



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

# SomerseT TOWN JOURNAL



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## Hello Somerset!

**By EJ Hardwick, Deputy Town Manager**

My name is Elvin James Hardwick, though you can just call me EJ, and I am your newest (and first!) Deputy Town Manager. A little about me: To

start with, I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on February 5, 2000. In 2003, my family moved to nearby Broken Arrow, Oklahoma where they remain to this day. That includes my parents (who just celebrated their 29th wedding anniversary!), my two younger sisters (who are identical twins!), and three family rescue dogs (a silky terrier, a schipperke, and a, well, we are still trying to figure out!). I attended Broken Arrow High School (the largest public school in Oklahoma!) and while there, I first learned that civil service was the path for me. Many in my family have been inclined towards civil service with many of them being veterans, firefighters, law enforcement officers, teachers, and pharmacists. My interest in local government specifically began with a TV show called *Parks and Recreation* and it has come a long way since. I began my own journey of civic duty by being active in the Broken Arrow High School Air Force JROTC, National Honors Society, and Youth City Council. I was also selected by the Broken Arrow City Council to serve on the city's Recycling Committee.

I graduated from Broken Arrow High School in 2018 and began attending Tulsa Community College. At TCC, I was involved in the national community college honors society Phi Theta Kappa. In 2020, I graduated with an Associate of Arts in Political Science and an Associate of Arts in History. From there I transferred to Missouri State University (Go Bears!) in Springfield, Missouri. In Springfield, I was active in the political science national honors society Pi Sigma Alpha and the Missouri State University Model United Nations. During my undergraduate studies, I was accepted into the Accelerated Master of Public Administration program that allowed me to begin work on my graduate degree. In 2022, I received a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a Minor in History. This year, I worked at the Village of Indian Point, Missouri directly with the Village Administrator from February to May. On May 19th, I received my Master in Public Administration with a Certificate in Local Government Management and now I am here. In my free time I enjoy reading, writing, watching movies and TV (both at home and on the silver screen!), and gaming (board, video, and outdoors!). Since my first visit years ago, I have long wanted to live and work in the DMV and am thankful for this opportunity. I am so excited for the chance to serve this community, to come to know its citizens, and learn everything I can about such a historic town!

Please feel free to contact me at  
[Deputy@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Deputy@townofsomerset.com).

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# JULY 2023

## TOWN CALENDAR

### MONDAY, JULY 3

Town Hall Closed in Observance of July 4 holiday

### TUESDAY, JULY 4

Independence Day Celebration at Town Hall  
12:00 noon, Town Hall

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Swim Team B Home Meet (vs. Bannockburn)  
4:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JULY 8

Swim Team A Home Meet (vs. North Chevy Chase)  
*This is the final Home Meet, and will honor graduating seniors*  
9:00 a.m.

### MONDAY, JULY 10

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

### TUESDAY, JULY 11

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

### MONDAY, JULY 17

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

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

Swim Team B Home Meet (vs. Mohican)  
4:30 p.m.

<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.

## CONTACT SOMERSET

### MAYOR

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

### TOWN COUNCIL

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

#### Robin Barr

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

#### Debbie Heller

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

#### Kabir Kumar

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

#### Shannon Rovak

4517 Cumberland Avenue  
608-334-2306  
Srovak@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN MANAGER

#### Matt Trollinger

301-657-3211  
manager@townofsomerset.com

### DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER

#### E.J. Hardwick

301-657-3211  
Deputy@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN ARBORIST

#### Tolbert Feather

town@townofsomerset.com

### TOWN HALL

Open: 9:00 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.  
Monday thru Friday  
301-657-3211 | Fax: 301-657-2773  
TTY users call Maryland Relay

### SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

#### EDITOR

#### Leslie Caplan

LeslieCaplan.townjournal@gmail.com

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

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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.



# Picking Up the Bees to Bring to our Town Apiary

THIS IS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF SHORT ARTICLES ABOUT OUR BEES!



(Left) Town Beekeeper Elizabeth Harris installs bees in our new apiary

(Above) Somerset forager bee returning home to the hive. Photo courtesy of Robin Barr (Essex).

Hundreds of bees buzzed around the white pickup at the top of the driveway. The flatbed was full of white boxes, two of which I had come to collect. Each contained five frames of wax comb, and thousands of bees along with their queen, ready to be transported and placed in the wooden hives I had waiting for them at the Somerset Apiary.

Thanking the beekeeper who had raised them, I paid for the bees, put them in the back of my car, and started home.

Ten minutes later, there were bees all over in the back of my car; there was apparently a hole in one of the boxes. This is not supposed to happen! The bees were calm, but curious about this new space, and didn't understand why they couldn't get through the glass to the outside. They were crawling all over the back window. One came up front to my window, which I quickly closed. Meanwhile, I was getting interesting looks from other cars.

I was reminded of our three-year-old crying, "All I want to do is panic!" when he'd once lost something. *Deep breath. Another deep breath.* I knew the bees wouldn't be aggressive unless they sensed a threat. If I remained

calm, they would, too. I had my bee veil in the back, but if I stopped to put it on, I'd have to open the car door, and I didn't want to let any bees out. *Another deep breath.* "I can do this," I told myself.

