

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



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 67 • No. 1

January 2022

Emergency and Fire Services in Somerset

By **Matt Trollinger, Town Manager**

When you call 911 for a heart attack, stroke, or other medical emergency, you expect an ambulance to respond quickly to take you to a hospital. We are fortunate that Montgomery County has an excellent fire and rescue service, and in most cases, Town residents are well served by EMTs, paramedics, and firefighters.

The closest station serving Somerset is Bethesda Fire Department (BFD) Station 6, at Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard—about one mile from Town. When the BFD ambulance is not available, the County dispatches the next-closest ambulance.

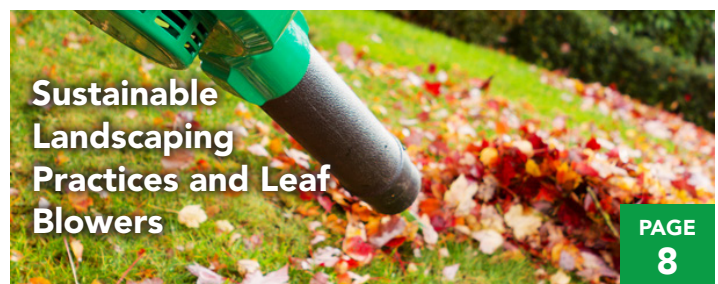
One concern that has been brought to the Town on several occasions is a lack of staffing at BFD Station 6, particularly at night and early mornings, i.e., from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekday nights, and to what extent response time might be affected in Somerset.

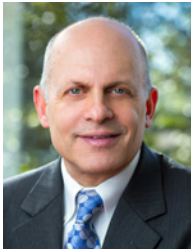
At the Council's request, the Mayor is seeking information regarding this and other issues from BFD and from **Montgomery County Fire Chief Scott Goldstein**. The Council will also hold an oversight hearing with the Montgomery County Fire Department and the BFD on January 20 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.



Our community's safety depends on quick, responsive ambulance service. Through property taxes and donations, Somerset residents are paying a great deal of money for this service. The Council and Mayor will continue to seek information and to ensure that our Town residents, guests, and workers receive the best possible fire, rescue, and ambulance service.

IN THIS ISSUE





ON MY MIND

Preparing for Elections 2022

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, *Warwick Place*

While it is hard to fathom that major elections in Maryland and Montgomery County will take place just next year, it's never too early to start arming ourselves with necessary information on all the candidates—and there will be many, especially with all of the open offices. The primary is just six months away, on June 28, 2022 and there will be plentiful opportunities for early voting. As always, I will constantly urge residents to prepare themselves to make informed choices. Every position in government has an impact on your quality of life.

Since the last time we voted for State and Local candidates, news coverage of local political stories has declined, as the Washington Post newsroom has been reduced, the local papers are long gone and the local TV stations spend so much time on crime and the weather.

Fortunately, however, there are now a number of online news services and websites that do an excellent job of reporting on candidates, issues and campaigns. Most of them are accessible at no cost. I read all of the following on a daily basis (as it is a necessary part of my job) but I recommend you peruse all of them, and sign up for at least one or two.

- *Maryland Matters* marylandmatters.org
- *Bethesda Beat* bethesdamagazine.com
- *Montgomery Community Media* mymcmedia.org
- *Center Maryland Morning Rundown* centermaryland.org
- *Jewish Insider Daily Kickoff* jewishinsider.com/topics/daily-kickoff/

Nonprofit journalism really does appear to be thriving and we are all benefiting. You can also find good coverage in online subscriptions to the Baltimore Sun and Capital Gazette, out of Annapolis. These do, however, charge monthly fees.

If you start your research now, you will have no excuse for ignorance of what's on the ballot in June. And while the Governor, Attorney General and Comptroller are all important offices, so too are those of the Montgomery County Board of Education and even the Sheriff and the Clerk of the Court. Even though I follow all of this closely, I am anxious to hear your views and your opinions along the way.

