



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

# Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 68 • No. 8

August 2023

## LED Street Project Receives Green Light

**By Barton Rubenstein, Chair, Environment Committee,  
Dorset Avenue**

At its July 10 meeting, the Town Council voted unanimously to move forward with installing LED streetlights in our Town. This is a milestone moment. Flashback...Over 20 years ago, our family moved into Somerset on Dorset Avenue, to find a Pepco LED Pilot Program light in front of our house. This was the result of a large effort to coax Pepco into installing LED streetlights in Somerset. Unfortunately, this process has dragged on for various reasons for over two decades, frustration followed by more frustration. But happily, the final moment arrived this past month, and during the next year, new LED lights will finally be installed on our light poles. Here are the main points to celebrate:

1. LED lights will use about 80% less energy. This will save us money on our Town's electric bills and greatly reduce our carbon footprint.
2. LED lights will have a warm 3000K color. Ideally, the Environment Committee recommended 2700K which is a slight warmer light used in San Francisco and other cities nationwide, but unfortunately this is the lowest kelvin rating that Pepco is presently offering. 3000K is not the dangerous 4000K blue light that is harmful to nature. Thus, the Town Council felt that the new lights would be sufficiently similar to the existing lights (as demonstrated during the pilot studies).
3. LED lights will all be 50 watts. This is the lowest wattage/brightness available (from a choice of 50, 70, 100, and 150), which will produce light that is approximately the same as you presently see. As of this writing, the one exception will be a 70-watt bulb at the intersection of Dorset and Warwick. Lower wattages are the best for the animal kingdom (e.g., birds, deer, and humans) because using bright lights at night disrupts our circadian clock. Thus, using the lowest wattage bulbs is the best solution.
4. LED lights are focused. The present lights have dispersed light that can pass into resident's homes. The new lights will focus all of their light downward onto the streets.
5. LED lights can have glare protectors in the future, which can further focus and soften the light. After the new lights have been installed, the Town will seek resident feedback for specific light poles and consider installing glare protectors as needed.
6. The Town is also focused on making sure tree branches next to the light fixtures are properly trimmed and maintained, which will allow the new LED lights to do their job!

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# AUGUST 2023 TOWN CALENDAR

## MONDAY, AUGUST 7

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

## MONDAY, AUGUST 14

Town Pool Committee  
Meeting  
7:30 p.m., via Zoom

## MONDAY, AUGUST 14

Town Communications  
Committee Meeting  
5:00 p.m., via Zoom

## MONDAY, AUGUST 21

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

<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.

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

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Monday thru Friday  
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TTY users call Maryland Relay

### SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

#### EDITOR

#### Leslie Caplan

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

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## 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.*

## GENERAL PERMITS

### TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

#### 4727 Essex Avenue

- Hemlock (20") – Tree is dead

### POD PERMIT

#### 4705 Falstone Avenue

### FENCE PERMIT

#### 4816 Dorset Avenue

## LED Street Project Receives Green Light

7. It would be good to become a Dark Sky Community, focused on minimizing light pollution. This LED project will minimize dispersed light, use low LED wattage bulbs with a low kelvin rating, and with the help of residents minimizing the amount of night lights they use on their properties, we can all contribute toward becoming a Dark Sky Community (<https://www.darksky.org/>).

My wife and I love to take walks in the evening, passing longtime resident and activist **Lucy Freeman** (Falstone) and other neighbors along the way. We love the quiet of the night, the occasional sighting of foxes and other small animals, and the warm light that the streetlights provide. We hope to see you out there enjoying our large tree canopy, the beautiful moonlight and the evening fragrances!



*A hummingbird celebrates the Town Council's decision in our backyard.  
Photo credit: Mother Earth Project Cofounder Sabrina Rubenstein*

## NEW SOMERSET WEBSITE LAUNCHED



Somerset's new website has launched! You'll find it at the same URL as the old one:  
**[www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com)**.

Please check it out and let Town Hall know if you have any questions or comments.



# Somerset Dolphins: 2023 Season Roundup

By Ann Kelly Bolten, Swim Team Committee Member,  
Cumberland Avenue

Every year, beginning the Tuesday after Memorial Day, roughly 280 of Somerset's residents (parents and kids) suit up in mostly purple and white (or the thematic costume of the week) to spend seven to eight intense weeks together volunteering, cheering, socializing, celebrating, bonding, and yes, swimming. The Somerset Dolphins (and their Minis counterparts who are in the Learn to Swim program) are the Town's swim team, but for roughly two months of the year, they are also this community's heartbeat.

