



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY MEMO

December 2024

Dear Town Council, Residents, Business owners, and Employees of the Town of Bladensburg;

The holidays are upon us, and 2025 is ending. I want to keep you updated on the following matters.

- **Bridge Repairs:** After revising the project scope, we will repair bridges on Varnum, Upshur, and Spring Road. This project, which started in mid-November and was completed this month, addressed some long-standing issues identified during a previous inspection. These repairs are partly being paid for with CDBG PY 48R Funds from Prince George's County Department of Community and Housing Development.
- **57th Avenue Lighting Update:** The bases of the lighting fixtures have been installed, and the new lights should be completed before the end of December. We will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses.



Upcoming Improvements for 2025:

- Grant Funding for Sidewalk repairs in the amount of \$255,000 from CDBG
- Grant Funding for new "green" bus shelters for \$60,000 from the Maryland Department of Energy.
- Grant Funding for Phase 2 | 57th Avenue Lighting Project.
- Town Hall Design Process and Community Outreach begins in January 2025.
- Completion of Bostwick House Events and Structural Study by March 2025.



Board of Supervisors of Election (BOSOE) Meeting Update | The Town of Bladensburg has a Board of Supervisors (BOSOE) that has met frequently this year, and applications for new members are now being accepted by the Council.

The board committed to ensuring a smooth and compliant election process in its most recent meetings. For further details or to access updated documents, please visit the town website or contact the Board of Elections Supervisors. Stay informed and engaged as we approach these crucial milestones in our election cycle in 2025!

Holiday Food Distributions | The Town held its annual Thanksgiving Food distribution at Bladensburg High School on Saturday, November 23, and we helped over 300 families in need. A remaining Holiday Distribution is scheduled for **Saturday, December 7, 2024**, at Bladensburg High School.

The event is open to the public from 10 AM to noon. It is focused on Town residents, and people are encouraged to sign up in advance due to the limited number of baskets available for needy families.

Bostwick House Updates: Below are the most recent updates for December.

- *ULI Report Update:* Over the last few months, we have diligently contacted ULI regarding the final document. However, a series of staffing issues have delayed the completion. We should see a final report in December, and I will hopefully be able to prepare a presentation for the January Meeting.
- *MNCPPC—Placemaking Project at Bostwick:* *This week, we met with the Planning Department staff to discuss the project's goals and themes.* Placemaking exercises allow us to activate the space and get public input as we move forward with some of the recommendations for providing context and promoting the site.
- *UMD – School of Architecture:* I met with Dr. Susan Kerns of the School of Architecture to provide her updates on the project and stressed the importance of our relationship with UMD. Next semester, Graduate Students may be working on a project with us to move forward with some of the site archeology that will move the project forward.
- *Encore Sustainable Architects—We have moved forward with this project, and the firm has presented some initial schematics to the town. This project should be completed in the next few months.*



Community Cupboard | The Town Council and staff welcomed the addition of a Community Cupboard Food site in David Harrington Park on December 3, 2024. Johns Hopkins University sponsors this program, and the Town will be one of two sites in Prince George's County where it is being launched. This cupboard helps to address food insecurity issues in the community, and as part of the program, our community partners will refill it. The Cupboard will be open to residents and will be restocked regularly.



Budget Calendar Set | With the passage of the FY 2026 Budget ordinance, the public's calendar of meetings to participate in will be set. Over the last year, I have tried to increase the transparency and predictability of information with regular reporting and more information on the website and part of each agenda. Below are the FY 2026 Budget dates:



- **January 2025 Budget Review | Town Council Meeting**
 - On **January 13, 2025**, a comprehensive **Budget Review** for Fiscal Year 2025 will be held, and key budget issues and initial departmental needs will be presented and discussed.
- **Budget Session #1 | Town Council and Events**
 - On **February 18, 2025**, the first public **Budget Session** will be held, focusing on Town Council Budgets and Town Events.
- **Budget Session #2 | Introduction and Public Safety**
 - On **March 10, 2025**, the Town Council will receive an Introduction to the revenues and a review of **the Public Safety budget**, with presentations from the Police Department with their requests for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Budget Session #3 | Finance, Clerk, and Town Administrator**
 - On **March 18, 2025**, a **Special Council Meeting** will be held to review budget requests from the **Finance Department, Town Clerk, and Town Administrator**.
- **Budget Session #4 | Special Budget Meeting | Public Works and Public Safety**
 - On **April 1, 2025**, another **Special Council Meeting** will focus on budget requests from the **Public Works** and review **Public Safety** items discussed in March.
- **First Reading of the Budget Ordinance**
 - On **April 14, 2025**, the **First Reading** of the Budget Ordinance will occur during the Town Council Meeting.
- **Tax Rate and Constant Yield Hearings (if needed)**
 - On **April 14, 2025, or May 12, 2025**, the Town Council Meeting would meet to set a new tax rate or conduct a Tax Rate or Constant Yield Hearing. This is a separate meeting
- **Budget Session #5 | Special Council Budget Meeting**
 - On **April 29, 2025**, the Town Council will hold a **Special Budget Meeting** for any remaining discussions and adjustments.
- **Proposed Budget Adoption – Second Reading**
 - On **May 12, 2025**, during the Town Council Meeting, the **Proposed Budget** for FY 2025-2026 will be presented for **Adoption**.
- **Alternative Budget Adoption Date**
 - An **Alternative Budget Adoption Date** is scheduled for **June 9, 2025**, if further revisions or discussions are necessary.

Green Corner | Green Team Items: In December, the Town will adopt a resolution to join Tree City USA. This item affirms the Town's commitment to environmental sustainability, urban forestry, and the overall enhancement of the community's quality of life. By becoming a designated Tree City USA, the Town seeks to align itself with national urban tree care and management standards.

Key Provisions:

Commitment to Tree Management: Establishes the Town's dedication to its urban tree canopy's care, maintenance, and expansion. Recognizes the importance of trees in improving air quality, reducing urban heat, enhancing aesthetics, and providing environmental and social benefits to residents.

Designation of a Tree Board (Green Team) or Department:

- Formalizes the responsibility for overseeing urban forestry efforts within the Town.
- Ensures proper planning, management, and advocacy for tree-related initiatives.

Annual Community Tree Budget: Commits to allocating a portion of the Town's budget to tree care, maintenance, planting, and education. Meets or exceeds the minimum per capita funding requirement to maintain Tree City USA designation.

Tree Care Ordinance Compliance:

- Supports the enforcement of the Town's tree maintenance ordinance to guide the planting, removing, and protecting trees on public property.
- Establishes guidelines for maintaining tree health and public safety.

Arbor Day Observance: Commits the Town to celebrate Arbor Day annually, engaging the community in tree planting events, educational activities, and awareness campaigns.

NDC and Town Hall Design | We have executed with the Neighborhood Design Center on the design and scoping project for Town Hall in mid-November. This will allow us to move forward and start the community outreach in January 2025.

We have a series of events this holiday season, and I look forward to seeing residents at the Yule Log, Senior Gala, and our Night with Santa Event.

Have a happy and safe holiday season!

Best Regards,

Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth

Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, Town Administrator

