

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



# Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



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April 2023

## Town of Somerset Election News: Plan for Town Election Tuesday, May 9, 2023

By Sherry Bindeman Kahn, Chair, Board of Supervisors  
of Elections, Essex Avenue

The Town of Somerset Election Day is **Tuesday, May 9, 2023. Voters will have the option to vote in person at Somerset Town Hall on Election Day between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. or by mail-in ballot.**

This year's election is for three Council seats currently held by **Debbie Heller** (Falstone), **Kabir Kumar** (Trent), and **Shannon Rovak** (Cumberland). In addition, the Town Council has directed the Board of Supervisors of Elections (the "Board") to include on the ballot a non-binding referendum item to provide guidance on the issue of whether to lower the voting age to 16.

### Nominating Procedures

At the Town Council meeting on March 6, the Board accepted nominations for the three seats.

The candidates are incumbent Council members Debbie Heller, Kabir Kumar, and Shannon Rovak. No additional nominees by petition were received by the deadline of March 20.

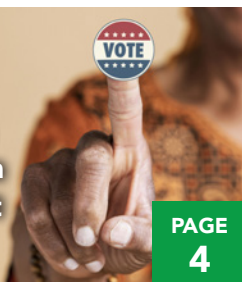
### Voter Registration Procedures

- Every person who (1) is at least 18 years of age, (2) has resided within the Town for at least 14 days immediately preceding the election, and (3) is registered with the Town or the Montgomery County Board of Elections, is a qualified voter of the Town.
- The term "resided" and "resident" refer to the location deemed one's permanent abode and single domicile for voting purposes, and where one intends to return after a temporary residence elsewhere. Actual physical presence in the Town for 14 days before an election is not required.
- Registration is permanent so long as the voter is a qualified resident. Voters already registered need not register with the Town again.
- A Town resident may register to vote by requesting a voter registration card from the Town Manager and delivering a completed card to the Town Office during normal business hours by election day, **May 9, 2023.**
- Due to the uncertainty of obtaining current Montgomery County voter rolls, all residents of the Town who have moved into the Town, or come of voting age, since **June 1, 2022**, are encouraged to fill

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# APRIL 2023 TOWN CALENDAR

## MONDAY, APRIL 3

Town Council Meeting  
7:00 p.m., Town Hall (in person)  
and via Zoom<sup>o\*</sup>

## TUESDAY, APRIL 11

Deadline for change-of-address request for Municipal Election  
(Please see the Board of Supervisors of Elections article on p. 1 for detailed information on Election timeline)

## TUESDAY, APRIL 18

Election Ballots Mailed

## MONDAY APRIL 17

Town Council Work Session  
5:30 p.m., Town Hall (in person)  
and via Zoom<sup>o\*</sup>

Pool Committee Meeting  
7:30 p.m., Zoom<sup>\*</sup>

## TUESDAY, APRIL 18

Tax Day

<sup>o</sup>The Town Council has instituted "hybrid" meetings starting in September 2022, to allow residents to attend both in-person at the Town Hall, or to continue to participate via Zoom.

<sup>\*</sup>Login information for Zoom meetings will be sent via email the week prior to the meeting. Residents may also email [town@townofsomerset.com](mailto:town@townofsomerset.com) for login and dial-in information.

## CONTACT SOMERSET

### MAYOR

**Jeffrey Z. Slavin**, 5706 Warwick Place  
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301-657-3211  
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### TOWN ARBORIST

**Tolbert Feather**  
[town@townofsomerset.com](mailto: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

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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](http://www.townofsomerset.com)

## 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](mailto:SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com) or 301-717-8083 (2/23)

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](mailto:SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com) or 301-717-8083 (2/23)

*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.*

## Town of Somerset Election News: Plan for Town Election Tuesday, May 9, 2023

out a Town of Somerset voter registration card so the voter list can be updated for the 2023 election.

### Additional Election Information

As to the non-binding referendum issue, the pros and cons of lowering the voting age have been widely debated across the country and residents may want to look at the many articles that have been published on the issue.

### Vote by Mail and In-Person Procedures

This year the Town will be mailing ballots directly rather than using the services of an outside election provider. Some dates to note are as follows:

- By Tuesday, **April 18, 2023**, a ballot and return envelope will be mailed to each registered voter who appears on the voter registration list compiled by the Election Board.
  - If a voter desires their ballot to be mailed to an address that is different than the address in the Town register, the voter must inform the Town by e-mail to **[Election@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Election@townofsomerset.com)** no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11, 2023**.
- In the event an issued ballot is lost or missing, a voter may request by e-mail to the Town at **[Election@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Election@townofsomerset.com)** that a new ballot and return envelope be issued. In order to allow sufficient time for a replacement ballot to be issued and voted, any such request shall be made no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28, 2023**. Upon receipt of such request, any previously issued ballot and return envelope for that voter will be voided.

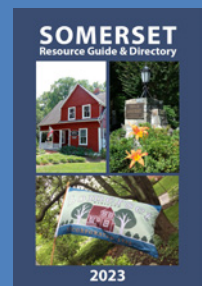
- Qualified voters who register after April 11 at 5:00 p.m. may pick up a ballot at Town Hall after **April 18, 2023**.
- **Voters may vote by mail or in person.**
  - To vote by mail, voters shall mail completed ballots in the Town-issued return envelope. They must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, **May 2, 2023**, and/or received by the Town by **5:00 p.m. on May 9, 2023** in order to be counted.
  - There will also be in-person voting at Town Hall on **Tuesday, May 9, 2023 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** Voters who wish to vote in person may bring their ballot in the Town-issued (and signed) envelope to the Town Hall and drop it in the ballot box during this time.

If you have questions regarding the Town election, please contact the Board of Supervisors of Elections at **[Election@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Election@townofsomerset.com)**.

