

2008 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 State of the Town message. 2008 is our Town's Centennial Year and 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 and 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.

It has been an exciting twelve months since I presented my first State of the Town message to you. 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

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 with a Council Committee dedicated to transportation, headed by Council Member Steve Varmecky, and changes in personnel in our capital projects area we have successfully completed a number of projects and have obtained new funding to move others forward. Steve continues to provide honest, thoughtful advice to our Council. It is a pleasure to work with him.

Over the last 12 months we have seen:

- The installation of two new traffic lights on Main Street, which improve access to this critical thoroughfare from our neighborhoods.
- We have obtained more than \$2 million in State assistance as we work towards our improvements at Main and Maple Avenue.
- We recently obtained preliminary approval for additional gas tax funding to help with other projects on Main Street.
- We are working with Loudoun Transit for the placement of additional bus shelters on Main Street to make public transportation more attractive to riders. We hope to see them constructed this Spring.
- We awarded the contract for our Comprehensive Transportation Study and I thank Mark Nelis and Mike Socha from Loudoun Transit

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for agreeing to serve as the citizen representatives on the Committee overseeing this important work.

- We completed our first substantial sidewalk project with a new sidewalk along South 20th Street that links several hundred families with Main Street. I am pleased to say it is well used on a daily basis.
- We completed small segments of sidewalk on Main Street at key locations giving residents for the first time the ability to walk almost the entire length of Main Street on a sidewalk.
- The Council voted unanimously to request the State to include the Southern Collector Road in the State's 6-year plan a critical step in obtaining State funding. The challenge of the SCR is that we need the assistance of the County to make this project a reality and I hope that the County will recognize the disproportionate impact on traffic they have on our community and help make this vital roadway a reality. This request is consistent with the findings of VDOT's analysis of our transportation challenges.
- We have initiated pilot traffic calming projects with the intention of undertaking similar projects in other areas of Town.

And, while it is important to put all these measures into effect, we have hired a police officer dedicated to traffic enforcement to promote better traffic safety.

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

With respect to wastewater I am pleased to report that the Council this evening will be awarding a construction contract for the upgrading and expansion of our sewage treatment plant to meet our existing and future needs. Meeting our long-term utility goals is important to ensure our business community we have the ability to serve your needs. This project will help meet forecasted in-Town by-right sewer capacity.

Just as important, I am delighted to report that due to the diligence of our staff undertaking value engineering processes at the front end of this project the contract is more than \$4.5 million less than earlier estimates. Furthermore, we have obtained a State grant in the amount of nearly \$6 million to offset the cost on ratepayers.

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Water

Clearly the region and Commonwealth have been severely impacted by the drought. As I spoke last year, the Council was in the midst of awarding a contract for a Comprehensive Water Study. I am pleased to report that under the steady leadership of Infrastructure Chairman, Dr. Jim Wiley, that study has been completed and adopted. It provides this Council and future Councils a critical roadmap for the future as we work to ensure an adequate supply of water for the short, mid and long-term.

Consistent with the Study the Council has taken steps that will provide our citizens and business community with access to up to more than 473,000 gallons of new water per day – an increase of 71%. While that sounds like a lot of water, we must continue to work to obtain additional supplies of water to meet projected long-term by-right in-Town demand.

You should be aware that our Town has not been able to meet maximum daily demand during high water use periods for more than a decade. These periods are becoming more prolonged and water use on some days exceeds 800,000 gallons per day. We still need; however, a very wet winter and spring to bring our reservoir back to normal levels. Unfortunately, that is something that has not yet occurred.

The Council will be rolling out this Spring new water conservation measures which we intend to provide incentives to residents and businesses to reduce water use. Additionally, we will be undertaking enhanced educational efforts.

Very important to ensuring the quality of water supply is the protection of our watershed. Now that our Water Study has been completed I will be asking the Council to move forward with placing 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.

Green 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.

Our purchase of Fireman's Field with a conservation easement placed on the property by the Fire Department will forever protect our Town's own Field of Dreams. We are grateful to the men and women of Company 2 who worked with the Town to make this critical project a reality. It has allowed us to have such fun events as an outdoor Family Movie Night bringing free

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entertainment to our families. And, as always, we were proud to host the Babe Ruth World Series.

Additionally I am pleased to note that the owners of Crooked Run Orchard Farm have placed their in-Town property in conservation easement. This action, supported by the Town, will forever protect this portion of a century farm. Therefore, 2007 saw the two properties specifically called out in the Town's Comprehensive Plan to be protected acted upon.

We achieved Tree City USA status for the first time and will be embarking this Spring on a tree-planting program that will plant 100 trees throughout Town to help celebrate our Centennial. We are undertaking this effort working with local organizations and HOAs. Furthermore, we were awarded a forestry grant to undertake an evaluation of our tree canopy and devise additional strategies to protect it for the future. We anticipate that project to be completed by June.

While we can be pleased with this work, I believe we can and should do more to help residents and business owners alike regarding environmental protection. As such, I have requested and I am pleased to say he has accepted, the Chairman of our Board of Architectural Review, Mike Purcell, to head up an effort on behalf of the Town to review our ordinances and other activities to see where we can provide incentives to promote more environmentally friendly activities.

