

2009 STATE OF THE TOWN MESSAGE

Good Afternoon and Happy New Year.

It is a pleasure for me to join with you today to present my third State of the Town message. I am proud to serve our community as Mayor and to work with a dedicated Town staff and Council who put the interests of the citizens of our community first and foremost.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the Purcellville Business and Professional Association for all that you do during the year to support our community. It is very much appreciated and noticed. Also our sincere thanks to all of the volunteers on our citizen committees and especially to John Chapman, Karl Fisher, Reggie Simms and all of the members of the Centennial Committee for a job more than well done.

It has been an exciting twelve months since I last presented my State of the Town message to you. It has been a year of great accomplishments and I look forward to the challenges that face us in the New Year. The Council, working as a team, has accomplished a great deal and while we can be proud of those achievements, we must continue to work together to move our Town forward.

Transportation

As I outlined last year on the transportation front we have made progress in a number of areas and we continue to press for long-term solutions to improve traffic in our community.

I am pleased to report that our transportation study is near completion and I anticipate adoption of its findings in the Spring. Furthermore, we have begun design of our downtown improvement project, which will include numerous pedestrian improvements. We also have engineering underway for a number of sidewalk projects in various locations throughout Town. We have installed bike racks at two locations and have erected our second bus shelter to make public transportation more attractive. We continue to work on placing additional bike racks and bus shelters in key locations.

The Council is also working with our delegation in the U.S. Senate and Congressman Frank Wolf to ensure that the Town's shovel ready infrastructure improvement projects are considered as part of the new Administration's stimulus package. On behalf of the Town this information was shared with our Federal delegation in early December.

With respect to the Southern Collector Road and improvements to the Main and Maple intersection, both of which are key to the long-term

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transportation network of our Town, we have taken the necessary steps to continue to move these projects forward.

Utilities

As I spoke with you last year the critical duty of providing a safe, reliable and sustainable supply of drinking water to our community is of utmost importance. Just as important is ensuring that we meet all Federal and State mandates on the other end of the spectrum regarding wastewater. We have made remarkable progress in both fronts.

Wastewater

I am pleased that since we last met the Town has broken ground on the expansion and improvements to our wastewater treatment plant with the project on time and on budget. This project allows us to meet the strict mandates of the Chesapeake Bay Act. The project will be substantially completed in the Spring of 2010 with full operation anticipated that Fall.

Water

The Council made significant progress as I outlined last year with adding additional water resources as identified by our Comprehensive Water Resources Study. Furthermore, we adopted new water conservation measures that provide incentives to residents and businesses to reduce water use. The Town continues to work aggressively in this area.

Very important to ensuring the quality of water supply is the protection of our watershed. As I announced last year we are working to place the nearly 1300 acres that the Town owns surrounding our reservoir into conservation easement to ensure that it will be protected forever. We owe it to future generations of Town residents to do so and I am hopeful that the easement will be adopted this Spring.

Green Park Initiative

Purcellville is a great place to live and raise a family. The Town rightfully can be proud of the efforts we have undertaken to protect the quality of life and small Town character of our community. I am proud to note we have been recently designated a "Preserve America" community by the White House. Furthermore, we were one of just 26 municipalities in the entire Commonwealth designated a "Go Green" community by the Virginia Municipal League.

We closed on our purchase of Fireman's Field in the Spring, established a web site for the park (www.firemansfield.com) and were designated for a

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special Growth Award by the Arbor Day Foundation while achieving Tree City USA status for the second consecutive year. Working with our citizens and local organizations we planted 100 trees to celebrate our 100th birthday and have set a goal of increasing our tree canopy 1% per year as a result of a tree canopy survey that was funded by a forestry grant.

To help protect that tree canopy we accepted a conservation easement on 10 acres of land along the stream valley to ensure its preservation. Our Environment Committee has begun its good work and held its first sustainability day as part of the Town-wide Tag Sale event.

While we can be most proud of these accomplishments I believe we can be a model in our County and Commonwealth. As such, I will be asking my colleagues on the Council to consider an initiative to make Fireman's Field a "Green" park.

Whether its utilizing renewable or geo-thermal energy for the skating rink or the simple task of retrofitting to energy efficient lighting I believe we can make this magnificent facility a model of environmental responsibility. We have also begun discussions internally on a street light demonstration project utilizing LED lighting technology and I am grateful to Dominion Power for their willingness to share their experience in this area with us. Also thanks are in order to Dominion Power, TMG Construction and the Locust Grove Women's Club for their monetary donations to help us make the Town Christmas Tree even more green with LED Christmas lights. It looks great!

Fiscal Responsibility

For the past two years the Council has adopted a tax rate that has either cut or equalized Town taxes. We have just completed our annual audit and I am pleased to report that once again we ended our last fiscal year with a surplus and have added to our reserves in compliance with our fiscal policies. In fact, our undesignated reserve exceeds the \$3 million goal as set forth in our policies. Our Town Manager reports this year's budget is on target with respect to expenditures and revenues.