Half an hour and zero casualties or stings later, I moved the bees safely into their new wooden hives in the Apiary. If you visit, you'll see the foragers coming and going from their hives. They are gathering nectar, as well as pollen, from flowers. If you look closely as they land on the front of the hive, you can see some of the foragers returning with full pollen baskets (yellow bumps on their rear legs). The pollen is their protein.

The bees are thriving in their new home, and I will continue to check on them regularly over the course of the coming months. Please stop to say hello if you see me there!

*Editor's note: For more information on bees and beekeeping, please see the recording of the June 7, 2022 Beekeeping/Apiary Forum:*  
**<https://youtu.be/VTqMlxCn-xU7>**



# The “Red Summer” of 1919: A Period Not Previously Noted in Somerset History

On a hot afternoon on July 5, 1919, Miss Mary Saunders, a young British war worker, was traveling home over the wooded path leading to Somerset from Chevy Chase Circle when a man suddenly jumped out from behind some bushes and accosted her. With a stone in his hand, he beat and choked her until nearly unconscious. Then he assaulted her. Miraculously, she regained consciousness and stumbled to the home of Captain S. W. Cushing at 318 Dorset Avenue, where she rented a room. Cushing, his wife, and a neighbor quickly drove Saunders to Georgetown Hospital where doctors treated her injuries and D.C. detectives took her statement. The assailant was Black.<sup>1</sup>

Four days later, Somerset residents joined a mass meeting at the Chevy Chase Library with other area neighbors. Dr. Everett F. Phillips of the USDA, a resident of Somerset, opined that “all throughout Maryland the people are incensed over recent crimes upon white women” and went on to say that white-hooded figures were reported to be riding at night, “keeping undesirables indoors and spreading the fear of justice throughout the community.” The news report concluded, “Relief is current in Montgomery County that the Ku Klux Klan of reconstruction days has been revived.”<sup>2</sup> As “white caps” roamed the area, police in Washington, D.C. began to express worry over the possibility of race trouble. And they were right.

The attack on Mary Saunders of Somerset and attempts on other women around northwest DC, one of whom was African American (although the latter case was rarely mentioned in media), led to a frenzy of racial tension that

enveloped the area and finally erupted into the D.C. Race Riots, becoming one of more than twenty race riots during what one NAACP organizer coined the “Red Summer” of 1919.

Sparked by a rumor of a sixth alleged assault of a white woman whose husband was employed by the Navy, demobilized and active-duty white soldiers on July 19 formed mobs and started brutally beating African Americans going about their normal business. By nightfall the next day, African Americans in D.C., including returned veterans from WWI, began to fight back — marking a huge departure from past riots. President Woodrow Wilson finally took action on July 22 and ordered troops from area bases to quash the rioting. A heavy summer rain helped. By July 24, it was over. Varying estimates indicated that 7-40 people died and 100-150 people suffered non-fatal injuries from beatings, clubbings and shootings at the hands of both African American and white rioters. No official death toll was ever given; the District and federal governments never investigated.<sup>3</sup> Other countries derided America’s claim as a leader in human rights.

Police captured and convicted two Black men, Forest Eaglan and Louis Randall, for assaults on different women. Months after the riots, however, an African American named William Henry Campbell was arrested after he was discovered testing doors in northwest DC and possessing stolen jewelry. Campbell confessed to dozens of robberies and assaults, including that on Saunders. He was convicted and hanged. Eaglan and Randall, rather than being pardoned, appear to have served time for crimes they didn’t commit.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Girl War Worker,” *Evening Star*, July 6, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> “\$2500 Price Put on Head of DC Fiend,” *Washington Herald*, 9 July 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*.

<sup>4</sup> Gillian Brockell, “The deadly race riot “aided and abetted” by the Washington Post a century ago,” *Washington Post*, 15 July 2019.



## FACES OF SOMERSET: Makarand “Mak” Dehejia, Engineer and Artist



*Ursula and Mak Dehejia*

When Makarand “Mak” Dehejia arrived in Somerset in 1968 with his physician wife Nina and two young children – son Anindya and daughter Vidisha – he had already spent years studying and working on three continents. He grew up in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, studied

applied mathematics at Cambridge University, worked for engineering companies in Manchester, U.K., and for the Tata Group in Bombay, all before taking a position as Project Engineer at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – the private sector arm of the World Bank Group – in 1966.

Once in Washington, he was advised to find housing “in a neighborhood in Montgomery County between the Potomac River and Connecticut Avenue,” because of a particularly excellent elementary school. They rented a house in Silver Spring and ended up enrolling Anindya at Sidwell Friends. There they met Steve and Carla Gelband, parents to Scott, one of Anindya’s classmates. Steve, who served on Somerset’s Town Council, recommended the

Town. The Dehejias eventually found the house on Surrey Street in Somerset.

