



Stephens City Newsletter

Volume 32 Issue 1

January and February 2013

From the Mayor's Office...

Hello Citizens,

First, I'd like to thank all the council, committee members and staff for their services this past year. So far this winter, things have been rather quiet at the Town office. Santa came to visit and listened to all the children's requests. Thanks to the Business Association for sponsoring the Christmas on the Commons.

The purchase of the school property has been completed and a committee has been appointed to investigate how it can be developed. We continue to work on the routine matters of running the Town, such as preparing for the next budget cycle and water and sewer upgrades, and we are still working to meet the requirements by VDOT for the north-end enhancement project. It won't be too long until we will be looking forward to a beautiful spring and outdoor projects. Happy New Year everyone! May this year be the very best yet.

Joy Shull-Gellner - Mayor



The Christmas on the Commons was another huge success. The Town would like to thank the Stephens City Business Association for making this event possible. It was great having the Sherando Band provide a brass ensemble and the Sherando Chorus and Aylor Band performing a Christmas concert. Between the decorating of ornaments, getting some fresh baked goodies, and warming by the fire, and also with the magic of a certain special guest, a good time was had by all. We can't wait until the 6th annual event next year!

this issue

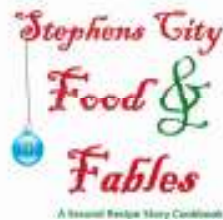
From the Mayor's Office **P.1**

Business License Renewal **P.2**

Snow Removal **P.2**

From the Town Manager's Desk **P.4**

The Planner's Corner **P.4**



The Newtown Heritage Festival is proud to present the 2nd addition of "Food & Fables" A recipe story cookbook with all new stories and recipes. Swing by the Town Office or other local businesses to pick up your copy today!

SNOW REMOVAL

Well, it seems to be the animals are storing up for the winter and there's a "buzz" on the street that we are in for a hard winter. Although this fall has been fairly mild, we just never know what weather we will get this winter. With that in mind, we thought it might be a good time to remind all citizens about their responsibilities with regard to snow removal.

Property owners or occupants must clear all public sidewalks of snow where sidewalks front their property. This must be done within 6 hours after snow has ceased to fall or no later than noon the next day if snowfall stops overnight. Please contact the Town Office if you have any questions.

Also, the Town is asking residents who are willing to volunteer to "adopt" a neighborhood fire hydrant for snow removal. If you are interested or feel you can help the Town with snow removal at hydrants, please contact the Town Office or e-mail us to let us know which hydrant you are willing to keep clear in snow related events.



BUSINESS LICENSES

Business licenses are to be renewed after January 1, 2013 through March 1, 2013. Renewal forms will be mailed to existing license holders. The cost of the business license is based on gross receipts or a minimum of \$15. **Please be sure to have your gross receipt records** available when applying for your license. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please call our office at 869-3087. Business and equipment taxes must be paid in full prior to licenses being renewed.

Town Clerk,
Dianne L. MacMillan



Frozen Water Lines

Most of the time the first place to check for a frozen water line is an exposed drafty area beneath or within your home or business. Find and be aware of where the cutoff valve is within your home. **Do not open a water meter box** unless you have contacted the Town. Town water meters are insulated and not prone to freezing.

If you have a problem with frozen water lines, during office hours you may call 540-869-3087; after hours contact 540-662-6162.



Recycled Christmas Trees will be picked up on Tuesday, January 8th and 15th, 2013

From all of the Town Council, Appointed Officials and Staff of Stephens City, we wish you and yours a joyous and prosperous New Year!



Water and Sewer Billing

Water and sewer bills for the bi-monthly billing end **Friday, December 21, 2012** and are due upon receipt.

After **Monday, February 4, 2013**, a **10% penalty** will be added. On **Monday, February 11, 2013** service will be discontinued for delinquency. A reconnect fee of **\$25** plus the full amount of the bill must be paid before service can be restored.

Just a reminder that for your convenience a night drop is available at the Town Office for dropping off check or money order payments and payments can now be made online at the Town's website. ***It is important to note that if you pay your bill online after midnight the day it is due, it will not be posted until two business days after the due date and will be subject to additional penalties.***

Water/Sewer bills can be paid using a Visa or MasterCard. If you pay a bill online after the due date, you will still be responsible for the 10% penalty and if the bill is paid after the shut off date, the \$25 reconnect fee will need to be paid as well, prior to reconnection.

DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE DROP BOX!



From the Town Manager's Desk...

This article is the first series of articles to come that will be designed to keep citizens up to date with the problems and the progress of upgrading the Town's sewer system.

With this newsletter, you just received your water and sewer bill from the Town. Well the Town also received a bill recently from the Frederick County Sanitation Authority, which operates the wastewater treatment facility that handles the Town's wastewater. This monthly sewer bill is three times higher than usual at \$17,295. This extremely high bill can be attributed to the rains associated with Hurricane Sandy and the 5-6 inches of rain that fell in the early part of November. This raises the sewer flows due to a problem that is common among many jurisdictions, called Inflow and Infiltration or (I&I), which is where ground water enters the sewer lines through small cracks or larger cracks caused by roots and the like. Another source for this additional inflow into the sewer system is sump pumps that are illegally connected. In addition to the dollar amount mentioned above, the Town also has another monthly payment of \$13,387 for debt service the

Town owes as part of our share of the cost of upgrading the Parkins Mill Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) located off of Route 522 on Opequon Creek which was completed in 2011.

