

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



Somerset TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 69 • No. 4

April 2024

Bees and Compost Education at Upcoming Town Hall Zoom Forum

By Barton Rubenstein, Chair, Environment Committee,
Dorset Avenue

Bees

On Thursday, April 11, at 8:00 – 9:00 p.m., the Environment Committee will host a Town Hall Zoom Forum to share information with Somerset residents about our Town Apiary and learn about the behavior of bee colonies. This most certainly will be a fascinating opportunity to learn about how bees build their homes, and where they go during the day to drink, and pollinate. Please bring yourselves and children as well!

Composting

As discussed in the previous months in our *Town Journal*, the Town Council is considering distributing compost buckets to the entire Town. Forty-one percent of our Town residents currently compost. This is an important way to reduce the amount of landfill we create individually and collectively. Presently, about 30% of all food is discarded in the U.S. It is extremely important to repurpose our food scraps for the creation of high-quality topsoil for farmers, among other uses. Please join us on this Town Hall Zoom

Forum (date and time above), to learn about Compost Crew, our compost contractor, which is responsible for collecting our food scraps (vegetables, meat, bones, other foods, soiled paper, etc.) every Tuesday morning. For those who do not yet compost, this is and will continue to be a free service provided by the Town.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENT:

"WHAT'S ALL THIS BUZZ ABOUT COMPOST?"

SOMERSET BEES AND COMPOST TALK

HEAR FROM BEEKEEPER, MAUREEN JAIS-MICK AND COMPOST CREW DIRECTOR, ALAN VAN ORDER

WHERE? TOWN HALL (ZOOM LINK TBA)

WHEN? THURSDAY, APRIL 11 @ 8-9PM

QUESTIONS? BARTSHER@GMAIL.COM

The Zoom link for this Town Forum will be posted shortly, stay tuned, and we hope to see you then!

Please let us know if you have any questions or sustainable ideas for the Town at tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com.

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APRIL 2024 TOWN CALENDAR

MONDAY, APRIL 1

Town Council Meeting
7:00 p.m., Town Hall (in person)
and via Zoom^{o*}

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Communications
Committee Meeting
4:00 p.m., via Zoom*

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

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

MONDAY, APRIL 15

Council Work Session
5:30 p.m., Town Hall (in person)
and via Zoom^{o*}

^oThe Town Council instituted “hybrid” meetings in September 2022, to allow residents to attend both in-person at the Town Hall, or to participate via Zoom.

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

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Monday thru Friday
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TTY users call Maryland Relay

SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

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Somerset TOWN JOURNAL

The Town Journal welcomes submissions from Somerset residents. Submissions should address topics of direct interest to the Town of Somerset and/or to Somerset residents. The suggested word limit for submissions is 300–500 words. The deadline for copy and ads is the 15th of the month that precedes the pertinent issue, at 4:30 p.m.

Please email submissions to the Town Journal Editor, Leslie Caplan, at LeslieCaplan.townjournal@gmail.com. The editor is happy to discuss articles before they are submitted.

GENERAL PERMITS

BUILDING PERMIT

- 4815 Cumberland Avenue

Town of Somerset Election News: Plan for Town Election Tuesday, May 14, 2024

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

The Town of Somerset Election Day is **Tuesday, May 14, 2024**. Voters will have the option to vote in person at **Somerset Town Hall on Election Day between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. or by mail-in ballot**. This year's election is for Mayor and two Council seats. The candidate for Mayor is incumbent **Jeffrey Slavin** (Warwick) and the candidates for Council are incumbents **Robin Barr** (Essex) and **Stephen Surko** (Uppingham).



Voter Registration Procedures

- Every person who (1) is at least 16 years of age, (2) has resided within the Town for at least 14 days immediately preceding the election, and (3) is registered with the Town and/or the Montgomery County Board of Elections, is a qualified voter of the Town.
- Registration is permanent so long as the voter is a qualified resident. Voters already registered need not re-register.
- A Town resident may register to vote by requesting a voter registration card from the Town Manager and delivering a completed card to the Town Office during normal business hours by election day, **May 14, 2024**, but ideally before April 16.
- Due to the uncertainty of obtaining current Montgomery County voter rolls, all residents of the Town who have moved into the Town, or come of voting age, since **June 1, 2023**, are encouraged to fill out a Town of Somerset voter registration card so the voter list can be updated for the 2024 election.