Mak recalls vividly the Sunday morning of April 29, 1968, the day after the family moved in. He was surprised when his doorbell rang. He opened the door to find a woman – Kate Larrabee, who lived across the street – with a welcome tray of muffins and other goodies. At the same time, he noticed an unfamiliar man spraying something at the “beautiful” yellow flowers on his front lawn. The man turned out to be Kate’s husband, Dave, who explained that the flowers were dandelions which had to be weeded. Their kindness marked an auspicious beginning for the Dehejia family in Somerset.

The family flourished. Mak loved his job at the IFC, which took him to 45 countries to nurture nascent private enterprises. Nina worked in health-related fields. Anindya and Vidisha found ready playmates among the children in the neighborhood. The family became, not just life-long, but generations-long, friends with their neighbors – the Fines, the Franks, the Pooles, the Morseys and the Finns. While in the U.K., Mak used to send religious Christmas cards to friends, some of whom turned out to be Jewish. They, nevertheless, would send him similar cards in return. He did the same in Silver Spring and in Somerset. His

*Continued on page 7*



*“Green Plums, Winter Branches” by Ursula*



*“Daybreak at the Inlet” by Mak*

# Pool Update

By Matthew Zaft,  
Chair, Pool Committee,  
Dorset Avenue



## Swim Off A Huge Success!

On Saturday, June 10, there were some incredibly competitive races at the Somerset Pool, and I am not just talking about the great swims from the Somerset Dolphins at Time Trials! Immediately after the meet ended, we held the annual adult Swim Off. We had fourteen parents/Dolphin alumni participate: **Giulia Bisconti** (Cumberland), **Adam Bookman** (Trent), **Daniel Bremer** (Warwick), **Michael Cariato** (Uppingham), **Alexis Ettinger** (Surrey), **Nick Fox** (Cumberland), **Russell Green** (Cumberland), **Haya Hakim** (Greystone), **Shay Knaani** (Greystone), **Adam Levitin** (Trent), **Morris Panner** (Essex), **Josh Rosenthal** (River), **Joey Wender** (Warwick), and me (Dorset), along with Dolphin's Head Coach Roger Dent. They each swam the stroke of their choice one length of the pool (25 meters) as fast as they could. Michael Cariato gets major props for doing butterfly!

Since the adults were swimming, the kids took over the job of timing, and 14-year-old **Lola Fuentes-Darling** (Cumberland) took over as Official Starter. The final heat came down to a photo finish (see photo) between yours truly (on the left) and Josh Rosenthal (on the right). While the times on the kids' watches gave the victory to me (by milliseconds), I think Josh out-touched me for the win. You can decide for yourselves. Unfortunately, reigning champions **Dario Fuentes** (Cumberland) and **Jim Vanderzon** (Falstone) both were unable to compete due to their recoveries from injuries. Thus, we will have to wait until next year to see if Roger or any of the alums can unseat Dario – as well as if Josh, another parent, or I can unseat Jim.



Photo finish!



# From Your Town Council

## Do I Really Need a County Permit to Give Piano Lessons in My Home?

By Robin Barr, Council Member, Essex Avenue

At a Traffic Committee meeting a couple of months ago, we discussed parking problems in Town (again, or is that again, again?!). This time, some members raised a concern that a few residents may be operating a business from their house, and that business is generating traffic that is causing parking problems.

As the Council liaison to the committee, I explained that the Town has no code directly on operating a business from home, but that the County does regulate use of homes for some kinds of business operation and so the County is the relevant level of government.

The County's Department of Permitting Services (DPS; <https://bit.ly/3poLQy3>) is the relevant County agency. It accepts and reviews both permit applications and complaints about a business that may be operating in residential areas (such as Somerset). Whether the resident provides sufficient parking for the anticipated business-related traffic is a substantial part of the review.

If you are giving piano lessons, do you need to apply for a permit? If you are expecting to generate no more than five

visits a week, then no permit is needed. That exception applies whether it is piano, violin, or even drum lessons (watch the noise ordinance though!), as well as to any other kind of business. But if you are expecting more than five visits a week then you should apply for a permit, even to provide piano lessons.

You may suspect that a particular resident is operating a business. You should be able to check online at the DPS site to find out whether the resident holds a permit for that address. You can also submit a complaint through the DPS site, regardless of whether the resident holds a permit.

Should the Town have code directly on operating a business? Probably not. We would need staff to review applications and complaints, as well as inspectors to review the residence that is proposed as the site of the business. We do not have sufficient staff. That means if we have any concerns about a residence being used for a home business then the County's DPS is the agency to contact. Of course, you can also ask your neighbor who you think is operating the business.

*Continued from page 5*

## Faces of Somerset

Christmas cards to some of them were met with silence. Only later, when he got to know them better, did he learn the reason. Since then, he has been sending out cards with secular greetings for the season.

In his more than half a century of living here, Mak witnessed two major changes in the Town: the land settlement involving the building of the Somerset House buildings and the construction of the Town swimming pool. In those decades, he also suffered personal tragedies. He lost Nina to cancer in 1977. Then in 2001, he lost Anindya to brain cancer, just six years after his retirement.

