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

Somerset TOWN JOURNAL

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Somerset Speaks: Town Council Election Results, Winners' Remarks

As we all know by now, **Steve Surko** (Uppingham) was re-elected to a second term on the Town Council and **Robin Barr** (Essex) was elected to his first term. The turnout was impressive: 654 ballots were cast. Mayor **Jeffrey Slavin** (Warwick) received 525 votes, **Robin Barr** received 375 votes, and **Steve Surko** received 402 votes. **Morris Panner** (Essex), the incumbent on the Council, received 321 votes. It was a hard-fought election and the Town benefited from hearing the views of the three Council candidates on issues important to the community. We heard their views through Zoom sessions, candidate statements, a special Candidates Forum, and through written Q&As published in the June Town Journal.

Here are post-election remarks from Steve Surko and Robin Barr, provided to the Journal:



Steve Surko

Somerset enjoyed a record turnout of 654 voters in our first vote by mail election. Perhaps it's because I served in uniform, but I consider voting a special part of our democracy — and was thrilled that so many residents took the opportunity to consider the candidates and cast their ballots.

I am honored by the votes I received and the confidence placed in me by friends and neighbors. While I look forward to fulfilling that confidence, I would like to reassure folks that I serve the entire Town. And like voting, I believe that your participation in the governance of Somerset is critical to ensuring that the Council addresses your needs and concerns. You are welcome to email me directly, but please submit your comments to the Town Manager if you want the Council as a whole to consider them.

Black Lives Matter. I've seen a number of signs (and even a parachute) up around Town in support of equality. What else can we do? I would like to welcome diversity to our Town Committees over the coming year!

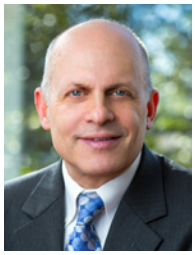
My goal on the Council will be to help keep Somerset a special place to live — with your continued engagement.



Robin Barr

Our election is over. Thank you to everyone who voted for me, to everyone who voted (what a turnout!) and to my fellow candidates for running great races. It is a privilege to live in Somerset and to serve as an elected Council Member for the Town. If the campaign was a time of division and contrasts, for me it is now a time to serve our common interest. I look forward to hearing from all of you going forward and will host meetings (both physical and through visual media) to hear your views and concerns.

I feel we can still do better in serving our community, and will strive to improve my own performance throughout my time on the Council. Beyond my interests in the environment and the Town budget, I have an interest in how we conduct our processes — not only our meetings, but also how we arrive at decisions with consequences for the Town. I see the roots of recent hurt feelings as resting in how we arrive at our decisions rather than in the decisions themselves. I hope I can make a difference in this regard.



ON MY MIND

A Model Campaign

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, *Warwick Place*

It was quite encouraging for democracy to watch Somerset Council candidates and voters so engaged in the exciting election campaign over the past several months which resulted in record participation! I was delighted that the new all mail-in process created twice the percentage of turnout compared to Montgomery County voters in the primary that took place the preceding week.

Our Board of Supervisors of Elections, so ably led by Chair **Phyllis Wiesenfelder** (Cumberland), is to be commended for quickly adopting new procedures and policies so that our residents could register and vote efficiently and safely during the pandemic. And it was wonderful to hear such informative discussions of the issues and the candidates' visions for our municipality's future.

I want to congratulate top vote-getter **Steve Surko** (Uppingham) on his re-election and for the thoughtful ideas he has brought to the Council over the past two years. I am confident he will work closely with the Council on implementing many of these proposals as we forge ahead.

Kudos to Environment Committee Chair **Robin Barr** (Essex) on his electoral success in his first attempt for public office. I think he is better prepared to hit the ground running as a new Council Member than almost anyone I have served with over the past two decades.

And finally, I want to tell you how much I appreciate **Morris Panner** (Essex) for his public service these past two years. Despite a taxing work schedule and heavy responsibilities to his remarkable family, he was able to attend almost every scheduled meeting. And his work with the Audit Committee has produced lasting benefits. It was also useful to have a businessman's perspective on the Council, something that has been lacking for years. I am sure that Morris will continue to speak out on Town issues for years to come.

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.***

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Somerset Pool Update

By Matthew Trollinger, Town Manager

As Montgomery County enters Phase 2 and 3, restrictions are being lifted on congregating, using public spaces, indoor spaces, and other facilities that have otherwise been limited for the past three months or so. One such restriction that is being lifted is the use of pool facilities.

The Town's Pool Committee has been hard at work following each and every development that pertains to pools, and between the Mayor, Council President, and I, we have sat in on at least two or three calls every week with County and State officials getting updates. In April, the Council, in anticipation of necessary changes, and to improve the record-keeping and signing-in process at the pool, approved a new pool software company to help better manage entry to the pool.