### Somerset Directory Correction

Please note the following entry correction for the recently released Somerset Directory (included in the Somerset Resource Guide & Directory):

Joseph Wender  
Lauren Paige  
Sam, Abby (children)  
5701 Warwick Place  
202-527-2722 Joseph (cell)  
510-701-4455 Lauren (cell)  
**[jawender@gmail.com](mailto:jawender@gmail.com)**  
**[lrpaige@gmail.com](mailto:lrpaige@gmail.com)**





# Equity and Inclusion

## Equity and Inclusion Committee's Statement on Somerset's Special Ballot Question this May

This past May, a motion to consider the adoption of a Charter Amendment that would lower the voting age in Somerset municipal elections from 18 years of age to 16 was considered by the Town Council. After a healthy discussion, the Town Council decided to consider the voices of Somerset residents in making the decision.

Along with voting for Town Council members on this May's ballot, there will also be a question to decide whether the Town of Somerset lowers the municipal voting age to 16.

We, the Equity and Inclusion Committee, would like to voice our support for the May ballot item that recommends to the Council that Somerset lower its municipal voting age from 18 years of age to 16.

Youth are a vital part of our Town and our wider community. Currently, however, youth do not have a voice in important decisions made by our local electoral process.

The population of Somerset involved in political activity skews much older than the median age of our residents. This leads to inequitable representation in our Town's voting eligible population that is not fully representative of Somerset's age-diverse community. Lowering the voting age so that residents between 16 and 18 years of age can vote allows for a population of Somerset voters that are a better representation of our Town.

Our Town enjoys a vibrant community life, much of which revolves around our youth, including our local schools, our beloved Somerset Dolphins, and special events like the annual Halloween celebration. Additionally, Somerset citizens take great pride in the beauty of our Town and protecting the environment, an issue of critical importance for our community's youth and their future.

Our Committee highly values inclusion. Expanding the franchise is a way to include younger voices when it comes to Town issues that impact them.

Giving the vote to 16-year-olds is not a new nor novel idea. The nearby Town of Chevy Chase, as well as Hyattsville, Takoma Park, and several other Maryland municipalities, have already lowered their voting ages for municipal elections from 18 years of age to 16. Countries such as Denmark, Austria, and Scotland have done so as well. There is an increasing body of evidence (<https://bit.ly/3TCk4sE>) that supports lowering the voting age. Benefits include:

- When youth start voting at a younger age, they are more likely to maintain a habit of voting, thereby increasing voter participation over the long term.
- In towns that have lowered the voting age, youth voter turnout is relatively high compared to the average voter — youth are motivated to vote.
- Youth voter turnout motivates others — when youth turn out to vote, their parents' turnout rates increase. This was seen in Takoma Park.

This past summer, Equity and Inclusion Committee member **Amalia Levitin** (Trent) hosted a Town-wide forum in which Michael Hanmer, University of Maryland Political Science Professor and Co-founder of the Vote16 Research Network, shared his extensive research on the Maryland municipalities who have lowered their voting ages and the positive impacts of a lowered voting age on them. (The recording of the whole forum can be found here for reference: [bit.ly/3Kn7usA](https://bit.ly/3Kn7usA).)

At a time when it feels like democracy is in decline, we have an opportunity to strengthen it with the voting power of our informed and engaged youth of Somerset.

The Equity and Inclusion Committee encourages you to thoughtfully consider your vote in May.

*Editor's Note: For more detailed information about the upcoming election, see the article on page 1.*



# Equity and Inclusion

## Somerset Sundays: How It's Going



**By Atsuko Horiguchi, Chair, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Essex Avenue**

The successful launch of the Somerset Sunday Movie Series on January 8 with *Akeelah and the Bee* (PG) was followed by another well-attended gathering on March 5 with *Cool Runnings* (PG).

The Equity and Inclusion Committee started this series in the hopes of fostering community by gathering neighbors, friends, and friends-to-be in Somerset. The purpose of the series is to show movies that touch upon themes of inclusion and equity in one way or another. Our aspiration is to create a warm and nurturing space to hold discussions afterwards for those interested.

On the first Sunday in March, kids and families alike found themselves cheering for the Jamaican bobsledders. Committee Member **Kirsten Darling** (Cumberland) led a short but lively discussion following the movie. Complimentary pizza, veggies, and drinks were enjoyed by all. We asked participants to bring their own cups and bottles to discourage single use plastic; thank you for cooperating!



So far, we've been showing PG movies to welcome everybody in the community. Down the road, we are open to showing films suitable for more mature audiences, ones with more complexity and nuance in the narrative, for instance. We might host such movie evenings at a later hour, perhaps with a BYOB option. We welcome suggestions about format, content, etc. Please email Committee Member **Fayez Choudhury** (Dorset) at [fayezulc@gmail.com](mailto:fayezulc@gmail.com).

Meanwhile, please mark your calendars for the next Somerset Sunday event:

**WHEN:** Sunday, April 30, start time TBD

**WHERE:** Town Hall

**WHAT:** Pizza and drinks (please bring your own cup or bottle)

Movie [*The Color of Friendship* (PG) – to be confirmed] and discussion

**WHO:** All Somerset Residents!

**RSVP:** [fayezulc@gmail.com](mailto:fayezulc@gmail.com)

# Pool Update

By Matthew Zaft,  
Chair, Pool Committee,  
Dorset Avenue



## Pool News: Only a Couple of Months Away!

I do not know about the rest of you, but those spring-like days in February got me ready for the Somerset Pool to open! Here is what you need to know:

- The Pool will open on Friday May 12!
- The closing date (and tentative date for the Dog Swim) will be Sunday, September 10.
- Swim Team **registration** (<https://bit.ly/42KPoK6>) and the **spirit wear store** (<https://bit.ly/3KcvUXD>) are **NOW OPEN**. *Dolphins gear is only available through March 31. Registration fees increase starting April 1.*
- Food Trucks, Food Trucks, and more Food Trucks!!! We will have many food trucks coming to the Pool this summer. Here is the current schedule:
  - Wednesday, June 14 (Dolphins' Home B Meet)  
**Astro Doughnuts and Fried Chicken** at 5:00 p.m.
  - Wednesday, July 5 (Dolphins' Home B Meet)  
**Timber Pizza** at 5:00 p.m.
  - Wednesday, July 19 (Dolphins' Home B Meet)  
**Rocklands Barbeque** at 5 :00 p.m.
  - More to come!
- All residents and guests need to ensure they are informed of and agree to abide by all aspects of the pool rules. They are available on the Town's website. A few to highlight are:
  - No glass!
  - Food is only allowed in the two designated areas (the patio adjacent to the Pool House and the elevated balcony area). Absolutely no food is allowed on the pool deck.
  - Respect the lifeguards and abide by their instructions.
- We have new grills! It is the responsibility of residents (and their guests) to clean the grills and grill area after usage. Grills must be off and cleaned 15 minutes prior to closing.
- Reminder that on the days of home Dolphin swim meets the Pool either closes early (three Wednesdays and one Saturday) or opens late (three Saturdays). Here is the complete schedule:
  - Pool closes at 4:30 pm: 6/14, 7/5, 7/19, and 7/22 (Swim Team Banquet)

*Continued on page 7*

## Pool News: Only a Couple of Months Away!

- Pool opens at 12:30 pm: 6/10, 6/17, and 7/8
- Lap Lanes—As with the prior two years, we will be continuing to have residents reserve lap lanes through the MemberSplash system. There is still the max of two reservations per lane. However, those two people can agree to allow additional people in the lane with them, but they do not have to.
- Early Bird Swim will begin Monday May 15 and run until the pool closes. As with last year, there will be two groups, M/W/F and T/Th/Sat, both being from 7:15 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. More information will be coming prior to opening.
- Water Aerobics will happen again this summer beginning Monday June 5 and going until the pool closes. More information will be coming prior to opening.
- We are hoping to pilot a Stroke and Technique Swim Class for two days a week once MCPS is out of session. It would be Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. This would be for all ages and provide residents with both instruction/honing of swim technique as well as a formalized workout from Dolphin's Head Coach Roger Dent.
- We have asked the Town Council to allocate up to \$8,500 of next fiscal year's budget to cover the costs of Water Aerobics (\$4,655 in 2022), Morning Swim (\$2,965.58 for 2023), and the Stroke and Technique Swim Class pilot (\$800 for 2023) so as to make them free and open to all residents this summer.
- Every year the Pool Committee must review the pool rules and give any new rules or changes to existing rules to the Town Council for approval. This year, Mayor Slavin said that the non-swim team lap lane usage must be delineated in the pool rules. To that end, at our March 13 meeting, the Pool Committee discussed and debated the following proposed new pool rule: "No program except for the swim team may occupy more than 3 lap lanes during normal pool hours." Ultimately the Committee voted to recommend the Council adopt the new rule.
- Finally, for now, did I mention no glass, no glass, no glass!!!

Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.



## 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 Zeughauser** at **202-368-9986** **Kathleen Kenyon** at **301-651-0758** or **Jim Berry** at **240-994-3939**.

If you would like to add your name to the volunteer list, please send an email to [HHSomerset@gmail.com](mailto:HHSomerset@gmail.com).



# A Tribute to Neighbor and Community Leader Jeff Mascott

By Ann Bolten, Cumberland Avenue



On Friday, March 10, a standing room only crowd of family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and parishioners gathered to celebrate the remarkable life of Somerset resident, **Jeff Mascott** (Dorset). Jeff passed away on February 28 after a courageous, six-month struggle

with pancreatic cancer at the heartbreakingly young age of 48. The remembrances shared by some of the nearly one thousand people in attendance painted a portrait of an accomplished entrepreneur, devoted father and husband, dedicated community leader, loyal friend, avid athlete, talented artist, intense visionary, and devout man of faith.

Jeff and **Jenn Mascott** first moved to a home at the corner of "Little" Surrey Street and Cumberland Avenue in 2005. They soon grew their family to include daughter **Avery** and sons **Everett**, **Eli**, and **Auggie** – all Minis and now Dolphins on the Town swim team. In 2021, they relocated their family to the historic Salmon-Stohlman house at the corner of Dorset Avenue and "Big" Surrey Street.

Jeff was the best of Somerset. He believed fervently in the power of service and that it was every person's obligation to work to improve their communities. Jeff lived those values, prioritizing attending his kids' school and athletic events over working long hours at the office — even as he managed to build multiple successful companies. Many noted that Jeff managed to be "all in" on everything he did — and he did a lot. Until his illness, Jeff served as

the Team Representative for the Somerset Dolphins for four seasons, chaired the Swim Team Committee, and organized the Somerset Back to School Classic Race for several years. Jeff and the Mascott family were also early and significant contributors to the fundraising effort that created the athletic field at Somerset Elementary School. Neighbors found themselves taking on volunteer roles at Jeff's gentle and at times hypnotic behest. One former resident, who flew in from London to attend Jeff's service, noted he was there because Jeff did more than anyone else to engage his family in the community of Somerset. Jeff, ever self-effacing and humble, insisted that he got more out of his service than he ever gave.

Jeff's illness and passing seems incomprehensible to many of us who knew him well, but the community safety net Jeff and Jenn built around their family over many years, through their friendship, generosity, and kindness, seems preordained. Those of us lucky enough to be small threads in that net feel grateful to hold and comfort this beautiful family in their time of grief — in our collective grief.

This past January, the Dolphins honored Jeff's service to the team and community by establishing the Jeff Mascott Volunteer Service Award, which will be given at the end of each season to a parent volunteer for extraordinary service to the team and community. The recognition board will be installed at the pool when it re-opens in May, with Jeff's name listed, appropriately enough, as the 2022 recipient.

To learn more about Jeff's extraordinary life and to donate to the memorial funds established in his honor please visit <https://legcy.co/3TEHwph>.



