

2018-19 Town Government Report

This Review builds on the mid-year update on Town Government accomplishments distributed in January.

The year's accomplishments and actions have been achieved because of the tireless commitment of our resident volunteers and committees who get things done! You are also responsible for many other events and happenings in our community that are not in the scope of this report.

Community Interest by the Town Council:

- Passed a *Resolution*, “A Call for Humane and Sensible Immigration Policies”, in response to the President’s harsh and unjustified treatment of children and asylum seekers.
- Passed a *Resolution* renaming the soccer and ball fields in Woodward Park the “Joseph Craig English Recreational Field” in recognition of Craig’s contributions to the Grove, including years establishing and organizing the Labor Day competitions.
- Issued a *Proclamation* honoring Joli McCathran for her many years of service to the Town in many volunteer capacities, including Mayor and Town Councilor.

Communications and Transparency:

- Draft Town Council meeting *Minutes* are now posted on the website within days of the meeting. Finalized *Minutes* replace these following Town Council approval in open meeting.
- An ad hoc Communications Group formed in the summer to develop ways to improve awareness and access to Town government activities.
- Recommendations were received from the Communications Group this Spring and work continues on implementation.
- Per recommendation, a Coming Events Calendar and Notable Deadlines Calendar have been added to the Town Bulletin.

Election Law Improvements

- Largely as recommended by the Elections Modernization Committee, *Ordinance* revisions were passed to make absentee balloting easier and clarifying election official conflict of interest.
- Approved by a “Procedures for Absentee Balloting” Resolution drafted in cooperation with the Board of Elections Supervisors

Dog Park:

- Following the “sense of the Town” vote last May, the Town Council passed a *Resolution* providing for the establishment of the Dog Park in the West Woods site.
- A Dog Park Committee was formed by residents to advise the Council and Mayor on building and operating the Dog Park.
- A *Resolution* establishing Dog Park Rules and Regulations has been passed.
- The Dog Park site in the West Woods was cleared, and an RFP for fence construction has been issued.
- Approved the name “The Dog Spot” for the Washington Grove Dog Park.
- Fencing of The Dog Spot is completed, and opening of is expected in May.

Forest Restoration and Health:

- Supported by the Mayor and Town Council, the Woods Committee continues a three-pronged program of forest health restoration. An Informational meeting was held featuring presentations by experts on deer management and non-native invasive plant control. *Recordings may be viewed on the Town web site.*
- A survey soliciting resident input on forest restoration plans and ongoing development of a deer control plan was distributed.
- A further round of targeted cutting and herbicide treatment of non-native invasive wisteria and honeysuckle has been performed this spring by the Town’s licensed contractor.
- In cooperation with the Woods Committee, the Town’s ordinance prohibiting hunting has been modified to allow deer management bow hunts with conditions. Any hunts must be authorized by Resolution of the Town Council Town Council.
- A stormwater management consultant (Doug Lohmeyer) was engaged and has performed a preliminary review of damage in the Town woods from stormwater runoff and stagnation.
- The next step to address stormwater damage in our woods is to obtain an engineering review and recommendations. Preparation has begun to issue a Request for Proposal for a Stormwater Management Engineering Study, which will seek recommendations on how further damage can be mitigated, and how existing damage might be remediated.

Town Services:

- A new Bulk Leaf Collection contract was awarded for up to 5 years at no increase over present cost.
- Contracted for Audit Services for up to 5 years with Lindsay and Associates using the required Request for Proposal process for the first time due to increasing cost of the service.

Town Infrastructure:

- The “Jim Fletcher” Street Sign Restoration project to improve sign visibility and reflectivity, and to preserve Jim’s wonderful artwork, is nearing completion (various non-standard signs and fewer than 40 wooden signs remaining).
- A backup generator for McCathran Hall, recommended by the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC)) has been purchased, installed, and screened.
- The electrical capacity in McCathran Hall has been upgraded.
- Floor beam reinforcement beneath McCathran Hall was completed at reduced bid after

reissuing a Request for Proposals in January.

- Fire hydrants in Town have been marked with reflective tapes by EPC volunteers to facilitate location in the dark.
- The culvert and bridge to Maple Lake has been replaced and improved by Steve Werts (and well under budget!).
- A stormwater runoff management project to reduce damage from water flowing from Johnson Alley onto Acorn Street and Chestnut Road was completed by Steve Werts.

Town Roads:

- A speed bump trial at stop signs on Chestnut has reduced the frequency of excessive speed and increased safety.
- A speed hump trial on Grove Road at Oak Street has reduced the frequency of excessive speed and increased safety.
- Bids to repave multiple segments of Town roads were obtained, and a 3-year plan to complete the work was adopted, to begin this year with \$50,000 of projects.
- Repaving of Brown Street from Grove Road to Chestnut Street has been completed.
- Repaving of Hickory Road from Center Street to 206 Hickory has been completed.
- Repaving of Ridge Road between 112 and 204 has been completed.
- Two of the three speed humps on Ridge Road have been rebuilt, and the third hump will be replaced by an installed hump.
- Further trials using speed humps are anticipated in the coming months.

Oversight and Regulations

- A new *Ordinance* enables sale of town land under nine structures to property owners affected by recent Town surveys that accurately defined public right of ways of the Circle and nearby avenues.
- Two *Ordinances* that originated with the Planning Commission were passed that modify rules for fences and carports, clarify accessory building setbacks and alter requirements for building permits.
- A Code Enforcement officer has been engaged (Doug Lohmeyer).

Looking Ahead:

- The periodic ten-year revision of the Town's *Master Plan*, a formidable task that is critical for protecting, improving, and guiding Washington Grove into the future, continues on track for completion in 2019.
- Significant progress towards submitting the Town's application to expand our designation on the *National Registry of Historic Places* continues to be made by the Historic Preservation Commission and our consultants.
- Preparation has begun to issue a Request for Proposal for a Stormwater Management Engineering Study, which will seek recommendations on how further damage can be mitigated, and how existing damage might be remediated.

Added to "Looking Ahead" in Mayor's Oral Remarks:

- Develop a Street Light Conversion Plan to continue installation of energy efficient bulbs and to replace obsolete light fixtures (with the Lighting Committee).

- Begin executing a Deer Management plan to reduce damage to Woods from deer browsing (with the Woods Committee).
- Work with both the County (MCDOT) and the City of Gaithersburg who are conducting separate Bikeway Studies to cooperatively establish safe and direct multiuser/bikeway connections to the Shady Grove Metro, Grove Shopping Center and Old Town Gaithersburg.