To console himself after Anindya's death, Mak took up watercolor painting – a life-long interest. He got remarried to German-born Ursula, also a watercolor artist. They have had their works exhibited at many area galleries and other venues.

Mak says his and his family's interactions with their neighbors ebbed and flowed with the changes in the population of small children in his neighborhood. He credits the new young families on Surrey, and the Town's many Committees, for fostering a greater sense of community.

Mak has lived in Somerset for 55 years now. He and Ursula have been married for 29. His sense of belonging has taken root here. Somerset is home.

*Note: This is the first installment in a series being launched by the Equity and Inclusion Committee. Our intent is to showcase the wonderful diversity of our neighbors and their rich personal stories. If you'd like to be interviewed, or know somebody whom you'd like to see featured, please contact Soching Tsai at [soching2006@gmail.com](mailto:soching2006@gmail.com).*



# Public Safety Roundup

By Kumar Vaswani, Chair,  
Public Safety Committee,  
Trent Street

## LED Streetlights – Your Input Needed

At its June meeting, the Town Council delayed until the July 10 meeting its vote on the brightness level of LED streetlights that will be installed on all Town streets.

**It is important for residents to give the Council input regarding the selection of LED brightness. Please send the Council, the Town Manager, and the Mayor comments stating your preferred wattage (brightness) by July 10, or come to the meeting to voice your views.**

For the past year, the Public Safety Committee (PSC) has advocated for a holistic approach to public safety – including pedestrian safety. Converting to LEDs (which will be more reliable than our current lights) is just one step in this process, which should also include eliminating sidewalk tripping hazards, adding light poles, adding *sidewalk* lighting (as opposed to street lighting), and pressuring Pepco to repair malfunctioning lights.

For information on the benefits of nighttime lighting (as well as the risks to human health, wildlife, and the environment), please see the March 2023 issue of the *Town Journal*: <https://bit.ly/3Jpge2j>.

**At the June Council meeting, it was acknowledged that pedestrians would benefit if the Town resumed selective trimming of Town-owned trees. Even bright LED lights do not shine through dense tree canopy to illuminate the sidewalk.** Therefore, before making a final decision, the Council has ordered some trimming of trees near two of the demonstration lights, in order to better assess the brightness levels of the lights at ground level.

Please keep in mind that the 5700 block of Surrey Street (the location of one of the demonstration lights) has a couple of dark areas. One dark area is caused by a nonfunctioning streetlight; the other is caused by a light that is enveloped in heavy tree foliage. The Town staff is working to address both of these problems. Once these problems are fixed, the dark areas should be eliminated.

Unfortunately, Pepco initially provided the Town with incorrect locations and wattage-equivalents of the demonstration lights.

**Below are the correct locations and wattage-equivalents of the demonstration lights:**

- 4817/4819 Dorset Avenue: 50-watt-equivalent LED
- 5707 Surrey Street: 70-watt-equivalent LED
- Corner of Dorset Avenue and Warwick Place: 100-watt-equivalent LED
- Corner of Cumberland Avenue and Surrey Street: 150-watt-equivalent LED

If you would like complete specifications of the lights (and an explanation of the term “watt-equivalent”), feel free to contact me at [kumarvas655@gmail.com](mailto:kumarvas655@gmail.com).

The Council, Mayor, Town staff, and Environment Committee have worked diligently to bring more reliable lighting to Somerset. Their work is much appreciated.

*Editor's note: For more information on streetlights, please see the article by Town Manager Matt Trollinger on page 12.*

## 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>.

# Outside our Gates: Bethesda Events in July

Compiled by Leslie Caplan, Town Journal Editor,  
Essex Avenue

These events are organized by the Bethesda Urban Partnership (<https://www.bethesda.org>). Some events are free; please consult the event website for more information. The calendar includes:

## OUTDOOR MOVIE SERIES (<https://bit.ly/43V449o> <https://bit.ly/43WS1bG>)

- Where: Corner of Norfolk and Auburn Avenues
- When: July 28, 9:00 PM
  - Whitney Houston: *I Wanna Dance with Somebody*

## FRIDAY STREETERY CONCERTS (<https://bit.ly/430qR2q>)

- Where: Corner of Norfolk and St. Elmo Avenues
- When: Fridays, 6:00 pm
  - July 7: DC Mudd
  - July 14: Billy Coulter
  - July 21: Eric Scott
  - July 28: Hard Swimmin' Fish

## CONCERTS FOR KIDS (<https://bit.ly/3NnWYTV>)

- Outdoor live music for kids
- Where: Norfolk Avenue Streetery (corner of Norfolk Avenue and St. Elmo Avenue)
- When: Fridays, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 pm
  - July 7: King Bullfrog
  - July 14: Marsha and the Positrons

— July 21: Rocknoceros

## YAPPY HOUR & "POPU" DOG PARK (<https://bit.ly/3pilOwq>)

- Where: 4600 Elm Street Park
- When: Thursday, July 20
- Participating restaurant (Smoke Barbecue) serving food, beer & wine
- Live music with Jay Byrd