## IN MEMORY OF Janet Leissner

By Carol Manning, *Essex Avenue (former)*

**Janet Leissner** (Essex), long time Somerset resident, died at her home on November 6, 2022. Prior to her retirement, Janet had a long and well documented career in broadcast journalism, including her position as senior producer of *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather* and as Washington Bureau Chief for the CBS News. Although nationally prominent in her field, Janet was probably best known to her Somerset neighbors as an advocate for animal rights and was frequently seen walking with Lucky, her constant companion and beloved rescue dog. Janet is survived by her sister, niece and great niece and great nephew, as well as many friends and admirers.

## Town Contracts with BayLand to Study a Shared Infrastructure Project for Stormwater Mitigation

By Julie Greenberg, *Member, former Stormwater Study Committee, Falstone Avenue*

At its March meeting, the Town Council approved a \$27,000 contract with BayLand Consultants and Designers (Hanover, MD) to develop a plan for installation of green infrastructure to reduce drainage problems in a Somerset "microwatershed." Unlike most infrastructure installations in which residents must try – and often fail — to reduce drainage problems because they are confined to consideration of only their own property, this plan — the first of its kind in the Town — will consider the microwatershed's drainage issues as a whole. For this pilot, BayLand's engineers will work closely with the households in the area east of Surrey that is bounded approximately by Dorset, Essex, and Warwick Avenues (the "DEW" microwatershed).

After assuring itself that BayLand had the technical expertise to develop a plan for green infrastructure installation that would be effective at a reasonable cost, the Council's foremost concern was that BayLand staff

welcomed resident involvement in all aspects of their work, including site visits and two public meetings, one early in the process and one close to its conclusion. The BayLand project manager provided such assurances in two separate meetings.

The proposal that the Town pilot a Shared Infrastructure Project emerged from the March 2022 report of the Stormwater Study Committee (<https://bit.ly/3M7R9b4>) and the culmination of this pilot project will be the formation of a new Stormwater Shared Infrastructure Committee (SSIP), the majority of whose members will be DEW residents. The SSIP Committee will advise the Town Council on matters related to implementation of the plan for installation of shared infrastructure, including the merit of any public funding for some installations.

The project will commence with site visits this spring, exact date to be determined. DEW households will be contacted shortly with more detailed information.

# "Come to the Cabaret": Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards and Live Concert

By **Cathy Bernard**, *Greystone Street*

I'd like to tell Town residents about an upcoming event sponsored by the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District: the Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Contest.

My family has lived on Greystone Street for 35 years, and we sponsor and founded this event. My uncle, Fred Ebb (of the team Kander and Ebb) was a lyricist. He wrote the song *New York, New York*, as well as the lyrics for songs in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Cabaret*, *Chicago*, and many others. This event honors his work and also gives young songwriters a chance to perform their songs and win prize money.

Please see below for more information about the event:



Fred Ebb and  
Cathy Bernard,  
2002

## Location

Bethesda Blues and Jazz Supper Club  
7719 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda

## Date/Time

Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

## Program

The following songwriters will perform their original songs. One will win the \$10,000 Grand Prize and 25 hours of complimentary recording studio time at Innovation Station Music.

- **Carol Anne Bosco**, Takoma Park, MD
- **Josh Lay**, Owings Mills, MD
- **Mike Ryan**, Clifton, VA
- **Jarreau Williams**, Alexandria, VA
- **TolumiDE**, Silver Spring, MD

Three Young Songwriters will also perform live and compete for \$2,500.

- **Elizabeth Lane**, Alexandria, VA
- **Erin Leberknight**, Ellicott City, MD
- **Josey Indigo**, Bethesda, MD

For more information on this year's finalists, see <https://bit.ly/3FMiYoC>

Purchase tickets here: <https://bit.ly/3K4eBb3>

# Budget Season Begins

By Ann Bolten, Chair, Budget Committee, Cumberland Avenue

Each year, the Mayor, in consultation with the Town Manager and with technical assistance from the Budget Committee, proposes a budget to the Council for the following fiscal year (FY), which runs from July 1 to June 30.

The budget for FY24 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) will be formally introduced at the April 3, 2023 Council meeting and voted on at the May 1, 2023 Council meeting. Next month's Town Journal will include a copy of the proposed budget and the *nonbinding fiscal outlook* for the following four years (FY25-FY28). The Budget Committee will also offer analysis on the budget's revenues, costs, reserves, and general fiscal outlook.

As a reminder, the budget is intended to reflect the Town residents' policy priorities, as interpreted by the Town Council, as proposed by the Town's various committees, and as recommended by the Town Manager. The Budget Committee's role is purely advisory: we assist only with forecasting revenues, incorporating costs required to achieve the Town's policy priorities, and work to ensure the budget includes adequate reserves as dictated by prior resolutions.



Every resident interested in how the Town prioritizes taxpayer resources should try to engage in this critical Town process by reviewing the budget when it is proposed in April, joining the April and May Council sessions where public comments are allowed, emailing both the Council and the Town Manager ([council@townofsomerset.com](mailto:council@townofsomerset.com) and [town@townofsomerset.com](mailto:town@townofsomerset.com)), respectively) your views on the Town's policy priorities and the actual Budget when it is proposed, and offering any amendments before the Budget is voted on.

## 2023 TENNIS FEES

Please pay your 2023 Tennis Fees  
to Town Hall  
**\$25 per family**

TWO WAYS TO PAY:

- (1) Drop off a check or cash to Town Hall or
- (2) Pay by Venmo: @TownofSomerset-MD. Be sure to write "Tennis Fees" and your name and address in the "notes" section, so the Town knows what the payment is for.



# Mindfulness: A Possible Key to Some Stress Relief, Better Sleep and Happiness

## PRACTICES TO BE OFFERED IN SOMERSET

By Jackie Quan, Cumberland Avenue

*"Happiness depends more upon the internal frame of a person's own mind, than on the externals in the world." – George Washington*

For decades, psychologists, psychiatrists and neuroscientists have primarily studied negative aspects of emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. About 25 years ago, scientists began studying and measuring happiness. What is happiness? Who is happy and why? The research is fascinating: apparently, happiness can be cultivated at any age for most people.