Voters may vote by mail or in person

- **To receive a mail-in ballot, a voter may pick up a ballot** and return envelope during normal business hours at Town Hall **after April 25, 2024**. **Any voter who is unable to pick up a ballot in person may request one by e-mail to the Town at Election@townofsomerset.com no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 29, 2024** in order to allow sufficient time for a ballot to be issued and voted. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, **May 7, 2024** or received by the Town by **5:00 p.m. on May 14, 2024** in order to be counted.
- There will be **in-person voting** at Town Hall on **Tuesday, May 14, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

If you have questions regarding the Town elections please contact the Board of Supervisors of Elections at Election@townofsomerset.com.

The Remarkable Life of Tania Palmer



By **George Wyeth**,

Falstone Avenue

Longtime Somerset resident

Tania Palmer (Falstone), who passed away on February 5, had a remarkable life. As neighbors on

Falstone Avenue, we did not know much about her history until we had a casual conversation following the death of her husband, Richard. She had begun disposing of things she had accumulated over many years, and we commented that she had saved a lot. She replied, "I guess it's hard to let go of things when you've been told to put everything you want to keep in one suitcase." Her remark opened up a long conversation that revealed an amazing story. I don't have room here to do more than hit the high points.

(The following article draws extensively on research carried out by a historian, Shelley Stokes, in 2017.)

Tania's full name was Tatiana Ai-Ling Tann. She was born in Berlin in 1928, the daughter of a Chinese diplomat, **Beue Tann** (formerly Trent). Her mother, **Natalia**, was a Russian émigré.

Growing up in Berlin, Tania lived in privileged circumstances. Her father interacted with many high-level leaders.

She recalled sheltering during bombing raids after World War II started. In 1941, her father arranged for the family to travel to the United States. They located in Washington where her father continued with the Chinese diplomatic service.

After the war ended in 1945, her family went back to China, where they lived in comfort. However,

their lives were turned upside-down again by the Communist Revolution. As members of a high-ranking family, they were at great risk, and one day her father unexpectedly told Tania that she had 24 hours to pack everything she wanted to keep in a single suitcase, so they could flee to Taiwan.

In 1950, Beue Tann returned to Washington as part of the Chinese diplomatic delegation. Later, he joined the International Monetary Fund. Because Tania had wisely kept her high school transcripts in that one suitcase, she was able to attend Smith College, graduating in 1952.

The Tanns moved to Somerset in the early 1950's, living on Trent Street for many years. Beue Tann died in 1982 and Natalia in 1991. In 1958, Tania married **Richard Palmer**; the couple bought the house at 4712 Falstone Avenue where she lived the rest of her life. Richard worked at the State Department and the World Bank. He died in 2013. They are survived by two children: Christina, who lives in California, and Andrea, who lives in the Bethesda area. Her friend and caregiver, Elaine Fedrick, was also an important part of her life in her final years.

Tania was soft spoken but gregarious with a great sense of humor, and fond of socializing. She loved ballet and went to a class into her 90's. She also helped with flower arranging for the National Cathedral. Her accent belied her cosmopolitan background – it was a little hard to place but had German and British traces. Up to her death, she enjoyed a glass of sherry every afternoon – possibly a way of recalling her childhood in the rarefied world of international diplomacy.

Reflecting on Two Years in Somerset

By Sharee Lawler, *Trent Street*

In May 2022, our family went to our very first Somerset Back to School Classic. It was a gorgeous spring day – this particular race had been delayed from October 2021. The intersection of Dorset and Warwick was filled with hundreds of people who all seemed to know each other, smiling, laughing, and enjoying the morning. However, we did not see a single familiar face.

Just over two months before, we had moved from D.C. to Somerset. Though several kind neighbors had stopped in to say hello, we really hadn't met many people. My husband and I, feeling intimidated by the scene, looked at each other that day in May and decided to put a pin in that moment and see how things had changed the next time the Classic came around.