Most recently, in June, the Town Council passed a set of rules, recommended by the Town's Pool Committee, that will be in effect for the 2020 Pool Season *(NOTE: The new rules are posted below)*. The Town Pool will follow strict cleaning, capacity, and reporting regulations from the CDC, Department of Health, State of Maryland, and Montgomery County, as well as adhering to privacy laws to ensure that use of the pool is as safe as possible given the covid-19 pandemic.

Among the rule changes that will be in effect this summer: There will be no guests allowed; nannies and caregivers will require their own pool passes; there will be restrictions on unaccompanied children; residents will be required to sign in and out of the pool, and certify prior to entry that they are not experiencing coronavirus or flu-like symptoms; face masks will be required except when in the pool; no food or drink (except for water in water bottles); and no patio equipment or grill use, among other restrictions (see below). These rules will be evaluated throughout the summer, and are subject to change based on the pandemic situation.

Opening the pool to these stringent standards requires a lot of work on the back end. We are aiming for a June 29 opening date, but that is subject to change, and may be delayed if implementation of those standards is not possible in that time frame. We will not rush the opening for the sake of opening, and will ensure all safety precautions are appropriately in place.

On behalf of everyone involved in the pool opening, I thank you all for your patience, and look forward to a fun and safe summer 2020 pool season.

2020 Town of Somerset Pool Rules

In light of Montgomery County's tentative plans to begin Phase 2 the week of June 15, 2020, which would allow lap swimming, the Pool Committee has asked the Council to approve the following recommended list of rules for the pool for this summer.

These rules were unanimously passed at the May 21 Pool Committee meeting in consultation with American

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JULY CALENDAR

FRIDAY, JULY 3	SATURDAY, JULY 4	MONDAY, JULY 6
Town Hall closed for Independence Day holiday	Somerset Independence Day celebration (virtual)	Town Council Zoom Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Continued from page 3

Somerset Pool Update

Pool, and follow the interim pool guidance produced by Montgomery County HHS Licensure & Regulatory program. The rules were also passed by the Town Council in June.

- Everyone must use hand sanitizer upon entering the pool building.
- Remove and store all furniture (chairs, tables, benches, etc.).
- Remove and store all kickboards, pull buoys, and noodles.
- No "lost and found." All items will be removed and discarded at the end of each day.
- Allow residents to bring their own chair or towel to sit on, but require that they take with them when leaving the pool enclosure.
- *If the Town allows 50 or more people in the pool enclosure*, then recommend marking off designated places where chairs/towels for sitting will be allowed.
- No food or drink allowed at all with the exception of water in a covered container, and no grill use.
- Anyone over age 2 must wear a face mask up until entering the pool.
- Swimmers in odd lanes start/end, enter/exit at the deep end and people in even lanes do so at the shallow end to the best of their abilities.
- Lap swimmers must reserve lanes/times through the new Member Splash software. At the time of publication, the Town is in the process of replacing the iGo Figure pool software with a new program called Member Splash that will allow residents all the same features on a newly-designed and easier-to-use platform. Member Splash is designing a web page specifically for the Town of Somerset, and information on how to access will be broadly shared once it is finalized and available. In the meantime, residents can continue to use iGo Figure for their pool accounts. Lap swimmers are allowed to reserve up to three times per week for up to one hour each time. If all slots are not filled on the day of, then it is first-come, first-served and not counted in one's three allotted times and will still need to be done via the Member Splash software.
- Lap swimming only in the traditional three lanes in the deep end, strictly one person per lane.
- Reserve deep end for water aerobics and two lap lanes Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
- No guests.
- Pool hours be expanded to open at 8:30 a.m. each day once Swim Team season ends.
- Pool be reserved for the Swim Team from 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. and from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. (may be revisited later).
- Raise the minimum age to be at the pool unattended to 12. "Attended" stays as defined currently (14 or older responsible party). Caregivers accompanying minors will require their own pool tag.
- Swim lessons are not allowed under current state guidelines; when swim lessons are permitted, they shall not be allowed in the three traditional lanes in the deep end.
- A waiver and release of claims must be signed by all residents who wish to use the pool prior to activation of their account (residents under 18 years must have the waiver signed by a parent or guardian).
- Ensure that the Town Pool and Pool Management Company are following CDC, State, and County guidelines [***https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/reopening/pool-guideline.html***], including with respect to cleaning and capacity in the Town Pool, and contact tracing in the event a positive case of covid-19 infection is discovered.

Congratulations, Graduates!

The class of 2020 will always remember their pandemic graduation! Although the traditional commencement ceremonies were impossible this year, Somerset more than compensated with exuberant parades and outdoor events. Heartfelt thanks to the many families who planned and organized these successful events! Our Town congratulates all our graduates, with apologies to any we've omitted.

