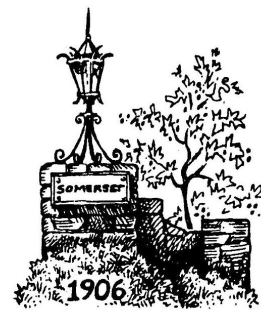


*"Where People and Trees Have Deep Roots and Grow Strong"*

# SomerseT TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 65 • No. 12

December 2020

## Report on Town Zoom Forum with County Police Officials

**By Bruce Tully, Nominated Chair, Public Safety Committee, Warwick Place**

The Town held a Zoom conference call on November 16th with the Montgomery County Chief of Police Marcus Jones and our Second District Commander Sean Gagen. It was an extremely informative and beneficial hour-long discussion about police coverage, safety and crime in Somerset and surrounding communities.

Chief Jones and District Commander Gagen briefed the Mayor, attending Council Members and Town residents on the current crime and safety profile of the area and County. Somerset remains in the "low crime" profile but has experienced upticks in reported unlocked car thefts and break-ins, home burglaries and larcenies. Commander Gagen provided an update on a few recent incidents in our area. First, a male suspect who had been cruising the Town and approaching young women was identified and interviewed. This was accomplished, in large part, through excellent reporting and observation by Town residents – an important lesson for all of us. Second, the incident of a barefoot young woman who entered unlocked homes was mentioned. This person is yet unidentified. Third, the homeless man from the woods seen near the Town pool was identified and is now in the care of social services.

It was noted that it would be misleading to profile Somerset as a "safe" neighborhood rather than a "low" crime area since this can lead to a false sense of security. Crime does occur in our Town and around us daily. We need to be situationally aware, lock cars and residence

doors, have adequate home lighting, and have visible home address numbers for responding police and fire units to see easily from the street.

While the police will respond to 911 and non-emergency calls, it is important and fundamental to understand that personal and residential security is first and foremost **your** responsibility. The Second District, at any given time, has between 12-18 units on the street and their patrols are geared to active crime areas as well as Somerset. You should remember that when seconds count, the police could be several minutes away. Recent demonstration activity and diminished availability due to COVID-19 quarantines have affected police availability. Your awareness and basic good security practices go far to protect you.

I expect that the Town's new Public Safety Committee will soon be publishing the latest best personal security practices to help protect yourself every day. In addition, I will soon make available, once again, Emergency Preparedness Guidelines that address potential emergencies ranging from winter storms to acts of terrorism. Lastly, as our Town's public safety is paramount for each of us, I plan to offer in the near future a live Zoom Personal Security Seminar that closely resembles my current presentation at the George Shultz Foreign Service Institute for all U.S. Government officers being posted at our Diplomatic Missions abroad.

Be safe, aware and wear a mask, too!



## ON MY MIND

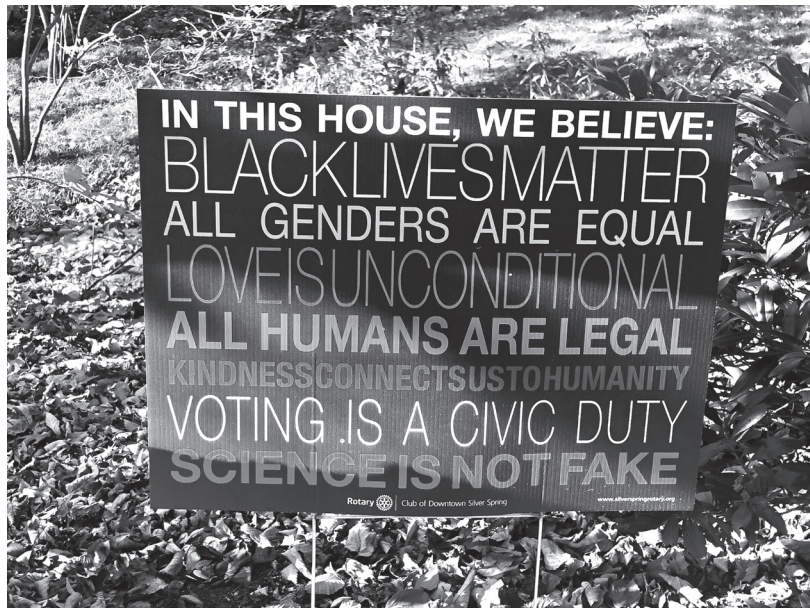
### In Consideration of Somerset's Values