In the intervening months, I posted questions to one of the private listservs used by Somerset residents. It resulted not only in helpful responses but also in kind invitations to join people on their porches. The pool opened and our kids became Dolphins (and we learned how to clearly – and quickly – record times at meets). Camp Summerset and Somerset Girls Club helped our twins meet other kids in the neighborhood and we started meeting more families when they started third grade at Somerset Elementary that fall.

October 2022 rolled around and, with it, the regular running of the Somerset Classic. This time, though, our situation was entirely different. The camaraderie we had seen five months before was not something we were looking at from the outside. You all had folded us into your community. In just a few months, we had met and been befriended by more people than we had in the previous eight years in our former neighborhood.

We just celebrated two years in Somerset and while I know you all are aware of what a unique place this is, I wanted to take a moment to let you know how special it has been from a newcomer's perspective. Not only the residents, but the school, its stellar teachers, staff, and amazing new principal have been more than we hoped for. Most of all, our children have found an independence they would not have had before. In fact, I had time to write this piece



The Lawlers on their way to the Back to School Classic, October 2023

because they stayed after school to play with friends on the playground, and they'll all walk home together in time for dinner. That is a Somerset childhood, one we are grateful to give them. To list all the ways this Town has been good to us would take too long. No place is perfect, but Somerset has something I think is better: a great heart.

The pandemic changed our life plans in unexpected ways, as it did for many. We didn't intend to leave our home in D.C. Once it became clear that we needed to, though, we were not looking for a house, we were looking for a neighborhood. Somerset, thank you for being exactly what we were looking for.

By the way, the next Somerset Classic will be October 6. We already have it on our calendars because we will be helping out this year. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please join us for the Somerset residents' opening of

Mary Vinograd's Heart to Heart Exhibit

Town Hall on May 5, 2024 • 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.



Many of you know Mary, as she is crossing guard for Somerset Elementary School! Hoping to see you there!

Celebrate Earth Day *in a Meaningful Way*

Please join us on Monday April 22 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall to hear from Will Bruno, a financial advisor who specializes in green (fossil fuel free) investing.

If you have questions and concerns about what you are actually invested in and if those investments are in line with your principles to reduce your carbon footprint, we encourage you to attend. We will have a discussion about sustainable investing and banking options, as well as the broader socially responsible — and impact — investment considerations.

A light dinner will be served. • Event organized by **Nancy Hooff** (Uppingham)

Somerset Elementary School Foundation Enhances Community Well-being with \$90,000 Investment

By Jackie Quan, President, Somerset Elementary School Foundation (2023-2024), Cumberland Avenue



We have exciting news from the Somerset Elementary School (SES) Foundation for

our local community. The SES Foundation has announced plans to allocate over \$90,000 in 2024 towards initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being and educational growth of students and staff, while also providing vital support to disadvantaged students and families. We need your help and donations to achieve our plans!

Our primary focus is on funding new, costly playground equipment for Summer 2024, aiming to bring joy to local students and children. While Montgomery County Public Schools supports the funding of two structures, the Foundation will fund a third structure. The three current playground structures have aged over time and are no longer up to modern safety standards. Recognizing the importance of play in childhood learning and development, our priority is to support a safe and enjoyable environment, promoting the well-being of students, families, staff, and local children.

Throughout 2024, the Foundation has initiated fundraising efforts, appealing to the generosity of our community. Every donation, regardless of amount, whether it's \$1, \$10, \$100, \$1,000, or more — contributes directly to achieving our \$90,000 goal for 2024. Each donation represents a direct investment in the improvement of our neighborhood and local community.

Beyond playground upgrades, we are collaborating with SES personnel to implement educational enhancement programs at the school. These initiatives aim to improve academic achievement and will address the evolving needs of our students' post-COVID learning. Our commitment ensures educational excellence, fosters equitable access to essential resources and embraces the broad socioeconomic diversity of our student population. Moreover, we have aims to provide further learning and



Image: Playground Specialists, Inc

development for staff as well, investing in the quality of our teachers and school staff for their growth and development.

Addressing food insecurity among underprivileged families remains paramount. The Foundation consistently allocates thousands of dollars every year to assist SES students and families experiencing food insecurity in our community, demonstrating ongoing commitment to well-being.