## IMAGINATION STAGE (<https://bit.ly/3pidUml>)

- Theater for children and youth
- Where: 4908 Auburn Avenue
- When: June 21- August 11
- Nate the Great, a musical mystery
  - ASL-interpreted performance: Sunday, July 16
  - Sensory-friendly performance: Sunday, July 23
  - Best for ages 5-11
  - Ticket price dependent on seating preference, special rates for groups

## BETHESDA PAINTING AWARDS (<https://bit.ly/46heUbx>)

- Annual art competition, honoring painters from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
- Where: Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite E
- When June 8-July 2



## UPDATES FROM THE Somerset Traffic Committee

### New Stop Signs in Somerset

By David Leibovitch, Member, Traffic Committee, Trent Street

One focus of the Somerset Traffic Committee over the past year has been to explore ways to increase traffic safety at stop sign intersections.

Concerns about stop sign compliance are not new. In a 2018 survey of Somerset residents, 83% of 281 respondents expressed a high level of concern with stop sign compliance, traffic volume, and vehicle speed ranking. The Traffic Committee, at the time *ad hoc*, recommended doubling the Town police budget to address those issues. The Town Council agreed and increased police presence in Town, effective 2019. Although these measures have mitigated risks of major traffic accidents, the Town now faces large-scale development on all sides, including in Friendship Heights, in downtown Bethesda, and at the Westbard Shopping Center.

In view of this ongoing concern, the Traffic Committee dedicated time and resources to explore creative solutions. The Committee reviewed the scientific literature on various means for improving roadway safety, and consulted with the County engineer and other professionals to determine a sensible path forward. Of note, studies indicate that lighted stop signs are effective at reducing speeds and improving full stop compliance. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (2014), for example, saw a reduction of about 41.5% in right-angle crashes using the lighted signs. The COVID-19 pandemic has also

seen record levels of fatalities nationwide due to reckless driving — intersection safety playing a significant role.

In consideration of the Committee's recommendation, the Town of Somerset has purchased two solar-powered LED stop signs, pictured here. As a test, these lighted stop signs have been installed at the intersection of Falstone Avenue and Warwick Place; this intersection was prioritized to improve overall safety for pool goers and other Town pedestrians and drivers. The intersection of Dorset Avenue and Devon Lane will be tested next.

The Committee believes that these efforts will increase driver awareness at stop sign intersections and help improve pedestrian and driver safety in the Town.

We welcome Somerset residents' feedback on the stop signs, including observed changes in driving habits or suggestions for improvement.

Please email the Traffic Committee:

- Elizabeth Hurwit – [eahurwit@gmail.com](mailto:eahurwit@gmail.com)
- Sherry Khanna – [khanna.somerset@gmail.com](mailto:khanna.somerset@gmail.com)
- David Leibovitch – [david.leibovitch@gmail.com](mailto:david.leibovitch@gmail.com)
- Anne Yap – [anneduboisyp@gmail.com](mailto:anneduboisyp@gmail.com)



# Lila Snow's Art Exhibit at Somerset Town Hall

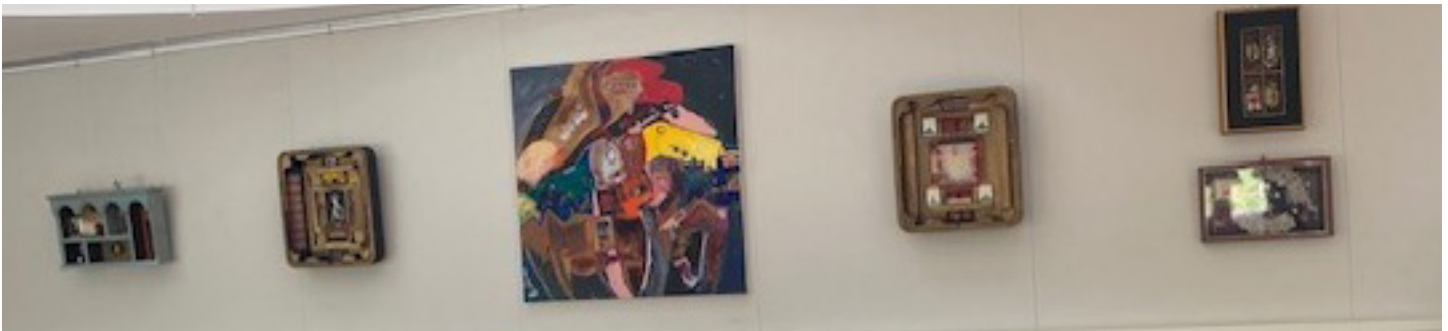
By **Barbara Zeughauser**, *Trent Street*

The Town of Somerset is very happy to re-open the Gallery in the Town Hall. Our first exhibit, open to the public during Town Hall hours, will display the paintings and wall constructions of former Town resident **Lila Snow** (formerly of Essex Avenue), who died in 2020.