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, Warwick Place

In meetings and conversations I have had over these pandemic months, from time to time, the question has arisen over whether the townspeople of Somerset have common values. Certainly we can probably all agree on such issues as protecting our trees and wildlife, and providing children with a good education. But having lived here for several decades and knowing so many of you personally, I truly believe there are many more principles on which we are in accord.

Over the summer a wonderful yard sign was created which has popped up in Town and around the County. In fact, to my surprise, the local Rotary Club--- part of an international nonpartisan organization founded over one hundred years ago that is decidedly neither Red or Blue nor liberal or conservative--was marketing it. I have since purchased this sign and am proudly displaying it on my front lawn:

***"In this House, We Believe that Black Lives Matter, All Genders Are Equal, Love is Unconditional, All Humans Are Legal, Kindness Connects Us To Humanity, Voting Is A Civic Duty, Science Is Not Fake."***



To my point, I believe that these concepts are the true essence of the citizens of Somerset. It is my sincere hope that everyone who lives here feels the same way.

Blessings to everyone this holiday season and may there truly be Peace on Earth.

## CONTACT SOMERSET

### MAYOR

**Jeffrey Z. Slavin**, 5706 Warwick Place  
301-654-6767 | Town Hall: 301-657-2229  
mayor@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN COUNCIL

**Marnie Shaul**, Council President  
5509 Uppingham Street  
301-913-5973  
mshaul@townofsomerset.com

**Robin Barr**, 4706 Essex Avenue  
301-656-7358  
rbarr@townofsomerset.com

**Franny Peale**, 5521 Uppingham Street  
301-652-9695  
fpeale@townofsomerset.com

**Stephen Surko**, 5500 Uppingham Street  
301-656-5004  
ssurko@townofsomerset.com

**Barbara Zeughhauser**, 5412 Trent Street  
301-951-8560  
bzeughhauser@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN MANAGER

**Matt Trollinger**  
301-657-3211  
manager@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN ARBORIST

**Tolbert Feather**  
town@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN HALL

Open: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Monday thru Friday  
301-657-3211 | Fax: 301-657-2773  
TTY users call Maryland Relay

### SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

#### EDITORS

**Barbara Marenus**  
bmarenus@gmail.com

**Mary Wisniewski**  
mary.p.wisniewski@gmail.com

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www.townofsomerset.com

# Somerset's Meeting with Pepco

By **Marnie Shaul, Council President**, *Uppingham Street*

Pepco held a panel discussion for the Town of Somerset on October 29th. If you missed it, you can watch the entire meeting at <https://bit.ly/3pU3gxX>

Here is what we learned about Pepco's plans for improved street lighting and other issues:

- Pepco has filed a tariff with Maryland's Public Service Commission which includes a proposed conversion of the 84,000 company-owned street lights to LED street lights during 2022-2026. This conversion would have no up-front cost for Somerset and would be paid for through our monthly bills—which are estimated to stay about the same as they are today even though the new lights would use much less energy. The new street lights would have smart nodes to enhance lighting controls such as dimming and enhanced communications that could automatically inform Pepco when a light is out, eliminating the need for individuals to report street light outages.
- Somerset now can ask to have a charging station installed for electric vehicles. The installation would be done at no cost for the Town. If Somerset wants a charging station, the Town would propose a location for Pepco to evaluate. The Town parking lot near the tennis courts was discussed as a site that could be examined to see if it has the correct electric feed.
- The Public Service Commission has seven months to decide on Pepco's rate case proposal. Therefore it could be next summer before we know their decision. If this conversion proposal is approved, Pepco indicated it would start installing LED street lights in 2022. Somerset's leadership has discussed LED street lights with Pepco for many years and had a pilot installation of five LED street lights near the Town Hall last year. Somerset's elected officials will work with Pepco to show "we are ready for installation" and try to be one of the first municipalities with new lights.
- Pepco also provided information about the reliability of its service in Town. During the past 12 months, there were eight outages on the feeder line that covers most of Somerset. Four of these outages were due to vegetation such as tree limbs. Pepco plans to be back in Somerset in 2022 for its vegetation management program. In the past, our Town arborist has worked closely with Pepco to ensure that a good balance is struck between preventing power outages and preserving our tree canopy.