Looking ahead, we have future plans to support the mental health of our students and staff, ensuring a comprehensive strategy to enhance the well-being of our school community.

Join us in shaping a brighter future for Somerset Elementary School. Stay updated on SES Foundation fundraising events, sponsorship opportunities, and ways to contribute as we strive to support academic excellence and a nurturing environment. Your support, contributions, and donations are greatly appreciated as we work towards a common goal of neighborhood and community betterment and our cause.

Please consider a donation to the SES Foundation by visiting this website: **donatenow.**

networkforgood.org/SomersetFoundation.

Or scan and use the QR code at right.



OUR FOUNDATION MISSION is investing to enhance the academic outcomes and well-being of the Somerset Elementary School community.

OUR FOUNDATION VISION is to make Somerset Elementary School a premier academic institution known for excellence and fostering a nurturing environment.

Somerset in Bloom

Spring blossoms came early to Somerset this year!



Communications Committee Update

By Leslie Caplan, Chair, Communications Committee,
Essex Avenue

Now that the Town's "new" website is up and running, the Communications Committee has been focusing on two projects.

Town Talks

As the *Town Journal* frequently reveals, Somerset residents possess a wide variety of skills, life experiences, and expertise. To help us all get to know each other, and learn from each other, the Communications Committee is organizing a series of social events entitled, "Town Talks." Each Town Talk will feature a Town resident sharing information from their experience or from their area of expertise, and residents will be welcome to enjoy light refreshments, as they listen, discuss, and ask questions. There will be three Talks a year: in Spring, Fall, and Winter. We will be announcing the Spring 2024 speaker and topic soon. Stay tuned!



Resource Guide and Directory

You should soon receive your 2024 copy of the Somerset Resource Guide and Directory. As was the case last year, Section I is devoted to the Resource Guide, and Section II provides the Directory. The committee has updated the Resource Guide, and provided support for the updates

made to the Directory. We thank those residents who provided input to these two documents.

We hope that Somerset residents will find the information useful. We ask that when your copy arrives, you take a few moments to familiarize yourself with Section I, which contains a concise Town history, information about Town government and committees; contact information for County, State and Federal elected officials; commonly consulted Somerset regulations, and much more. Please keep this resource in mind when you seek local information! The Resource Guide is also available in the Communications section of the Town website (<https://bit.ly/3TpVT0t>).

TOWN OF SOMERSET'S SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

You can find the Town of Somerset on the following platforms:

 facebook.com/townofsomerset

 instagram.com/townofsomersetmd

 threads.net/@townofsomersetmd

 linkedin.com/company/townofsomerset

 twitter.com/townofsomerset

nextdoor nextdoor.com (once you join Nextdoor, you automatically are placed in Somerset's claimed neighborhoods)

 youtube.com/@townofsomerset

 bsky.app/profile/townofsomerset.com

 mastodon.social/@townofsomerset

 tiktok.com/@townofsomerset

To access these links (with the exception of Nextdoor), you can also consult this LinkTree: <https://linktr.ee/townofsomerset>.



Notes from the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Our outstanding Town Manager **Matt Trollinger** has been presented with an exciting opportunity for career advancement in Signal Mountain, TN and I am very happy for him. He has accepted the offer. No one will miss him more than I will!

It was heartwarming to see the outpouring of affection for him expressed by residents on the private listserv. (Although since the staff doesn't regularly monitor it, I'm not sure Matt is even reading the messages!)

The staff and I are planning to create a Tribute Album to include cards, letters, and photos from all of you, which will

be presented to Matt in early April when he departs. All of you can help this effort by sending such cards, letters, and photos to the Town Hall. And anyone who wants to help on this project please get in touch with me.

This issue of the Journal includes an article about the Somerset Elementary School Foundation and its fundraising efforts (see page 7). I myself have made a substantial contribution to the Foundation. Even though I don't have children attending Somerset Elementary, I recognize the importance of the school to the Town and the surrounding community, and to our future citizens. The school is an important Town asset.



Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just an Email or Phone Call Away

If you need a ride, someone to pick up some groceries or a prescription, a ride to the Metro, or even if you just want to get to a friend's house, please contact **Somerset Helping Hand**. We have a list of 30 Somerset volunteers who can help.