CONTACT SOMERSET

MAYOR

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

TOWN COUNCIL

Steve Surko, Council President
5500 Uppingham Street
301-656-5004
ssurko@townofsomerset.com

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

Debbie Heller
4803 Falstone Avenue
301-654-5497
dheller@townofsomerset.com

Kabir Kumar
5415 Trent Street
202-830-4905
kkumar@townofsomerset.com

Shannon Rovak
4517 Cumberland Avenue
608-334-2306
Srovak@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

EDITOR
Leslie Caplan
LeslieCaplan.townjournal@gmail.com

The Town Journal is the official publication of The Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.

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

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

POST OFFICE ADDRESS:
4510 Cumberland Ave.
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
www.townofsomerset.com

Mayor Testifies Regarding County Redistricting Proposal

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, Warwick Place

On November 16, 2021, I testified before the County Council regarding the redistricting proposal for the County. My testimony follows:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

In most legislative bodies in the United States, once-a-decade redistricting decisions are the most difficult and challenging for every legislator. Fortunately, in Montgomery County this year that should not be the case.

This time a balanced, well-staffed commission has recommended a thoughtfully crafted map that meets all the required criteria and laws and has received enormous public input. I congratulate the commission for its work.

Please know that I strongly support this map for a variety of reasons, but most especially because I

believe that it will result in the next Council being far more representative of our great County's changed demographics than the present one, and it will ultimately lead to better decisions for all of us.

Furthermore, I urge you to pass this map without any amendments. In my view most of the amendments that are floating around that I have become aware of in the press and online seem to reflect a total disrespect and lack of understanding of the process itself, and of the legal requirements and seem to be self serving and/or nothing more than sour grapes.

Thank you.

[Editor's Note: The County Council passed the plan as proposed with minor amendments. Information regarding the final redistricting of Montgomery County can be found at <https://bit.ly/3yl36ie>]

JANUARY CALENDAR

MONDAY, JANUARY 3

Town Council Meeting, via Zoom*
7:00 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 17

Town Hall Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

Board of Supervisors of Elections Meeting, via Zoom*
2:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

Somerset Discussion Series
History & Archives and Equity & Inclusion Committees Present: A Discussion/Forum of the History of Racial Segregation & Slavery in Somerset, via Zoom*
7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

Oversight hearing with officials from Montgomery County and Bethesda Fire Departments, via Zoom*
12:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

Town Council Work Session, via Zoom*
5:30 p.m.

*Log-in information for Zoom meetings will be sent via email the week prior to the meeting. Residents may also email town@townofsomerset.com for log-in and dial-in information.



Town Council News

By Council President Steve Surko, *Uppingham Street*

Ordinance 11-21-2, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to amend and clarify the exemptions from setbacks for projections

During the course of routine building permit application reviews over the last year, the Council has identified a number of issues with our Building Code (<https://ecode360.com/SO3592>). Article II, §112-14 (d), which covers exemptions for projections and appurtenant structures, has been a source of particular contention.

We discussed this section at our Work Session on November 15. It describes exemptions that allow buildings to extend into (i.e., violate) required boundary setbacks without Council review. The Town Manager noted that several neighboring jurisdictions have dealt with this situation by eliminating the exemptions for projections and appurtenant structures. We considered options and agreed to introduce Ordinance 11-21-2, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to amend and clarify the exemptions from setbacks for projections. The proposed ordinance states, in part: “the Town Council finds that the exemptions for projections, which are based on historical forms of construction, are difficult at times to apply to contemporary forms of construction and should, therefore, be deleted”.

To inform its decision on the proposed ordinance, the Council encourages residents to submit their comments to the Town Manager (manager@townofsomerset.com).

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), signed into law March 11, 2021, is a \$1.9 trillion stimulus and COVID-relief package. Among its numerous provisions, ARPA includes \$350 billion for state, local and tribal governments. Allocations to states, cities, and towns were based on Census data, including population size, poverty rates, low-income population, and other metrics.

Somerset’s ARPA allocation is \$1,254,235.34. That money arrives in two tranches, the first of which (\$627,117.67) was received in September 2021. That money is currently sitting in a “high yield” (0.05%) savings account. We will receive the second half of our allocation in 2022. All funds must be obligated and reported to the U.S. Treasury by

December 31, 2024. But we have until December 31, 2026 to expend all funds. In general, ARPA allocations are to:

1. Support public health expenditures/address negative economic impacts,
2. Replace lost public sector revenue,
3. Provide premium pay for essential workers, and
4. Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

As a small town, only the second and fourth allocation categories are relevant to Somerset. The rules also allow for the transfer of funds to private nonprofit organizations. In addition, Somerset could pool money with other entities, or transfer money to other entities (e.g., Montgomery County).