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

### MONDAY, DEC. 7

Town Council Zoom Meeting  
7:00 p.m.

### MONDAY, DEC. 14

Town Council Zoom Work  
Session  
5:00 p.m.

### FRIDAY, DEC. 18

Holiday Fund Donation Day—  
Initial Deadline  
(please deliver contributions to  
Town Hall or Mayor's residence)

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 23 – FRIDAY, DEC. 25

Town Hall closed in  
observance of Christmas  
holiday

### FRIDAY, JAN. 1

Town Hall closed for New  
Year's Day



# Somerset Race Undaunted

By Jeff Nussbaum, Essex Avenue

If you spotted blue-shirted families jogging through Somerset between October 15th and 25th, chances are they were among the more than 600 people who participated in the Somerset Race this year.

Earlier in the year, the Somerset PTA doubted whether they would be able to hold the race at all, but thanks to a tremendous response from race sponsors and participants, they were able to stage a successful event by any standard, and a wildly successful event by the standards of this strange year, raising over \$30,000.

Because the race was run virtually, participants could run on the traditional Somerset course or anywhere they chose. This allowed the race to include participants from 17 states and from as far away as Ireland and Hawaii. Somerset Elementary's second graders had the most participation (by percentage), just edging out the fourth grade.

**Matt Zaft** (Dorset), who served as a gold sponsor, also assembled the biggest "team" — the 40-member Zaftpak.

Anyone who did not run but would like to support the PTA by purchasing a T-shirt for \$20 can still do so by emailing [somersettracechair@gmail.com](mailto:somersettracechair@gmail.com). And we hope to be back together for next year's race!



Race Director Jeff Nussbaum presents award for largest team to Matt Zaft



Enthusiastic Somerset runners



Second graders Abi, Maya and Azora are ready to run





# *Somerset Employee Holiday Fund*

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Residents,

Our annual holiday fund for thanking Somerset employees has been extremely successful in recent years, and I am asking that we all recognize our hard working staff at this time. I began this project in 2012 in response to the many calls and emails I had received from residents asking how to properly thank our dedicated staff. I hope that everyone will show their gratitude in this challenging year by contributing generously. The pooled monies will be distributed to employees on the basis of length of service and responsibility. Other municipalities in the area make the distributions in this manner, which seems fair and equitable. The employees who will share in the funds are: three maintenance employees, police personnel, our Town arborist, Code Enforcement Officer, and Administrative Assistant.

All contributions should be made by cash or check and made payable to the Town of Somerset, with "Holiday Fund" placed on the note line. Checks can be mailed or delivered to the Town Hall, 4510 Cumberland Avenue, Chevy Chase 20815 or left at my residence at 5706 Warwick Place. Enclosed in this month's Journal is an envelope for your use. Please try to send in your contributions before 4:30 p.m. on Friday, December 18th. There also will be a second distribution after the holidays to take into account any additional contributions received after this date. Your gifts will be greatly appreciated by those who do so much for us.

Best wishes for you and your families this holiday season,

Jeffrey Slavin  
Mayor



# Somerset Went All Out for Pandemic Halloween











# Proposed Changes to Town Code

By **Franny Peale, Council Member**, *Uppingham Street*

At the November 2nd meeting the Town Council voted unanimously to introduce a proposed ordinance to amend the Town Code. This amendment will be considered at the December 7th Council meeting. Please join the meeting if you are interested in hearing more. You can view the text of the proposed ordinance here: <https://bit.ly/3fD9cqJ>

The Council expects to continue to review the Town's building code regulations, especially in light of ongoing discussions and committee work on issues related to trees, stormwater management, and drainage.