Swimmers of every ability, hailing from families brand new to Somerset to long-time residents, gather each Wednesday early evening to swim for fun against neighboring pools (B meets) and every Saturday morning (and one Sunday) to swim for points (A meets) against pools seeded by the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL). In all cases, swimmers try to swim legal breast and fly strokes, strive for personal bests, and contribute to the team in ways big and small. All this swimming is intertwined with a busy social calendar that encourages kids in Somerset to spend quality time together, mentoring younger kids or looking up to teenage junior coaches. Adults make friends too, as the many volunteer hours required to run both a swim team and a learn to swim program while still parenting, and in most cases working a paid full-time job, create their own bonding experience.

For the 2023 swim season, the Somerset Dolphins were seeded in Division J – the 10th most competitive of 15 Divisions in the county. As one of only a handful of pools among MCSL's 89 teams where pool membership is fixed

and dictated purely by Town residence, the Dolphins start every season as underdogs. After all, we don't have the luxury of recruiting to fill age group gaps as do our rivals and we don't have a membership base where the entire point of joining is to use the pool. Creating A meet lineups often takes creativity by our Head Coach, Roger Dent, and brave kids who are willing to swim in an older age group.

Despite these challenges, the 2023 Dolphins ended the regular season with two narrow losses and three sweeping victories in our A meets and a decisive win in the Relay Carnival, one of two all-Division swim meets that combine with A meet wins to determine end-of-season ranking. Seventy-four individual swimmers contributed points to these victories, either in individual events or on a relay. As of this writing, the Somerset Dolphins will enter the Divisional Championship meet on July 22 in second place. Along the way, six team records were broken: **Miles Haraldsson** (Dorset) in the Boys 15-18 50M Fly; **Gage Bolten** (Cumberland) in the Boys 13-14 50M Breast; **Dylan Reilly** (Surrey) in the Boys 11-12 50M Breast; Miles, **Peter Kumar** (Trent), **Joey Panner** (Essex), and **Phoebe Lewis** (Trent) in the Mixed 15-18 200M Free Relay; Dylan, **Xan Guyer** (Greystone), **Junie Zaft** (Dorset), and **Joey Edick** (Warwick) in the Mixed 11-12 200M Free Relay; and **Liam Bryce** (Cumberland), **Everett Mascott** (Dorset), Gage, and **Samuel Torrecilla** (Falstone) in the Boys 13-14 200M Free Relay. We suspect by the time the Divisional championship and the All-Star invitational meets conclude that the Dolphins will look back on this season with a tremendous sense of pride and will start planning their goals for summer 2024. We are grateful to the Town of Somerset community for making these magical summers possible.



Dolphins celebrate their final home meet victory against Glenmont on July 8th with a traditional post-win jump in the pool.





## Second Quarter Crime Report

This is an update on crime in Somerset for the second quarter of 2023 (April 1 through June 30).

### Somerset continues to enjoy an extremely low crime rate

In June, according to the County Police Department, a theft of a bicycle was reported at Somerset Elementary School. (See below for crimes that occurred outside of Town or that involved fraud.)

All of us have done an *outstanding* job taking basic precautions, such as **keeping vehicle doors, garage doors, and house doors locked—even when we are at home—and removing everything (even spare change or an object of little value) from vehicles (or hiding it in the console or trunk).**

### Fraud continues to be a problem

Somerset residents reported two incidents of fraud involving illegal use of credit cards (one of the cases was associated with a theft that occurred in a community center), one instance of identity theft, and another instance of fraud. For tips on preventing identify theft, visit: <https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft>. For tips on preventing credit card fraud, visit: <https://bit.ly/475hXnu>.

Crime data is from the County Police Department's interactive crime map: <https://bit.ly/3BRF1rl>. If you are the victim of a crime, I encourage you to report it to the police at 301-279-8000. To report a crime in progress or a violent crime that has just occurred, call 911. For more information on which number to call, visit: <https://bit.ly/3QCZHtB>.