The Committee, which will be made up of representatives from the Planning Commission, Economic Development Advisory Committee, our Tree and Beautification Commission, the Town Council and I hope a representative of the Business Association will be charged with making recommendations to the Council.

Fiscal Responsibility

Last year with the hard work of the Town Staff and Council the Town was able to adopt an equalized tax rate budget for the current fiscal year. We have just completed our annual audit and I am pleased to report that we ended our last fiscal year with a surplus and have added to our reserves in compliance with our fiscal policies. This year's budget is on target with respect to expenditures and revenues.

The Council through thoughtful planning and hard work eliminated any reliance on assessment increases to balance the budget. The Town Manager has informed me that as the result of this hard work and barring any unforeseen massive cutbacks in State Aid, that he will be submitting an equalized tax rate budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

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Key to our fiscal success has been the work of our Ways & Means Committee under the capable leadership of Council Member Greg Wagner. Greg has done a great job in keeping our staff focused and results oriented. Furthermore, his active role in meeting with the owners of business properties critical to our long-term economic success is a testament to his quiet style of leadership.

Economic Development

The overall goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is to achieve a 30% business tax base. Last year we undertook a number of changes to our processes in an effort to provide better customer service to our residents and business community. It is an ongoing effort and we can always do better.

In that light, the Council voted to make a new investment in our Planning Department by adding an additional planner to provide more responsive service to our customers. I am pleased to report that experienced personnel who share the Town's vision and commitment to service have filled the new position and the vacancy caused by Wayne Lee's move to Frederick County government.

I am also pleased to report that the Council has adopted changes to our parking ordinance and about to make amendments to our landscaping ordinance to provide flexibility in our business districts with respect to redevelopment. These have been long sought after changes. My thanks to Commission Chairman Dennis Beese and the members of the Commission for their hard work on these very detailed proposals. We will also be hiring outside assistance to develop additional amendments to our business district zones by June of this year.

To help achieve our economic development goals, the Council voted unanimously to adopt a recommendation from our Economic Development Advisory Committee to implement a façade improvement grant program. The program, which will need fiscal support from the Town, is meant to assist small business owners make improvements to their storefronts. The program provides for up to a 50% match in an amount not to exceed \$2500 – it is the first of its kind in Loudoun.

To further enhance our economic development efforts I will be asking our Economic Development Advisory Committee, our Planning Department in concert with the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development and our business community to hold an Economic Summit this Spring. The goal of the Summit is not only to share information, but to work to develop the private/public relationships to recruit the many retail businesses and

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services we know from our own data can be supported by our community and surrounding community.

We have also made as one of our top projects for the fiscal year developing a private/public partnership along the 21st Street corridor to stimulate additional economic development. We must continue to work to invest in our downtown.

Public Safety

One of the proudest moments we as a Town can celebrate is the fact that our Town Police Department won a statewide award from the Virginia Municipal League for our youth outreach activities. It was our first-ever award of this magnitude. With a proactive Chairman of the Council's Public Safety Committee, C.J. Walker, we have made critical investments in equipment and most importantly training.

From working with our youth, being responsive to citizen and business community concerns to our coordination with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Purcellville is a safe place to live and do business. I can tell you that under the leadership of our Chief, Darryl Smith, and the men and women of the Department we are blessed to have one of the finest Police Departments in the Commonwealth.

While I have specifically mentioned four of my colleagues I would be remiss if I did not recognize the hard work of both Council Member Tom Priscilla and Council Member Janet Clarke. Both have been instrumental in the success of our Council and I can say without reservation our community is lifted up by their service to our Town government.

Defending our Growth Management Contract

Finally, I would like to briefly speak about the protection of our growth management contract with the County.

As you know, the Town working with the County through the PUGAMP process has successfully brought the property for the Fire/Rescue facility into Town limits. We are working with the County through the PUGAMP process for the Upper Loudoun Youth Football League stadium project as well.

As such, I once again urge the County to continue forward with the PUGAMP process to work with the Town regarding the balance of the property located at Fields Farm. This simple request of working with us has been the consistent position of the Town since 2000. I believe the

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County of Loudoun deserves an answer to their annexation request and the Town is willing to facilitate the public process so they can receive one.

To foster improved communication between Loudoun's seven Towns and the County, I have requested the Board of Supervisors to create a formal Committee on Towns. Furthermore, just like our Town Council, which holds a planning retreat on an annual basis, I will be respectfully requesting the County to hold a similar retreat with all of the Towns. I believe we would all be beneficiaries of this kind of joint work effort.

Conclusion

Like many a young man of my generation I was an avid baseball fan and participant in Little League baseball. I was lucky to have as the Coach on several of my teams my late dad. Dad understood what it took to impart on his young son and his fellow players what it meant to be part of a team.

His advice, like that given by many a parent was simple: "You are not playing for the name on the back of the jersey, but for the team on the front." That is what your Town Council, our Commissions, Town staff and volunteers are doing on a daily basis: they are working hard for the residents of our Town with a jersey proudly emblazoned with Purcellville across the front. Simply put, we recognize its not about us as individual members of Council - its about us as a community.

Thank you and God Bless Purcellville.