High School Graduates



The sun shone and residents cheered from their porches and driveways as a lively parade of graduates wound its way around Somerset on Saturday, June 6, followed by outdoor festivities at the Town Hall. Mayor **Jeffrey Slavin** presented each grad with a gift on behalf of the Town. Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School teachers John Zehner and Stephanie Rizas delivered an entertaining commencement address in a friendly, family atmosphere — a memorable graduation day! Somerset's high school graduates are:

- **David Bartley** (Cumberland) Landon HS, to Tulane University
- **Lilly Esfahanian Behbehani** (Falstone) B-CC HS, to University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- **Danny Brown** (Trent Court) B-CC HS, to University of Colorado-Boulder
- **German Rojas Duarte** (Essex) Wilson High School, to Montgomery College, University of Maryland
- **Max Emil** (Trent) B-CC HS
- **Zach Friedman** (Essex) B-CC HS
- **Albert Nyrop Henriques** (Trent) B-CC HS, to gap year in Denmark
- **Rachel Alexandra Kamis** (Falstone) B-CC HS, to Duke University
- **Emma Hope Kapani** (Surrey) National Cathedral School, to University of Chicago
- **Kesh Khanna** (Uppingham) B-CC HS, to McGill University
- **Sam Lieppe** (Trent) B-CC HS, to Tulane University
- **Ali Mills** (Uppingham) B-CC HS
- **Antonella Francesca Nicolacci** (Dorset) St. John's College High School, to Catholic University of America
- **Mikey Panner** (Essex) Sidwell HS, to Tulane University
- **Oliver Wesley Patrick** (Greystone) B-CC HS, to Middlebury College
- **Dominic Scurfield** (Essex) Georgetown Prep
- **Nicholas Scurfield** (Essex) Georgetown Prep
- **Nicole Vanderzon** (Falstone) B-CC HS, to Georgetown University
- **Lucy Walker** (Dorset) Holton Arms, to Southern Methodist University
- **Sarah Elizabeth Williams** (Uppingham) B-CC HS, to university in Australia
- **Edward Faris Woodings** (Dorset) B-CC HS, to Guilford College
- **Berret K. Yuffee** (Trent) Georgetown Day School, to Occidental College







Congratulations, Graduates!

Eighth Grade Graduates



Somerset celebrated its eighth graders at a Town Hall event on Wednesday, June 10, as families came together — at a safe distance — to mark the end of middle school and send 20 talented teens off to high school. Astrid Wynter, of the Inter-American Development Bank, addressed the graduates, telling them, "We are greater than we think we are," and sharing Ralph Waldo Emerson's words: "To know even **one life** has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded." Somerset's eighth grade graduates are:

- **Alexander Castel** (Dorset) Sidwell Friends School
- **Eden Fisher** (Warwick) Westland Middle School
- **John Friedrich** (Uppingham) The Siena School
- **Francesco Guinand** (Warwick) Westland Middle School
- **Asher Lewis** (Trent) Westland Middle School
- **Clara Lieppe** (Trent) The Field School
- **Cecilia Locraft** (Essex) Sidwell Friends School
- **Lucas Lopez Forastier** (Falstone) Sidwell Friends School
- **Farrah Mobarek** (Uppingham) Holton Arms School
- **Ben Oldale** (Greystone) Westland Middle School
- **Josephine Panner** (Essex) Eastern Middle School
- **Martine Panner** (Essex) Eastern Middle School
- **Max Peckerar** (Essex) Westland Middle School
- **Ella Raymond** (Greystone) Westland Middle School
- **Nadia Singelmann** (Uppingham) Westland Middle School
- **Lael Spalter** (Warwick) Westland Middle School
- **Aidan Spellacy-Urken** (Cumberland) Westland Middle School
- **Matthew Steindecker** (Uppingham) Charlie E. Smith Jewish Day School
- **Max Veksler** (Warwick) Westland Middle School
- **Carolina Zanna-Stone** (Warwick) Westland Middle School





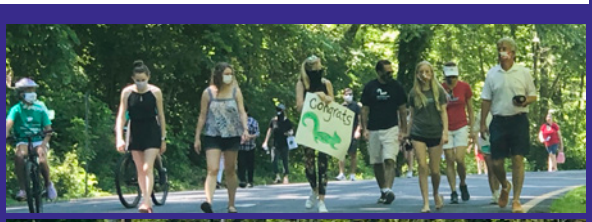
Congratulations, Graduates!