Recognizing that our nation's fiscal condition has changed dramatically since the adoption of the budget last Spring, the Council at our December meeting amended our Capital Improvement Program by either deferring or eliminating \$9 million in this year's capital program. Furthermore, Department Heads have been directed to reduce this year's operating budget by up to 10%. Our capital programming is now complete and the Council has already taken up our Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

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Constantly working to improve and where we can emulate the private sector, the Council adopted a pay for performance program for our employees. Gone are the days of automatic cost of living adjustments. Raises are based on individual performance and merit. For the upcoming fiscal year we have doubled the contribution existing employees will pay towards health insurance and have quadrupled it immediately for new hires. It is once again our goal, barring unforeseen dramatic circumstances, to adopt a tax rate that equalizes Town taxes. The actions taken by the General Assembly this upcoming session will have an impact on our own budget deliberations.

Economic Development

Last year at my request the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee, our Planning Department, the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development and our business community held an Economic Summit.

The Council took the recommendations of the Summit seriously and adopted a number of important initiatives. These include:

- Adoption of a Community Development Authority Ordinance to help foster private/public partnerships with the 21st Street corridor as our top priority;
- Improvements to our review processes, which shave three months off the review times for site plans and subdivision plats;
- Simplified submission requirements for special use permit applications, which save time and costs;
- New tools for smaller projects: minor site plan, site plan waiver and preliminary site plan options
- A new application and checklist package streamlines application preparation and intake.

These efforts in combination with the Council's amendments to our parking, landscaping and business district zones puts our Town on track to achieving a 30% commercial tax base as set forth in our Town's Comprehensive Plan. A second Economic Development Summit will be held later this month.

On the economic development front we anticipate the ground breaking for the Cole Farm project in April. And, my congratulations to Dr. Scott Dilzer on the groundbreaking last week for his new and improved offices. Furthermore, working with the Loudoun County Design Cabinet and property owners we will be undertaking a design charette later in the year for properties at the northern terminus of North Maple Avenue.

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Critical to any community is the issue of health care. I am pleased Inova Loudoun Hospital has kept its commitment to our community with the opening of several new offices on Hirst Road. We anticipate further service improvements in the near future to meet our Town's growing health care needs.

2009 also provides great tourism economic development opportunities for Purcellville and western Loudoun. The Sesquicentennial of the Civil War will commence this Fall with a national event at Harper's Ferry. I would like to request the Business Association to consider partnering with the Town to work together to attract to our community some of the many thousands of folks who will converge on our region later in the year. I believe this can be a win-win for all concerned.

On-Line Job Bank

Certainly the global and national economies pose its challenges to the job market. As such, to assist Town residents in finding local jobs I have recommended to the Town Manager, and he has agreed, to establish an on-line job bank to assist our residents to find jobs and provide a place where Town businesses can post their job openings for free. The Loudoun County Chamber has already agreed to share this information with their members and I ask the PBPA to do the same. I am hopeful we can have this service up and running in the next several weeks.

Fair, Responsible Planning

While we took many steps to improve our business zoning districts and development process issues, we also implemented the planning map as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive remapping of our Town took more than 1,000 residential units off the planning map, which is the equivalent of taking more than 10,000 future average daily vehicle trips off our roads, and significantly reduced our long-term water demand as well. My thanks to Planning Commission Chairman Dennis Beese, the Planning Commission and planning staff for all of their hard work and to our citizens for their many comments on this proposal. This action adds significantly to the quality of life of the community in which we live.

Defending our Growth Management Contract

Last year when I stood before you the Town was fully engaged in defending our growth management contract with the County. As you are well aware, I am pleased the Town and County were able to successfully conclude its negotiations to end the litigation and adopt an agreement that is fair,

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responsible and protects the interests of the taxpayers of the Town of Purcellville.

I thank our residents for the support they have given our Council, my colleagues and former colleague, Janet Clarke, for their fortitude. I would be remiss if I did not thank Board of Supervisors Chairman Scott York for his hard work. Chairman York was the only member of the Board of Supervisors to consistently reach out to the Town to help us achieve common ground and resolution.

Specifically, the Town will be receiving \$5.78 million from the County for transportation improvements. Furthermore, we are working with the County to annex the Fields Farm property into the Town's boundaries while at the same time accessing water resources on the property.

The Town has also taken steps to ensure that the eastern and northern edges of our Town are protected. In December the Town annexed several strategically located properties that are critical to the long-term economic development and transportation infrastructure of our Town. The Town, which has a big box ordinance, Board of Architectural Review and Historic Overlay District has far more tools than the County government to address the concerns of our residents who are directly impacted.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by recognizing the men and women who serve on our Council. Tom, Greg, C.J., Jim, Steve and Joan give it their all. This is a team effort and not only do we like each other, we respect each other. I am proud to serve with them and am proud not only to call them colleagues, but friends.

This is a team that recognizes we are not playing for the name on the back of the jersey, but the team on the front. They have and continue to put the interests of our community first and foremost.

Thank you and God Bless Purcellville.