

## 2011 State of the Town Address

Good afternoon and Happy New Year.

It is my pleasure to join you to present my State of the Town remarks. I appreciate the Purcellville Business and Professional Association's invitation and sincere thanks to Patrick Henry College for hosting us. As always the Council deeply appreciates all that the Association, its members and the College do to make Purcellville a great place to live and raise a family.

I would like to touch on seven topics today.

### **Economic Development**

I cannot overstate the importance of our business community to the wellbeing of our Town. The Town has undertaken a number of process and ordinance amendments to better ensure predictability, timeliness and flexibility. Furthermore, as I announced last year at this event, the Town has expanded the number of positions on our Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to provide more representation for our business community. These positions have been filled.

It is through such efforts as reaching out to the business community that netted great results. I am pleased to report the joint efforts the Council, EDAC, our citizens and businesses engaged in were recognized with a State-wide achievement award. Not only did our joint effort result in tangible process changes and critical information sharing, but also it was recognized as a model for our Commonwealth.

Further independent verification of the outstanding economic development progress we have made can be found in the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development Report entitled, "State of the Towns 2010".

The report states, "The seven towns had a greater increase in the number of business licenses issued than the rest of the County combined 442 to 312. They also increased their share of overall business licenses in the County from 17.96% to 19.3%, further demonstrating the towns to be hotspots for entrepreneurship and business growth." I am pleased that Purcellville represented more than 30% of those business licenses.

Further, the report goes on to state, "The towns clearly are hubs for economic activity, serve as great locations to start and grow a business, and offer quality of life amenities that people search out when choosing a location for their home or business."

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While we can be happy with the positive economic growth we have seen in our Town, we cannot be complacent. As such, I would like to touch on a number of areas to share with you.

Over the past several years the Council has undertaken the necessary planning, zoning and capital infrastructure improvements to provide a strong foundation upon which economic development can occur.

With our Planning Director recently leaving Town government to take over the helm of our sister Town, Middleburg, this recent staff change provides the Council with the opportunity to revamp the position into a business development role. I am pleased to report we have received over 70 resumes for this position and are closing in on a short list of final candidates.

While we have seen exciting changes on Main Street with three critical economic development projects – RiteAid, Harris-Teeter and Loudoun Valley Shopping Center, I am just as excited about our historic downtown as well.

The Town is now out to bid for Phase 1 of our downtown improvement project. We expect construction to begin in the Spring. I want to personally thank Mayor Bill Druhan for his role in recognizing the strength of our downtown through his leadership that led to our first downtown plan.

It is this plan that served as the basis of our grant applications that have provided more than \$1 million in Federal funding for this project. The grant application request for Phase 2 has already been submitted.

We are, however, not stopping there.

With the renewed energy of several merchants and property owners in our downtown, we are proactively working to improve traffic flow and parking on 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The Council is delighted the businesses worked together to come to consensus on recommended improvements. I am pleased to say – we have heard you. We are taking those plans to the next step and are making the investment necessary to make them a reality.

### **Strong Fiscal Performance**

With strong fiscal discipline and management the news from Town Hall once again is positive.

We ended fiscal year 2010 with a surplus of more than \$640,000, the Town's largest, and in keeping with our fiscal policies the Town's rainy day fund has grown to \$4.4 million. Furthermore, the Council for four

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consecutive years the Council has adopted a tax rate that either equalizes or cuts Town taxes.

In recognition of the Town's outstanding performance our Consolidated Annual Financial Report and budget received national awards. Fewer than 1% of the municipalities of our size in the entire nation have been so recognized. Purcellville is the smallest jurisdiction in Virginia to receive a Distinguished Budget Award.

As outlined in the State of the Towns 2010 report from the County the report remarks on the positive fiscal impact Towns have on our County as a whole. The report states, "In many areas, the towns provide services to their residents, offloading the additional cost burden from the county. This includes, but is not limited to, separate police services in Leesburg, Middleburg and Purcellville. The cost of these services by the towns can be viewed as savings to the county."

And, if I may add, I am so very proud of the men and women of our Police Department. The service they provide on a daily basis is a critical element of the quality of life we enjoy as a community.

### **Transportation**

Much is happening on the transportation front and I am excited by the progress we are making with long planned transportation improvements. Some of these improvements were adopted as part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan more than thirty years ago.

With respect to the Southern Collector Road the Town is taking the necessary steps to complete this long-planned and needed roadway. We appreciate the public support of the Business Association, Loudoun County Public Schools and the Purcellville Volunteer Fire Department and our residents in these efforts.