Somerset Elementary School Graduates

Onlookers waved, cheered and joined in the "clap-out" for Somerset ES grads on Friday, June 12. Wearing Somerset T-shirts and Hawaiian leis, the graduating fifth-graders and their families walked along Little Falls Parkway, which is closed to traffic Fridays through Sundays, from Bethesda Pool, where they picked up treat bags, to River Road and back. It was a send-off ceremony they won't soon forget! Somerset's elementary school graduates are:

- **Aaron Amdur-Kass** (Warwick)
- **Clara Bloodworth** (Warwick)
- **Gage Bolten** (Cumberland)
- **Aurele Bouye** (Falstone)
- **Margaret Coleman** (Falstone)
- **Iris Fisher** (Warwick)
- **Lola Fuentes-Darling** (Cumberland)
- **Jonas Hawkins** (Falstone)
- **Luke Hunwicks** (Surrey)
- **Liam Joyce** (Greystone)
- **Daniella Lloreda** (Falstone)
- **Emilia Lopez-Rodriguez** (Greystone)
- **Ada Nussbaum** (Essex)
- **Sam Oldale** (Greystone)
- **Malikai Spellacy-Urken** (Cumberland)
- **Arabella Terbush** (Cumberland)
- **Lila Tynan** (Essex)
- **Maggie Weil-McCann** (Dorset)
- **Vu Wrona** (Grantham)







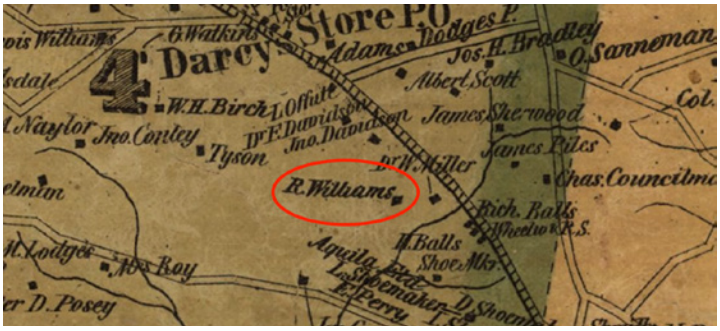
Somerset History: Slavery Roots

By L. Paige Whitley, *Cumberland Avenue*

In an 1852 oration, Frederick Douglass asked: *"What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim."*

Protests for racial justice currently march across our nation, prompting a nationwide introspection on contemporary America and its roots in Slavery and its aftermath. Various quotes from ads and accounts I've uncovered during my research on local African-American history are echoing in my mind right now.

Somerset land was purchased in 1890 by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists who worked at the Experimental Station for Animal Husbandry, a USDA farm set up around 1888 on what is now Norwood Park. Yet much earlier, in 1834, Richard Williams, then an administrator and collector for Judge Thomas Cramphin's five estates, purchased this land and farmed it for almost 50 years. Before 1865, Williams, like his close neighbors the Davidsons to the north, the Loughboroughs to the south, and the Bradleys to the east, **all** *enslaved Africans.*



Here are a few of the materials I've encountered:

- 1843 Runaway Ad: "Was Committed to Carroll County Jail … As a runaway, a colored boy who calls himself HENRY DAVIS, about 19 years of age, yellow complexion, 5' 4" high, a smart attractive fellow, with no particular mark. Had on a drab roundabout and pants, black fur hat pretty much worn … He says he belongs to RICHARD WILLIAMS, Montgomery Co., Md."
- In September 1852 Joseph Beall, Robert and Jeffrey were jailed in D.C. as runaways. They were released to Harriet Loughborough's future son-in-law, lawyer Joseph H. Bradley, Jr. Hamilton Loughborough wrote to his stepmother: "… I am sure that you do not desire to confound the innocent wife and offspring with … the guilty husband, or even to visit such a heavy punishment as **perpetual transportation** on the guilty husband himself." (One former enslaved Loughborough hand *was* sold to Louisiana.)
- In the 1867-68 Montgomery County Slave Statistics, on behalf of her brother Richard Williams, Arianna Williams listed the following enslaved people for potential remuneration: RUTH DAVIS (age 35) and her children Ann, Lloyd, William, Frank and Mary, the latter ranging in age between 3–14. After the war, the Davis family worked for the Bradley family, the farm now being the location of the Chevy Chase Club bounded by Bradley Lane and Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues.
- Recounted in 1911 by Civil War veteran John Godfrey: "In 1862 I ran away from my owner (Roderick Magruder in P. G. County) and … I enlisted under the name of John Bowie. When I was mustered out in 1865 … I came to Washington … I worked on a farm for … John Davidson in Montgomery Co., Maryland … for three years."

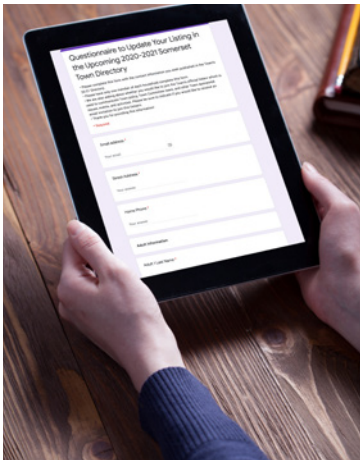


- Local Justice of the Peace James Henry Loughborough to wife Margaret, 1903: "I have just returned from Rockville (and) have attended a magistrates trial in which I was Plaintiff vs. a negro who assaulted me with words and raised a stone to hit me; but did not hit. He will lie in jail until Nov. term of Court unless bailed out and then be tried, so I think, he will learn to behave … "

Racism is a vestige of "slavery unwilling to die," declared Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglass in 1968. It is my hope in sharing these bits of local history that we can embark on a journey of enlightenment, that we can come to grips with and accept our local roots steeped in slavery and racism, and that as we can move forward to truly build a democratic society.