The proposed changes fall into a variety of categories:

- Specifying county permit delivery requirements for Town projects
- Codifying standard conditions for building permits, including inspection

- Clarifying points of measurement and categories for setback purposes
- Codifying Council approval of projects with multiple open permits
- Simplifying Council procedures for when to issue written decisions
- Adding Council approval requirement for new town committees
- Cleaning up language and numbering conventions in the Code

The proposed ordinance reflects the ongoing and collaborative work of the Council, with the advice of our Town Attorney, over recent months during public work sessions. If you are interested in looking back at these drafting sessions, you can contact the Town Manager to ask for a link to recordings of the meetings.



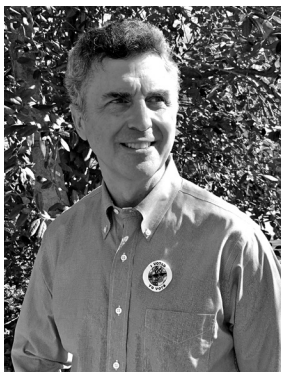
## Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just an Email or Phone Call Away

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](mailto:HHSomerset@gmail.com) or call **Barbara Zeughhauser** 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](mailto:HHSomerset@gmail.com).





## SOMERSET LEADERS

# Steve Surko

This is the fourth article in our monthly series of profiles of our Town's leaders. This month, we focus on Council Member Steve Surko (Uppingham Street).

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

Steve Surko rescued Vietnamese boat people, patented an airport security scanner for determining whether passengers' liquids are safe or contain explosives, and designed currency with added bumps to aid the visually impaired in distinguishing between different denominations. It's all part of Steve's impressive background as a naval officer and professional engineer.

Steve is the son of a naval officer and moved frequently as a child, although he considers Lexington, MA his home town. Steve graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy and spent 22 years in the Navy, retiring as a Commander. After serving as a Surface Warfare Officer on a destroyer, Steve specialized as an Engineering Duty Officer. Over the years, Steve was based in San Diego, Boston, Philadelphia, Ottawa, and, ultimately, came to D.C. in 1995.

During his naval career, Steve managed ship repairs and led and supported numerous ship design and ship system research and development activities. Steve also earned dual master's degrees in mechanical engineering and naval architecture & marine engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While attending MIT, Steve met his wife, Elizabeth Thompson, a law student at Boston College Law School. They were married in 1989.

Steve left the Navy in 2004 and then worked for two technology companies before becoming a program manager at the Homeland Security Advanced Research Projects Agency Program (HSARPA) in 2008. While at DHS, Steve led the \$19 million Magnetic Vision (MagViz) Program with Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a bottled liquid screening system for improved aviation checkpoint security. The system employs magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology (<https://bit.ly/35XuwE4>), typically used by doctors to scan brains, to screen for harmful liquids, gels, and lotions. There were two public demonstrations of this system at the Albuquerque Airport, which were well received, and the

invention was recognized with a R&D 100 Award. Although the technology was licensed for commercial use, Steve recalls that various operational considerations led to MagViz not being adopted by the Transportation Security Administration.

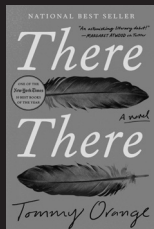
In 2014, Steve began his "dream job" as chief of the 30-person Office of Technology Development at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. His management duties include supervision of the Security Features Division, Materials and Application Division, and Technology Integration Division. His team is responsible for improving inks, developing a raised tactile feature that would create distinguishing bumps on the edge of bills to enable the blind and visually impaired to denominate their banknotes, and maturing innovative security feature concepts to protect the next generation of U.S. currency.

One of the challenges of the pandemic has been trying to schedule the testing of these innovations on printing equipment. There is no downtime for the machines at this point, Steve explained, because currency demand has greatly increased worldwide, and printers are working 24/7.