Send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com or call **Barbara 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.

HAVE STUFF TO DONATE?



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

*Information provided by
Lauren Rubenstein (Surrey)*

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council met on Monday, March 4, 2024 for its regular monthly meeting. A recording of the meeting is available on the website and on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/3IFIsWW>.

The following actions were taken:

- Approval of nomination of **Gayle Horn** (Surrey Street) to the Pool Committee for a term ending in 2026
- Approval of nomination of **Russell Green** (Cumberland Avenue) to the Pool Committee for a term ending in 2026
- Approval of Arbor Day Proclamation
- Approval of Budget Work Session Dates
- Adoption of a Resolution establishing the 2024 Pool Rules
- Adoption of a Resolution Condemning Antisemitism
- Introduction of a Resolution Sunsetting the Town of Somerset Police Program
- Approval, with conditions, of a permit application submitted by David Kelly on behalf of David S. Kelly Development Co., Inc. for the construction of a new home at the property located at 4815 Cumberland Ave.

CLASSIFIED ADS

BOZEMAN, MONTANA: Awesome Every Season! Ski Big Sky & the Bridgers! Fly fishing. Trail rides. White water rafting. Hiking/biking everywhere. Enjoy our 4-bedroom home on 20 acres with spectacular 360 degree vistas. Four night minimum stay. Just four miles to downtown Bozeman. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com or 301-717-8083 (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 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.



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, *Town Manager*

Before I offer my farewell to Somerset (see page 13), please allow me to run through several projects that are top of mind this month:

Stormwater Evaluations

Bayland Consultants & Designers has begun its work evaluating the "micro-watershed," in the area around the Dorset/Warwick intersection, which was identified by the Stormwater Management Study Committee's report. Bayland will gather data (including talking to residents), provide analysis, and make recommendations for ways that flooding can be controlled and stormwater adequately managed in the area. The total length of the project is likely to take several months to complete with a full report to the Council, which will determine what its next steps will be to address the issues that are identified and solutions that are recommended.

LED Streetlight Conversion

"Phase 2" of the streetlight conversion project was completed at the end of February, and the project should be completed by Pepco in April, concluding this long-awaited improvement to Somerset. This marks a huge milestone for the Town, and we should begin reaping the benefits immediately – from a safety perspective, the streets are more uniformly lit, with a lower risk of streetlight outages (however, if for any reason there is an outage, please reach out directly to Pepco or to the Town Hall to report to Pepco). Environmentally, the Town will use about 1/3 of the electricity for the streetlights in Town, which should in turn reduce our electrical bills significantly.

Pool Renovation

This project remains highly weather-dependent but has gotten back on track in March. The goal is to pour concrete sometime in April in preparation for the pool's opening in May ahead of Memorial Day.

Streets/Sidewalks

The Town staff is contacting firms to carry out routine maintenance for the street and sidewalk infrastructure in Town, including fixing tripping hazards on the sidewalks. Residents can play a part in helping to keep the sidewalks clear by removing plantings back that are overhanging the sidewalk, and trimming them so as not to interfere with those using the sidewalks.

Town Entrances and Plantings

The Town is in negotiations with the County on a memorandum of understanding to move forward on the beautification of the Town's entrance at Little Falls Parkway. In addition, Groundsmith Collective is finishing a design and maintenance manual for the Town's green spaces, including the entrances, rain gardens throughout Town, and parks. This manual will be completed later in 2024 and will help improve long-term maintenance of the Town's public spaces, and ensure that the Town stays beautiful and uses sustainable vegetation.

Town Budget

The Town is in the midst of its budget preparation. As mentioned in the *On the Docket* column (see page 14), the Town's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. The Budget Committee Chair may offer a review of the budget, but I have offered a very short summary in *On the Docket*. As mentioned, the Town remains in excellent fiscal standing. Several exciting capital projects are scheduled and budgeted for next year, and the Town does not project any needed increases in the property tax rate to sustain its current level of services, despite an expected increase of up to 40% in the cost of trash and recycling pickup.