### Town-Employed Police Activities for the Quarter

During the period April 1 through June 30, our Town police took the following actions, according to the activity log that the officers resumed keeping this year:

#### TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT:

- Number of traffic stops: 0
- Number of tickets issued: 0
- Number of warnings issued: 0

#### INCIDENTS RESPONDED TO:

- April 28: Call for service (non-emergency) on Dorset Avenue (No details are specified in the police activity log.)
- June 14: Call for service (non-emergency): low hanging wire in the 4700 block of Dorset Avenue

Please note that the above description of activities is for our Town-employed police only. It is not an account of all incidents or police responses in our Town.

The Town employs two excellent and dedicated Montgomery County police officers—Sgt. Steve Cheoung and Officer John Olcott. On average, we have one Town-employed police officer in Somerset for about two hours a day (less than 8% of the time). If you see a police officer in Town, you generally will not know if the officer is one of our on-duty Town police officers or one of the Montgomery County Second District officers who regularly serve us.

In a future *Town Journal* article, the Public Safety Committee will provide a primer on our Town police program and on the nature of incidents and police responses that occur in Town.

### Theft/burglary prevention when traveling

If you travel out of town, it's important to take basic precautions even in our very low-crime neighborhood. If you can do only two things before you leave town, I would suggest that you place a hold on your mail delivery with the Postal Service (<https://bit.ly/43TatBX>) and plug two interior lights into programmable timers (or smart home devices) to give your home a lived-in look.

For more advice:

- Please see page 11 of the May *Town Journal* for tips: <https://bit.ly/3PsE7da>.
- This flyer from the Montgomery County Police also contains some very good tips to prevent thefts from (and of) vehicles: <https://bit.ly/3pgVpPL>.



# Way Too Much Fun Had at the Inaugural Pool Olympics

By **Walt Whalen**, *Trent Street* and **Russell Green**, *Cumberland Avenue*

The flags were raised, and the medals were shining at the first Somerset Pool Olympics on June 25. The weather was perfect, and coming after a spate of inhospitable days, there were large crowds at the pool to take part. Over about six hours of nearly nonstop activities, there was just so much fun, it's hard to put into words.

The first event was synchronized swimming, which was really an opportunity for the unbelievable Water Aerobics crew to show off to the world with a vigorous set and a rockin' soundtrack. They also broke out their tiaras to take it over the top.

Next was an obstacle course in the shallow end, where elementary-aged kids went through the paces, helped by

older kids manning the course. No reason this can't be a regular pool activity—you just need hula hoops and diving toys.

The cannonball contest was judged by an expert panel that included Town celebrities Council Member **Robin Barr** (Essex) and Journal Editor **Leslie Caplan** (Essex). Judges were only given cards 8, 9 and 10, but somehow there were some 6's and 1's given by the younger judges.

The races and relays were a hoot. We did piggyback races (two swimmers); a t-shirt relay, where a wet t-shirt served as the baton; an underwater race, where many kids surprised us by going the whole 25 meters in one breath; a dolphin race where competitors' noses pushed balls across the pool; and a family relay.

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Photo courtesy of Brett Guiley (Cumberland)



Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex)



Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex)

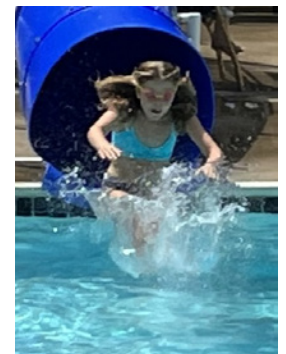


Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex)

## Way Too Much Fun Had at the Inaugural Pool Olympics

After all that, everyone took a break for some University of Maryland ice cream! That didn't distract us for too long, because money was involved in the next event—the coin toss, also known as "Earn Your Allowance." Generous donations of unwanted loose change from the community became the object of a piranha-like scramble in the shallow end. The ping pong ball grab was a similar contest, but that was a race among four elementary-aged teams, headed by middle schoolers. There was some controversy about the scoring, so we had to do it twice!

Finally, we ended with the diving, flipping and belly flop contest. At that late point in the evening, things got a little loose. The judges were all kids, the announcers were all kids, Halloween costumes broke out among the belly floppers, and to my great amazement, the kids kept going back and back and back to do more belly flops. Gold and silver went to the two youngest floppers. No adults were brave enough!

