

TOWN OF UPPER MARLBORO

14211 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
Phone: (301) 627-6905 • www.uppermarlboromd.gov

TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Charles J. Colbert • Vice Mayor Derrick F. Brooks • Councilmember Sarah A. Franklin • Councilmember Karen H. Lott
• Councilmember Joseph Hourcle'

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

TO: Town Council
FROM: Clayton Anderson, Town Manager
DATE: August 24, 2026
RE: Sponsorships and Events Committees

Staff Report to Council

I. Purpose

The purpose of this staff report is to present recommendations for improving the planning, funding, and execution of Town-sponsored events through the use of business sponsorships and Council-appointed event planning committees.

The Town currently hosts several community events, including Marlboro Day, Community Day, Trunk or Treat, and various holiday events. While these events provide significant value to residents and contribute to community engagement, they are also time-consuming and require substantial staff hours to coordinate, organize, and execute.

The proposed approach would give local businesses opportunities to become active partners in Town events while establishing committees to take responsibility for the creative planning and development of individual events.

II. Event Sponsorship Program

Financial Advantages

Sponsorships can reduce the financial burden on the Town by allowing local businesses and organizations to share the cost of community events. Sponsorship contributions could be used to offset expenses associated with:

- Event giveaways and promotional items;
- Entertainment and activities;
- Decorations and event materials;
- Food or refreshments;
- Children's activities;
- Prizes and other event-related expenses.

Sponsorships could be monetary contributions, donated goods or services, or direct donations of giveaways and promotional items.

For example, rather than the Town purchasing all giveaway items for an event, a local business could provide the items or contribute toward their purchase. This would allow the business to participate directly in the event while reducing the amount of Town funding required.

Business Participation and Community Engagement

A sponsorship program would also provide local businesses with an opportunity to become more involved in the community and demonstrate their support for Town residents.

In exchange for sponsorship support, participating businesses could receive recognition and advertising through appropriate Town communication channels, including:

- Recognition on the Town's website;
- Recognition on Town social media platforms;
- Business recognition at the sponsored event;
- Inclusion on event promotional materials, when appropriate;
- Recognition in Town communications related to the event.

This arrangement creates a mutually beneficial relationship. The Town receives financial or in-kind support, while local businesses receive positive exposure and an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the community. A sponsorship program would also encourage residents to see local businesses as partners in community activities rather than simply as businesses operating within the Town.

III. Event Planning Committees

Staff also recommend that the Town Council consider establishing individual planning committees for major Town events.

The proposed committees would be different from the previous Events Committee. Rather than serving as a general advisory group, these committees would be established to plan and develop specific Town events. Potential events could include:

- Marlboro Day;
- Community Day;
- Trunk or Treat;
- Holiday events; and
- Other major community events identified by the Council.

Role of the Town Council

The Council would establish the overall scope and expectations for each event.

The Council would determine matters such as:

- The purpose and scope of the event;
- The intended audience, such as Town residents or the broader community;
- Any budget parameters;
- The general date or timeframe;
- Town priorities or expectations for the event.

Once the Council establishes the scope, the committee would develop the event within those parameters.

Role of the Event Committee

The committee would serve as the creative and planning force behind the event and would be selected by the Town Council.

The committee would be able to develop the event concept, activities, themes, programming, and other creative elements while remaining within the scope and parameters established by the Council.

The committee would work collaboratively with Town staff regarding logistics and implementation. Staff would provide guidance and assistance concerning matters such as Town procedures, facilities, permits, purchasing, scheduling, public safety, contracts, and other operational requirements.

The committee, however, would have primary responsibility for planning and developing the event itself. This approach would allow community members and volunteers interested in a particular event to contribute their ideas, creativity, experience, and time.

IV. Reducing the Staff Workload

The current process for planning and executing Town events requires a significant investment of staff time and resources. Event planning involves numerous tasks before, during, and after each event, including coordination, vendor communication, activity planning, purchasing, marketing, logistics, setup, event-day operations, and cleanup.

While staff support will remain necessary, shifting much of the creative planning responsibility to Council-appointed committees would allow staff to focus on the logistical and administrative aspects of the events.

This structure would also create greater community ownership of Town events and give residents a meaningful opportunity to contribute to activities in their community.

V. Recommended Framework

Recommended Framework

Staff recommends that the Council consider the following framework:

1. The Council establishes the scope, purpose, target audience, and general parameters for each major Town event.
 2. The Council appoints an event planning committee for the event.
 3. The committee develops the creative concept, activities, programming, and overall event plan.
 4. Town staff works with the committee on logistics, Town requirements, purchasing, permits, scheduling, contracts, and other administrative matters.
 5. The committee identifies potential sponsorship opportunities in coordination with Town staff.
 6. Staff coordinates the sponsorship process and ensures that sponsorship recognition complies with Town policies and applicable requirements.
 7. Sponsors receive appropriate recognition through Town-approved communication platforms and event materials.
 8. Following each event, the committee and staff provide feedback to the Council regarding attendance, sponsorship participation, expenses, successes, and opportunities for improvement.
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VI. Conclusion

Town events are an important part of building community, giving residents opportunities to interact, and strengthening connections among the Town, its residents, and local businesses. However, the current event-planning process requires a substantial commitment of staff time and Town resources.

Developing a sponsorship program would allow local businesses to share some of the financial responsibility for events while receiving meaningful recognition and an opportunity to participate in the community.

Establishing Council-appointed event planning committees would also allow community members to take a more active role in developing and planning events. The Council would maintain oversight by establishing the scope and expectations for each event, while the committee would serve as the creative force responsible for developing the event with logistical support from Town staff.

Together, these approaches could reduce the workload on Town staff, increase community involvement, provide local businesses with opportunities to participate, and potentially allow the Town to offer more robust and engaging events without assuming the entire financial and administrative burden.

VII. Recommended Council Action

Staff recommend that the Town Council discuss and provide direction regarding:

1. Establishing a formal Town event sponsorship program;
2. Developing guidelines for monetary and in-kind sponsorships and sponsor recognition;
3. Establishing Council-appointed planning committees for major Town events;
4. Defining the scope of authority and responsibilities of the committees;
5. Determining the role of Town staff in supporting the committees; and
6. Identifying the initial events that would utilize this model.

Staff further recommend that, upon receiving Council direction, staff develop draft sponsorship guidelines and an event committee framework for Council consideration and approval.