New Online Updating of the Town Directory

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager



Town staff have been working with the Town's Communication Committee on a new strategy for updating the resident listing in the upcoming 2020-2021 Directory. Our goal is to mail this new Directory to Somerset residents by mid-October. We are committed to creating the most up-to-date and accurate Directory possible. In that light, this year, we have created an online questionnaire that we are asking all residents to fill out. The Town will be sending out this questionnaire in the beginning of July.

The questionnaire is easy to complete. When you finish completing the form, tap "submit" and you are done. The Town will be emailing the form to all residents for whom the Town has email addresses. Emails will be sent out via Constant Contact and on the Town listserv. In addition, the form will be available on the Town's website in the Somerset Announcements post on the homepage, and can also be found at the following link/webpage: ***https://forms.gle/4oa9vtmeB9Ajutag7***

Please note that just one member of each household should complete the form. Please send back your completed questionnaire by Friday, July 31 in order to have your updated contact information included.

If you have a question, contact the Town Hall. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and helping to make the 2020-2021 Somerset Town Directory as complete and accurate as possible!

Town Council to Consider Opting-In to MoCo Healthy Lawns Act

By Council Member Steve Surko, *Uppingham Street*

The County's Pesticide Law (known as the Healthy Lawns Act) to restrict the use of lawn care pesticides on both public and private property was passed by the Montgomery County Council and became law in October 2015. However, it was challenged in the courts and did not go into effect until May 2019 after the Maryland Court of Special Appeals ruled in favor of the Act. The key legislative finding behind the Healthy Lawns Act is that "in the absence of adequate regulation at the federal or State level, the County is compelled to act to protect the health of children, families, pets and the environment." **Robin Barr** (Chair, Environment Committee) wrote an article for the March 2020 Town Journal which provides some excellent background information on this topic.

What does the Healthy Lawns Act do?

The Healthy Lawn Act restricts the use of certain pesticides applied for cosmetic purposes on private lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities. Most synthetic pesticides are not allowed to treat pests in lawns. The County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has an excellent website (***https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lawns/law/***) that explains



the purpose of the law, what's banned, exemptions (e.g., mosquitos), signage regulations and retail regulations. The Healthy Lawn Act does not apply to gardens.

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Town Council to Consider Opting-In to MoCo Healthy Lawns Act

Why isn't Somerset already covered?

If you received the Lawn Care Mailer ***(https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lawns/Resources/Files/pesticide-law-mailer/PesticideMailer_English-Spanish.pdf),*** which provides a useful summary of the Healthy Lawns Act, you may have assumed that it applied to Somerset. But it doesn't. Like many Montgomery County regulations, the Healthy Lawns Act only applies to unincorporated jurisdictions within the county. Incorporated cities, towns, villages, and municipalities — like Somerset — enact many of their own laws and can "opt-in" to county regulations of their choosing.

Has Somerset opted into any other County regulations?

Yes, Somerset has opted into many County regulations. §123-1 County laws applicable of our Town Code ***(https://www.ecode360.com/SO3592)*** lists all the chapters of the Montgomery County Code which Somerset has adopted.

What is the cost or burden to Somerset for opting in?

There is no cost to Somerset. County DEP handles education and enforcement. Residents suspecting a possible violation are advised to call 311. County DEP will then assess the report and take action as appropriate. In general, this consists of education. To date, no fines ($50/violation) have been issued.

Has Somerset carefully considered the pros and cons of opting in?

Yes. The Environment Committee reviewed the Healthy Lawns Act and met with Mary Travaglini (DEP Program Manager, Organic Lawn and Landscape Program) on February 12. The Environment Committee then recommended to the Town Council that Somerset opt-in. Following a brief working session discussion, at which time it was clear Council Members wanted more information, the Town held two special forums in May with County Councilmember Tom Hucker, Mary Travaglini, and Bob Mann and Andrew Bray of the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP). The forums were recorded and you can watch them on YouTube (***Somerset Hearing 5/28/2020*** and ***Somerset Hearing 5/20/2020***). Notwithstanding the efforts of the NALP lobbyists, the Council agreed that the science is established — synthetic pesticides are hazardous.

Discussions regarding impact on landscapers confirmed that they are certified professionals who understand the constraints on pesticide use in the Healthy Lawns Act. One Council Member reported that her landscaper has already shifted all of their operations in Montgomery County — including Somerset — to comply with the Healthy Lawns Act. Because it is already implemented in many surrounding areas, Somerset residents using lawn care companies will likely find that their provider knows how to comply with the Act — and is already following it. Several residents explained how they have successfully employed organic landscaping — and have maintained lush lawns. And Somerset adopted organic landscaping for Town property many years ago.