The medals were a big collection of donated old trophies. The oldest were Dolphins' trophies from the late '70s from **Lorrie Barse** (recently of Cumberland). The biggest were huge baseball and basketball trophies from **Linda Kanefield** (Greystone). So if you're wondering where that thing on your coffee table came from, maybe it's an "Olympic medal." And if you have old unwanted trophies, hang on to them. We hope to do it again next year!

We had amazing volunteers, with **Brendan Douherty** (Trent) and **Dudley Fowlkes** (Falstone) on audiovisual support, **Andrew Lewis** (Trent) as emcee, **Sarah Morse** and **David Kathan** (both Dorset) as race coordinators, **Matt Zaft** (Dorset) on the starter and many other grownups judging and timing.



Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex)



Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex)



Photo courtesy of Brett Guiley (Cumberland)



Photo courtesy of Brett Guiley (Cumberland)



Photo courtesy of Brett Guiley (Cumberland)

### Organizers of Somerset Olympics Recognized

*At its July 10, 2023 meeting, the Town Council passed the following resolution:*

**Be it resolved**

**That the Town Council recognizes the extraordinary contributions of Somerset residents, Russell Green and Walt Whalen, to a successful Somerset Olympics at the Pool on Sunday, June 25.**



# MORE SOMERSET SPORTS

## Tennis Committee News

By **Carrie Wofford**, Chair, Tennis Committee, *Essex Avenue*

Somerset hosted the Edgemoor Club on June 26 on three courts of ladies' doubles, with Somerset represented by **Meredith Davis** (Cumberland), **Michelle Scurfield** (Essex), **Alessandra Tassara** (Falstone), **Kathryn Williams** (Warwick), and **Carrie Wofford** (Essex).

Any Somerset residents who are interested in joining a tennis team this fall, please let **Carrie Wofford** or **Mark Oxley** (Dorset) know ([carrie.wofford@gmail.com](mailto:carrie.wofford@gmail.com); [marko@outdoorillumination.com](mailto:marko@outdoorillumination.com)).



Meredith Davis & Alessandra Tassara



Carrie Wofford & Michelle Scurfield



## Somerset Rower Honored

Somerset resident **Carmen Torrecilla** (Falstone) was named to the Spring All Met First team for crew this year. <https://bit.ly/3Y3w5ti>

Carmen sat in the stroke seat for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Barons' top varsity eight this year. See photo above (Carmen is the second person from the bottom).

## Are you interested in joining a Somerset tennis team?

**Carrie Wofford** (Essex) and **Mark Oxley** (Dorset) are interested in putting together a Somerset team for USTA in the Fall. The USTA options in the Fall are **18 and older** mixed doubles at the combined 7.0 level (such as a 3.5 man and a 3.5 woman or a 4.0 man and a 3.0 woman) or tri-level (3 courts of 3 levels). Matches are in the evenings at Wheaton Indoor Tennis or Pauline Betz Addie Tennis Center in Cabin John, or a few other sites in Montgomery County. To let us know if you're interested, please send email to Tennis Committee Chair Carrie Wofford at: [carrie.wofford@gmail.com](mailto:carrie.wofford@gmail.com)

*Editor's note:* Please note that the required age provided in the July 2023 issue of the *Journal* was incorrect. The correct age is 18 and older.



# Outside Our Gates (and Just Up the Road): Strathmore Events in August

Compiled by Leslie Caplan, *Town Journal* Editor, Essex Avenue

The following events are hosted by Strathmore, in North Bethesda (<https://www.strathmore.org>).

**Live from the Lawn** (please RSVP at <https://bit.ly/44Aw6ra>)

- Wednesday, August 2, 7:00 p.m.  
— *Incendio*: Globally inspired, dynamic guitar ensemble
- Thursday, August 3, 7:00 pm  
— *Cool Concerts For Kids: Dan & Claudia Zane*:  
Sensory-friendly, subversively educational dance party

- Wednesday, August 9, 7:00 pm  
— *Lakou Mizik*: Haitian powerhouse music collective
- Wednesday, August 16, 7:00 pm  
— *Ukefest Finale*

**At the Music Center** (to buy tickets, go to <https://bit.ly/3rEdkka>)

- Saturday, August 26, 8:00 pm  
— *Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood: The Scared Scriptless Tour*: Comedy improv stars from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

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## Goodbye from the Levine/Gashon Family, formerly Cumberland Avenue

Dear neighbours,

We have just left Somerset to return to Sydney after one magical year in your Town. Thank you all for sharing your precious community with us.