For the second allocation category, ARPA provides a formula to calculate the counterfactual revenue trend that we would have experienced had COVID not occurred. (Based on average growth in the three years preceding COVID, Somerset’s counterfactual revenue growth rate is 5.6% per year.) The difference between Somerset’s revenue and the counterfactual is considered “revenue loss” and is assumed to be caused by the pandemic. Somerset’s budget through 2023 shows a cumulative loss of \$1,751,894 from the counterfactual – all assumed to be caused by COVID. ARPA funds in this category, to replace lost revenue, may be broadly used for purposes that include, but are not limited to:

- Maintenance or pay-go funded building of infrastructure, including roads;
- Modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure;
- Environmental remediation;
- School or educational services; and
- Police and other public safety services.

As we consider our options, it is important to note that Somerset has been in austerity budgeting since prior to the pandemic—and ARPA funding does not fully compensate for our revenue losses. In this situation, the Town Budget Committee recommends that we develop our ARPA priorities in concert with our next Five-Year Plan.

Continued on page 5

Town Council News

Thanks to some lobbying from national organizations (such as the National League of Cities, of which Somerset is a member), and to recognition of the importance of infrastructure throughout the country, the U.S. Treasury updated its rules to explicitly include stormwater-related projects in the fourth allocation category (i.e., water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure). ARPA notes: "More frequent and extreme precipitation events combined with construction and development trends have led to increased instances of stormwater runoff, water pollution, and flooding." The U.S. Treasury encourages recipients to consider green infrastructure investments and projects to improve resilience to the effects of climate change. Green infrastructure projects that support stormwater system resiliency could include rain gardens that provide water storage and filtration benefits, and green streets, where vegetation, soil, and engineered systems are combined to direct and filter rainwater from impervious surfaces. ARPA guidance provides: "May include projects on privately-owned infrastructure."

ARPA explicitly identifies ineligible uses, many of which relate to payment of debt (Somerset has some debt related to the pool house renovation). Also, funds cannot be used to replenish financial reserves, such as emergency funds or rainy day funds.

The Council held a special meeting on December 1 to receive a briefing on ARPA and discuss the way forward for Somerset. The Budget Committee emphasized that ARPA funding is a one-time event and recommended that the Council be careful of funding a new activity with a tail or ongoing resource requirements. The Council discussed how ARPA funds need to be accounted for separately from the regular budget. A second discussion on ARPA was scheduled for the December 16 council working session.

To inform its decisions, the Council encourages the full engagement of the our citizens. In addition to participating in meetings and forums, residents may submit comments to the Town Manager (manager@townofsomerset.com).

Town Soon to Welcome a New Website

By **Barbara Marenus, Chair, Communications Committee, Surrey Street**

The Town has hired a web design company and is on its way to having a new website up and running in a few months. The Communications Committee has been working closely with **Matt Trollinger, Town Manager**, on the selection of the website designer and on identifying what functions and features Town residents would like to see offered on the new website.

Last month, the Town sent an online questionnaire to a sample of residents to gather information on satisfaction with the current website and suggestions for new features and functions. I think it is fair to say that most respondents want a more customer-friendly, up-to-date, and agile website. There is interest in having a calendar on the home page that can be a reliable source of all Town events,

easier access to Council meeting agendas and minutes, more information on the activities of the various Town committees, and a comprehensive "how do I" section. Residents also want the website to be a place where they can pay for Town services, share photos of Town life in a timely manner, and where they can access the Town Directory.

So there is lots of work to do to make sure that the new website meets the needs of the Town. We also need to do some creative thinking about how to introduce the new site so people will view it as a valued Town resource and start to use it. If you have any suggestions on any aspects of this project, please contact Town Manager Matt Trollinger (manager@townofsomerset.com). We would be delighted to hear from more Town residents and we will provide another update soon.

