

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY

MEMO



August / September 2024

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

Here are a few things that I want to keep you updated on that occurred this summer. WE have been busy preparing for the fall and the new school year.



Town Construction Projects Updates | Summer 2024: The Public Works team has been jam-packed this summer, and I want to commend Purnell and his crew for their hard work, especially given the tricky weather warnings this week. Below are some key updates on the projects they've been tackling:

- **Sidewalk Improvements:** The ramps and sidewalk upgrades on 57th Avenue and Emerson House are now complete.
- **Roadway Repairs—Upshur Street:** We have also finished milling and replacing the roadway in the industrial section of town, the 4600 block of Upshur Street.
- **Bridge Repairs:** We will present the updated plans to the Council for approval on September 9, 2024, after revising the project scope. This project will address some long-standing issues identified during a previous inspection.
- **Lighting Update:** We are currently navigating the permitting process with the County. The lighting fixture is available, which should expedite the timeline for installation this fall. We will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses.

We appreciate your patience as these improvements take shape and look forward to delivering these enhancements to benefit all residents.

Welcome Regine Watson | New Town Clerk: I am excited to welcome Regine Watson as our new town clerk; I am so happy that she began her role with the Town on Monday, August 19, 2024. Regine comes to us from Bay Harbor Island, Florida, where she has served in many roles, most recently as Education and Community Services Director. She has over 15 years of local government experience and will be an asset to our organization. Please take a moment to welcome her to the Town.



Walkable Watersheds Rain Barrel – DIY Session | September 24, 2024: Transform Your Garden and Protect Our Bay! The Environmental Finance Center and the Town for the Walkable Watershed DIY Rain Barrel Event on September 24, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Bladensburg Town Hall. This exciting event is a fantastic opportunity for residents to participate in environmental conservation while benefiting their homes.

What to Expect:

- **Free Rain Barrels:** The Town of Bladensburg will provide free rain barrels to all participating residents. These barrels are perfect for collecting and storing rainwater, which you can use to nourish your garden.
- **Hands-On Training:** At 6:00 PM, we will hold a comprehensive training session during which you will learn how to properly install and use your rain barrel. Our experts will guide you through the process, ensuring you feel confident and prepared.

Why a Rain Barrel?

Did you know that using a rain barrel helps keep your garden lush and vibrant and plays a crucial role in reducing water runoff into the Chesapeake Bay? By capturing rainwater, you’re saving water and contributing to our local waterways' health.

Don’t miss this chance to impact your home and the environment positively. We look forward to seeing you there and working together to create a greener, more sustainable community!

For more information, please register at go.umd.edu/PTrainbarrels.



Let’s make every drop count!



Board of Election Supervisors Meeting Update |

September 3, 2024: The Town of Bladensburg Board of Elections Supervisors (BOES) convened to address several crucial topics related to election management and campaign regulations. Here are the key highlights from the meeting:

1. **Review of Internal Procedures and Documentation:**
 - The board conducted a thorough review of internal procedures and documentation. Revisions were proposed for the candidate handbook and the BOES process document to enhance clarity and efficiency in election operations.
2. **Election Dates and Reporting Requirements:**

- Important election dates were confirmed, and detailed campaign finance reporting requirements were discussed. The board emphasized the need for adherence to deadlines and accuracy in financial disclosures.
- 3. **Regulations on Use of Town Resources:**
 - The meeting covered regulations concerning the use of town resources for campaign events. Specific guidelines were established for promotional giveaways and the use of town property to ensure fair and transparent practices.
- 4. **Proper Use of Town-Issued Materials:**
 - Members discussed the proper use of town-issued materials and stressed the importance of compliance with campaign finance rules. Clear guidelines were outlined to prevent misuse and ensure all campaign activities adhere to legal and ethical standards.
- 5. **Action Items:**
 - **Document Updates:** Action items were assigned to update relevant documents, including the candidate handbook and the BOES process document.
 - **FAQ Drafting:** The board decided to draft an FAQ to address common questions about town property usage for campaigns.
- 6. **Upcoming Meetings:**
 - The next BOES meetings are scheduled for **September 24 and October 1 at 3:00 PM**. These sessions will focus on finalizing the updated documents and preparing for the upcoming council meeting on October 7.

The meeting underscored the board's commitment to ensuring a smooth and compliant election process. 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!