We stumbled upon Somerset almost by accident and could never have predicted just how fantastic it would be, or how rapidly we could feel folded into the life here.

We will miss so much: the magnificent seasons, the wildlife (even the screeching fox!), the Dolphins, the Halloween mayhem, the movie nights, the wine nights, the knitting friends, the threads on the list serve, the school friends, the gorgeous homes, even the out-of-boundary CCT, Kenwood cherry blossoms and Little Falls Creek. Most of all we will miss you - such welcoming, friendly, civic-minded people. The best of the United States.

Our youngest Zoe said, "when I grow up, I'm moving back to Somerset. I want to be on the Dolphins swim team forever." Our middle child, Sam said, "when we came here I was leaving home for some other place, but now I'm leaving one home for another home, and that feels extra hard." Our eldest, Camilla, refused to think about leaving and went from sleepover to sleepover in the final week, soaking up the best of the neighbourhood and plotting how and when to come back.

You all know how special your Town is – from an 'outsiders' perspective, we're writing to tell you it really is THAT good. Thank you for having us – and as one resident said to us, at least if we ever move back to DC, we'll know exactly where to live.

In the meantime, please get in touch if you're coming to Australia.  
Until next time,

Aaron Levine, Daniela Gavshon, Camilla, Sam and Zoe Levine  
~~Cumberland Ave~~  
[aarlevine@gmail.com](mailto:aarlevine@gmail.com) [danielagavshon@gmail.com](mailto:danielagavshon@gmail.com)

# Somerset's July 4 Celebration

Somerset held its annual Independence Day celebration on July 4 at the Town Hall. The festivities began with the presentation of the colors (**Delphine** and **Marie-Louise De Hoop**, Uppingham; **Liam Bryce**, Cumberland), followed by renditions of the National Anthem and the Somerset Anthem (led by **Andrew Lewis**, Trent). Then, a number of young Somerset residents took turns in reading the Declaration of Independence: **Sabrina Bryce** (Cumberland); **Lola, Luna**, and **Beck Fuentes-Darling** (Cumberland); **Clara, Dylan** and **Sebastian Reilly** (Surrey); **Cece** and **Amelia Lawler** (Trent); **Scarlett Doherty** (Trent); **Indu Kumar** (Trent); **Joey Edick** (Warwick); **Eli** and **Gage Bolten** (Cumberland); **Julian Garin** (Surrey); and **Lola Witte** (Trent).

There were remarks from elected officials (see the Mayor's Report on page 12), and announcements of:

- Recent graduates (elementary school through postsecondary degrees): **Delphine de Hoop**

(Uppingham), **Samuel Meddin** (Warwick), **Lola Fuentes-Darling** (Cumberland), **Tabitha Cutler** (Cumberland), **Jake Williams** (Warwick), **Lorenzo Lloreda** (Falstone), **Daniella Lloreda** (Falstone), **Nadya Guyer** (Greystone), **Jonah Roark** (Dorset), **Martin Angell** (Dorset), **Owen Benson** (Dorset), **Kate Chlopak** (Dorset), **Erin Mullens** (Uppingham), **Ronan Doherty** (Essex), **Ava Pilot** (Gretystone), **Patrick Crowell** (Essex), and **Don Smith** (Dorset)

- Somerset Dolphin record-breakers (For names, see Somerset Dolphins: 2023 Season Roundup on page 4)
- Annual cupcake competition winners (judged by **Montgomery County Councilmember Laurie-Ann Sayles**, Town Journal Editor **Leslie Caplan** (Essex), and **Don Smith** (Dorset)): **Julian Garin** (Surrey), Best Tasting Cupcake; **Natalie Williams** (Warwick) and **Cam Edick** (Warwick, Best Decorated Cupcake; **Katherine Klempner** (Cumberland), best overall cupcake.