ARPA Dollars, Somerset Street Lighting and Public Safety – a Perfect Match Up!

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

Somerset residents have long complained and demanded better, brighter and more efficient street lights and help just may be on the way! The American Rescue Plan Act, ARPA, is providing Somerset a great deal of money to the tune of 1.2 million U.S. Dollars and I can think of no better way to spend it than on town public safety lighting!!! [Editor's Note: see discussion of ARPA funds in Town Council News, page 4]. New Pepco LED street lights will not only benefit all of our residents but be better for our environment, reduce our town energy bill and go far to assist your safety in the overnight hours. Brighter and more efficient lights reduce areas for the would-be criminal to lurk and lets you see (and be seen) to navigate safely on your evening walks. I urge Town residents to contact the Council to back this public safety initiative fully.

Let me also address some recent criminal incidents and observations. The late-evening attempted burglary and intruder entering a Cumberland residence underlines the critical need and requirement for all of us to **lock our home and car doors!** To be sure, good security is inconvenient but necessary in Town. The intruder in this case, as we saw on a neighbor's home security camera, wore surgical gloves, a face mask, was relatively well attired, young and walked with confidence undeterred until a dog barked and

he then went on to the next house! I stress in my anti-crime seminars that criminals, miscreants and those that do these things do not think as you do and are willing to take chances to achieve their goals. A **locked door** is usually enough to make the intruder move on. Outside lighting, both static and motion-detected, can be a good and affordable deterrent.

Over the past several months, I have posted for your consideration and use security checklists and ideas to best protect you, your family and home. You can watch the 90-minute Town of Somerset Security Seminar we provided last January on YouTube (<https://bit.ly/3ml3dvg>). It covers a great deal of information on anti-crime, active shooter and carjacking defense. This information is included in the best practices that I teach as a current U.S. Government-certified Subject Matter Expert to all U.S. Foreign Service, Civil Service and Military members and families that are assigned to our diplomatic missions abroad. I urge you to take the time to review that information.

In closing let me state again as above, the Town has a great opportunity via ARPA to upgrade overall street lighting to improve Somerset public safety for ALL of us. We won't get this chance again – let's get it done!

Be situationally aware and safe. Thank you.

Letter to the Editor

HOUSE NUMBERS

Hello Neighbors,

I'd like to once again make the case for having all house numbers painted (perhaps using reflective paint) on the curbs—as was done some number of years ago. It was quite effective.

As a strategy, I assume the Council can locate the cost for this and estimate the cost per house. We might perhaps allow residents to pay directly now in order to accomplish this within a reasonable time period—with reimbursement possible if ultimately passed by the Council. For consistency/safety purposes, it is important, however, that all residents participate.

I believe this is a basic, relatively inexpensive, safeguard for emergency response purposes, as well as for convenience. Notice how few house numbers are easily visible from the street, especially at night—particularly now, when it gets dark so early.

This is a simple (partial, perhaps) solution to concerns about safety, security and lighting. It will take us far longer to achieve comprehensive solutions, and to reach consensus on them.

I am requesting that the Council take this action and hope other residents will chime in with their support.

Nancy Zivitz Sussman
Greystone

SAVE THE DATE!

The History & Archives Committee and the Equity & Inclusion Committee are pleased to announce a special Town Event on Jan. 18, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

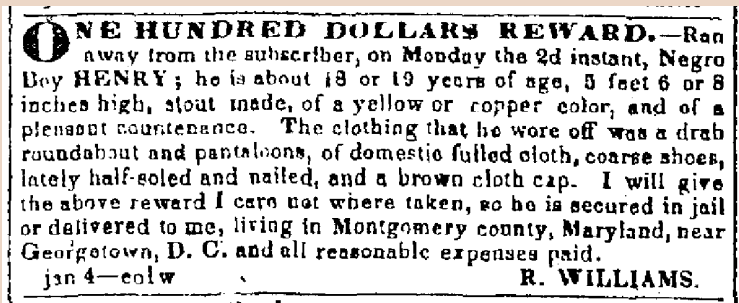
Somerset, Slavery and Segregation

A TOWN TALK AND DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Learn about our area's history prior to Somerset's establishment. How extensive was slavery before the Civil War? What effect did Reconstruction have locally after the Civil War ended? And what happened during Segregation?

