

At the risk of belaboring some issues we have already discussed, I would like to let you know how these issues relate to one another to form a larger picture. This is very important because they have critical long term impact on the Town.

On February 25 I will be giving my comment to the FCPC in support of our growth/annexation area. Although we have gone over this in previous newsletters, please allow me to reinforce its importance with greater detail.

From last month's newsletter you are aware, undoubtedly, of our traffic problems. But did you know that the Ijamsville Rd. Corridor Study conducted by the County predicts traffic volume of 10,000vpd by 2005 and 16,000vpd by 2020? If we do not get the County to agree with the Town for the proper comprehensive plan designation and zoning classification for the Casey/Blentlinger tract now, we will be experiencing somewhere between 10,000 and 16,000vpd when the next comprehensive planning cycle begins! Yes, this will mean more development. But the trade off is a developer funded bypass road that will direct traffic from Boyers Mill Rd. to Rt. 75. The Town will address schools, parks, libraries and other public facilities in consultation with the County through a monetary exactions permitted by law with tool called a municipal annexation agreement. This is simply a contract between the Town and developer. This is a stronger tool than an APFO because the APFO enabling legislation does not provide for such exactions. Thus, the Town will be ahead of the curve and leading the way for responsible growth. This will ensure that both schools and population are concurrent.

The other half of our plan targets the commercial and industrial properties to the South and East of town for annexation. The purpose here is to increase our commercial tax base. This will provide a balanced financial structure needed to offset our currently predominant residential base. Moreover, New Market area residents have expressed a desire for better jobs to be located here. The proximity to I-70 would be perfect location for Biotech firms. They can take advantage of an increasing well educated population as well as proximity to local colleges and universities, Ft. Detrick and federal agencies located in the metro DC area. Furthermore, this type of development is not as sensitive to the current topography that exists on these sites. This means less disruption of our current landscapes. Finally, the East County Phase V water tower can ensure adequate pressure needed for this type of industry. Needless to say this will be very difficult to pull off. It will take extreme cooperation between the Town and County. But through this planning cycle we are working towards this goal by implementing the right tools to ensure its execution.

As you know, we currently operate on a budget that has excess revenue over expenditures of \$15,000.00. This situation is almost wholly attributable to cut backs in state shared revenues such as highway funds and income tax. Thus, we were forced to increase the personal property taxes on businesses to generate an additional \$7,000.00 just to get to \$15,000.00. This \$15k reserve does not include amortization of infrastructure expenses such as road paving, storm drainage and streetlights. Have you ever wondered why the alleys in the Historic District are so bad? That's because we must save (amortize) approximately \$7,500.00 each year to pay for paving every 15-20years. This does not include streets in the village. Their cost is about \$3,500.00/yr. Furthermore, we may very likely need to entirely replace the storm drainage system in the Historic District. This will cost approximately \$161,000.00 or \$3,200.00/yr over an assumed 50 year useful life. Colonial streetlights cost

\$1,800.00 each. Their expected life is 12-15 years. This means we must save \$120.00/yr per lamp in order to replace them. Lastly, in order to repair the storm drainage problems attributable to the state highway, we may be required to take back Main Street from SHA. The deal is this. They fix the problem and complete the streetscape project and we take over operations and maintenance of the road. Without this fix we can not only fix the problems they've created, but we can not fix the alleys as well. Thus, we are between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The annual cost of the road is \$17,500.00. If you were to deduct these non cash related expenses to our budget, assuming we take over Main St., our income would be -\$16,700.00 (not including streetlamps).

Now that we're all totally depressed, let's look at some good news. I have enclosed the working copy of our capital budget. It shows the money we expect to spend on these big ticket infrastructure items and where the money will come from. The good news is that we already have the money set aside to do these projects. The total estimated cost of these projects, including water lines, is \$984,753.00. We have currently saved \$1,642,936.00. \$792,936.00 of this total comes from our excess revenues over expenditures saved up over many years. The remaining \$850,000.00 is the consideration payment received from Oak Hill Properties in exchange for waiving their commitment to build a water tower and treatment plant (not to mention a minimum of three years of operating costs) to serve their subdivision known as Royal Oaks. Their expected cost would have been over \$2 million. They will now receive water service through the New Market Water Service Area the Town established with the County at considerable savings. As you can see, the Town has \$658,000.00 (1,642,936-984,753) unappropriated in what is essentially our savings account. What do we do with this money? Spend it on daily operational expenses? Or try to keep building it up? Establish a revolving loan fund augmented with community redevelopment funds obtained through the National Historic Trusts Main Street Small Towns Program? One thing is for sure, it won't last long if we don't fix our long term financial problems. If we don't alleviate the traffic no one will want to live here. If we don't expand and diversify our commercial tax base we won't be able to maintain what we currently have. See the bigger picture now?

I have and will continue to express our problems to the County and Sen. Brinkley in excruciating detail. I think they are finally beginning to get it. I am confident they will do all in their power to work with us in order to accomplish our goal. It will be difficult and hard work. Now more than ever, we must be patient and stick together. We must put our individual agendas aside until this battle is won. "Failure is not an option."

Respectfully,
Winslow
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P.S. I would like to thank everyone who parked their vehicles at the Grange Hall during last week's snow events. You need to take your share of credit for the successful execution of our snow plan.