Cupcake competition entries



Katherine Klempner accepts her prize for Best Overall Cupcake from Montgomery County Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles



Swim team recordholders



Andrew Lewis



Congressman Jamie Raskin



Some of the readers of the Declaration of Independence

Montgomery County  
Executive Marc Elrich





## A Monthly Review of Town Council's Proposed Municipal Laws

This is a new feature that I would like to provide to residents, which gives a very brief description of resolutions, ordinances, and charter amendments that are under consideration by the Council.

### Resolution: Social Media Policy Resolution

The Town has created social media pages to provide additional avenues for sharing information about the Town. In order to moderate the platforms, to facilitate discussion on topics related to Town business, several stipulations must be adopted by the Council pertaining to the Town's right to moderate inappropriate, off-topic, or disruptive language, or to prevent solicitations or personal information from being leaked. The Town Attorney has reviewed the proposal, which was drafted by the staff and based largely on Montgomery County's own standards.

### Resolution: Invasive Plants List

As the Council is considering the adoption of an ordinance that would ban invasive plantings in landscaping plans for new construction (see below), a list of what types of plants are considered invasive needs to be made available. The Town is considering adopting the list that is already available from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

### Ordinance: Banning Invasive Plant Species During New Construction

Virtually all new construction includes a landscaping plan as part of its reforestation plan. At the recommendation of the Environment Committee, this ordinance would ban landscaping plans submitted alongside new construction from including non-native invasive species. Promoting native plants promotes local ecology and the biosphere. This ordinance only applies to new construction. The Town does not monitor planting outside of landscape plans that are required for some construction.



### NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the Constitution of Maryland, Article XI-E; the Maryland Code, Local Government Article, Section 4-301, et seq.; and the Charter of the Town of Somerset (the "Charter"), the Town Council on July 10, 2023, duly adopted Resolution No. 1-23 to amend Section 83-21 of the Charter to lower the voting age to sixteen (16).

This amendment shall become and be considered a part of the Charter on August 29, 2023, unless on or before August 21, 2023, there shall be presented to the Town Council, or mailed to it by registered mail, a petition signed by twenty percent (20%) or more of the persons who are qualified to vote in municipal elections of the Town of Somerset, requesting that the proposed amendment be submitted on referendum to the voters of the Town of Somerset. A complete copy of the Resolution and Charter can be obtained from Matt Trollinger, Town Manager, at 4510 Cumberland Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

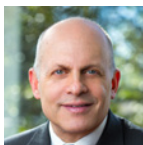
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## Manager's Corner

readers of the Declaration of Independence. The Town's traditional celebration is always a special occasion.

One of Somerset's great attributes is its spirit of volunteerism. Many of the Town events, initiatives,

competitions, community-building exercises, and even the Town government would not happen without volunteers. So, thank you to ALL the volunteers – you make this a special place!



# Report from the Mayor

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

## What's Up This Month...

- The weather, as always, was beautiful (but hot) for our Town's Independence Day event on July 4, which had a nice turnout. As usual, Somerset youth were the stars of the day: as color guard, reading the Declaration of Independence, being honored for graduations and swimming records, and baking cupcakes for the contest (see article on page 10 for names of participants).
- I want to thank our outstanding staff persons Town Manager Matt Trollinger, Deputy Manager E.J. Hardwick, and Administrative Assistant Linda Williams who, along with the maintenance staff, made the day so special.
- I was pleased that **County Executive Marc Elrich**; **County Councilmembers Evan Glass, Laurie-Anne Sayles, and Andrew Friedson**; **State Delegates Marc Korman and Sara Love**, and **2nd District Police Commander Amy Daum** were present and made meaningful remarks. Of course, we were joined by our spectacular **Congressman Jamie Raskin**, who gave his annual rousing message about the value of our democracy.
- I want to remind everyone that the batting cage at Town Hall is up and running and waiting to be used by baseball players or even anyone who wants to get some exercise.
- All residents need to thank the Town Council for approving a final plan for the installation of new streetlights in Somerset which will improve lighting while at the same time be respectful of the environment. This has been a two-decade effort!

## And What Happened Last Month:

- Thanks to Town Art Curator **Barbara Zeughauser** (Trent), there is a beautiful display of the late **Lila Snow's** (Essex) work in the Peale-Zeughauser gallery at Town Hall. Stop by sometime to take a look. There will be more shows in the coming months.
- Several of us from Town government attended the Maryland Municipal League convention in Ocean City, where there was some excellent programming and an outstanding trade show. Two of the highlights for me were an address by **Governor Wes Moore** and a workshop with **Attorney General Anthony Brown**, where top members of his staff made presentations on the vital work his office does for Marylanders.



