

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



# Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 68 • No. 1

January 2023

## Environment Committee Makes Two Recommendations to Town Council

By Barton Rubenstein, Chair, Environment Committee,  
Dorset Avenue

### All-Electric New Construction



At the December 8, 2022 Environment Committee (EC) meeting, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the Town Council that Somerset opt

into Montgomery County's legislation on all-electric new construction.

As most of us know, the Somerset government aspires to create a sustainable Town and to become carbon neutral before 2050, aligning itself with the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. Toward that goal, Somerset has declared a Climate Emergency, has signed the Maryland Mayor's 100% Clean Energy Pledge, and has signed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Now, homes in Somerset will need to reduce the use of natural gas, which is a greenhouse gas used for heating, cooking, grilling, hot water, fireplaces, etc.

Thankfully, Montgomery County has a determined agenda to become a more sustainable county. It has recently passed legislation, Bill 13-22, "Buildings —

Comprehensive Building Decarbonization," which requires that newly constructed homes not use natural gas, and which also creates "all-electric building standards." This legislation also applies to home renovations that require over 50% of the home to be replaced. It will take effect on December 31, 2026 (<https://bit.ly/3Wb5mJw>).

Somerset previously opted into the County Pesticide Ban; similarly, the EC believes that the Town should also opt into this legislation. But 2026 seems a long time away! In the interim, although not required by law, the Environment Committee also recommends that the Town Council strongly and actively encourage owners of new home construction to consider building homes that do not use natural gas.

### Banning Plastic at all Town Events and Composting When Possible

At the same meeting, the EC unanimously voted to recommend to the Town Council that all Town events avoid using plastics, and compost whenever possible.

**Plastic** cutlery, plates and water bottles are used regularly at Town events and at the Swimming Pool. Plastic poses a major environmental problem, and we must take all measures to reduce its use. Presently, there is a large

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# ON MY MIND

## A New Era in Annapolis... and Rockville

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, Warwick Place

As everyone knows, next month we will witness a once-in-a-generation, transformative leadership change in Annapolis with the inauguration of a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller and Attorney General. It is my great hope that this team will be more responsive to the major issues affecting our part of the State than was the previous administration (Our brilliant Attorney General Brian Frosh (Grantham) has obviously been an exception).

Governor-elect **Wes Moore** campaigned with positions more sympathetic to Montgomery County, particularly in the areas of transportation and housing, and having our "favorite daughter" **Aruna Miller**, a former County engineer and State Delegate, as Lieutenant Governor should be an added benefit. I was honored and grateful to have been named to the well-organized Moore-Miller transition operation and have been bringing the municipal perspective to the multitude of meetings.

The Statewide officeholder with whom Somerset works most closely is the Comptroller. Our newly-elected Comptroller **Brooke Lierman** is not only a County native but has pledged to implement the latest practices as she continues to improve the office's operations and carry on the good work of **Peter Franchot**.

Similarly, I anticipate that Attorney General-Elect **Anthony Brown** will carry on the mission of Mr. Frosh, who himself has always been available when we need him and/or his outstanding staff.

Likewise, I am looking forward to newly re-installed County Executive **Mark Elrich's** second term, as he has always been on Somerset's side when we have become involved with a County policy or piece of legislation — especially regarding land use. Additionally, I am anticipating that the new County Council majority, which includes former Takoma Park Mayor **Kate Stewart** and former Gaithersburg Councilwoman **Laurie-Anne Sayles**, will pay better attention to the needs of the municipalities.

It's up to all of us to keep informed as best we can on the doings in Rockville and Annapolis. Let's all pledge to do a better job of that in 2023.

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TTY users call Maryland Relay

### SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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

## GENERAL PERMITS

### TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

#### 4906 Falstone Avenue

Red Maple (33") – Tree has crack at base. The tree is hazardous and should be removed.

Silver Maple (39") – The tree has large dead branches and a crack in the main trunk. The tree is hazardous and should be removed.

## Environment Committee Makes Two Recommendations to Town Council

collection of plastic in the middle of the Pacific Ocean the size of the State of Texas. In addition, scientists have indicated that each of us inhales approximately 16 bits of plastic each hour, and its use results in many health hazards (<https://bit.ly/3HN28aL>; <https://wapo.st/3HNj3KD>; <https://bit.ly/3PBcNHD>).

The Town of Somerset should set a standard for its residents. But it would also be great if Town residents consider not using any plastic at their own private parties. Please share a sustainable party story if you are so inclined — we would love to share it!