Final Thoughts

With transition and turnover, there is bound to be disruption. Please, as I mentioned in my farewell letter to the Town, work with the Town staff as they power through the transition of my exit, and show them the grace and appreciation that they deserve. It is an unfortunate reality that in a small operation like the one here in Somerset, certain functions are entirely or largely dependent on one individual. So, when they exit, it can take some time to get things back on track and figure out the new best way forward. Somerset has dedicated, hard-working, and good people working for the Town. I know that the future is bright in Somerset. I will be cheering you on from afar. And I'll send a picture of baby Trollinger whenever he or she arrives.



Farewell Message from the Town Manager

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

Dear Residents of Somerset,

I hope this message finds you well. It is with mixed emotions that I announce my departure as the Town Manager of Somerset. This past month, I was offered and accepted a new role as the Town Manager for Signal Mountain, a small town of about 9,000 located in Tennessee, just outside Chattanooga.

I will not rehash my entire message to the Town (if you would like to read my full message, it can be found at: <https://conta.cc/4adg1Kx>), but I wanted to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for the privilege of serving as your Town Manager over the past five years. It has been an honor to get to know every one of you, and I am truly touched by all the kind words and support I have received.

Somerset is an undeniably special place. From its majestic trees to its charming streets and outstanding facilities, the Town exudes a unique charm and beauty. But what truly sets Somerset apart is its people. I have been continually inspired by the dedication, passion, and kindness demonstrated by the residents of this community.

As I reflect on my time in Somerset, I am proud of the many accomplishments we have achieved together. From community initiatives to infrastructure projects, each endeavor has been a testament to our collective spirit and commitment to making Somerset an even better place to live.

Yet, amidst the achievements, it is the simple moments that I will cherish the most. Whether it was walking down the street to notarize a document on a resident's front porch, or engaging in heartfelt conversations with members of the community, these are the experiences that have truly enriched my time here.

I am grateful and honored to have been a small part of Somerset's history, and I am excited to see what the future holds for this remarkable town. Though I may be leaving, Somerset will always hold a special place in my heart.

Thank you once again for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Town Manager. I wish you all continued success, happiness, and prosperity in the years to come.



Warm regards,

Matthew Trollinger
(soon to be Former) Town Manager, Somerset



A Monthly Review of Town Council's Activities

FOR ADOPTION

A Resolution Sunsetting the Town of Somerset Police Program

This issue has been heavily discussed at several Town Council meetings and work sessions, and was recommended by the Town's Public Safety Committee and Traffic Committee. The Public Safety Committee wrote an extensive memo regarding the Town's current police program, which hires off-duty Montgomery County police officers in a "secondary employment" capacity for a small number of rotating hours, to supplement the regular coverage provided by Montgomery County Police Department.

In this proposal, the Town's supplemental secondary employment police program will end at the end of April. The Town will continue to be provided regular coverage by the Montgomery County Department of Police, and will look for alternative methods to provide traffic calming and other safety measures.

For more detailed information, please see the Public Safety Committee's articles in the *Town Journal* from December 2023 (<https://bit.ly/3Nx8QDR>) and January 2024 (<https://bit.ly/47FnrVa>), as well as an expanded version of the December 2023 article (<https://bit.ly/3TFqsBa>).

FOR INTRODUCTION

An Ordinance Adopting the FY25 Budget

The Town's fiscal year runs July 1 – June 30, so the budget will be introduced in April, and adopted in May after a public hearing. Major highlights of the proposed budget include:

CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Hiring a lighting consultant to do a photometric evaluation of the new LED streetlights and offer recommendations for additional lighting, including new poles, pedestrian sidewalk lights, etc.
- Major implementation of roadway and sidewalk master plans, including an evaluation of sidewalk extensions on streets that do not currently have sidewalks
- Solar panel installation at the Town Poolhouse
- Improvements to the Town tennis courts to repair cracking

OPERATIONAL BUDGET

- The biggest change is an anticipated increase in trash/recycling collection fees

The bottom line and good news is that the Town remains in a fiscally stable state. Property tax rates are not recommended or anticipated to increase, and the Town continues to make progress towards its goal of saving for a Rainy Day Fund equivalent to 12-months of operational expenses.

The budget will be shared with Somerset residents in the May issue of the *Town Journal*.

