

2014 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.

All I can say is, what a great year 2013 was for our community.

Transportation

As you know, the debate in Richmond regarding the development of sustainable financing for transportation dominated the legislative session and news. It is an issue of critical importance to our State, Region and County. And, I am pleased to report our Town is a beneficiary of the legislation that was ultimately adopted.

With full credit to former Governor Bob McDonnell, the legislation was amended by the Governor at the request of the Towns, to provide those of us in Northern Virginia responsible for road maintenance an allocation of funding. For us in Purcellville, it means more than \$300,000 a year in new, reliable transportation funding with an additional minimum allocation of approximately \$900,000 a year for projects in the Town deemed to have regional significance.

After more than 30 years of public input and planning, the long awaited Southern Collector Road was opened in June. Thank you to the Purcellville Business Association for your support of this project.

I am pleased to report more than 4,000 vehicle trips a day are already using the roads. With more than 10,000 residential units that can be developed in the County in the rural policy area, this road will become increasingly important to our community for many years to come.

2014 State of the Town Address

We completed a major reconstruction of Country Club Drive with traffic calming elements and completed a resurfacing of the Town maintained portion of Hirst Road an important road in our transportation network.

Our efforts to improve pedestrian access and safety continue to move forward. We are thankful to our Supervisor, Janet Clarke, for obtaining funding for the Town to complete a critical link of sidewalk to provide access to the Blue Ridge Middle School along A Street. Furthermore, we anticipate the long planned sidewalk on East Main Street to be put out to bid in the late winter, early spring. More than two miles of new sidewalk and paths have been placed in Purcellville over the last several years.

Furthermore building on the success of our long planned and well-received Downtown Improvement Plan, we received the last allocation of funding for Phase 2 from our partners in the State. We appreciate the Association's support of this project as well. The project will address long-standing drainage, handicapped access and sidewalk improvement issues. We anticipate this project will be out to bid in the near future.

While the Town Council had no role or vote in the expansion of Metro to Loudoun its planned arrival to Ashburn in 2018 will certainly have an impact as it makes our community 20 minutes closer to Tysons or Washington, D.C. I believe the impact over time will be as substantial as the Greenway when it opened. With that in mind, I believe it is important we look to the future how our community is served in terms of public transit to the future Metro stations in Loudoun.

As such, I have asked our own Loudoun Transit and they have agreed, to partner with us to receive citizen input on future public transportation access from Purcellville to the Metro stations. We are far better served by understanding consumer demand for the service and working to design

2014 State of the Town Address

something that would be well received as opposed to telling the commuter/consumer this is what we are doing.

Furthermore, looking at traffic demand management, I am proposing the Town establish a pilot program in our downtown parking lot to provide real time data to consumers and merchants with respect to the availability of parking spaces. It would be as simple as looking at your smart phone with respect to available parking in our lot.

A Great Place to do Business

With more than 90% of our business licenses being held by independent, non-chain businesses our small business community is thriving. Over the past two years more than 600 private sector jobs have been created in our Town. This is consistent with our effort to help achieve at a minimum a 30% business tax base as adopted in our Comprehensive Plan.

Standard & Poor's recognized that strength when it rated our Town's fiscal health and opined, "We consider Purcellville's broad and diverse economy very strong..." We should not be apologetic about those businesses that have chosen to locate here, invest their capital, expand and create jobs in our community.

In fact, this past year we made changes to our parking and landscape ordinances to better serve the community at large. And, we launched our Shop Purcellville program to help promote our Town's small business community.

I am proud to report as part of this program, which launched last April, we created a web site, collateral materials for program participants,

2014 State of the Town Address

undertook print advertising and distributed more than 14,000 discount cards. And, more than 80 local businesses participate in the program.

Tourism

An important component of the lifeblood of our business community is the number of visitors who come to our Town as either a direct destination or as part of a tourist visit to western Loudoun. Tourism is a \$1 billion plus industry in Loudoun County. In that respect I am proud of our relationship with Visit Loudoun and what it has meant to our Town.

With the support of Visit Loudoun and a number of wineries our Visitors Center in the Train Station was an unqualified success. For the May through October period I am delighted to report that 1,273 visitors from 20 different states and 3 countries stopped in to the Center. In addition, a number of our Loudoun wineries were present to provide tastings and bottle sales. Each visitor was offered a Loudoun wine map, a Shop Purcellville listing and card and map of restaurants.

Our Town sponsored special events are quickly making a positive reputation for themselves and have literally drawn thousands to our Town. I am proud our inaugural Wine & Food Festival won a statewide award. Just the Loudoun Grown Expo and Wine and Wine and Food Festival last year drew more than 10,000 visitors to our Town. The Tabernacle and Fireman's Field facility brings an estimated 100,000 folks to our community on annual basis. And, how about a nice round of applause for our Loudoun Babe Ruth team that won the World Series right here on their home field.

The economic impact of these events cannot be diminished. I am pleased to reveal for the first time an economic analysis provided for us by Virginia

2014 State of the Town Address

Tech for the 2013 Wine and Food Festival. We are grateful to the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development for partnering with us on this study.

