

**Town Hall
Upper Marlboro, Maryland**



Board of Town Commissioners

Steve Sonnett, President
Joe Hourclé, Jim Storey

THE TOWN HALL IS OPEN WEEKDAYS

Monday–Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Contact Town Hall at:
(office) 301-627-6905
(fax) 301-627-2080

(e-mail) info@uppermarlboromd.gov
(cable channel) Verizon 19
OR VISIT US ONLINE AT:
www.uppermarlboromd.gov

Town of Upper Marlboro
14211 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

SPECIAL YARD WASTE PICK-UP

Due to the extraordinary damage to trees and shrubs by the recent snow the Town will be collecting your yard debris on

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

All tree-related debris **MUST** be placed at the curb (not in the street) by 8 am, and be grouped in bundles easy enough for 1 individual to lift.

Limbs should be **NO LARGER** than 4 inches in diameter and 4 foot in length (anything larger will not be picked up)

Welcome to *Landings* . . .

A monthly newsletter from the Town of Upper Marlboro



A Monthly Newsletter from the Town of Upper Marlboro

March, 2010 vol. 5 no.2

President's Annual Report – March 2010

Town Charter Section 82-15(c) requires an annual report by the President on "... the condition of municipal affairs and make such recommendations as he deems proper for the public good and the welfare of the Town".

Overview

Since the March 2009 report, the Town is seeing increased effects of the current recession. The State has reduced the amount of Highway User revenue and Police Aid grants to the Town. The return on our investment in certificates of deposits is currently in the 2% range, about half of what it was in 2007. On the brighter side, real estate and personnel property taxes indicate steady to slightly increasing returns. Revenue from income taxes appears to be on track with last year, however, it depends on the last payment that is normally received after June 30th (the close of the current budget fiscal year).

Costs are going up. The turmoil in the financial markets has caused the funding for the State's retirement plan to fall below required levels. We have received notice that the Town will be required to increase its payment into the plan by about 3%. The high unemployment rate has also drawn down the unemployment fund below required levels, resulting in a 5% increase in required payments. While we will not know the amount of increase in health insurance premiums until May, indications are that they could be in the 20% range. We have started a complete review of our health plans to see if cost reductions are possible.

The good news is that we have a \$220,000 surplus from FY2009 that can be used to balance the upcoming FY2011 budget, should we need to. Unlike many other towns, we have not had to raise taxes, lay off employees or cut services in order to survive this financial downturn.

Town Operations

For the benefit of present and future administrations, we continue to work on streamlining operations and documenting policies and practices. To date, personnel policies and procedures have been formalized into an Employee Handbook that is currently under review by the Board of Town Commissioners. A separate Operations Manual that will document the administrative procedures of the Town, is being drafted by a graduate student intern from the University of Maryland who is working for course credit. As resources permit, we hope to make progress on an asset management system in conjunction with the FY2011 budget.

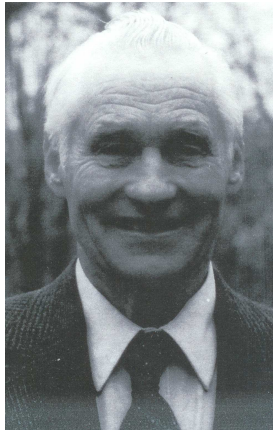
A draft of the codification of the Town's ordinances is expected to be delivered shortly. The purpose of this draft is to take the existing ordinances and put them into a more readable code form. The next step will be a complete review by the Board, with citizen input, to see what additions, deletions and corrections should be made. There are several items that I believe need to be addressed, which are: street parking on residential streets, the Town's procurement policy, ethics requirements and donations by the Town to other organizations.

After a long wait, the Town received an approved Document Retention Schedule from the State. Despite the constant reminder from the many boxes of documents in the Town Hall offices, little progress has been made in de-

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Arthur Lange

May 6, 1926—January 30, 2010



Arthur Lange, a long term employee of the Town of Upper Marlboro, passed away last month.

Long time residents will remember him as a kind person who went out of his way to keep the Town well maintained for thirty years.

His pride in the Town and dedication to its people was demonstrated in many ways.

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ciding which documents can be destroyed, which should be sent to the State Archives and which should be retained for their historical, administrative or legal value.