Steve, Elizabeth and their three children – Katherine, James (Jack) and Sam – moved to Somerset in 2005, largely because of Somerset Elementary School, the outstanding Montgomery County School system, and the Town pool. The children later attended Westland and B-CC. Katherine, who will be returning home, is a graduate student in a joint program at Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland in public health and social welfare. Jack was commissioned this summer as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corp, and Steve -- back in uniform for the first time in a long time -- swore him in. Sam is a junior at B-CC. Elizabeth runs Compass Point, a consulting service for environmental policy. The household also includes one rescue dog and three rescue cats.

*Continued on page 11*





## *There There* by Tommy Orange

Reviewed by  
Alex Acosta,  
Essex Avenue

Tommy Orange's *There There* takes you on a road trip through space and time, with an expansive cast of characters bound for the Big Oakland Powwow. That's Oakland, California, Orange's hometown, and that of Gertrude Stein, whose much-quoted take on Oakland "There's no there there" is, according to Orange, misconstrued as a dismissal of the city. Instead, Orange argues, it's a lament for what was there and is now lost, unless we – and his band of travelers – journey on to rediscover it.

Those travelers – skateboarders, dancers, custodians, event planners, drug dealers, social workers, filmmakers, and mail carriers -- share roots in Oakland's urban Indian [Orange uses the term "urban Indian" to refer to Native Americans living in cities] community, which Orange describes as "the generation born in the city . . . who know the downtown Oakland skyline better than . . . any sacred mountain range." In *There There* Orange explores what it means to be an urban Indian, while at the same time illuminating the larger story of Native Americans throughout our country, which once was, of course,

their country. The book's prologue is an extraordinary recounting of American history from the perspective of Native Americans. It will take your breath away and sweep you along as Orange's characters, connected to one another through filaments that you – and they – can barely see or grasp, move toward the powwow where they'll come together and spin off even more threads.

*There There* is an intricate and demanding book – you might resort to an atlas to trace the characters' routes to Oakland and you might even want to make your own map of the characters' relationships to one another. Extra credit is available if your map looks like a spider's web, an image that Orange makes compelling use of as he ties together the plot streams. Like a spider, Orange weaves a thing of beauty and delicacy, but also of power. Near the end of the book, he quotes James Baldwin most aptly, "People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." At this moment of history, when the plot twists of our American story have us rubbernecking on a daily basis, *There There* is a story that deserves our attention.

*Continued from page 10*

## Steve Surko

Steve was elected to the Town Council in 2018 and reelected in 2020. He is currently the Council liaison to the Environment Committee, the new Stormwater Study Committee, and the Citizens Coordinating Committee for Friendship Heights. Steve is also slated to serve as liaison to the soon-to-be reconstituted Public Safety Committee. The passage of the Healthy Lawns Act, which limits the use of synthetic pesticides on lawns and playgrounds, is the initiative of which Steve is most proud. And he is leading consideration of the Environment Committee's proposal to ban gas-powered leaf blowers in 2022. The delayed implementation is designed to provide sufficient time to educate residents and lawn companies about the new requirements. Steve believes that the Town's recent

purchase of battery-operated leaf blowers for Town use will provide useful experience in evaluating the legislation.

In his spare time, Steve loves bike riding. Last year he participated in a Climate Ride event, bicycling from Bar Harbor to Boston. He also uses the Capital Crescent trail every day. Murder mysteries are another passion.

Prior to the pandemic, Steve wrote an article for the Somerset Town Journal encouraging residents to see how our money is made by taking the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's tour. He offered to reserve public tour tickets for Somerset residents. We hope we'll get a chance to see Steve's currency innovations when the tours resume.



# Results of Petition to Ban Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

The Environment Committee distributed a petition to Town residents on Saturday, October 21 to get a sense of how many people are concerned about the excessive noise of gas-powered leaf blowers, not only as a health issue, but also as a quality of life issue. It appears that lots of people feel their desire to play in their backyards or sit on their porches is being severely impaired by the penetrating whine of these machines. The petition specifically asked whether residents support a ban of gas-powered leaf blowers, a regulation that would piggyback the ban that will start in the District of Columbia and Chevy Chase Village on January 1, 2022. In one short week, the petition received numerous positive responses.