The study revealed that for the five hour event approximately \$177,000 in spending occurred as the direct result of the Festival. Further the study indicates that approximately \$111,000 of that spending occurred with Purcellville businesses. Outside of the obvious fiscal impacts, the Festival allows us to highlight our Town and I look forward to the 3rd Annual Festival in July.

To continue our emphasis in drawing visitors to our business community, our Economic Development Advisory Committee is working on a Tourism Plan for our Town. Having a plan will allow us to apply for State grants for our programs and events. I look forward to receiving that plan later in the Spring.

Working with our partners in the County and the Northern Virginia Community College I am pleased to report we have submitted a grant to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Forestry to help us develop a business plan for a proposed “Enology and Viticulture Center”. As you recall, I proposed this Center in my speech last year.

As Standard & Poor’s cited, “Purcellville, known as Washington’s wine country, has 40 wineries within minutes of its historic downtown.” The Center will help us continue our work to see this important segment of our local rural economy prosper and grow well into the future.

2014 State of the Town Address

Public Safety

I am proud of the efforts of our outstanding Police Department to keep our community safe. This fiscal year we expanded our Department by one officer, but more importantly, my Council colleagues and I were proud to stand with the men and women of Department when they received their reaccreditation.

Reaccreditation is not automatic. In fact, this round some lost their accreditation.

Purcellville is one of the smallest Departments in the Commonwealth to achieve accreditation and I am proud of the investments in personnel, equipment and training we have made over the years in our Department.

Triple A Bond Rating

As I said earlier, 2013 has been an outstanding year and this Fall our many years of planning and hard work to strengthen our fiscal condition and local economy was well awarded when the Town went into the bond market for the first time. As you know, we were awarded AAA by Standard & Poor's. Purcellville is the smallest municipality in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia to achieve that status.

My colleagues and I were delighted when Moody's Investors Service stated, "Moody's believes that the town's financial position will remain healthy, given the town's history of conservative fiscal management." Fitch recognized our efforts to grow our rainy day fund when they opined, "Reserves remain strong offering a cushion against unanticipated budgetary pressures."

2014 State of the Town Address

The result of our strong fiscal position is allowing us to retire more than half of our General Fund debt in ten years time. And, Fiscal Year 13 ended with a strong position allowing us to add to our rainy day fund by nearly \$500,000.

For our residents, this strong fiscal position has allowed us to either hold the line or cut taxes for 6 consecutive years. The average homeowner is paying \$42 more in Town property taxes than they were in 2006 or a \$6 a year increase while maintaining and improving Town services.

Considering the depth of the Great Recession this is a record we can be proud of.

We begin our planning for the fiscal year 2015 budget in strong standing and I expect the Town Manager will be submitting a responsible, sustainable long-term plan that will allow us to reduce utility rates.

The fact of the matter is that nearly 70% of our long-term investments have been made in our utility system to meet treatment standards, environmental regulations and demand. We are charged with on an annual basis of producing and treating more than 200 million gallons of water. We must get it right every day, every time.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated staff at our water plant and wastewater plant that do so. They should be very proud of the work they do, I am certainly proud of them.

Recognizing our Volunteers

As was recently demonstrated at our successful Christmas in Purcellville program, we are fortunate as a community to have such a dedicated cadre

2014 State of the Town Address

of volunteers. Whether it's the brave men and women who volunteer in our Fire Department or Rescue Squad, those who help serve a meal at the Tree of Life food pantry or quietly help at their local church we are blessed with volunteers making a positive difference in their community.

As such and after discussion with Business Association President Bowman, this March at the PBA's Annual Meeting luncheon, we will recognize an outstanding volunteer and/or volunteer organization that is making a positive difference in Purcellville. This is one small way that we in the Town government and the business community can join together to say thank you.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to thank the members of the Council. I am proud to serve with them.

We are also fortunate as a community to have a dedicated, loyal, award-winning 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.

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.

I am proud of all we have accomplished together.

2014 State of the Town Address

Purcellville has placed more land in conservation easement, some 1500 acres protected forever from development, than any Town in the entire Commonwealth. We have doubled our water supply to ensure the days of mandatory restrictions are a thing of the past. We achieved a Triple A bond rating right out of the box. We have seen more than two miles of sidewalks placed. Thousands of trees have been planted. We have created a positive business environment where small, local businesses thrive. And, we have won national, state and local awards for environmental protection, historic preservation, management and budget. There are many other things we can be proud of.

Finally, I would like to take the time to say thank you to the PBA and its members for all of your support of our community. The businesses in our Town support so many efforts. Whether it is sponsoring our local sports teams, high school scholarship programs or quietly helping a family in need you are always there to help out. The PBA is an important part of the community we love.

It is the Town Council working with our staff and with the active support of the business community and our citizens we have been able to accomplish these things and much more in a positive atmosphere.

In conclusion, I am pleased to report the State of our Town is strong, our future bright. Working together it can only be brighter.

God Bless Purcellville.