What's the current status?

On June 1, I requested that Somerset formally consider opting into the Healthy Lawns Act. The Council agreed to have our Town Lawyer draft an Ordinance To Make County Code Chapter 33b, Concerning Pesticides, Applicable In The Town Of Somerset. The Council will vote on this ordinance on July 6. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Any comments you have which you wish to be considered by the Council as they deliberate the ordinance should be submitted to the Town Manager.

Sustainabilty Corner

By Barton Rubenstein, Member,
Environment Committee,
Dorset Avenue

What is the Climate Emergency?

Many people think that the climate emergency is about saving the environment, planting a trillion trees, and reducing pollution so our planet doesn't heat up. We all know that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a body of UN appointed scientists, claim that we need to reduce our CO2 emissions aggressively by almost half by 2030 or there will be irreversible damage to our planet. These tasks seem large enough but, in actuality, the climate emergency is about a lot more than the planet.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations has defined 17 goals, based on the idea of "leaving no one behind." Reading through them causes one to think that attaining them is inconceivable, but as Nelson Mandela said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." And that is exactly what millions of people worldwide are now determined to do.

As you can see in the illustration below, the climate emergency is related to nearly every SDG. The central message of the SDGs is that we really need to change both our individual behaviors and how we govern around the globe. Governments need to incentivize renewable energy projects. These create new jobs and so reduce poverty and hunger. In changing our behaviors we need to reduce meat consumption and focus on the Rs: Review (think about your entire carbon footprint), Repair, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle, etc. There are many Rs, but the message is clear. Change must happen simultaneously, both at a small and large scale.

With each falling branch that damages my exterior deck furniture, I attempt to repair it. Some chairs admittedly now look very beat up. My family used to laugh, saying I should just get new furniture, but now they understand that it is not just about being frugal. The point is we can no longer be the generation that says, "Just throw it away and buy a new one."

Black Lives Matter

With members of my own family participating in the rekindled Black Lives Matter movement, it has caused me to reflect on how this movement also embodies the core SDGs. Black Lives Matter is another aspect of the environmental movement even as it is about challenging racism in all its forms. As an example, research has found that people of color suffer more air pollution than white residents. Poor air quality, which is linked to multiple respiratory conditions, significantly increases the risk of death from covid-19. Underserved neighborhoods are also typically where factories are built, leaving the citizens exposed to tainted drinking water and other environmental hazards. Racism has blanketed our planet for centuries and now there is an international movement to remove slave-related statues, reform police practices, and create better services for the underserved.



Mother Earth Project cofounder and rising BCC senior Ari Rubenstein next to the latest parachute.

The continued protests and climate strikes over the last few years may seem unsettling for some, but this could also be a huge positive for the survival of our species and health of our planet. People are now starting to see the power of civil disobedience and how we as citizens of the planet can truly move the needle together.



To Your Health

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

To Somerset Residents: A Request

I have found it very difficult this last month to maintain a sense of balance, especially in my emotions . . . rage, sadness, despair, more anger and lastly determination to make a difference in this world. At the same time I know taking time for self-care is necessary for me to stay healthy especially during the covid-19 pandemic.

I am monitoring how much news I watch, meditating, walking, going to bed at the same time each night, trying to cook healthy meals and enjoying quiet time in nature. I'm monitoring how much time I'm spending on Zoom.

I'm also trying to become a better listener, to listen more closely to feelings as well as words so I can connect more fully with others as well as myself. Sometimes I just want to sit with my dog next to me.

I'm making a request. Please share your coping skills, wellness tips, activities that bring you peace, book recommendations, classes you're taking and recipes you're cooking. You can email them to me at ***Diane.b.horn@gmail.com*** and/or post them on the unofficial listserv. I will share them with those who are interested.

I'd also like to assist in finding self-distancing walking partners for Town residents. You can let me know your preferences whether it's a dog walking partner, particular day of the week, time of day, etc. I'll share whatever information I have. Again, just email me.



Somerset Pride

Montgomery County Councilmember Evan Glass raises the LGBTQ rainbow pride flag at Somerset Town Hall on June 5. At the June meeting, the Town Council passed a resolution proclaiming June as LGBTQ Pride Month in Somerset.



From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



First, I want to greatly thank Somerset voters for having the confidence in me to elect me for another term. Once again, you will be giving me an opportunity to serve the public and help implement my vision for our special municipality. As always, my door will always be open to solve a problem or listen to your views.

Recently, a number of separate groups of Town and area students posted a collection of meaningful signs around Somerset related to criminal "injustice" and racism that has provided an excellent wake-up call to all of us. I applaud these efforts of civil disobedience!

It was a pleasure to watch Montgomery County At-Large Councilmember Evan Glass visit Town Hall and help raise the Pride Flag recently. It goes very nicely with our Black Lives Matter sign. I invite everyone to come by and take a look.