Park and Planning is conducting two studies at the Town's request. The first will evaluate the older western residential area of the town using the National Historic District Standard. After we receive the study, we will be holding one or more Town Meetings to decide what action, if any, the Town should take based on the study. I believe that this area of town exemplifies the overall character of our Town, and we should pay attention to what changes may adversely affect that. The second study deals with the issue of parking availability in the downtown area. Over the years, there have been several plans that proposed solutions to the parking problem in the downtown area to no avail. This new study will be taking a more pragmatic approach and will include not only an inventory of available parking, but also, what types of parking are available and how that parking is actually utilized. My hope is that we will be able to answer basic questions such as: (1) Is there a real parking shortage, or is it matter of product mix?; (2) To what extent is parking hindering increased retail entry?; and (3) Are there practical, doable solutions? In addition, we have specifically asked that our Church Street parking lot be studied as well.

The Town has acquired additional property from the County (at no cost), which is located on Old Crain Highway across the street from Town Hall. We are consulting with The Neighborhood Design Group, who will offer suggestions on how we can best transform this vacant lot into an attractive area for use by Town citizens.

The Town's Web site: <http://uppermarlboromd.gov/> has been redesigned. We are now able to post news and events with relative ease, such as, the *Landings* newsletter, street closings, snow emergency operations and Town meeting minutes and notices. The site has a *subscribe* feature which, once you sign up, will automatically notify you of any new postings to the site.

Our Police Department is in the process of switching over to the new county-wide public safety communication system. Thanks to the good work of our Chief, our Town is receiving a grant to cover the cost of six hand-held radios that will be able to operate on the new wavelength. In addition, the Town will be purchasing cruiser-mounted radios in FY2011.

We are currently conducting a comprehensive review of the Public Works Department operations. In FY2009, nearly 40% of the Town's expenditures were attributed to Public Works, so we will be exploring several options to provide the Town with these services in a more efficient and cost effective manner.

Recommendations

Over the last two years, we have noticed that many people who live in the Greater Upper Marlboro area outside of town tend to believe that they actually live in the Town. Upon explaining the difference, many of them appear disheartened and even rejected. In addition, visitors have often commented how much they love our "quaint little Town". While it seems, on the whole, that the Town is surviving the current economic downturn better than many areas, the real estate market is nearly frozen and people are coming under continued economic pressure. My recommendation, to ensure that the Town becomes an even more attractive place to live and work, is to build on this innate appeal of the Town and invest in it accordingly. During the FY2011 budget process, we will be reviewing a long list of potential investments while seeking citizen input.

For many years, with limited exceptions, the Town government has been managed by the President of the Board of Town Commissioners. While it is a fulfilling and interesting job, I have found that it demands a good working knowledge of municipal operations and requires a full-time commitment. As I do not plan to continue as President when my term expires in 2012, my concern is that there may not be a candidate with these qualifications to take over the job.

To aid in the transition to a new administration, we are working on completing an Operations Manual to be used as a reference guide for routine procedures. That, along with our Employee Handbook and codification of our ordinances, the Town government should have the tools it needs to continue operations successfully. However, in order to insure a continuation of institutional knowledge, I am recommending the Town Clerk be assigned the additional duties of Assistant to the President. In that role, the Clerk will be trained in the full range of government operations and thus, be able to assist the new President, as well as the Board of Town Commissioners more effectively. His current duties as police clerk will be transferred to the Town's Accountant, whose position will then have to be upgraded to full-time.

With these considerations in mind, I recommend that the Board of Town Commissioners establish a Government Review Commission. The purpose of the Commission would be to study and report on the sustainability of our current form of government and make recommendations for improvement. The next twenty-two months will be busy to say the least, but we are confident that they will bring about a more stable and efficient government for the citizen's of the Town of Upper Marlboro.

—Steve Sonnett

POLICE REPORT / FEB. 2010

Town Citations: 77

State Citations: 16

In-Town Incidents:

- 1 Recovered Vehicle
- 1 Theft (Co. Ad. Bldg.)
- 1 Warrant Service
- 1 Arrest (disorderly)
- 8 Vehicle Impound

Out-of-Town Incidents:

NO REPORT
AVAILABLE
AT THIS TIME

All in-Town incidents were in the downtown area and not in the residential areas.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

TOWN MEETING: Tuesday, March 9, 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public

WORK SESSION: Tuesday, March 23, 9:00 a.m., at Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public.