

## 2023 STATE OF THE TOWN

2023 was another good year for the Town of Boonsboro. We added four new employees - Jared Schumacher as our Town Manager, Drew Bowen as Town Planner, Tom Moretti Police Officer, and Curtis Wyand in Public Works. I'm glad to report that all are doing an excellent job.

We have had several new businesses open in 2023 and glad to report all seem to be doing very well. The one most needed business, Ace Hardware, finally opened and we welcomed with open arms.

As for projects in 2023 that will run into 2024 and some longer, there is good news on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge Dewatering Facility. The project is coming along nicely and should be up and running sometime this Spring. A BIG savings in not having to pay to have the sludge hauled away will help in saving the Town money.

Shafer Park well replacement is almost ready to be put on line. That will help the Town in its water capacity.

The Creek Masonry Repair and Renovation is now complete and turned out to be a much-improved look along the stream in Shafer Park.

Chase Six Boulevard and Campus Avenue realignment and intersection design is complete. The Town is expecting residential development and construction of 100+ new homes, immediately north of campus, in the Fletcher's Grove community. With it, the final section of Chase Six Boulevard will be completed and intersect with Maple Avenue. Heavy traffic and frequent speeding on Maple Avenue, combined with the absence of crosswalks to safely allow students across a busy road to/from campus, represents a dangerous public safety issue in our community and a school zone. The increased traffic created by the buildout of Chase Six Boulevard will inevitably worsen the safety and traffic issues that already exist. With a multitude of issues present (parent pickup lines, speeding, high traffic, etc.), the Town agreed our only option is to realign Chase Six Boulevard and Campus Avenue to intersect at Maple Avenue, with traffic signals and pedestrian crosswalks. The Town is working closely with State Highway, Potomac Edison, the Developer, WCPS Staff, and a neighboring property owner to complete this important connection. To date, the Town has been awarded \$1.2 million to complete our portion of the project. We are hoping to start the project in the Summer of 2024.

Boonsboro became an Appalachian Trail Community Town in 2023. Sustainable Maryland, Banner City with MML, and Tree City are all ongoing awards we have won in previous years.

All of our Commissions are growing and very active in our community:

- Public Safety is working on keeping the Town safe in all aspects.
- EDC is keeping the Town going with many different kinds of events. The largest is the Labor Day Food Truck Fest. This is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the area. So many more events to come -- stay tuned.
- The Environmental Commission has been quite busy with the Community Garden, Green Fest, placing Compost bins in the Park, getting Electric Car Chargers in the Park, and Bulk pick-up in the Park, just to name a few.
  - **Sustainable MD recertification** In 2023, the Town of Boonsboro, through the efforts of the Environmental Commission, became recertified as a Sustainable Maryland Community.

Sustainable Maryland is a certification program for municipalities in Maryland that want to go green, save money and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term. Sustainable Maryland is a collaborative effort between the Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland and the Maryland Municipal League.

- The Park Board keeps busy with taking care of the Park year-round with all of the events that take place throughout the year. They were instrumental in getting the Dog Park built in the Park. There is a new trail to be added sometime this year. Disc Golf is coming sometime in the year.
  - **Tree City USA recertification** Boonsboro qualified for a Tree City USA designation for the 8<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Boonsboro was first recognized as a Tree City USA in 2015 and has maintained this designation and distinction as a community that loves trees ever since. The Tree City USA program provides communities with a four-step framework to maintain and grow their tree cover. It also gives them an avenue to celebrate their work, showing residents, visitors, and the entire country that they're committed to the mission of environmental change. The four-step framework Boonsboro must meet to qualify as a Tree City USA include:
    - Maintaining a tree board or department
    - Having a community tree ordinance
    - Spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry
    - Celebrating Arbor Day
- The BZA has not been quite as busy as there has been limited exceptions that have come before the board this year.
- Our Planning Commission and the Utilities Commission are the busiest Commissions in the Town. The Planning Commission is working on the Comprehensive Plan as well as updating other policies. The Utilities Commission is working on the Rate Study along with other daily utilities.
  - **Reservoir Replacement** - To date, the Town has been awarded \$3.1 million in local, state, and federal funding to replace our aging and leaking reservoir. The Town of Boonsboro owns and operates a 1.3 MG drinking water reservoir. Built in 1954, the reservoir is leaking upwards of 100,000 gallons a day. Although recently discovered, records indicate the reservoir has been leaking for over-20 years. Ultrasonic meter testing, electrical resistivity testing, and a scuba dive survey all confirm multiple leaks and significant structural degradation. Due to the age of the leaks, structural damage is expected, and a complete replacement is both necessary and an emergency priority. The reservoir is the Town's only pressure source. Structural failure would result in flooding, property damage, and loss of water and sewer service to 4,800 Washington County Residents. This planned project will replace the nearly 70-year-old reservoir, at a projected cost of \$8 Million, using modern engineering and construction. The new asset's estimated lifecycle is 70- 100 years. The Town hired WRA as project engineers and have recently completed 90% plans for the project. Once finalized by the Town, we will send the plans to MDE for approval. We plan to start the bidding process in the spring of 2024.
  - **WWTP Sludge Dewatering Press** - The Town has been awarded over \$2.3 million in state and federal funding to complete the purchase, design, and installation of our WWTP sludge dewatering press and facilities. This project will accomplish the following:
    - Provide a 93% reduction in the sludge tonnage that will be removed from the Town's VVWTP, on an annual basis: from 7,000 tons annually, to 470 tons.

- Reduce sludge hauling/treatment costs from \$165,000 annually, to approximately \$36,000. As the Town grows, the cost to haul/treat sludge will also increase, adding further stress to the VVWTP's existing infrastructure.
  - Dewatered sludge can be "land applied" as a fertilizer. This beneficial reuse is an environmentally progressive practice.
  - A dewatering phase added to the VVWTP adds emergency storage capacity and operational flexibility.
- **WWTP Stream Restoration Project** - The Town, in cooperation with Washington County and the State of Maryland, completed a stream restoration project adjacent to our WWTP. Funding for the project was provided by the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG Funding) through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The project engineer's MS4 credit evaluation was estimated to equate to approximately 30.57 acres.

I'm very proud to say that ALL of our Commissions do an excellent job in keeping Boonsboro a Great place to live. Without our Great Staff and Great Commissions, we would not have that Town that we have.

Thank you ALL for ALL that you do.

Mayor Howard Long