The *Washington Post* art critic Michael Welzenbach noted, "when a number of Lila Snow wall constructions are on exhibit together they give the impression of a miniature museum dedicated to the turbulent history of the 20th century as perceived through the artist's eyes." Nancy G. Heller said of Snow's work in *Sculpture Magazine*, "her

assemblages transform humble material into objects of breathtaking beauty, often emotionally powerful and always intellectually stimulating." Lila Snow's work is in permanent collections in Argentina, Italy, Japan, and here in the United States at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American University Museum, Radford University, the University of Maryland, University College, and the Philadelphia Museum of Judaica.

All of Lila Snow's displayed works will be available for sale with the proceeds being donated to the charity Homes Not Borders.



*Works displayed at the exhibit*



*Works displayed at the exhibit*



*Linda Williams, Town Administrative Assistant, and Barbara Zeughauser, at the exhibit*

# Recommendation on LED Streetlights

By **Matt Trollinger**, Town Manager

At the June Town Council meeting, the Council considered selections for the LED replacement lightbulbs. After some debate, the Council tabled the topic and is expected to make a final decision at the July Council meeting. As part of the preparation for the Council, I was expected to offer my own recommendations to help with the discussion. Although my recommendations are just one piece of the puzzle – residents weighed in, primarily on the first locations; the Environment Committee also weighed in; and Council Members used their own personal observations and opinions – I wanted to offer, in writing, the logic behind my recommendation.

First, a quick primer on some of the terms that are most relevant to this topic:

**Wattage:** Wattage measures the amount of electricity used.

**Lumens:** Lumens measure the brightness (or *luminosity*) of the lights.

A light's wattage is related to the amount of lumens it produces, but they are not synonymous terms.

The Town has about 180 existing streetlights, of which a vast majority use *high-pressure sodium* (HPS) technology. The Town has long considered switching to LED lights from the HPS lights because LED lights use far less electricity, are more environmentally friendly, provide better directed light, last longer, and do not dim over time in the same way that older lights do. Similarly, the objectives of this project are to save on the monthly electrical bills to Pepco, help play a part in sustainable environmentalism, and to provide more consistent lighting, not necessarily in that order.

Given those objectives, I approached a recommended solution by considering light efficiency, best practices for lighting, and maintaining brightness at a safe and consistent level.

Several months ago, Council Member Barr and I met with Pepco officials in Town to look at the lights and discuss our options. In that conversation, the officials explained that Pepco stocks five different levels of LED lights, which are measured at LED watt equivalency (explained below):

- 50w
- 70w
- 100w
- 150w
- 250w



(Note, though, that 250w bulbs are typically reserved for highways and interstate roads, and are not appropriate for residential areas such as Somerset, as using too high of wattage can contribute to glare. For that reason, they were quickly and easily dismissed as an option for Somerset)

Pepco further explained that it is common practice to use higher-wattage lights at intersections to increase visibility. We therefore settled on piloting the 100w and 150w at two intersections, and 50w and 70w lights at two locations that were not intersections.

How does our selection of pilot lights stack up with our existing lights throughout Town? To answer this question, I looked at a study done by Iowa State University. According to that study, the lumen output for 100w high-pressure sodium lights is between 3,500 – 6,000. See the table on next page (relevant section in bold).

*Continued on page 13*

## Recommendation on LED Streetlights

HPS Wattage	LED Lumen Equivalent, HPS Lights	
	Low	High
70	2,500	3,500
<b>100</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>6,000</b>
150	6,000	9,000
250	13,000	18,000
400	23,000	28,000

Keep in mind, as noted above, there is a range for HPS lights. The consistency of LED lights is one of the reasons for making the switch in the first place.

We can also compare this data with the luminosity of the pilot LED options:

HPS Wattage Equivalency	Actual Wattage	Lumens, LED Lights
50	23	3,459
70	34	4,076
100	43	5,955
150	63	8,511

As you might deduce from the table above, the reason LED lights are often measured in “wattage equivalency” is that the LED light produces a brightness equivalent to the high-end output of an HPS light at the same wattage. In other words, the 100w LED bulb is called that because it produces a luminosity equivalent to a 100w HPS light at its brightest. However, the actual wattage is much lower (for all options).

Based on this information, the only two lights which produce light in the range of our existing lights are the 70w and 100w LED equivalents. The 50w equivalent is very close, just below the low end of the existing lights’ luminosity levels – but only just.


Looking at the numbers, they are consistent with what I observed. There was a smaller difference between the 50w and 70w equivalents than there was between 100w and 150w.

I also noted in my recommendation to the Council that a selection of 70 and 100/w equivalent was consistent with Montgomery County’s recommendations for residential areas – and that the Town of Kensington recently put in a new streetlight to match this standard.

Based on this information, I believe the selection of 70w equivalent bulbs for straightaways, and 100w equivalent bulbs for intersections is the best choice among our options. These recommended lights:

- Provide more consistent lighting, as the LED lights do not dim over time, last longer, and do not provide lighting over a wide range of lumens;
- Are within the range of the brightness of our existing lights, to address concerns of residents who want to address darkness in Town (without increasing brightness on a per-light basis);
- Address the concerns of residents who do not want the Town overly lit;
- Reduce our consumption of electricity;
- Are consistent with environmental concerns.