According to a Harvard University study of approximately 2,250 adults, we spend nearly 50% of our waking hours mind-wandering. The study found a positive correlation between mind-wandering and unhappiness.<sup>11</sup> This means that if we're mind-wandering, ruminating, or obsessing about something, we're usually not happy. We may not even know we're doing it. Some mind-wandering can be good for creative thinking and problem solving, but too much negative mind-wandering is not helpful. Furthermore, mind-wandering may trigger our "fight-or-flight" stress response. We know too much stress is bad: it can have physiological effects on our bodies which may result in poor-quality sleep, high blood pressure, heart disease, metabolism issues, and/or mood alterations (anxiety, depression, etc.). In summary, there may be emotional as well as physical health costs from undesired, negative mind-wandering that most of us don't know how to dampen, control, or turn off when we want to.

What's the opposite of negative mind-wandering? Paying attention. According to John Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is *"awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."*<sup>2</sup>

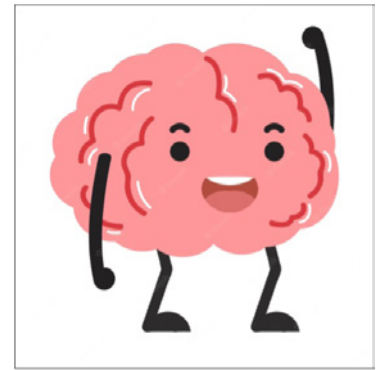
I discovered mindfulness through reading about leadership and happiness about a year ago. I looked up mindfulness research and discovered more than 20,000 published research papers. I was stunned. I read a few hundred decent studies (randomized studies and meta-analyses),

and several reported encouraging findings that mindfulness was associated with stress reduction, sleep improvement, lower anxiety, reduced depression, lower blood pressure, etc. The most innovative and fascinating research I found is in the realm of neuroplasticity. Due to recent advances in imaging modalities, such as magnetic resonance imaging, some neuroplasticity research suggests that mindfulness, over time, may beneficially alter the physical structure of the human brain at any age.

At first, I didn't like practicing mindfulness. I didn't get it. I thought it was weird and boring. I couldn't make it past two minutes of sitting and focusing on my breath. I would just stop and go back to my regular, daily stuff. Today, I practice mindfulness daily for at least 10–15 minutes. I sleep better. I'm calmer in moments of distress. I have more energy. I'm more productive because I have more energy. I'm also happier. These benefits are consistent with results of the studies I had read.

Mindfulness practice has immensely improved my well-being. As such, I would like to offer its practice to Somerset residents to share awareness of what mindfulness is, why it may be beneficial for some individuals (not all) and how to practice it. Maybe some Somerset residents will sleep better and be just a little happier. **Practices will meet weekly** for one hour on **alternating Wednesdays at 1pm** and **Saturday mornings at 7:30am at Town Hall**. A schedule will be posted through the listserv and at Town Hall on the corkboard. I hope you can join us!

*Jackie Quan lives on Cumberland Avenue. She has a 25-year background in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry, predominantly in cancer research alliances project management. She now consults and helps her client teams be optimal research collaborators with other organizations by creating an environment of psychological safety through intra and inter-company high team Interventions performance. She has a certificate of specialization in leadership and management from Harvard Business School Online, two certificates in happiness from University of California, Berkeley, two mindfulness certificates, and a certificate in medical neuroscience from Duke University.*



1 Killingsworth, Matthew A. and Daniel T. Gilbert. "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind." Science 330 (2010): 932 - 932.

2 Kabat-Zinn, Jon. "Mindfulness-Based in Context: Past, Present, and Future." Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice 10 (2003): 144-156.



# Beekeeping Pilot Project



**By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager**

At the April Town Council Meeting, the Council is expected to discuss and vote on a proposal for a pilot beekeeping project that has been recommended by the Town's Environment Committee.

The proposed plan is for the Town to appoint Elizabeth Harris, a former resident of Somerset, as volunteer beekeeper. She would manage several hives in the parkland south of Dorset Avenue, near Wisconsin Avenue and the Little Falls Branch creek. The Town has already installed a fence in the area where the beehives will be kept, and signage will be erected to give notice of an active hive in the area.

The species of bees that would be maintained are Italian honeybees, which are not native to the Americas, and were first introduced in the 1850s. They are the most popular honey-producing bee for backyard and commercial

apiarists. When left undisturbed, the bees pose minimal risk to passersby, as they are considered among the gentlest varieties of bees. However, bees will still protect their hives if they perceive a threat, so the gates around the fence would be locked to reduce the risk of injury to children and others who might approach the hives.

The Town Council may consider other initiatives related to this project in the future, including, but not limited to, the promotion of local pollinators, making honey available for town residents, and hosting educational activities related to the bees and their hives.

Town residents are encouraged to weigh in on this topic. In addition to a public comment the night of the meeting, residents can also submit comments ahead of time. Please feel free to send an email to [town@townofsomerset.com](mailto:town@townofsomerset.com) with the subject line, "Beekeeping."



## High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Program

The Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which took effect January 1, 2023, encourages states and counties to push ahead with decarbonization initiatives by taking advantage of financial incentives, such as rebates for heat pumps and electric vehicles (EVs). The IRA provides billions of dollars in federal grants, loans, and tax incentives to fight the climate crisis and to address environmental justice.