**Composting** is useful for sustainably repurposing food scraps and soiled paper products. When composted, these items naturally decompose into coveted fertilizers and rich topsoil for farmers. Somerset provides a free composting program (call Compost Crew at 301-202-4450 if you are not yet signed up) for our residents and this recommendation will help to increase our Town’s composting.

Please let us know if you have any comments or ways that our Town can become more sustainable by emailing us at: [tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com).

# JANUARY 2023 TOWN CALENDAR

## MONDAY, JANUARY 2

Town Hall closed in observance of New Year’s holiday

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Somerset Sundays #1  
5:00 p.m. Town Hall (in person; for more details, see p. 5)

## MONDAY, JANUARY 9

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

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

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

## MONDAY, JANUARY 16

Town Hall closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

## MONDAY, JANUARY 23

Town Council Work Session  
5:30 p.m. Town Hall (in person) and via Zoom\*\*

\*The Town Council has instituted “hybrid” meetings starting in September, 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](mailto:town@townofsomerset) for login and dial-in information.

## 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)

SEA COLONY - BETHANY BEACH - OCEAN FRONT APARTMENT - EDGEWATER BUILDING: 2 bedrooms plus 1 tiny one with bunk bed and 2 full baths. Immaculate and all updated. Has a few summer weeks available. Contact **Luba Marx** at 301-233-2727 (7/22)

*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.*



## Winter Storm Tips

Although the Washington, D.C., area no longer sees much snow during the average year, we occasionally get a whopper that leaves commuters grumpy and kids elated. Late January to mid-February is our most likely time for winter precipitation—anything from a trace amount of snow to a significant snowfall (<https://wapo.st/2nLOI50>).

This year, the *Washington Post* is predicting “somewhat below-normal snowfall for the sixth time in the past seven winters” (<https://wapo.st/3jdXkRQ>). Despite this dreary forecast (for snow lovers), Montgomery County has issued its annual advice regarding winter weather preparation (<https://bit.ly/2BHtBrO>). A few highlights:

### Know the terms:

- **Winter Weather Advisory** — any amount of freezing rain, sleet, or snow is expected.
- **Winter Storm Watch** — severe weather is possible in the next 24–48 hours.
- **Winter Storm Warning** — severe weather conditions have begun or will begin soon.

### Be prepared:

- Winterize your vehicle: Have a mechanic check antifreeze, brakes, heater and defroster, tires, and windshield wipers to ensure they are in good shape. Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- If you have jettisoned your land line in favor of a cell phone, charge up your phone when severe weather is predicted. It is also helpful to have an emergency charging option (car, solar, hand crank, etc.) in case of a power failure.



- Walk carefully on snowy or icy walkways.
- Shoveling snow provides a good workout but try to avoid overexertion. This might sound like a cliché, but overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter.
- Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector.

Finally, although it does not happen often, ice or adverse weather can produce downed power lines, which can be life-threatening. **Please report downed wires to 911.** The fire and rescue service will respond and will also notify Pepco. **I recommend that you call 911 first because Pepco often takes hours to respond.** If you would like to call Pepco, you should call them *after* you call 911. Although the fire and rescue service cannot shut off the power to the downed lines, they will rescue any victims and prevent further injuries by restricting access to the area.

### Erratum

In last month’s Journal, the donation link in the article entitled *In Memory of Lenka Homonnay-Preyer* was incorrect. To donate in Lenka’s memory, please use this link: <https://bit.ly/3PAKkli>.





# Communications Committee News

By Leslie Caplan, Member, Communications Committee, Essex Avenue

## Results from the Town Journal Survey Indicate Strong Community Support

Recently, the Communications Committee asked Town residents to share their views about the Town Journal by responding to a Town Journal survey. We thank the 191 residents who responded! We believe they represent a reasonable cross-section of the Town. Respondents ranged from 11 to 95 years of age, with more responses from females (105) than from males (61). Respondents have lived in Somerset from less than a year to 60 years, with an average of 21 years.

Some of the major quantitative findings include:

- More than half of residents (102) read the hardcopy version of the Journal “most or all months;” 26 reported that they read it “some months.”
- The online version was read by fewer residents (59).
- Most residents (125) thought that both printed and online versions should continue; 55 thought that only the online version should be continued. A small minority of residents believed that only the printed

version should be continued (4) or that both versions should be discontinued (3)

The Communications Committee is also continuing to review the many useful comments received from residents about how to improve the content of the Town Journal and how the Town itself might improve communications. Some of those comments expressed interest in obtaining more news about neighbors and increasing content relevant to Somerset youth.