Without question, personal preference is a factor in selecting streetlights. Some people prefer dimmer lights, while others prefer brighter ones. I know that my recommendation is just one of many in Town, and I do not take personally any difference of opinion. But I hope this helps “illuminate” my reasoning on this topic.

A background image showing a close-up of a tennis racket with a blue and white frame and a yellow tennis ball resting on a green tennis court surface. The racket's strings are visible, and the ball is positioned to the left of the racket head.

# Are you interested in joining a Somerset tennis team?

**Mark Oxley** (Dorset) and Tennis Committee Chair **Carrie Wofford** (Essex) are going to try to create a mixed doubles team of Somerset residents for the Fall USTA season. You must be 55 or older or turning 55 this calendar year. It's a trilevel team, so you can be almost any level. (Teams can be either 2.5, 3.0, and 3.5, or 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0). Matches are generally 7:00 p.m. in Bethesda or Wheaton. Let us know if you're interested (***Carrie.Wofford@gmail.com***).



# Report from the Mayor

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

## What's Up This Month...

- It's already graduation time and I know that many households have school graduates at all levels, from elementary to professional school, and even beyond. Because there is so much interest, I want to encourage both students and parents to let us know so we can make mention of these accomplishments in this Journal and at our July 4 celebration.
- Speaking of which, the Town staff is always looking for volunteers to help in various ways before and on Independence Day so please call Linda Williams, Town Administrative Assistant, at Town Hall (301-657-3211) if you have the time to help.
- The long-awaited return of my quarterly Brown Bag Lunch series will take place on Thursday, July 27 at noon at the Town Hall. Please bring a sandwich or dish (perhaps to share) and be prepared to discuss Somerset issues, summer plans or anything of interest. We provide beverages and utensils. Call me at 202-549-2299 with questions.
- I have named former Council Member **Barbara Zeughauser** (Trent) as the Town's Art Curator and she will be working with the staff on future art shows, establishing an inventory of our collection and helping draft an art gift plan. Let me know if you are interested in assisting.
- I have noticed that a number of residents have posted ads on area listservs that inadvertently give notice that they will be out of town on certain dates. The Montgomery County Police advise against this as there are no controls over who can gain access to this info, thereby leading to exposure to potential criminal activity.

## And What Happened Last Month:

- Congratulations to the Council and Staff for making major progress on the decades-long effort to install new street lighting in Town. It is hoped that final decisions will be made within the month, with installations beginning later this year.
- There are renewed efforts by some citizens to bring pickleball to Town. Stay tuned for future opportunities to make your views known. It is my hope that the Council will authorize a survey to gain specific information as to interest.
- Our Equity and Inclusion Committee hosted a movie night at Town Hall recently where the film *The Color of Friendship* was screened. Although this movie is over two decades old, the topic is even more relevant today and I urge all those who missed the event to do their own private screening.

## GENERAL PERMITS

### TREE REMOVAL PERMITS

#### 4907 Cumberland Avenue

- Spruce (18") – tree is 85% dead

#### 4503 Cumberland Avenue

- False Cypress (5") – tree is split and poorly shaped



# Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

July is here, which means the start of a new fiscal year in Somerset. We finished the year with some exciting projects: 1) a maintenance project on some sidewalk areas throughout town – fixing areas where the sidewalk was uneven and bringing several intersections into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2) the purchase of an electric Rivian R1T pickup truck for our maintenance crew, and 3) replacing the street trash cans with lidded ones. More on these projects:

- **Trash cans.** This change should speak for itself. The new trashcans are less likely to overflow than the former unlidded ones, and should contain the stench of trash, especially as it accumulates over the weekends and before Tuesday pickups.
- **Truck purchase.** The timing for this purchase worked out well, as the old truck, a 2008 Chevy Silverado, has had more and more issues over the years. Its battery recently went out, and the alternator was on its last legs as well. Nonetheless, fifteen years was a good run, and technology was able to progress so that we were able to get a fully-electric truck. The new truck has great power and will serve the maintenance staff well in hauling materials throughout town and transporting equipment. It will save on our gas consumption as well. With any luck, this vehicle will also give us a decade-plus of use in town.
- **Sidewalk maintenance.** Please keep in mind that this was regular maintenance, repairing some of the more notorious spots throughout town. We are still undergoing a comprehensive evaluation of both our roads and sidewalks, and in July/August, the Council will get a report that will serve as a basis for long-term improvements to our infrastructure. Often, the uneven surfaces on the sidewalks are caused by tree roots – an unavoidable side effect of our tree-lined streets – and we grind down the sidewalks as a first step before moving onto concrete replacement, as we did this spring. But, as the trees grow, new hazards can pop up, and we will plan to address them year by year as they do.