We are pleased by the size of the response. A small handful of residents had reservations about the ban: their concerns about the science and impact on landscapers were allayed by visiting this info webpage: <https://motherearthproject.org/ban-leaf-blowers/>

In addition to the petition, the Environment Committee received dozens of personal comments about the need for the ban. Many neighbors suggested that the ban should happen immediately and a few stated that the only way they can make it through the autumn is by using noise-canceling headphones.

### Draft Legislation Underway:

In response to the positive support for the ban, the Town Council on November 2 voted unanimously 5-0 to request that the Town Attorney draft an amendment to the Code for consideration at the upcoming Town Council meeting on December 7. We encourage residents to join this Zoom meeting (and the EC Forum below) and share their personal concerns and perspectives. The current plan is for the Town Council to vote on this regulation on January 4, 2021.

### It's All About Education: EC Forum #2 on December 2, 7:30 – 8:30 pm:

To continue the education concerning the hazards of gas-powered leaf blowers as well as to learn more about sustainable gardening practices, the Environment Committee is inviting the Mayor, Town Council Members, and residents to hear from landscaping companies and garden experts. Most of the Forum will be Q&A. All are welcome and here is the link to the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9349382458>

### Enjoy Your Leaves For Two Months:

To reduce the amount of leaf gathering and leaf mowing, I have my landscaper come only twice in the fall, once at the end of November to mow the first batch of leaves, and once toward the end of December to remove the leaves from my roof and mow the remaining leaves. Thus, my property is mostly covered with leaves during the autumn.

As I walk and kick the leaves around, I am reminded of making leaf piles with a rake as a kid and jumping and hiding with my sisters, all filled with laughter and some roughhousing. I hope you are also having fun with your family, especially during this very precarious time.

Please email questions and comments to **TOS.EnvironmentCommittee@gmail.com**.

# From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



Last month, it was a pleasure to see that so many residents participated in several wonderful Halloween activities meticulously planned by a large group of Town parents. In this way, children could remain safe and healthy and still have lots of fun. It was also encouraging that the vast majority of our citizens followed the urgent request of County Executive Marc Elrich to curtail traditional trick or treating and not hand out candy. The only way we are going to end this pandemic is for everyone to make sacrifices. Hopefully, this pattern of adherence to health recommendations will continue during the upcoming holiday season.

I am pleased to report that at a recent work session the Town Council made some progress in considering adoption of a Town "Welcome Letter." Once approved, this material would be provided to any resident, prospective, new or otherwise, who is interested in making changes to their properties where a building application is required. I am grateful to **Jon Medalia** (Surrey) for his suggestion, made many months ago at a public meeting,

to create a one-page document to provide details of our building code. In this way, at the pre-design stage residents would be made aware of regulations and thus could avoid conflicts or problems when a building application is taken up by the Council. Many thanks also to the residents who have participated in the creation of this vitally needed notice.

It's that time of year and soon you will be all be receiving more information on Somerset's annual effort to help the most needy around us. It will be announced soon and will comply with pandemic protocols. It's sad how many folks in our County—especially children—go to bed hungry at night in such an affluent jurisdiction. We must all do our part to address this problem, especially at this time of year.

Last but not least, in this edition of the Journal, there is a letter from me announcing our annual holiday fund which we use to thank our tremendous Town employees who work so hard for us throughout the year. Let's all think of them as we enter the holiday season.

## 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.

MASSANUTTEN, VIRGINIA. Own a well-appointed timeshare at this all-season family resort in the Shenandoah Valley. Two connected units (each sleeping 6) can be separated for personal use, for rental, or for exchange through RCI, the world's largest timeshare exchange network. Any offer considered. Call 301-907-8805. **Jeanette Kreiser**

*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.*





# Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

Here we are in the heart of fall – my favorite season of the year! Soon enough it will be winter, and with it all the challenges that snow brings.