Transportation, however, is not just about cars. I am pleased to report we have completed acquisition of the easements necessary to move forward with our North Maple Avenue sidewalk and trail improvement project. Furthermore, the Council will be moving forward to obtain the easements for our North 23rd Street project to connect the Country Club and Catoctin Meadows neighborhoods to our downtown with one sidewalk. And, recently the Town completed a pedestrian and drainage improvement project on East D Street that continues this priority to link residents to other neighborhoods.

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### **Critical Infrastructure**

Ensuring that the Town's critical infrastructure meets all federal and state requirements and is sized to meet the long-term demands of our residents and business community, I am pleased to report the Town's upgrade to our waste water treatment plant has been completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

Furthermore, our maintenance facility is completed as well. This modern facility, replaces a 50-year old derelict garage, will serve our community a long time and will provide operational efficiencies to allow our public works department to more cost effectively serve our Town and protect and maintain the very valuable equipment that serve our citizens.

### **Protecting the Environment**

Once again our Town won a "Go Green" award from the Virginia Municipal League. Furthermore, we again achieved Tree City USA status with a growth award. Council Liaison to our Tree and Beautification Committee, Tom Priscilla, reports to me that last year more than 1,400 trees were planted within Town. What an outstanding effort.

Our continued community shred and prescription drug collection program was a success. As such, we will once again combine the two for a collection program - you can empty out your old file cabinet and medicine cabinet at the same event.

Protecting our environment not only has quality of life benefits, but saves taxpayers money as well. Our pilot LED Street Light program is being expanded with the receipt of a Federal grant, which will allow for the installation of 42 LED Street Lights on Main Street. Upon installation Purcellville will have the largest pilot program in the Commonwealth of Virginia and we are grateful to our private sector partner, Dominion Power, for working with us to make this a reality.

### **Purcellville Pride**

There is much to take great pride in our community. The Town government is committed to ensure the actions we take preserve and protect the small town character and quality of life. We are thankful for our citizen volunteers who help in these efforts.

The structures that make Purcellville a unique place are important to maintain and protect. As such I am pleased to report that both the historic Bush Tabernacle and Train Station are now both listed on the National

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Register of Historic Places. This action is consistent with the long stated goals of our Comprehensive Plan.

Our renovations to the Tabernacle have been completed and it is well used. The renovated Tabernacle provides a unique venue in Northern Virginia for special events and meetings. We are partnering with the leadership of Visit Loudoun to discuss how it can be better utilized.

As you know, we were pleased to use this historic facility for the 2010 Babe Ruth World Series, which was a huge success. And, I am happy to report Purcellville has been once again awarded the World Series for 2013, which we are happy to host at what we consider the best amateur baseball field on the East Coast. In February, the Tabernacle will play host to the first ever Loudoun Grown Expo that is being sponsored by the Town.

Furthermore, I must give sincere thanks to Paul McCray and the members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for their successful “Rock the Field” events that brought literally hundreds of families to Fireman’s Field for free entertainment.

As a Town we are fortunate to have an active faith community that adds so greatly to the quality of life of our Town. The multi-faith “Tree of Life” ministry, which encompasses a food bank and job seekers program, is a great example of how our faith community works together in a common mission to address critically important issues. This ministry has partnered with groups as the Boys Scout and Upper Loudoun Youth Football League to help collect literally tons of food for those who are less fortunate. To all that contribute to this worthy cause, thank you.

### **Citizen Feedback**

For the first time ever the Town undertook a Citizen Survey to engage our citizens to get their direct feedback on the services we provide and to our business community as well. Rob informs me the results from the Citizen Survey are very positive and a report will be released shortly.

### **Performance Dashboard**

While the citizens and business community have provided us with their feedback, I believe it is important that we as a Town provide additional data to our citizens that outline the level of effort being undertaken by their Town government. As such we will be developing a web accessible performance dashboard to provide our citizens and business community with information on key elements of Town government service we provide. Our staff is working to outline the categories of data to be provided and it is a project I hope we can preview before the end of this fiscal year in June.

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### **Conclusion**

In conclusion I would like to thank the members of the Council who have stood together time and again for undertaking the sometimes difficult, but necessary work of governing. Working together this unique group of men and women have worked to successfully address some of the most complex issues facing any municipality in our Commonwealth. I am proud to serve with them.

We are also fortunate as a community to have a dedicated, loyal and hard working staff. They like the Council put the needs of the community ahead of their own personal self-interests. I know speaking for the Council we are eternally grateful.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not take the time to publically thank Carolyn, my wonderful wife, and Kathryn our daughter for their support of my efforts. In fact, I thank all of the families of our Council Members, Commission members, volunteers and staff for their support of their spouses. Without their support and understanding it would make a difficult job, even more challenging. We are grateful for their support.

Thank you once again for allowing me to join with you today.

God Bless Purcellville.