In response to these findings, the Communications Committee has started to consider changes we might make to the Journal. We have begun to identify ways to make sure that Somerset residents all have an opportunity to receive the Journal each month. You will also see a new *Neighbor News* section in this issue (see p. 7). And if anyone knows of a feasible way to increase youth content in the Journal, please let us know!

Stay tuned — there will be more to come!

## SOMERSET SUNDAYS: A Movie Series for the Whole Community

Join your Somerset neighbors and friends for the first event in the inaugural *Somerset Sundays Movie Series* for the entire family!

**What:** Family-friendly short film, pizza, and drinks

**Where:** Town Hall

**When:** Sunday, January 8, 2023

5:00 p.m. Pizza

5:15 p.m. Movie: *Akeelah and the Bee* (PG)

7:15 p.m. Discussion (optional)

**Why:** To foster community and belonging

**Attire:** Pajamas (or your most comfortable, cozy outfit)



**To sign up:** The Equity and Inclusion Committee would love to get a headcount to make sure there is enough pizza! Please let Faye Choudhury (Dorset) know how many in your household are coming: [fayezulc@gmail.com](mailto:fayezulc@gmail.com).

Sponsored by the Somerset Equity and Inclusion Committee

# Upcoming Changes in Medicare: What Somerset Seniors Need to Know

By Patricia Barry, Cumberland Avenue

One in four Somerset residents is 65 or older, according to the latest U.S. Census. So those who are enrolled in Medicare, or have that milestone on the horizon, may like to know of important changes in the program that go into effect in 2023 and subsequent years. These changes — signed into law under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 — are landmark improvements for which consumer advocates have lobbied for years and, in some cases, decades.

The new rules, and the dates they take effect, include:

- Medicare will begin covering some specific **dental services**, notably dentistry that is required before a patient has certain surgical treatments, such as heart valve replacements, organ transplants and cancer treatments. (From January 1, 2023)
- **Insulin costs** will be limited to \$35 a month, with no deductible applied. (From January 1, 2023 for people in Medicare's Part D prescription drug program; from July 1, 2023 for people using insulin pumps under Part B coverage)
- People with Part D coverage will pay nothing for **approved adult vaccines**, including the shingles vaccine. (From January 1, 2023)
- People with very high drug costs who are enrolled in Part D will no longer be responsible for any copays after they reach the **catastrophic phase of Part D** coverage in any one year. (From January 1, 2024)
- Everyone enrolled in Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage program will have their **out-of-pocket costs** capped at \$2,000 a year. (From January 1, 2025)
- The **cost of some drugs will be reduced** as Medicare begins negotiating prices directly with the

manufacturers (a practice explicitly forbidden in the original 2003 act that created Part D). Lower prices for the first 10 drugs to be negotiated will become available in 2026; 15 more in 2027, 15 more in 2028, and 20 more for each subsequent year.

- More people will be eligible for **"Extra Help,"** the program that provides Part D drug coverage at reduced cost for people with incomes under a certain level (From January 1, 2024)
- Another fundamental change affects **Medicare enrollment** which, until now, has not only imposed life-long financial penalties for people who sign up later than they should, but also punitive delays in coverage. The Part B late enrollment penalties remain, but after January 1, 2023, coverage begins on the first day of the month after enrollment.
- Some **special enrollment periods** (SEPs), which allow people in certain situations to avoid late penalties, have been in effect for years — notably, those for people older than 65 who have had health coverage from an employer for which they (or their spouse) actively work. But the new law creates some new SEPs for "exceptional" circumstances — for example, having received inaccurate information from one's employer or health plan about Medicare enrollment, or being in a situation that makes enrollment difficult or impossible, such as during natural disasters or imprisonment. (From January 1, 2023)

*Editor's Note: Patricia Barry is a national expert on Medicare and the author of "Medicare For Dummies." She also personally answers questions about Medicare, free of charge, through a dedicated email address: [yourmqsg@gmail.com](mailto:yourmqsg@gmail.com) .*



## 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 Zeughouser** at **202-368-9986** **Kathleen Kenyon** at **202-368-9986** 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).

# Neighbor News

This issue of the Journal marks the beginning of a new section, entitled *Neighbor News*. The section will include articles about accomplishments and activities of Somerset residents, written by Somerset residents. The Journal encourages Somerset residents to submit articles (not longer than 300-500 words) to share news about neighbors (including themselves) with others in the Town. You may include photos to accompany your submission.