### Energy Efficiency

Rebates will be available to low- and moderate-income households in late 2023 through the **Homeowner and Occupant Monetary Encouragement and Stability (HOMES)** rebate program. These rebates will be based on the estimated energy savings from retrofits and will be available for both single family and multi-family homes. Up to \$14,000 in rebates for low- or moderate-income households will also be available for qualified electrification projects through the **High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Program**, including:

Electric Load Service Center upgrades	\$4,000
Electric Stove, Cooktop, Range, and/or Oven	\$840
Electric Wiring	\$2,500
Heat Pump Clothes Dryers	\$840
Heat Pump Heating/Cooling	\$8,000
Heat Pump Water Heaters	\$1,750
Insulation and Air Sealing	\$1,600

### Heat Pumps

**Tax credit of up to 30%** of the cost for purchase and installation of a heat pump, are available, **up to \$2000**. Additionally, there are tax credits available for electric panel upgrades, which folks might need as they add more electric equipment to their homes. In addition, there will be a new point-of-sale rebate for people earning up to 150% of area median income that will apply to heat

pumps, heat pump water heaters, and heat pump clothes dryers. The rebate has a **\$14,000 cap**.

### Solar

The **residential 30% tax credit** for any project advanced in 2022 will apply to projects through 2032. Projects with battery storage *connected to and powered by* solar also qualify. Standalone residential energy storage systems >3kW in capacity will also qualify for a **30% tax credit** (they do not need to be connected to/powerd by solar).

The 26% **Commercial Solar Investment Tax Credit** was also increased to **30% and extended through 2024**; the 30% applies to solar projects placed in service during or after 2022. The base credit will also apply to projects <1 megawatt or that meet prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements. If a project is >1 megawatt and does not meet those requirements, **the base credit is 6%**.

This provision will become the "Clean Electricity Investment Credit" in 2025 and will be extended through 2032 or until emission targets are reached.

### Tax Credits

You may be eligible for a **tax credit of up to 30%** of cost of an energy efficient project through 2032, including any improvements on your principal residence. The lifetime cap has also been changed from \$500 to an **annual cap of \$1,200**.

Doors	\$250/door, up to \$500 total
Insulation/ Weatherization	\$1,200
Water Heaters	\$600
Windows	\$600

Residents can find more information about the program here: <https://go.umd.edu/3z0h0wZ>.

If you want to know how much money you can get with the Inflation Reduction Act, just by entering your zip code and you income, this website will have all answers about rebates and/or tax credits <https://bit.ly/3IGp4zR>.

**CALLING ALL RESIDENTS!** We are actively seeking residents interested in writing an article about an environment-related topic for this column. If you are interested, please contact us at [tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com).



# Report from the Mayor

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

## What's Up This Month...

- The Town's FY 2024 budget season has begun, and the Council has held work sessions to begin the review process before the budget document is introduced. Kudos to our outstanding Budget Committee, led by the awesome **Chair Ann Bolten** (Cumberland) with the assistance of members **Jon Medalia** (Surrey) and **Meredith Wade** (Essex) and with expertise provided by **Council Liaison Kabir Kumar** (Trent). Committees have already submitted recommendations, but I want to urge all citizens to make their views known, in support of current programs or projects or making suggestions for new ones.
- Election season in Somerset is underway and the incumbents whose terms are up, **Council Members Debbie Heller** (Falstone), **Kabir Kumar** (Trent) and **Shannon Rovak** (Cumberland) have all been renominated. As all three have done excellent jobs these past two years, I am strongly supporting each of them and hope you will vote in person on May 9 or by mail in advance. This is your opportunity to show how much our democracy is valued. As an added incentive, the Council has requested an advisory vote during that election on whether to lower the Somerset voting age to 16, so I hope we get as close to 100% participation as possible
- Later this month, I will be attending the National League of Cities (NLC) annual D.C. winter conference where the focus is on federal advocacy. While I have ended my two-year term as chair of the NLC's LGBTQ+ caucus, I am pleased to report I have been appointed to the Finance, Administration, and Intergovernmental Relations Federal Action (FAIR) Committee and I look forward to serving, especially because civil rights and voting rights comes under its jurisdiction.
- I am looking forward to reading the new book by **Environment Committee Chair Barton Rubenstein** (Dorset), *Powered by Grief: My Adventures as a Scientist, Artist, and Activist*, especially because he often writes such interesting and informative articles for this Journal!

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## And What Happened Last month...

- **Town Manager Matt Trollinger** and I recently walked around Somerset with the Kelley Okleson, of Groundsmith Collective, the landscape designer who already works with us, to take a look at the four (actually there are six!) Town entrances, in order to give her some ideas and share suggestions from residents on what improvements might be considered. Ms. Okleson will be submitting her recommendations soon (probably in April) so that the Council can take an initial look and set up the formal process for finalizing a plan. We are still looking for ideas from our citizens at these early stages.
- I attended **Governor Wes Moore's** Black History Month breakfast at Government House at the end of February, along with several of my fellow Mayors and other prominent Black Marylanders. I was dazzled by the speeches by our State's Chief Executive and the First Lady.
- I am very pleased that the Town Council had the opportunity to meet with a group of PEPCO officials to learn about the long-awaited plan to install badly needed new streetlights throughout our Town. I appreciate the hard work of staff in preparing a contract. It has been two decades in the making but the end seems near!



# Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Although the weather has been chilly the past month, we are ready to move forward into springtime and all that entails.

## Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

As of this writing, the Town is deep in budget discussion talks. Throughout the month of March, the Town Council will have met with the Budget Committee (Chair **Ann Kelly Bolten** (Cumberland) and Committee members **Jon Medalia** (Surrey) and **Meredith Wade (Essex)**, along with Town staff and Mayor on the Town's introductory budget.

Please keep in mind: the budget that is introduced is *not* adopted without discussion. Resident input is more than welcome, and the Council goes through a very deliberative process to make many difficult decisions. The Budget Committee met three times to assist the staff in development of the draft budget, and minutes from those meetings are on the Town website. In addition, the Budget Committee held two separate meetings with the Town Council in March to review the proposed budget and for the Council to weigh in. The budget will be introduced at the April meeting, and the Town will accept public comments through the May 1 Council meeting, when there will be a public hearing and, ultimately, adoption of the budget.