**SAVE THE DATE**

# NEWCOMERS' PARTY

## September 10, 2:00–4:00pm

Once again, a cherished Town event, the party to welcome new residents to the Town, will be held at the pool on Sunday, September 10th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. *Here's the Scoop* will be serving their delicious ice cream treats and *Faces by Sonia* will be doing face painting and balloon art.

This is a wonderful opportunity to greet our new neighbors, catch up with friends, and chat with members of our Town Government.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!**





# Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

With swim season behind us and just one month before Labor Day, we are truly in the dog days of summer now. What's in store in Somerset? Quite a bit, actually!

## New Town of Somerset Website

In July, the Town launched its new website. I hope that you will find this as big an improvement as we do in the office. The new site will allow us to keep you better informed on what is going on in Town, and will be a more reliable place for you to get information about the Town – agenda, recordings and minutes, information about the Code, the Communications Committee's Resource Guide, and latest news will all be available on the website, among other things. I know that this is a big change. The old website had long become outdated and had not been properly maintained and updated for many years. But I hope that, in time, you will come to see this new site as your go-to first stop to get information about the town.

That being said, the website is new, and there are inevitably kinks to work out when new websites launch. We have done our best to make this functional and up-to-date from Day One, but if you see anything that needs to be fixed, please let us know so we can get that done as soon as possible. In time, we will add individual log-ins to add an extra layer of security for some of the more sensitive or personal information – for example, when the Town Directory is added to the site. As of now, though, the site is open, and we are holding off on uploading some of that more personal information until we can create the log-ins for residents. Stay tuned!

## Town of Somerset Social Media Pages

In a similar vein, we have launched social media pages for the Town, including Facebook, Threads, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Nextdoor. I hope that these platforms will give residents another method of getting updates from the Town Hall. Official announcements will still be sent via the email blasts (note: if you are not currently receiving weekly emails from the Town Hall, please contact **town@townofsomerset.com** so your email can be added to the distribution list). One thing to keep in mind, especially for Facebook: this is a page, not a private group. The Town's page is open to anyone – not just Somerset residents. Please help us maintain a civil discourse on these pages, which will play a big part in their becoming a successful

communications vehicle for the Town Hall, residents, and community.

For both the website and social media, I would like to give a big shoutout to the Communications Committee, which has been involved in the new website from creation, starting with a Request for Proposal through to actual launch; and to our new Deputy Town Manager, E.J. Hardwick, who has taken the bull by the horns and brought this project across the finish line, and who will be the main point-person for the continued maintenance of the website and social media.

## Streetlights

At the July meeting, the Council voted on one of its most impactful issues, and instructed me to enter the Town into a contract with Pepco to replace the existing streetlights Town-wide with high-efficiency LED bulbs. Over the next year, Pepco will install low-wattage bulbs throughout Town. Congratulations to the Council on this historic vote, which has been in the works for over 20 years. When I was first hired over four years ago, this was a project that was high on the priority list for the Mayor and Council, and over the years we have engaged with Pepco through difficult negotiations, engaged with experts on the topic, and sought advice from you the residents. I am proud that together we have taken this enormous step.

## Charter Amendment: 16- & 17-Year-Old Suffrage

Perhaps even more impactful than streetlights, the Council adopted a Charter Amendment on Monday, July 10 that will extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds for municipal elections in Somerset. The Council was unanimous in its vote, which followed a non-binding referendum in which residents voted in support of the measure by a margin of almost 20% (60% in favor, 40% against). The Amendment will go into effect on August 29 (see the notice posted in the Town Journal page 11).