Green Team Update | September 4, 2024: On September 4, 2024, The Green Team held a productive meeting, focusing on several key sustainability initiatives aimed at enhancing our town's environmental efforts:



1. **Sustainable Maryland Certification:** The team celebrated the submission for Sustainable Maryland certification. Town staff collaborated extensively to compile a comprehensive portfolio of sustainable practices, showcasing our town's commitment to environmental stewardship.
2. **Clean Water Partnership Presentation:** The Clean Water Partnership provided an update on a significant flood channel project. They presented hydrologic modeling results and discussed potential solutions for mitigating watershed flood damages. Design work for this project is scheduled for 2024-2025.
3. **Green Preferred Purchasing List:** The town updated the Green Preferred Purchasing List, which was introduced and is now available on the town website. This list promotes

eco-friendly products, helping residents and businesses make sustainable purchasing decisions.

4. **Tree City Initiative:** The team explored the possibility of the town becoming a Tree City, discussing the necessary policies and financial commitments required. This initiative aims to enhance our green spaces and urban forestry efforts.
5. **Upcoming "Growing Green with Pride" Event:** The "Growing Green with Pride" event was announced for October 19, featuring community cleanup and beautification projects. Action items were assigned to Michelle and Ray for follow-ups on various initiatives to ensure the success of this event.

Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved! For more details on these initiatives and upcoming events, visit our town website or contact the Green Team. The next meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2024, at 3 PM.

Bostwick House | Updates and Action Items: I am excited to share updates on the ongoing projects at Bostwick House. Significant progress has been made as window repairs have begun, led by our Historic Preservation Contractor, WGC. In collaboration with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), we have also received permission to place protective coverings on the windows to prevent further damage.

Looking ahead, Town staff will be bringing an item to the Council regarding masonry, façade, and roof repairs on the September 9th Agenda. As part of our ongoing efforts, the next steps include:

- Continuing stabilization efforts for Bostwick House through the Capital Grants
- Receiving the final ULI TAP (Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel) report in early September 2024
- Reviewing and sharing the TAP recommendations, which will inform the architect's work on the Event Center, a project managed in collaboration with Aman Trust
- Developing implementation plans based on the TAP recommendations
- Seeking additional funding for site improvements
- Submitting invoices for grant reimbursements

We will continue to keep the community informed as we move forward with these exciting developments at Bostwick House.

Business Roundtable | October 29, at 8 AM: Join us for the next Business Roundtable on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at 8:00 AM, hosted at the Town Hall. This meeting is a fantastic opportunity for local business owners to connect with fellow entrepreneurs and engage directly with Town officials. Event Highlights:

- **Networking Opportunities:** Meet and network with other business owners in the community.

- Collaborative Discussions: Come and work with Town officials to explore strategies for enhancing the local business climate.
- Economic Development: Contribute to initiatives to build and boost economic development within the Town.

Whether you want to share ideas, seek advice, or connect with other local businesses, this roundtable is the perfect platform to voice your thoughts and collaborate on solutions.

We look forward to seeing you there and working together to create a thriving business environment in our Town!

Legislative Affairs Update | Legislative Priorities: Throughout this year's legislative session, the Town of Bladensburg has closely monitored and supported several vital bills and initiatives that directly impact our community. Working alongside Legislative Advocate LA Perez, we have focused on key priorities to improve public safety, economic development, and the overall quality of life for our residents.

During the upcoming September 9 Council Meeting, our legislative team will provide a comprehensive update on these priorities. Some of the critical areas we've been advocating for include:

- **Public Safety and Policing:** We continue to support legislation that enhances the safety and well-being of our community. This includes initiatives aimed at modernizing policing practices and ensuring resources for crime prevention.
- **Economic Development:** Encouraging growth and opportunity in Bladensburg remains a core focus. We've supported bills that promote business growth, job creation, and sustainable development within the town.
- **Restoration of Bostwick House:** As one of our most historic landmarks, efforts are ongoing to secure funding and legislative backing for the preservation and restoration of Bostwick House, ensuring it remains a cultural asset for future generations.
- **Peace Cross Intersection:** Transportation and infrastructure improvements at the Peace Cross Intersection are crucial for traffic safety and community access. We are advocating for necessary changes to make this area safer for both drivers and pedestrians.
- **Homeowner, Tenant, and Condo Association Issues:** Addressing the needs of homeowners, tenants, and condo associations, we are supporting legislative measures that protect housing rights and ensure fair practices within our community.
- **Planning and Zoning Authority:** The Town continues to push for strengthened authority over planning and zoning decisions to better manage growth and maintain the character of our neighborhoods.

We encourage all residents to attend the September 9 Council Meeting to learn more about these legislative efforts and how they benefit Bladensburg. Your input and participation are vital as we move forward with these priorities.

Ending Soon | Security Camera Reimbursement Program: The Town started advertising the program in early August 2023, and information is on the website. We have also posted announcements on the Town’s social media. The program is funded with \$50,000 in ARPA funds. This is estimated to assist 50 households in each ward. *Please make sure to apply today! This program is ending soon!*



Best Regards,

Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth

Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, Town Administrator