The Town is lucky to have many active community members and committees, which see many opportunities for improvement in the Town. The draft budget includes about \$170,000 in committee-requested budget items. It also includes major capital projects including : 1) pool renovation and repairs this upcoming fall, 2) roadway and sidewalk repairs in consultation with the recently-approved consultant contract with Dewberry, Inc., 3) the long-anticipated street light LED replacement project, and 4) stormwater mitigation.

In addition, the Town's ambitious agenda has required adjustments to its operating budget. The Town will be bringing on a third member to its office staff this spring and will be contracting with a technical stormwater reviewer for the new stormwater code regulations. This is in addition to inflationary cost increases for the general maintenance of the Town and its regular services.

The Council has a very difficult task in balancing the budget, and while some of the Town's capital projects are supported by American Rescue Plan Act funds, the long-term outlook requires careful consideration.

Responsible budgeting requires compromise and some give-and-take. The Town leadership is up to the task, and by going through the budget with a fine-toothed comb, the Town can remain on solid fiscal standing now and into the future. The May edition of the Town Journal will include the one-year budget for residents to review, and residents will have an opportunity to comment before the budget is ultimately considered and adopted at the May Council meeting.

## Streetlight Update

This past month, we were able to arrange with Pepco to put up some pilot streetlights on Cumberland Avenue, to see what our options look like. The general consensus from residents was that the lower the wattage the better, so the majority of our streetlights will be 50-watt LED streetlights, with 100-watt bulbs at intersections. As of this writing, we are finalizing the order with Pepco. After that is submitted, Pepco will design the project for us, after which installation will begin in 8-week intervals throughout the Town. So, all in all, we are looking at about a 30-week project from here, assuming we don't run into supply issues.

The benefit of our current plan is that the Town will be able to pay lower fees every month for the consumption of electricity. The Town typically spends about \$23,000 per year on streetlights, and the new LED bulbs will reduce our consumption of electricity and the cost of maintenance, overall reducing our annual cost by 60-70%. From a safety perspective, LEDs should be an improvement as well, as the bulbs are less likely to go out, so we will have fewer outages, and LED lights are better able to distribute light than the legacy technology.

All that being said, this is not meant to be the be-all and end-all. Further improvements will be considered in future years, and the Mayor's five-year fiscal plan includes a lighting study in the following year to evaluate gaps in our lighting and possible improvements, after completing the installation of the LED lights.

*Continued on page 17*



## Manager's Corner

### Stormwater Mitigation

In March, the Council approved a contract with Bayland Consultants to create a shared infrastructure plan for stormwater mitigation. In essence, this engineering firm will work with residents to develop infrastructure and other mitigation methods for the properties that are between Dorset Avenue and Essex Avenue on the north and south, and Warwick Place and Surrey Street on the east and west. This area was identified by the Low Impact Development Center (LIDC) as a "microwatershed" during its Town-wide stormwater study. The plan for this particular microwatershed is likely to include infrastructure on private property, and potentially shared between neighbors.

The Council is in discussion on how any potential plan might be implemented and budgeted. Questions that the Council will be grappling with include: how much should the Town budget include for this and future projects? What should the overall split be between the Town and private residents – especially for infrastructure on private property? Who will be responsible for the maintenance of any installation on private property? Please see the article by Julie Greenberg (p. 9) for more information on this particular project.

### Final Thoughts

**WEBSITE:** A beta version of the Town website is now running, and staff are in training to learn how to use the

new system. The full website will finally be launched this May!

**SOLAR PANELS:** The Council is considering moving forward with solar panel installation at the Town Hall at the April meeting. The project would provide about 55% of the power consumed at the Town Hall.

**ELECTRIC VEHICLE:** The draft agenda includes a budget amendment for the purchase of an electric vehicle. A quick point of clarification: this was included in last year's five-year plan, but for FY24, which starts in July. As such, this purchase will not affect the long-term bottom line. I am requesting this budget amendment for accounting purposes. The existing truck is on its last legs, and electric trucks are in high demand and short supply, so this merely gives us the flexibility to make the purchase between now and July if one happens to become available.

And... March Madness is in full swing, and the two teams nearest and dearest to me, the University of Vermont, and the University of Maryland, both made it to "the Big Dance" this year. Neither are expected to make it very far — and it would be a minor miracle if UVM were to win even one game — but, hey, that's what March Madness is all about, right? Maybe one or both can make some noise and pull off an upset or two and give us all something to cheer about.

## GENERAL PERMITS

### TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

#### **5807 Deal Place**

Black Walnut (37") – Tree is dying and hollow at base. Tree is hazardous.

#### **5407 Surrey Street**

Mulberry (10") – The tree has two main leaders with a crack in the trunk. Tree is hazardous.

### FENCE PERMIT

#### **4809 Grantham Avenue**

### PERMIT AMENDMENT

#### **5506 Trent Street**

Approval of a permit amendment request by CM Conlan Contractors & Builders, Inc., represented by Chris Conlan, to remove the permit

requirement for a permeable paver at the property located at 5506 Trent Street, due to site conditions and driveway slope, and in compliance with the current Town Code, with the condition that the applicant plant at least two trees recommended by the Town Arborist.

# Council Meeting Actions

The following actions were taken by the Somerset Town Council at its monthly meeting, held March 6, 2023.

