer months, minor crime increases in Somerset. I have spoken with the police about this recently and wish to remind everyone to always lock cars and increase lighting inside and surrounding your house, especially when you are away. These are some of the best ways to prevent crime.

Safe travels to all who will be visiting familiar locations this summer or going on a new driving adventure!



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Happy Summer! We are really in the dog days now, but thankfully the Town Pool is open and available for use by residents to take a dip and cool down. I was there on "opening day," and it was a nice feeling to see and hear residents enjoying a small semblance of normalcy in these crazy times.

We have extended pool hours to open earlier in the morning, starting at 8:30 a.m. All residents should be able to make their reservations on the Town's new Member Splash website (townofsomerset.membersplash.com). If you experience any issues logging in, please let us know at Town Hall and we can help you work through the problems. In order to comply with state-wide covid-19 regulations, it is important that everyone make a reservation before going to the pool – whether for lap swimming, regular recreational swimming, or even to enter the pool area to relax. There is a limit of 50 people at the pool at one time.

It was important that we opened the pool carefully and safely, and we will continue to operate the pool in such a manner, keeping the health and safety of the residents as our top priority.

The Town Council, in the vein of safety, voted this past month to continue to hold virtual meetings through the rest of the calendar year. We will continue to host the meetings on Zoom, with log-in/call-in instructions sent around ahead of time. The Zoom meetings have thus far worked out quite well, with an added bonus of recording the meetings so that residents can catch up and listen after the fact. Those recordings are posted on the Town website under the Council agenda page.

The Council also passed a resolution that puts a moratorium on rentals of the Town's public spaces,

including the pool, Town Hall, and parkland through the rest of the year. Unfortunately, this will affect the flu clinic that is typically hosted at the Town Hall in the fall. However, we are working on alternative arrangements, so stay tuned!

I also wanted to quickly touch on a subject that you may have read before: bushes and plantings in the right-of-way. As a reminder, residents are responsible for maintaining grass and other plantings in the right-of-way. Vegetation must not interfere with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Shrubbery and other vegetation should be trimmed so that it does not overhang the sidewalk and does not otherwise obstruct pedestrian use and motorist sightlines. I ask that all residents, especially those with hedges or other plantings near an intersection, please cut back your plantings so that residents can walk safely on the sidewalk. We have more foot traffic than usual as people try to get fresh air and exercise, and often residents are walking with their dogs, or two by two down the sidewalk. I have seen instances and heard complaints where people were forced off the sidewalk and in some cases into the road. Please be mindful of pedestrians and their ability to use the right-of-way, and don't force people off the sidewalks. Please cut back your hedges and plantings. Thank you.

Finally, I wanted to take this opportunity to wish our wonderful Town **Administrative Assistant Linda Williams** a happy birthday (August 12). As many of you know and have experienced first-hand, Linda is a great asset to the Town, great with residents, and always helpful and responsive.

Editors' note: We also want to wish a very happy birthday (August 11) to Matt Trollinger! 😊

GENERAL PERMITS

TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

- 4706 Dorset Ave. – 16" dia. & 18" dia. (hazardous)
- 4805 Dorset Ave. – 12" So. Magnolia (hazardous and causing flooding)

OTHER

- 4603 Dorset Ave. – HVAC replacement
- 5711 Warwick Pl. – Fence replacement and alteration

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met in regular session on July 6, 2020, and took the following actions:

1. Elected Marnie Shaul to serve as President of the Council.
2. Approved authorization of the Town Manager to establish a Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP) account for Town through PNC Bank, and the transfer of \$168,329.74 from the Town's existing Capital One checking account to the MLGIP account, to accrue interest at a greater rate.
3. Approved bid proposal from Precision Concrete Cutting to address sidewalk tripping hazards at a cost of \$24,265.
4. Approved \$200 reimbursement to parents of graduating Somerset students for banners purchased for graduation event.
5. Approved HVAC unit replacement at 4603 Dorset Ave.
6. Approved the removal of the following Town trees, as recommended by the Town Arborist:
 - Capello Park – 16" American Elm (90% dead);
 - Capello Park – 18" American Elm (90% dead);
 - 4604 Dorset Ave. – 15" Mulberry (hazardous: leaning on fence);
 - 5526 Warwick Pl. – 30" Pin Oak (in decline with large dead wood, and will not revive).
7. Adopted Montgomery County's Healthy Lawns Act (Bill 52-14), restricting the use of certain pesticides on private lawns, effective January 1, 2021.
8. Approved a six-month moratorium on the rental of Town of Somerset public spaces and facilities (including Town Hall, Town Hall green space, swimming pool, parkland, and tennis courts).
9. Approved a gift of DOGIPOT dog waste receptacle and bag dispenser to Town of Somerset by Mayor Jeffrey Slavin (Warwick Pl.), to be placed at the Town Pool parking lot and walking path.

The Town Council also met in special sessions on the dates listed below and took the following actions:

July 16

10. Approved a proposal by Somerset Dolphins Swim Team to close the pool early on the evening of Saturday, July 25 for a Swim Team banquet.

June 17

11. Approved Pool Rule recommendations from Town Pool Committee, available on the Town website under the Somerset Announcements, and at: <https://conta.cc/39hDlbE>

12. Approved work order for replacement of Main Pool Pump and Phase Converter at Town Pool in the amount of \$20,816.50.

July 2

13. Approved a Resolution to authorize continued use of remote meetings.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting August 3, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

The Somerset Town Council will meet via Zoom on August 3, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.
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.****

Somerset Town Council

- Marnie Shaul,
Council President
- Robin Barr
- Franny Peale
- Steve Surko
- Barbara Zeughauser

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

1. **Motion:** To appoint Council liaison assignments to Town Committees. – 7:40 p.m.

CONSENT

2. **Motion:** To approve minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on June 1, 2020.
3. **Motion:** To approve minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on July 6, 2020. – 7:45 p.m.

NON-CONSENT

4. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider permit application submitted by Property Alchemist LLC, on behalf of Erlinda and Brendan Doherty, to construct addition to front of house and remove two trees at the property located at 5516 Trent St. – 7:46 p.m.
5. **Discussion:** Building Administrator Report. – 8:05 p.m.

6. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the Swim Team Committee Charter/Mission Statement. – 8:10 p.m.
7. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider Mayoral nomination of Barton Rubenstein to serve as Chair of Town Environment Committee. – 8:25 p.m.
8. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of contract to paint and varnish Town Poolhouse (contractor and amount TBD at time of publication). – 8:26 p.m.
9. **Discussion:** Town Manager Administrative and Fiscal Reports. – 8:40 p.m.
10. **Motion:** Adjourn – 9:15 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.

* Times listed are estimated, and may run longer or shorter than allocated.

** Questions should be submitted via email ahead of the meeting to manager@townofsomerset.com or town@townofsomerset.com.

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.