This month, *Neighbor News* includes two articles, one about Florence Gang's 102nd birthday, and the other about a new book that Vicki Malone has written and illustrated.

## Former Somerset-er Turns 102!

By Sharon Gang, *Falstone Avenue (formerly)*

When my mother, former Somerset resident, Florence Gang, turned 102 on November 1, she happily celebrated with friends, family, and some current Somerset residents, including **Mayor Jeffrey Slavin** (Warwick), **Barbara Marblestone** (Trent), and **Maura and Jim Vanderzon** (Falstone). Close friends **Alan and Mary Dock** (Falstone) and **Lois Levitan** (Falstone) plan to celebrate with her at a later date.



Florence and Arthur Gang and their three children were original residents on Falstone Avenue in 1955. While my Dad passed away in 1998, my Mom stayed in the house on Falstone until 2017, when she moved to Brightview West End, a senior residence in Rockville. She enjoyed living in Somerset — and especially swimming in the pool, which she did almost daily during the season. Florence still swims once a week at the municipal pool in Rockville.

Florence loves the many friends that she made during her years in Somerset, and she works hard to keep in touch with them. Throughout most of her adult life, Florence was an artist — her style changed but her talent never waned. A number of Somerset residents, including the Mayor, proudly display her artwork in their homes.

Besides her three children, Florence now has four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. All but one of us live in the area, so we are a constant presence in her life.

Thanks to all who helped Florence celebrate her 102nd birthday. She looks forward to 103!

## New Book About Endangered Species Written and Illustrated by Somerset Resident

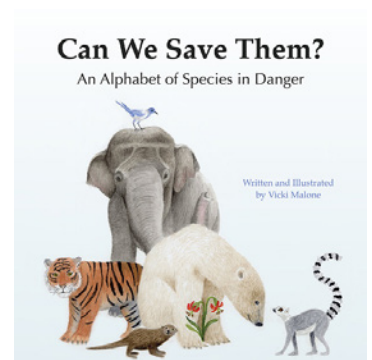
By Vicki Malone, *Essex Avenue*

I am a botanical and nature artist and have written and illustrated a book titled *Can We Save Them?* It's 64-page alphabet book highlighting 26 endangered animals and plants for readers 8 years old to adults.

Out of the many thousands of species in trouble, I chose 26 endangered by human beings. Habitat loss, climate change, pesticides, wars, and poaching are a few of the contributing factors.

The world is experiencing an existential crisis. But there is hope. Learning about endangered species can inspire action and hope. People all over the world are finding ways to preserve nature and in doing that we are ultimately preserving the species called *Homo Sapiens*.

*Can We Save Them? An Alphabet of Species in Danger* is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Mascot Publishing.





# Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Happy New Year, Somerset! It figures to be an eventful year in Somerset. We have several Requests for Proposals (RFPs) out for exciting new projects, and several other big projects continuing.

## Solar Panels

At the recommendation of the Environment Committee, the Town is proceeding with installation of solar panels on the Town Hall and potentially at the Town pool house. The first step is to conduct a relatively simple feasibility study to see if any supplemental reinforcement is needed on the existing roof frame to support the solar panels. The Town has already signed off on a contract with GPI for that work. Assuming all goes well, we will start receiving bids for the remaining work shortly thereafter. An RFP has been issued for this project, and several interested companies have requested additional details. The results of the feasibility study and the bids will determine a more specific timeline, but we should know soon when this project can actually begin this spring.

## Roadways Master Plan

Late in fall 2022, we repaired a sinkhole that was forming on Dorset Avenue, as well as some particularly damaged sections of curbs, and a major tripping hazard along Warwick Place. Ad hoc work like this is necessary every year, but the Town is pivoting its focus to a comprehensive look at its roadways, sidewalks, and curbs and gutters.

The Town has issued a Roadways Master Plan RFP to conduct an existing condition report and develop a multi-year plan to re-pave the streets, and repair sidewalks and other concrete throughout town. The Plan will be used to guide long-term planning to maintain safe roadways and pedestrian walkways. A contractor is expected to be selected in February, and we will hopefully have some frame of reference when we construct the budget in March. The Mayor's five-year budget tentatively has the Town spending six figures in roadway repairs in fiscal year 2024, (which begins July 2023), so we may have some construction coming in the not-too-distant future.