- The Board of Supervisors of Elections accepted three nominations for Town Council:
  - **Debbie Heller** (incumbent), Falstone Avenue
  - **Kabir Kumar** (incumbent), Trent Street
  - **Shannon Rovak** (incumbent), Cumberland Avenue
- Approval of the appointment of **Patty Friedman** (Grantham) to serve on the Environment Committee, to fill the term formerly filled by **Donna Harman** (Dorset), through calendar year 2024
- Approval of a Resolution declaring Friday, April 28, 2023 as Arbor Day in compliance with Tree City USA certification
- Approval of a Resolution declaring May as Jewish American Heritage Month, and to hold an accompanying event at the Town Hall to be organized by the Town's Equity & Inclusion Committee
- Approval of a Resolution approving the Declaration of Inclusion for the Town of Somerset, and to be placed prominently on the Town's website
- Approval of a letter directed to Montgomery County Parks and Planning Commission requesting additional hearings and public engagement on the status of the Little Falls Parkway closure and park plan
- Approval of the appointment of **Soching Tsai** (Trent) to serve on the Equity & Inclusion Committee through calendar year 2027
- Approval of a permit amendment request by CM Conlan Contractors & Builders, Inc., represented by Chris Conlan, to remove the permit requirement for permeable pavers at the property located at 5506 Trent St., due to site conditions and driveway slope, and in compliance with the current Town Code, on the condition that the applicant plant at least two trees on the property in consultation with the Town Arborist.
- Approval of a tree removal application, submitted by **Janet Lowenthal** (Deal), for the removal of a diseased 37" Black Locust tree, at the recommendation of the Town Arborist.
- Approval of a contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc., to complete a Comprehensive Roadway Evaluation at a cost not to exceed \$65,000.
- Approval of a contract with Bayland Consultants & Designers, Inc., to provide a stormwater mitigation plan in an amount not to exceed \$27,000, provided that residents in the affected area sign off on entry to their property and approve of their houses being included in the plan.



# For Your Reference

## TOWN OF SOMERSET COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Audit	Chuck Edson (Surrey)
Budget	Ann Kelly Bolten (Cumberland)
Communications	Leslie Caplan (Essex)
Environment	Barton Rubenstein (Dorset)
Equity & Inclusion	Atsuko Horiguchi (Essex)
History & Archives	Paige Whitley (Cumberland)
Newcomers	Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Cumberland)

COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Parks & Natural Resources	Josh Rosenthal (River)
Pool	Matt Zaft (Dorset)
Public Safety	Kumar Vaswani (Trent)
Revenue	Nick Fox (Cumberland)
Swim Team	Dario Fuentes (Cumberland)
Tennis	Carrie Wofford (Essex)
Traffic	Elizabeth Hurwit (Dorset)

## TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR 2023

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

(All times at 7:00 p.m.)

- Mon., April 3
- Mon., May 1
- Mon., June 5
- Mon., July 10
- Mon., August 7
- Tues., September 5 (Sept. 4 is Labor Day holiday)
- Mon., October 2
- Mon., November 6
- Mon., December 4

### WORK SESSIONS

(All times at 5:30 p.m.)

- Mon. April 17
- Mon., May 15
- Tues., June 20 (June 19 is Juneteenth holiday)
- Mon., July 17
- Mon., August 21
- Mon., September 18
- Mon., October 16
- Mon., November 20
- Mon., December 18

## LINKS TO COMMITTEE-PROVIDED RESOURCES

### STORMWATER STUDY COMMITTEE

- Stormwater Study Committee Report: <https://bit.ly/3M7R9b4>
- FAQs for Somerset Residents: <https://bit.ly/3uVIX96>
- Resource Guide to Green Infrastructure: <https://bit.ly/3MhYnsW>
- LIDC Final Report — Stormwater Master Plan 1/20/2022: <https://bit.ly/3uUADp8>
- Recording of May 10, 2022 Stormwater Study Committee Town Forum: <https://bit.ly/39FMAr3>

### ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

- Ban on Certain Pesticides: <https://bit.ly/3MKQpt5>
- Resolution Declaring Climate Emergency: <https://bit.ly/38DGIDz>

- Sierra Club Maryland Mayors for 100% Clean Energy Pledge: <https://bit.ly/3NuCeZ5>
- Fossil Fuel No-Proliferation Treaty: <https://fossilfuel treaty.org>
- Ban on Gas-Powered Blowers: see Chapter 140, section 3 (§140-3) of the Town Code (<https://bit.ly/3LDF1xR>)
- Recording of June 7, 2022 Bee Forum: <https://bit.ly/3be19SN>

### EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

- Resolution Condemning Anti-AAPI Hate: <https://bit.ly/38I0t7r>
- Recording of January 18, 2022 Slavery & Segregation History Forum Recording: <https://bit.ly/3MHSV3o>

## VIDEO RECORDINGS OF 2022 TOWN MEETINGS

All Town Council and Work Session meetings are available for viewing on the Town of Somerset YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3Uq7Tz4>

# 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 April 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

The Somerset Town Council will hold a "hybrid meeting," both in-person at the Town Hall and simultaneously cast via Zoom on Monday, March 6, 2023, 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://bit.ly/3TEP2Av> Meeting ID: 836 4271 5125 Passcode: 287338

Dial by your location: +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

### 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 actions without discussion

- A Resolution Adopting a Town-wide Commitment to Sustainability, as recommended by the Environment Committee
- A Resolution Denouncing Anti-Semitism, as recommended by the Equity & Inclusion Committee
- Renewal of the trash, recycling, and yard waste contract with Goode Companies, Inc. for Option Year June 2023 – May 2024 at an annual cost of \$147,348

### NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:12 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a six-month extension request submitted by **Mariam Rosenthal** for the ongoing construction project at 5522 Greystone Street

7:30 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application submitted by **James Gillis** and **Alison Hooker** for the demolition of an accessory building for the property located at 4816 Essex Avenue. The applicant is also seeking a variance of 3.92' for the placement of a HVAC unit in the side yard of the property

8:00 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application submitted by **Elizabeth Ewing** for the replacement of a rear deck on the property located at 4719 Cumberland Avenue

8:10 p.m. **Discussion:** Building Administrator's Report

8:20 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the appointment of Elizabeth Harris as the official Town Beekeeper for 2023

8:35 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of a contract with Celestial Solar Innovations, LLC for the installation of solar panels on the Town Hall roof at a cost of \$41,450

9:00 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a budget amendment for the reprogramming of \$85,000 from, for the purchase of an electric vehicle at the Town Hall

9:10 p.m. **Motion:** To consider Introduction of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and Tax Rates

9:15 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager Report

9:25 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.