Late last month, I convened two public hearings so the Town Council and residents could hear the pros and cons of Somerset opting-in to Montgomery County's environmentally progressive Healthy Lawns initiative. This law, passed by the County Council a number of years ago, provided for greater restrictions on the use of the harmful pesticides that endanger our children, pets and local wildlife — but there was an exemption for most of the County's municipalities. In the meantime, nine of the 20 independent jurisdictions have passed similar acts. County Councilmember Tom Hucker, one of the primary sponsors of the law, joined one of the hearings and explained why he is such a strong advocate. To my delight, after the hearings, literally dozens and dozens of residents wrote or called us in support of such a move. At the last Town Meeting, Council Member **Steve Surko** (Uppingham) announced that he was introducing a measure for consideration in July. I hope that residents will continue to write or call to let us know their views. I would also like to thank Environment Committee Chair **Robin Barr** (Essex) for his leadership in guiding that Committee to support this important legislation.

With the passage of a revised Town Code last year, the Town Manager and I have been in the process of re-establishing all of the Town's Committees, an important component of our government where policy, programs and legislation can get their original formulation. Along that line in the coming months, I will present nominees for Council confirmation to the following committees: History and Archives and Traffic and Public Safety. If you are interested in serving, please drop me or the Town Manager a line.

It is hard to believe that Town Manager **Matt Trollinger** has been on the job for over a year now! It's amazing how much he has accomplished. The Council and I are very impressed with his level of professionalism and his many skills. I very much enjoy reading his well-written communications to residents several times a week and hope you do too. Thank you, Matt.

We haven't done enough in the past to properly thank all of our volunteers and honor our residents for their accomplishments or lifecycle milestones and I hope to improve on that in my next term. For example, I know I didn't properly thank **Eugene Tillman** (Warwick) upon his retirement as the Journal's *All About People* columnist for the many excellent and original profiles he wrote on Town residents. And of course, as always, I give great thanks to the co-editors of our Town Journal, **Barbara Marenus** (Surrey) and **Mary Wisniewski** (Greystone). Their tireless work binds our community together and helps make Somerset a special place.

While our Town Code allows us to work in our yards — and use equipment that could bother neighbors — on Sundays after 9 a.m., I would like to encourage all residents to observe a day of rest and avoid scheduling landscapers or doing the work ourselves on Sunday mornings, if possible. I have gotten some complaints of late about the use of lawn mowers and tree trimmers on Sundays when many of us like to enjoy quiet time. Thanks for your cooperation.



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Happy New Year! As mentioned in several of the last Town Journals, the Town of Somerset's fiscal year runs from July to June. This means that the Town's new budget, adopted in May, starts in July. As a reminder, the Town adopted a budget that prioritized maintaining current services, in light of expected budgetary shortfalls as a result of the pandemic. Already the Town has received an updated (i.e., *reduced*) estimate from the state on Highway User Revenue, money that the state funnels to local municipalities for the upkeep of roadways. So too will Town revenues be impacted by the late pool opening, the cancellation of Camp Summerset, among many other factors.

So how might this impact the average Somerset resident? Not a whole lot, we hope. The Town has diligently been setting aside money for a "Rainy Day Fund" to cover regular Town expenses, and, as mentioned, the Town's FY2021 budget prioritizes maintenance of current services. However, it does mean that several hoped-for improvements to the Town and its operations will be put on hold, or have to otherwise be reimagined. For instance, the Town website is due for an overhaul, and draft budgets back in January/February had allocated money for that. Unfortunately, that is not an investment that the Town is in a position to make at this time, so we'll focus more on *tweaking* than *overhauling* the website. While not as comprehensive as would be ideal, I still believe there is an opportunity to continue to improve the website as a service to residents. For example, we have now made recordings of the Town Council meetings available, on the same page where residents can access the Council meeting agenda. Additionally, that page also includes future Council meeting items that are up for discussion, so residents can review these ahead of the meeting.

It has been a strange almost four months now with the coronavirus; and June presented further disruptions in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which has brought to the forefront of the national discourse the intertwined topics of race, criminal justice, and social justice. Protests have taken place throughout the country – and around the world – including many in D.C., Bethesda, and other nearby places. The Town has put up a Black Lives Matter sign in front of the Town Hall, to show our solidarity with the cause and validate those simple words, which have not been fully realized in our country's history. Somerset residents have also confronted our collective and individual historical biases in various ways. **Amalia Levitin** (Trent), a rising first-year student at B-CC High School, for example, has organized *Somerset Talks*, pairing up people in the town (13 and older) who want to participate in challenging conversations about racism and other divides with open hearts and minds.