## Pool Repairs

The pool deck is nearing the end of its lifetime, and the Council has asked the staff for a robust review of the pool facilities to determine the ultimate scope of the work. The bottom line is that this upcoming fall, once the pool season is closed, there will be repairs at the pool. The likeliest scenario is that the Town will repair the concrete

decking around the pool and repair the pipes underneath the pool which seem to be leaking small amounts of water—not a huge problem now, but one which will lead to more severe problems the longer we delay repairs. The Town is dedicated to maintaining its pool as a first-class facility, so these repairs are necessary. The concrete and piping are both largely original materials from 1970.

Because this work is so disruptive, it will also be a good time for the Town to investigate upgrading some of the equipment, such as the diving board, railings, and lifeguard posts, to ensure that they remain safe.

## Streetlight Replacement

We appear to be making some headway with Pepco on this long-standing concern. Rather than pursuing the original plan to purchase poles from Pepco and installing custom streetlights, the Town is now working with Pepco to use their in-stock LED options and realize the mutually beneficial results of switching to this more energy-efficient light source. The Town will be able to save on its monthly streetlight bills, and Pepco will save on its maintenance (which is, actually, another benefit to the Town, since LED lights will burn out much more slowly than current lights).

After a phone meeting with Pepco in December, Pepco is escalating the project internally and assigning a dedicated person from its streetlights team to our project. As of this writing, we do not have a specific timeline, but I expect to be able to provide more detailed information in an upcoming Journal. I have hopes that we will begin this project before the fiscal year is over.

## Town Website

The new website is now in development and is being programmed with our new information. In January/February, we will begin doing quality control, testing out the website, and continuing to fill in the pages. By late Spring 2024, we should have a new website up and running!

## Stormwater Mitigation Project

At the recommendation of the Stormwater Study Committee, the Town has issued an RFP for a firm to complete a stormwater mitigation plan that would involve installing devices on a collection of properties between Warwick Place and Surrey Street, and Dorset Avenue and Essex Avenue which all site within one of the many "micro

*Continued on page 10*



# From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



It was very impressive how many citizens responded to the survey circulated by the Town's Communications Committee regarding this Town Journal. I was greatly pleased by the positive feedback and compliments paid. All of this is thanks in large part to our latest-in-a-long-line-of-talented-editors **Leslie Caplan** (Essex) — this publication is the best of its kind in the County, and probably in all of Maryland!

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

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

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

May I also remind everyone that whenever you have an issue during evenings and weekends (e.g., brown water, injured deer, a downed tree, a traffic problem, a crime incident), please get in touch with **Town Manager Matt Trollinger** on his Somerset-issued cell phone (202-740-8635) or text me (202-549-2299). Placing a question or request on social media that involves solving a problem or answering a query will inevitably delay the response and could also result in misinformation. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Belated Happy Channukah and Diwali, Merry Christmas and Happy Kwanzaa, New Year, Las Posadas, Shogatsu and/or whatever holiday you happen to celebrate at this time of year. Looking forward to a Successful 2023 for all.

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## Council Meeting Actions

The following actions were taken by the Somerset Town Council at its monthly meeting, held December 5, 2022.

- Approved 2023 Town Council meeting dates schedule (please see page 11 for a full list of meeting dates in 2023)
- Approved a curb cut application, submitted by **Lina** and **Maurice Asseo**, to increase the size of the existing curb to 20' at the property located at 5524 Greystone Street
- Approved a tree removal permit, submitted by **Deborah Shulman**, for the removal of the following two trees on the property located at 4906 Falstone Avenue, as recommended by the Town Arborist, on the condition that a replacement tree be replanted on the property in consultation with the Town Arborist, or that the applicant demonstrate at a future hearing that there is sufficient canopy coverage on the property and/or that there is inadequate space on the property:
  - 39" Silver Maple – dead branches and cracks in main trunk (hazardous)
  - 33" Red Maple – dead branches and crack at base (hazardous)
- Deferred Action on Ordinance 11-22-1, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to require the installation of house numbers on existing and future houses and to require certification of compliance in connection with a building permit. The Council will further discuss at a future work session and Council meeting.
- Approved of the reprogramming of \$10,000 from the Town's Capital Budget Contingency Fund to line 62907 – Town Code Consultant, for the appropriation of funds to enter in with a contractor to provide a comprehensive code review and recommendations.

*Continued on page 10*

## Manager's Corner

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watersheds" that were identified in the report created by the Low Impact Development Center last year <https://bit.ly/3uUADp8>.