November was a busy month. At the November meeting, the Town Council approved two infrastructure proposals to help alleviate some concerns for walkers – especially during the cold winter months. The first was a proposal to straighten out areas of the sidewalks in Somerset that were unable to be ground down when Precision Concrete came through earlier this fall. Unfortunately, there were a few areas that had previously been ground down, and to do any further grinding would compromise the integrity of the concrete and cause cracks and splitting. Sidewalks will be replaced in certain areas. (Please see Council Meeting Actions in this issue for further details.)

The second was a proposal for the bridge at the Town Pool, which will lift the side beams, and allow water to flow off the sides more easily, limiting the ponding that we have seen in large rainstorms.

Speaking of public safety, Mayor Slavin organized a recorded event with Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones and District 2 Commander Sean Gagen in November that was highly informative, and answered many of the questions and concerns that residents have posed to our office and on various listservs about police coverage and crime. Kudos to **Bruce Tully** (Warwick), who

acted as the moderator for the event. Bruce's own security knowledge was clearly evident, and helped move the conversation forward in a productive, easy-to-follow, and educational way. The discussion is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/nejf3Ghw3WQ>

In November the Council also approved the fall tree planting list in the Town right-of-way, reaffirming the Town's commitment to the environment and as a Tree City USA. And the Town received delivery of a number of electric, battery-powered leaf blowers to replace the gas-powered blowers.

November is always special to me because of Thanksgiving, my favorite holiday. My step-dad is a chef, so food and sharing meals together has been an important part of our family. I love the teamwork it takes to make Thanksgiving happen, the gathering of friends and family. I think about the not-quite-winter weather, and setting up the fireplace to keep people warm; drinking wine together, watching football, playing board games, and, of course, the food itself. This year will be quite the change, but we must all keep in mind all that we have to be grateful for – not least of which is being a part of this wonderful community.

As we enter December, I wish you all a happy holiday season, and encourage you to take part in the various donation opportunities in Town and nearby.

**To all Somersetters, happy Thanksgiving, happy December, and happy holidays!**

## GENERAL PERMITS

### BUILDING

- Three-month permit extension for ongoing construction project at 4917 Essex Ave.
- Permit for one-story rear addition and wheelchair accessibility ramp at 4811 Cumberland Ave.

### TREE REMOVAL

Tree removal permit and accompanying reforestation plan of five ornamental trees at 5518 Trent St. Trees requested for removal are:

1. 8" Foster Holly
2. 11" Foster Holly
3. 16" Tilia
4. 27" Ornamental Pear
5. 8" Red Maple
6. 12" Ornamental Pear
7. 28" Ornamental Pear
8. 21" Ornamental Pear
9. 13" Ornamental Pear
10. 13" Ornamental Pear
11. 23" Ornamental Pear

# Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council has taken the following actions:

- Approval of a three-month permit extension, as requested by Mimi Kress (Sandy Spring Builders), on behalf of Lance and Meredith Wade, for the ongoing construction project at the property located at 4917 Essex Ave.
- Approval of a building permit to Jason Arce (Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc.), on behalf of Jim Belikove and Vanessa Piala, for new one-story rear addition and wheelchair accessibility ramp at the property located at 4811 Cumberland Ave.
- Approval of sidewalk replacement by A.B. Veirs & Sons, Inc. at 4731 Surrey St., 4806 and 4814 Grantham St., and 5525 Greystone St. in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.
- Approval of installation of elastomeric bearing pads under both downstream and upstream side edge beams of the Town Pool bridge, to improve drainage on bridge, as proposed by Masonry Resurfacing and Construction Co., Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$9,000.
- Approval of the Fall Tree Planting Schedule, as recommended by the Town Arborist, and approved by the Parks and Natural Resources Committee:
  - October Glory Red Maple – 4707 Cumberland Ave.
  - October Glory Red Maple – 4709 Cumberland Ave.
  - Swamp White Oak – 4716 Dorset Ave.
  - White Oak – 4824 Dorset Ave.
  - Red Oak – 4701 Falstone Ave.
  - Yoshino Flowering Cherry – 4710 Falstone Ave.
  - Swamp White Oak – 4717 Falstone Ave.
  - American Beech – 4723 Falstone Ave.
  - Forest Pansy Redbud – 5529 Surrey St.
  - Black Gum – 5804 Surrey St.
  - American Beech – 4707 Trent Ct.
  - American Beech – 4715 Trent Ct.
  - Serviceberry – 5526 Warwick Pl.
- Approval of tree removal permit to Laura Apelbaum, on behalf of the Estate of Sheldon Cohen, and accompanying reforestation plan of five ornamental trees at 5518 Trent St., as recommended by the Town Arborist. The trees requested for removal are as follows (all trees are measured in diameter at 4.5' above ground level):
  - 8" Foster Holly – too close to house;
  - 11" Foster Holly – too close to house;
  - 16" Tilia – too close to house;
  - 27" Ornamental Pear – too close to house;
  - 8" Red Maple – struggling, very little canopy;
  - 12" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting;
  - 28" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting;
  - 21" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting;
  - 13" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting;
  - 13" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting;
  - 23" Ornamental Pear – hazardous, beginning to become too large, heavy and susceptible to splitting.
- Approval of online Tennis Court reservation system through GAMETIME Software in the amount of \$360, as recommended by the Tennis Committee.
- Approval of tennis ball recycling program, including the purchase of a tennis ball recycling bin in the amount of \$214 from RecycleBalls, as recommended by the Tennis Committee.
- Adoption of a Charter for the Town Committee on Equity and Inclusion.
- Introduction of Resolution No. 8-20, an Ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to change instances of Vice-President to President; clarify the procedures for creation of committees; add a definition of lot; amend the procedures for appeals so that Council decisions are not stayed pending a prospective petition for judicial review; delete unnecessary provisions; and otherwise amend and clarify existing provisions.

# Preliminary Agenda

## Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting December 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Somerset Town Council will meet via Zoom on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda and updates are posted on the Town website: [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82629760527?pwd=M3YrT3lMRVNubnFSUHBwT0thMjYv>

UT09 Meeting ID: 826 2976 0527 Passcode: 433034

### Somerset Town Council

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

## PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

7:00 p.m. Opportunity for residents to make public comments.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

7:10 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of agenda as presented.

## CONSENT AGENDA

7:11 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of the following items without discussion:

- Minutes taken from the regular Town Council meeting held on October 5, 2020;
- Minutes taken from the regular Town Council meeting held on November 2, 2020.

## NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:15 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application submitted by Paula Marques, on behalf of Helene Safire, to enclose the existing back porch at the property located at 4723 Falstone Ave.

7:30 p.m. **Discussion:** Building Administrator Report

7:50 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To Adopt a Charter for the Town Pool Committee

7:55 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To Review and Approve Mayoral nominees to the Public Safety Committee

8:00 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To Adopt Resolution No. 8-20, an Ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to change instances of Vice-President to President; clarify the procedures for creation of committees; add a definition of lot; amend the procedures for appeals so that Council decisions are not stayed pending a prospective petition for judicial review; delete unnecessary provisions; and otherwise amend and clarify existing provisions.

8:05 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To Adopt Resolution 11-20-1, a Resolution Adopting Protocol for Amendment of the Town Code.

8:15 p.m. **Motion:** To Introduce Resolution 11-20, an Ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to prohibit the use of gas-powered blowers on or after January 1, 2022.

8:25 p.m. **Discussion:** Pepco evaluation of Town Hall parking lot for viability of installation of electric car charger.

8:40 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager Report

8:50 p.m. **Motion:** Adjourn

## 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.

\*Questions should be submitted via email ahead of the meeting to [manager@townofsomerset.com](mailto:manager@townofsomerset.com) or [town@townofsomerset.com](mailto:town@townofsomerset.com).

Residents who wish to present for a particular Agenda item are advised to arrive 20 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time, as discussions can run ahead of schedule.

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](http://www.townofsomerset.com)) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.