We also made progress on two major capital projects in the month of June:

- **Pool renovation.** The Council approved a contract with American Pool for the renovation of the pool deck this off-season. American Pool expects to complete the work between the fall and spring, and we will make every effort to see that to fruition. As a fair warning, though, capital projects do tend to lag due to various factors outside of anyone's control, most notably weather and supply chain. No matter what, our office will keep residents informed on the progress of the project.
- **Streetlights.** The Council held a hearing on LED streetlights and will continue that discussion during its July meeting. The Council anticipates selecting the lights at that meeting. The final details are still undecided; however, I thought it would be useful to provide an explanation for the recommendation that I made to the Council. Please see the article titled, "Recommendation on LED Streetlights," on page 12, for details. The Council may very well go in another direction if, for example, they emphasize the lowest possible wattage use – and that's perfectly okay! There are several competing factors, and the selection is in part a decision based on personal and aesthetic preferences. The important thing is that we should not let perfect be the enemy of the good, because regardless of the selection, the Town will be able to save money, be more environmentally conscious, and provide more consistent and safe lighting on its streets.

*[Editor's note: for more on streetlights, please see Public Safety Update, page 8.]*

Finally, I would like to extend two major congratulations from this past month. Congratulations to our Council President, **Steve Surko** (Uppingham), who was elected to serve again as Council President until the next Council is sworn in. And congratulations (and welcome!) to our new **Deputy Town Manager, EJ Hardwick**. EJ will make a great addition to our team and is already fitting in well with Tomas, Jose, Linda, and me in the office. I know that he will make a great impression on all of you as well as you get to know him.

# Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met on Monday, June 5. The Council voted on and took the following actions:

- Elected **Steve Surko** (Uppingham) to serve as Council President through the next election
- Re-Appointed Matthew Trollinger as the Town Manager and Clerk-Treasurer for Fiscal Year 2024
- Re-Appointed Ron Bolt (Bolt Legal) as the Town Attorney for Fiscal Year 2024
- Approved a Town Nonagenarian Party to be held on Thursday, September 7
- Approved a four-month extension to the existing building permit for an addition to the front of the existing home located on the property at 5502 Greystone Street
- Approved a 100% native plant strategy and removal of invasive species, and approval of up to \$7,000 in funds for the procurement of plants, as presented by Groundsmith Collective, LLC, for the Town of Somerset entrance at River Road and Greystone Street
- Approved a contract with American Pool Enterprises, LLC for the reconstruction of the Town Pool deck, and other repairs to the Town Pool in fall 2023 and spring 2024, in an amount not to exceed \$705,000, as recommended by the Town Manager
- Adopted Resolution 21-06-1, a Resolution adopting the 2023 Town Pool Activity Fee Schedule, and removing the \$5 fee for the Stroke & Technique Pilot program, as requested by the Town Pool Committee
- Introduced an amendment to the Town Charter Sec. 83-21 to extend the right to vote in Town of Somerset municipal elections to all residents aged 16 and older
- Tabled a discussion on a selection of LED bulbs for the proposed LED replacement project



## 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).



# 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., 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., July 17
- 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 July 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Please note that due to the 4th of July holiday, the meeting will be held on the 2nd Monday of the month. The Somerset Town Council will hold a "hybrid meeting," both in-person at the Town Hall and simultaneously cast via Zoom on Monday, July 10, 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.

### CONSENT AGENDA

7:06 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of the following item without discussion

- Hold Newcomers Party Sunday, September 10

### NON-CONSENT AGENDA

#### PERMIT HEARINGS

7:08 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a three-month extension request submitted by **Miriam Rosenthal** and **Michael Phillips** for the ongoing construction project at 5522 Greystone Street

7:20 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a six-month extension request submitted by **Amy** and **Geoff Buteau** for the ongoing construction project at 5522 Uppingham Street

7:30 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.

7:45 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of 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

8:05 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a curb cut permit application submitted by **Nancy Galler** for a second curb cut on the property located at 5712 Surrey Street. Ms. Galler is requesting the Town to waive fees and permit the second curb cut as a reasonable accommodation for a disability.

8:35 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 St.

### ORDINANCES

9:15 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider Adoption of 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

9:30 p.m. **Motion:** To consider Introduction of an Ordinance banning invasive plants species during new construction, as recommended by the Town Environment Committee.

### OTHER

9:35 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a selection of LED bulbs for the proposed LED streetlight replacement project.

10:05 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager's Report

10:15 p.m. Adjourn

*Continued on page 20*

## Preliminary Agenda

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### KEY

**Public Hearing Item:** Agenda item where public comment is permitted.

**Discussion Item:** Agenda item limited to discussion among the Council, Mayor and Town Staff.

**Motion Item:** Agenda item requesting action, limited to Council discussion.

**Comments:** Opinions and Questions from Town residents.

\*Questions should be submitted via email ahead of the meeting to **manager@townofsomerset.com** or **town@townofsomerset.com**.

\*Residents who wish to present for a particular Agenda item are advised to arrive 20 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time, as discussions can run ahead of schedule.

The Mayor and Town Council may entertain a motion during the open meeting to close a portion of the meeting, in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1)(7) of the Open Meetings Act (Maryland Code, General Provisions Article), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

The Preliminary Agenda for each month's Town Council Meeting is posted on the Town website ([www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com)) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.