### Comprehensive Code Review

The Town is beginning work on an RFP to conduct a comprehensive review of the Town's building code and existing houses. Some Town residents have voiced concerns about the scope and scale of new development, including the looming of structures, loss of open space and sightlines, loss of privacy, negative impact on the streetscape, vegetation/tree cover, and flooding.

Within the past fifteen years, several nearby communities, including the Village of Martin's Additions, the Town of Chevy Chase, and Chevy Chase Village have undergone similar studies and comprehensive reviews of their respective building regulations.

The goals of this are threefold — to create a Town Code that:

1. Is based on the appropriate structure for its primarily single-family residential use and limited lot size;

2. Retains compatibility with existing development, while incorporating design standards and other strategies where appropriate; and, additionally
3. Simplifies regulations for users and provides quick reference tools. Techniques envisioned include visual elements, such as drawings, graphics, and cross-referencing tables.

The details of the RFP, and the ultimate scope of this project are still being determined as of this writing, but the goal is to create a document that will help guide the Council in making decisions about any Code changes in the future, and the permitting process in the Town of Somerset. Stay tuned for more details.

Thanks for sticking with me through this long update, I hope you found it valuable and informative to know the major projects that the Town is currently working on. I wish you all a happy new year.

## Council Meeting Actions

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- Re-approved the following five Town Charter amendments, as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections, to allow for adequate notification via publication:
  1. An amendment to Section 83-21 of the Charter to add a definition of "resided", as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections
  2. An amendment to Section 83-26 of the Charter to provide that if a resident is registered to vote with the Montgomery County Board of Election, they shall be deemed registered for elections in the Town so long as the resident remains qualified to vote; to provide that voters may be removed from the list if not qualified to vote; and to provide that the removal of voters from the registration list shall comply with the applicable procedures set forth in State law, as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections
  3. An amendment to Section 83-28 of the Charter to advance the nomination meeting from 4 weeks to 8 weeks prior to the election, and the nomination petition deadline from 21 days before the election to 10 days after the nomination meeting, to allow more time to prepare ballots and administer the election, as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections
  4. An amendment to Section 83-35 of the Charter to allow uncontested elections to be canceled, as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections
  5. An amendment to Section 83-30 of the Charter to allow elections by mail and other means, and to remove the requirement for incapacitation or absence for absentee voting, as recommended by the Somerset Board of Supervisors of Elections



# For Your Reference

## TOWN OF SOMERSET COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Audit	Chuck Edson (Surrey)	Parks & Natural Resources	Kristen Khanna (Uppingham)
Budget	Ann Kelly Bolten (Cumberland)	Pool	Matt Zaft (Dorset)
Communications	Barbara Marenus (Surrey)	Public Safety	Kumar Vaswani (Trent)
Environment	Barton Rubenstein (Dorset)	Revenue	Nick Fox (Cumberland)
Equity & Inclusion	Atsuko Horiguchi (Essex)	Stormwater Study	Ellen Globokar (Dorset)
History & Archives	Paige Whitley (Cumberland)	Swim Team	Dario Fuentes (Cumberland)
Newcomers	Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Cumberland)	Tennis	Carrie Wofford (Essex)
		Traffic	Elizabeth Hurwit (Dorset)

## TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR 2023

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

- Mon., January 9  
(Jan. 2 is the observed New Year's holiday)
- Mon., February 6
- Mon., March 6
- Mon., April 3
- Mon., May 1
- Mon., June 5
- Mon., July 3
- 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., January 23  
(Jan. 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday)
- Tues. February 21  
(Feb. 20 is Presidents' Day holiday)
- Mon., March 20
- 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 January 9, 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, January 9, 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/3HNTVU0> 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:

- Approval of Mayor Slavin's nominations of Committee Chairs and members for 2023
- Approval of the continued use of Zoom as a hybrid meeting tool for calendar year 2023

### NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:12 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the FY22 audit, as presented by Lindsay and Associates.

7:30 p.m. **Discussion:** Pepco Report and Council Q+A with Alberto Zegada, Sr. External Affairs Specialist.

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

8:05 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider adoption of Ordinance 11-22-1, an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances to require the installation of house numbers on existing and future houses and to require certification of compliance in connection with a building permit, as recommended by the Public Safety Committee

8:20 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider Introduction of a Resolution prohibiting the use of single-use plastic at the Town Hall and Town Pool facilities

8:25 p.m. **Discussion/Motion:** To consider Introduction of an Amendment to Code of Ordinances, opting into Montgomery County Bill 13-22, which prohibits the installation of gas appliances for new construction beginning in 2026

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

8:55 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.