After the presentation, the Equity and Inclusion Committee will lead a discussion.

(Note: Date, time, and Zoom information will be confirmed via Town Announcements in January 2022.



Daily National Intelligencer, January 21, 1843

GENERAL PERMITS

BUILDING PERMITS

4501 Cumberland Avenue

- Building Permit
- Demolition Permit
- Fence Permit
- Driveway Apron Permit

4503 Cumberland Avenue

- Building Permit

- Dumpster Permit
- Fence Permit
- Driveway Apron Permit

5522 Greystone Street

- Building Permit
- Wall Permit
- Heat Pump Permit

4721 Cumberland Avenue

- Fence Permit

5524 Trent Street

- Fence Permit

4806 Grantham Avenue

- Fence Permit

TREE REMOVALS

4718 Essex Ave

- Holly (12")
- The tree is in decline with 50% live canopy.

5516 Uppingham St

- Silver Maple (36")
- The tree has large dead branches and is in decline.
- The tree is hazardous.



Sustainable Gardening Practices—and the Leaf Blower Education Campaign Continues with Flyers to be Delivered Door to Door

As mentioned in last month's Town Journal, gas powered leaf blowers will be banned in our Town starting on September 1, 2022, joining other municipalities in Montgomery County as well as Washington, DC. In support of the Town Council's decision, the Environment Committee will continue its education campaign so neighbors understand the risks of gas-powered leaf blowers (i.e., noise, pollution, and health risks), as well as share information about more sustainable gardening practices. Toward that goal, in the coming months Environment Committee members will be going door to door with two flyers (English and Spanish) for you to read and share with your landscaper. We hope you find these flyers informative and helpful during this transition period.

- Use the blower only to clean drains and rake hard surfaces. Using the blower less makes my property less "perfect", but blowing plant beds and grass regularly will destroy the health of the soil as well as the habitat for all sorts of nature's creatures. Leaves should never be blown from the grass, they should ALWAYS be mowed with the grass.
- Don't water the grass. Our weather system (at present) is plenty sufficient to support the healthy growth of grass.

WORKING WITH THE LEAVES IN AUTUMN

After waiting for all the leaves to fall, I have my landscaper come only once in mid-December with rakes, tarps, mower, and electric and battery powered blowers to move the leaves. I also engage in the following practices:

- Use an electric blower to remove leaves from my roof and gutters.
- Let the leaves in my plant beds naturally turn to mulch.
- Rake and blow leaves off hard surfaces and drains to the grass where my landscaper mows the leaves and grass approximately three times, thus creating free mulch! (FYI, I have a very large white oak, which produces a LOT of leaves, but I still manage the volume without difficulty.)
- Pay my landscaper slightly more for his services, now that the already illegal (i.e., over 70 decibels) gas-powered leaf blowers will soon not be allowed in our Town.



Some General Gardening Practices that Work for Me!

On a personal front, I have changed the way I care for my property by using more sustainable gardening practices:

DURING THE WARM MONTHS

- Cut the grass every two weeks so that mowing occurs half as much (less pollution), and thus the grass becomes slightly taller and actually healthier. Short grass is typically more stressed.

We realize that each property has its own challenges, so we understand that everyone must decide how to care for their property in as sustainable and feasible way as possible.

The Environment Committee wishes you a Happy Holiday Season! Please reach out to us with questions at: **tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com**.

From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



As the year 2021 comes to an end, so does the dedicated Somerset career of longtime **Maintenance Supervisor Enrique Cabrera**, who will be retiring after decades of service. Enrique has performed his duties with distinction and is much beloved by hundreds of our residents. As he will be staying in the area, we will find an opportunity next year to publicly honor this remarkable man.

Thanks to all residents who have given generously this holiday season to both the Holiday Fund to benefit our extraordinary Town employees, and to the food drive so that the less fortunate among us will have something to eat during the winter cold. The number of people in affluent Montgomery County who go hungry each day is mind-boggling. I hope that many of you will continue to engage with Manna Food Center during the coming year. For more information, go to www.mannafood.org.