In 2009 Town officials thought that the problem with I&I would be addressed with the approval of two new subdivisions on the northern part of the Town. The developers had proffered funds to replace the older sewer lines that would be used to serve their development. This proffer would be in addition to the water and sewer availability fees for each new home or business, that in return would allow the Town to address other identified I & I problems.

Now, nearly 4 years later with the sluggish housing market and the turnover of ownership in many future developments within the area, this does not seem like a realistic solution in the near future. Furthermore, as part of the settlement of the lawsuit with Frederick County, many of the funds slated for sewer line replacement were redirected to offset impacts to the county such as schools and other services that were part of the 2005 annexation agreement.

What this now means is that the Town must seek funding elsewhere to fix these major problems in the Town's sewer system. The Mulberry Street sewer line extension and service lines on the east side of Rte 11 have been identified as having a major problem with I & I. At times, such as the recent

storm event of Hurricane Sandy, more than a million gallons a day (mgd) of water found its way into the sewer lines. Charts show the flows into the pump stations and waste water plant hit like a flash flood. Keep in mind that the Town's average waste water flow is less than 0.200 mgd. In essence we are paying to treat rain water opposed to just wastewater. Replacement of the Mulberry St Line is estimated to cost \$1,200,000. Once this line is replaced the Town will increase our treatment capacity at the Parkins Mill WWTP and it will help to forestall increasing the size of the downstream interceptor line and two pump stations, which would cost millions more than replacing the Mulberry Street line.

The Town now faces major decisions on how to finance the improvements. Grants or stimulus money that was once readily available to small communities for major public works projects are few and far between and it does not seem to be a priority of our state and federal elected officials to bring these opportunities back. Leaning upon developers to pay for such improvements also seems to no longer be a solution. During the course of the year, the Council and staff will be working towards sensible solutions or maybe even innovative solutions that are both fiscally responsible and progressive with regard to the Council's goal of thinking of citizen first.

Town Manager, **Mike Kehoe**

Corner

The Planner's

2012 started off with so much promise and many of the goals that were set forth in 2012 will be a continued focus in 2013.

The North Main Street Enhancement Grant Project has taken us a lot longer than we anticipated. Normally a sidewalk/ multi-modal trail does not take this

long to complete, especially within an existing right-of-way. However, with regard to Enhancement Grant Projects, this schedule is actually about average. Plus, with regard to this project we have had to tweak our concept as well as apply for some waivers from VDOT. The project continues to move forward, just a lot slower than the Town had anticipated. It is our hope that the plans will be approved and hopefully the project will begin construction in the middle to later part of the year.

The Veteran's Memorial on the Newtown Commons is planned for construction and

dedication by Veteran's Day 2013. The Town and the Veteran's Memorial sub-committee will be working hard on fundraising at the beginning of the New Year and throughout. Residents might have noticed the new sign located at the Newtown Commons which has a fundraising thermometer, which will need to be filled in order to accomplish the construction of the Veteran's Memorial.

Another project began behind the scenes in 2012 and will be completed at the beginning of the New Year. Throughout the Town's Historic District you will see new decorative street signs replacing the existing signs. This project is made possible by a grant the Town was awarded through the Certified Local Government program. It is anticipated that the Town will also apply for funding in 2013 as well in hopes of securing funding for new Historic District signs and way finding signs for the Town.

I will also continue my work with the Stephens City Business Association in

coordinating the Hop In on the Commons and Christmas on the Commons as well as other events helping to promote the great businesses of the Town and surrounding area.

Finally the Planning Commission (PC) will wrap up the revision/ rewrite of the Town's Zoning Ordinance. There will be several meetings where the PC will be discussing the draft ordinance and will be holding Public Hearings prior to the approval of the draft ordinance at the PC and Town Council.

2013 will be a year of completing several projects within the Town of Stephens City and I hope 2013 brings you a year of completing your goals set in the New Year!

Till next time, this is the Planner's Corner.

Brian P. Henshaw
Town Planner/
Assistant Town Manager

Town Calendar of Events

January 2013

- Jan. 1 **Town Office Closed-
New Years Day**
- Jan. 2 **Town Council at 7:30pm**
- Jan. 8 Planning Commission
Work Session at 5:00 pm
Personnel Committee meeting at 5:00pm
- Jan. 15 Historic Preservation Commission
at 5:00pm
- Jan. 16 Water/ Sewer meeting at 5:30 pm
Public Works meeting at 6:00 pm
- Jan. 17 Newtown Heritage Festival at 7:00pm
- Jan. 21 **Town Office Closed -
Martin Luther King Day**
- Jan. 23 Finance Committee at 5:00pm
- Jan. 28 Parks and Recreation Committee
at 5:00pm
- Jan. 29 Planning Commission at 7:30pm

February 2012

- Feb. 4 **Penalties added to Water/Sewer Bills**
- Feb. 5 **Town Council Meeting at 7:30pm.**
- Feb. 11 **Water Shut Off Date**
- Feb. 12 Personnel Committee at 5:00pm
- Feb. 14 **Valentine's Day**
- Feb. 18 **Town Office Closed—Presidents Day**
- Feb. 19 Historic Preservation Commission
at 5:00pm
- Feb. 21 Water/ Sewer Meeting at 5:30pm
Public Works Meeting at 6:00pm
Newtown Heritage Festival at 7:00pm
- Feb. 25 Parks & Recreation Commission
at 5:00pm
- Feb. 26 Planning Commission at 5:00pm
- Feb. 27 Finance Committee at 5:00pm

*** All meetings subject to change without notice w/
the exception of the Town Council meeting.**