## Last Word

Thank you to everyone who came out for the 4th of July celebration, and to the volunteers who help make it happen. Thank you to **Andrew Lewis** (Trent), who graciously leads our Somerset and National Anthems every year, our Cupcake Contest participants, and our young

*Continued on page 11*

# Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met on Monday, July 10. The Council voted on and took the following actions:

- **Approved:** Newcomers' Party to be held Sunday, September 10.
- **Approved:** A three-month extension request submitted by **Miriam Rosenthal** and **Michael Phillips** for the ongoing construction project at 5522 Greystone Street
- **Approved:** A six-month extension request submitted by **Amy** and **Geoff Buteau** for the ongoing construction project at 5522 Uppingham Street
- **Approved:** A building permit application submitted by Kelly Vogan on behalf of **Jeff Nussbaum**, for the construction of a ground-level deck in the rear yard of the property located at 4716 Essex Avenue
- **Approved:** A curb cut permit application submitted by **Nancy Galler** for a second curb cut and non-enforcement of the prohibition on driving over the curb, on the north side of the property located at 5712 Surrey Street, as reasonable accommodations.
- **Continued:** A building permit application submitted by Peter Lustig, on behalf of Lustig Associates, LLC, for the construction of a new home on the property located at 5528 Trent Street<sup>1</sup>
- **Adopted:** Charter Amendment Res. 1-23, an amendment to the Town Charter Sec. 83-21 to extend the right to vote in Town of Somerset municipal elections to all residents 16 years and older
- **Introduced:** An Ordinance banning invasive plants species during new construction, as recommended by the Town Environment Committee
- **Approved:** A selection of LED bulbs for the proposed LED streetlight replacement project, and amending the FY24 Budget, reprogramming \$155,134 from unencumbered reserves to line 69204 – Lighting (Capital). (NOTE: This is an accounting measure, as the FY23 budget had included this amount for the purchase of new streetlights. Because the purchase was not made in the last fiscal year, the funds are required to be moved to the FY24 Budget. The Town's bottom line projections are unaffected.)
- **Adopted:** A Resolution thanking **Russell Green** (Cumberland) and **Walt Whalen** (Trent) and congratulate them for organizing the Town Olympics (see page x for the resolution)

<sup>1</sup> The Council recommended that the applicant submit an updated application that addresses concerns about the driveway and stormwater drainage measures.



## 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).

## HAVE STUFF TO DONATE?



Please check out this Montgomery County website for places that may accept your items: <https://bit.ly/47ed7EK>

*Information provided by  
Lauren Rubenstein (Surrey)*





# For Your Reference

## TOWN OF SOMERSET COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Audit	Chuck Edson (Surrey)	Parks & Natural Resources	Josh Rosenthal (River)
Budget	Ann Kelly Bolten (Cumberland)	Pool	Matt Zaft (Dorset)
Communications	Leslie Caplan (Essex)	Public Safety	Kumar Vaswani (Trent)
Environment	Barton Rubenstein (Dorset)	Revenue	Nick Fox (Cumberland)
Equity & Inclusion	Atsuko Horiguchi (Essex)	Swim Team	Dario Fuentes (Cumberland)
History & Archives	Paige Whitley (Cumberland)	Tennis	Carrie Wofford (Essex)
Newcomers	Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Cumberland)	Traffic	Elizabeth Hurwit (Dorset)

## TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR 2023

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

- 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., August 21
- Mon., September 18
- Mon., October 16
- Mon., November 20
- Mon., December 18

## LINKS TO COMMITTEE-PROVIDED RESOURCES

[Editor's note: the URLs for the following items may change when Somerset changes its website in June]

### 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/38DGI Dz>

- 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://youtu.be/VTqMlx Cn-xU7>

### 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 August 7, 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, August 7, 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

7:05 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of agenda as presented.

### NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:06 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application, submitted by **Mark** and **Julie Oxley**, for the construction of a garage in the rear of the property located at 4515 Dorset Avenue

7:20 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of an amendment application submitted by **Rebecca Lamadrid** and **Daniel Bremer-Wirtig** for the ongoing construction project at 5613 Warwick Place, to add a rear deck and replace the existing driveway

7:35 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application submitted by Peter Lustig, on behalf of Lustig Associates, LLC, for the construction of a new home on the property located at 5528 Trent Street

8:00 p.m. **Discussion:** Building Administrator's Report

8:05 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider the adoption of a Resolution establishing a social media policy.

8:07 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider the adoption of a Resolution establishing an Invasive Plant List

8:10 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider the adoption of an Ordinance banning invasive plant species during new construction, as recommended by the Town Environment Committee

8:12 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager's Report

8:20 p.m. Adjourn

**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).

### KEY

\*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.