Each December at this time I like to ask residents whether our U.S. mail service has been satisfactory for the last twelve months—especially because in the recent past, we have received a number of complaints and have requested and received Congressional help. Accordingly, I would

like to encourage everyone with a concern about the mail in general or with a specific problem to write to me or to the Town Manager now so that we can bring such issues forward to our **Congressman Jamie Raskin** and his expert staff. Service will only improve if we know about the problems.

May I also remind everyone that whenever you have an issue on evenings and weekends (e.g., brown water, hurt deer, tree down, traffic problem, crime), please get in touch with Town Manager Matt Trollinger on his Somerset-issued cell phone (202-740-8635) or text me (202-549-2299). Using social media, such as a listserv, to post a question or request, will inevitably delay the response and could also result in the spread of misinformation. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Belated Happy Hanukkah and Diwali greetings, Merry Christmas, and Happy Kwanzaa, New Year, Las Posadas, Shogatsu and/or whatever holiday you happen to celebrate at this time of year. Looking forward to a successful 2022 for all.



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 Zeughauer** 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.



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Another year in the books! Auld Lang Syne choruses are in the air, and New Year's resolutions are fresh. For the Town, the New Year means several things.

Tax Season: Filling Out Your Maryland 502 Tax Form

Revenues received through our residents' paid income taxes are a main source of Town revenues. Please help ensure that the Town receives all the income tax revenue it is due. In order for the state of Maryland to return this revenue, your political subdivision (Town of Somerset) needs to be entered on Maryland Form 502. This form also now requests a 4-digit Political Subdivision Code. The four-digit Code for the Town of Somerset is **1610**. If filing electronically, there is a character limit; therefore, you may have to enter simply «Somerset» for Maryland Political Subdivision.

REQUIRED: Maryland Physical address of taxing area as of December 31, 2020 or last day of the taxable year for fiscal year taxpayers. See Instruction 6. Part-year residents see Instruction 26.

1610	Town of Somerset
4 Digit Political Subdivision Code (See Instruction 6)	Maryland Political Subdivision (See Instruction 6)
Maryland Physical Address Line 1 (Street No. and Street Name) (No PO Box)	
Maryland Physical Address Line 2 (Apt No., Suite No., Floor No.) (No PO Box)	
City	MD State
ZIP Code + 4	Maryland County

Budget Development and Discussion

The new calendar year also means we will soon enter budget season. The Town's fiscal year runs from July through June, so January marks the halfway point. Over the next few months, the Town Council, Mayor, Budget Committee, and Town staff will begin preparing for the next budget year. Remember that residents have a stake in the Town government. I think I can speak for not just myself and the Town staff, but also the Mayor and Council when I say that resident input and feedback are vitally important to the process of setting priorities for the Town government. The government represents your taxpayer dollars at work, and we all want to ensure that it is serving you well.

Snow Management

The New Year is when snow removal services are on our mind. The Town is fortunate to have Mulheron Tree Experts providing our plowing, shoveling, and street treatment services again this year. We are in good hands, as they are experienced in keeping the Town safe during winter season.

New Year's Thanks

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was able to contribute to the Town's Holiday Fund. While I do not personally take part, I know that the well-deserved contributions were very much appreciated by **Town Administrative Assistant Linda Williams**, the maintenance staff, and the police officers. Additionally, the coat drive and food donation collections were a great success for some excellent local organizations and causes.

Finally: I hope everyone has/had a wonderful holiday season. Onwards and upwards in 2022! I have high hopes for the upcoming year. Some important discussions and potential projects we can anticipate in Town include:

- A new Town website (hopefully around April!);
- Stormwater rules to better protect properties from flooding, and the Bay from run-off;
- A pickleball pilot program;
- Food trucks at the Town Pool;
- Suffrage for 16- & 17-year-olds;
- Improving streetlight quality;
- Equity discussions, including the upcoming discussion about the history of racial segregation and slavery in Somerset;
- Moving away from gas-powered leaf blowers; and
- The formation of a new Revenue Committee.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg! Thank you to all Town residents who are a part of these discussions, and who make the Town what it is and strives to be. I look forward to working with you and serving you in the coming year.