Meanwhile, the world around us is starting to open up as COVID-19 numbers trend in the right direction in Maryland and Montgomery County (as of this writing). The Bethesda "Streetery" is an exciting way to get out and patronize local businesses; the Town's Pool Committee and Council are looking at ways to open up the Town Pool for limited use; and the Mayor is working to make sure that we are able to hold some sort of Independence Day celebration. It hardly feels that we are "back to normal," but it is nice to see people eating on patios at restaurants and out walking in nice weather. Still, we are not done and the virus is not gone, so please continue to use your masks when you might be in close proximity to others outside your immediate household, and follow social distancing guidelines. The Town still has masks available, courtesy of the Mayor, vis-à-vis the U.S. Conference of Mayors, for residents to pick up at the Town Hall.

Speaking of the Town Hall, our staff has transitioned back into a more regular work schedule, working in the office. I still discourage residents from coming in if possible, and to use email or phone as a primary method of communication, but we are available here if you need us, and I have resumed in-person notary services. We do ask that you please use a mask when you enter.

Finally, I want to wish everyone a happy July. We're halfway through 2020. Hang in there, be safe, and enjoy some sunshine.

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met in regular session on June 1, 2020, and took the following actions:

1. Approved minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on May 4, 2020.
2. Issued a proclamation declaring June as LGBTQ Pride Month in the Town of Somerset, and hanging the Rainbow Flag at the Town Hall in honor of LGBTQ Pride Month throughout June, 2020.
3. Issued a proclamation declaring Friday, June 5, 2020, as National Gun Awareness Day in the Town of Somerset.
4. Re-appointed Ron Bolt as the Town Attorney for Fiscal Year 2021.
5. Re-appointed Matthew Trollinger as the Town Manager and Clerk-Treasurer for Fiscal Year 2021.
6. Approved a building permit submitted by John and Vanessa Beckman for the construction of a detached garage, new driveway and driveway apron, and temporary dumpster at 4816 Dorset Ave.
7. Approved the removal of the following Town trees:

- 4801 Essex Ave. (on Surrey St.) Zelkova 7" dbh – dead.
- 4824 Dorset Ave. Ash 53" dbh – 50% dead.

8. Approved a street cleaning contract with Wray Brothers not to exceed $5,500.
9. Approved the use of the Town Hall green space, and appropriation of $300 of Town funds for a graduation celebration for 2020 Graduating Senior students in Somerset on Saturday, June 6.

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. Contac **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

TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

- 16" Japanese Maple (dead) – 4814 Grantham
- 18" Black Cherry (hollow and hazardous) – 4814 Grantham
- 18" Spruce (dead) – 5522 Greystone
- 20" Sugar Maple (declining tree) – 4809 Grantham

BUILDING PERMITS

- Fence Installation – 4709 Dorset Ave.
- Fence Replacement – 5806 Warwick
- Detached garage, new driveway and driveway apron, and temporary dumpster – 4816 Dorset
- HVAC Replacement (issued administratively, passed inspection 6/10) – 4603 Dorset
- Fence Installation – 4904 Cumberland

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting
July 6, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

The Somerset Town Council will meet via Zoom on July 6, 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 a Council President for Fiscal Year 2021. – 7:40 p.m.

CONSENT

2. **Motion:** To approve minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on June 1, 2020.
3. **Motion:** To approve a proclamation renouncing systemic racism, and declaring support of Black lives.
4. **Motion:** To affirm and sign on to Maryland Municipal League statement condemning racial injustice.
5. **Motion:** To approve a schedule of authorized individuals, establishing a Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP) account for Town through PNC bank, and the transfer of $168,329.74 from existing Capital One Checking Account to established MLGIP account. – 7:45 p.m.

NON-CONSENT

6. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a proposed BBQ block party and street closing at 4731 Essex to the corner of Warwick Pl. from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. on evening of the event (date TBD), hosted by Somerset resident Birdie Pieczenik. – 7:46 p.m.
7. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of reimbursement in the amount of $200 for banners purchased by parents of graduating Somerset residents for graduation ceremony at Town Hall. – 7:55 p.m.
8. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of HVAC unit replacement at 4603 Dorset Ave. [Permitted administratively June 3, 2020; Noise test passed June 10, 2020.] – 8:00 p.m.
9. **Discussion:** Building Administrator Report. – 8:05 p.m.
10. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the Swim Team Committee Charter/Mission Statement. – 8:10 p.m.
11. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider Town adoption of County Pesticide Law, restricting the use of certain pesticides on private lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities, as proposed by Council Member Surko. – 8:25 p.m.
12. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of proposal by Precision Concrete Cutting for expenditure to address sidewalk tripping hazard (cost TBD at time of publication). – 8:35 p.m.
13. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of donation of DOGIPOT dog waste receptacle and bag dispenser by Mayor Jeffrey Slavin (Warwick Pl.) to be placed at the Town Pool parking lot and walking path. – 8:50 p.m.
14. **Discussion:** Town Manager Administrative and Fiscal Reports. – 9:00 p.m.
15. **Discussion:** Mayor's Report – 9:10 p.m.
16. **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.