An Ordinance establishing a Data Policy

In accordance with State law, the Town Attorney has helped draft a data policy consistent with some of our neighboring municipalities. The policy will establish standard security measures for Town equipment and the Town Hall itself, and reporting requirements in the event of a data breach. It will also reinforce document retention protocols in alignment with the Town's already-established document retention policy.



For Your Reference

TOWN OF SOMERSET COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Audit	OPEN	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	OPEN	Swim Team	Dario Fuentes (Cumberland)
History & Archives	OPEN	Tennis	Carrie Wofford (Essex)
Newcomers	Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Cumberland)	Traffic	OPEN

TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR 2023

COUNCIL MEETINGS (All times at 7:00 p.m. on a Monday, with the exception of holidays)

- Monday, April 1
- Monday, May 6
- Monday, June 3
- Monday, July 1
- Monday, August 5
- Monday, September 9 (Date changed due to Labor Day)
- Monday, October 7
- Monday, November 4
- Monday, December 2

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

- Monday, April 15
- Monday, May 20
- Monday, June 17
- Monday, July 15
- Monday, August 19
- Monday, Sept. 23 (Note two-week gap)
- Monday, October 21
- Monday, November 18
- Monday, December 16

LINKS TO COMMITTEE-PROVIDED RESOURCES

STORMWATER STUDY COMMITTEE

<https://bit.ly/3QQkCvR>

- Committee Report to Mayor & Town Council: <https://bit.ly/46FBRUZ>
- FAQs for Somerset Residents: <https://bit.ly/4713RYL>
- Resource Guide to Green Infrastructure: <https://bit.ly/3QPkTNZ>
- LIDC Final Report – Green Stormwater Infrastructure Master Plan – 1/20/2022: <https://bit.ly/3QH58s4>
- Recording of May 10, 2022 Stormwater Study Committee Town Forum: <https://bit.ly/3Fx71CM>

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

<https://bit.ly/45FAghD>

- Ban on Certain Pesticides: <https://bit.ly/3MVYQUt>
- Resolution Declaring Climate Emergency: <https://bit.ly/47Kign8>
- Sierra Club Maryland Mayors for 100% Clean Energy Pledge: <https://bit.ly/3s593qr>
- 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/VTqMlxCn-xU7>

EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

<https://bit.ly/3qMoblz>

- Resolution Condemning Anti-AAPI Hate: <https://bit.ly/3QMhb7H>
- Recording of January 18, 2022 Slavery & Segregation History Forum Recording: <https://bit.ly/3MHSV3o>
- Declaration of Inclusion: <https://bit.ly/3qMoblz>
- Resolution denouncing Anti-Semitism: <https://bit.ly/3sLZNRD>
- Resolution supporting Black Lives Matter: <https://bit.ly/40RDRI4>

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

- Town of Somerset Police Program: History, Challenges, & Alternatives (Expanded *Town Journal* Article). <https://bit.ly/3TFqsBa>

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

- Somerset Resource Guide <https://bit.ly/459MgHK>
- Somerset Town Journal <https://bit.ly/3urVeDz>

VIDEO RECORDINGS OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

Preliminary Agenda

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

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting April 1, 2024 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, April 1, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/3RTWad7> Meeting ID: 860 9193 9743 Passcode: 491819

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 the agenda as presented

CONSENT AGENDA

7:11 p.m. To consider approval of the consent agenda as follows:

- Nomination of **Peter Tynan** (Essex Avenue) to the Budget Committee

NON-CONSENT AGENDA

7:12 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider a permit application submitted by **Guido Bracciale** and **Sharmeen Ahsan-Bracciale**, for the construction of a new home at the property located at 4905 Cumberland Avenue

7:40 p.m. **Discussion:** Building Administrator's Report

7:45 p.m. **Public Hearing/Motion:** To consider the Adoption of a Resolution sunsetting the Town of Somerset Police Program

8:00 p.m. **Motion:** To consider the Introduction of an Ordinance Adopting the FY25 Budget, as recommended by the Budget Committee

8:05 p.m. **Motion:** To consider the Introduction of a Resolution establishing a Data Policy

8:10 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager/Financial Report

8:25 p.m. **Adjourn**

KEY

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

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

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

Comments: Opinions and Questions from Town residents.

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

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

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

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