Council Meeting Actions

The following actions were taken by the Somerset Town Council at its monthly meeting, held December 6, 2021:

- Approved a one-month extension through January 2022 for the continued use of Zoom as a virtual Town Meeting setting (currently set to expire December 31, 2021).
- Approved Mayor Slavin's nomination of **Leslie Caplan** (Essex Avenue) to the Communication Committee.
- Approved a building permit, submitted by Lou Balodemas of Balodemas Architects, on behalf of **Monica Gomez** and **Guillermo Israilevich**, for the construction of a side addition for the house on the property located at 4900 Cumberland Avenue.
- Approved an amendment to the existing building permit granted to **Miriam Rosenthal** for the property located at 5522 Greystone Street, to add an 8.6 foot deck with glass railing.
- Approved a building permit application submitted by John Nunez of Colonial Home Improvements, LLC, for the demolition and construction of a new single-family home at the property located at 4501 Cumberland Avenue.
- Approved a building permit application submitted by John Nunez of Colonial Home Improvements, LLC, for the construction of a new single-family home at the property located at 4503 Cumberland Avenue.
- Approved the removal of the following Town Trees at the recommendation of the Town Arborist:
 - 4824 Dorset Avenue—Pin Oak 28" dia. – Tree is in decline and shedding large branches; and
 - 4807 Dorset Avenue—Pin Oak 32" dia. – Tree is in decline with decay at base, and hazardous.
- Adopted Ordinance 10-21-1, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to remove the sledding hill designation on Cumberland Avenue, as recommended by the Town Public Safety Committee.
- Approved Resolution 11-21-3, a Resolution regarding "Black Lives Matter" in the Town of Somerset.

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 301-717-8083.

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 301-717-8083.

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. Contact **Jeanette Kreiser** at 301-907-8805.

HOME HEALTH AIDE. Available for new clients in Somerset and nearby. Whether for one or several days per week, she can provide services including hygiene/personal care, homemaking (cooking, shopping, household chores) and transportation to medical appointments and activities. Contact **James Wachob** at 301-656-5251 or Jwsomerset@msn.com

SEA COLONY - BETHANY BEACH - OCEAN FRONT APARTMENT - EDGEWATER BUILDING: 2 bedrooms plus 1 tiny one with bunk bed and 2 full baths. Immaculate and all updated. Has a few summer weeks available. **Contact Luba Marx** at 301-233-2727

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.

Preliminary Agenda

(The final agenda is available and emailed to Town residents on the Friday before the monthly Council meeting.)

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting January 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Somerset Town Council will meet via Zoom on Monday, January 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m..

Agenda and updates are posted on the Town website: www.townofsomerset.com

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/33ERAbP> Meeting ID: 831 4539 1969 Passcode: 388562

Somerset Town Council

- Steve Surko,
Council President
- Robin Barr
- Debbie Heller
- Kabir Kumar
- Shannon Rovak

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:

- A one-month extension through February 2022 for the continued use of Zoom as a virtual Town Meeting setting (currently set to expire January 31, 2022);
- Mayor Slavin's nominations to fill membership of Town Committees;
- A Town forum, presented by the Town's History and Equity & Inclusion Committees, on the history of racial segregation and slavery in Somerset, to be held on January 18, 2022; and
- A Resolution establishing that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be budgeted for expenditure as part of the Town's annual budget process.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:12 p.m. Building Administrator's Report

7:20 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To Adopt Ordinance 11-21-2, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to amend and clarify the exemptions from setbacks for projections.

7:40 p.m. **Motion:** To Introduce Ordinance 12-12-1, an ordinance to regulate the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

7:45 p.m. **Motion:** To introduce Ordinance 12-21-2, an ordinance to amend definitions; amend application requirements; require the same application requirements regardless of the number of trees sought to be removed; amend the criteria for permit decisions; add permit conditions, including a warranty period for replanting trees; and to clarify existing provisions, as recommended by the Town Parks and Natural Resources Committee.

7:50 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To approve of amendments to the Parks and Natural Resources Committee Charter.

7:55 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager's Report

8:15 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 or 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) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.