



WINTER/SPRING 2017

## LET'S TALK: INTERVIEW WITH THE MAYOR



### Walter James

#### How long have you been Mayor of Bladensburg?

I started my public service with the Town of Bladensburg as a Town Council member in 2003 and was elected by the residents of the Town to proudly serve as their Mayor in 2005.

#### Why did you want to serve as Mayor?

I began serving my community at the age of 12 and in doing so I developed a passion for service to others in order to improve their quality of life. My faith has also taught me the value and importance of giving of one's self, and by doing so, you are able to help lift up your fellow man. As Mayor I understand that success requires a team effort and I recognize the value of working collaboratively with all community stakeholders to ensure we are making a positive difference. I am dedicated to ensuring that the leadership for the Town of Bladensburg works collaboratively to create the best community for our residents and the community at-large.

#### Tell us a little about you and your family?

##### Where did you get your start?

I am a man of humble beginnings. I come from Cape Charles, Virginia, a small town on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. I have always had a heart for community service. As the oldest of three children I started my community service work at the age of 12 assisting in organizing community health fairs on the Eastern Shore. After high school I moved to the DC/Maryland Metro area to attend college at Howard University where I graduated with my bachelor's degree in International Business. It was at Howard that I met my lovely wife, First Lady, Kisha James, and from this union we have an amazing daughter, Imani James.

#### How did your experience at Howard University (HU) prepare you for civic leadership?

My experience at Howard University was a real defining moment for

me. It was a time of growth, where I learned a real sense of knowing who I am as a man and what I have to offer to the world. HU was a time of deep discovery of self and one's value in changing our world for the better. My time as a student at HU empowered me to move forward in life with an assurance of who I am and what I could become if I put God first and stayed focused and remained a person of character and integrity. My understanding of what a community is about was ingrained in me as a young man growing up on Virginia's Eastern Shore, but my commitment to service was further cultivated during my time at Howard. To this day, I still live by Howard University's motto "Veritas et Utilitas, Truth and Service.

#### What are your short term and long term goals for the Town of Bladensburg (TOB)?

My short term goals are to change the perception of Bladensburg by continuing the process of branding and positioning Bladensburg as a vibrant and exciting destination that offers superior services and opportunities to all community stakeholders in a clean and safe environment, promoting redevelopment, investment and diversity. As an ongoing and long-term goal, I am committed to making our Town a competitive destination for future economic and redevelopment opportunities by putting policies in place that will encourage developers to invest in our community and attract quality business and retail establishments to the Town of Bladensburg.

#### What has been your greatest accomplishment since your tenure as TOB Mayor?

*"My greatest accomplishment so far as Mayor has been inspiring the next generation to be great. When speaking with youth in our community I hear this comment frequently and it is incredibly humbling."*

#### What are some of your favorite places to go/visit in Town of Bladensburg?

The Town of Bladensburg is fortunate to have many great assets available for our residents and visitors to take advantage of, but a few of my favorite places include the Town of Bladensburg Community Center, the Volunteer Fire Department, visiting our many Seasoned Citizens' residential complexes, the Bladensburg Waterfront Park and Trail System as well as our many historic sites!

#### If you could describe yourself in two words, what would they be?

*"Dedicated Servant-Leader"*



# Town Administrator

## TOWN OF BLADENSBURG 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**A**s the Town Administrator for Bladensburg I have the privilege of observing first-hand the dedication and commitment our Town staff has in delivering superior services to the community. Town of Bladensburg staff work tirelessly to make sure our residents and businesses receive the best possible service. As I looked back over 2016 I quickly realized the list of their accomplishments would easily fill-up several pages. Unfortunately due to space limitations I can only highlight a few of the many projects this extraordinary team worked on during 2016.

1. Secured a \$750,000 grant through the Community Legacy Grant program to purchase 11 Big Belly Trash Receptacles that were distributed between several Collaborative Partners, two of which were installed in the Town of Bladensburg.
2. During the 2016 calendar year, Lt. Flynn and Pat McAuley, our Town Clerk, applied for and were awarded \$1,315,102 in grant funding for Capital Improvement projects and grants to assist Town residents with upgrading their homes to be more energy efficient.
3. Staff reestablished the distribution of the Town's Quarterly Newsletter, including translating the newsletter into Spanish to ensure information is shared with as many of our residents as possible.
4. Started the upgrades to the Town Park, as part of the Maryland Energy Weatherization Grant.
5. Recertified the Town of Bladensburg as a Sustainable Community.
6. Hired the Town's first Marketing Coordinator to promote the Town's assets
7. Our Marketing Coordinator improved and increased our community outreach.
  - a. Identified and began utilizing social media platforms to expand the Town's community outreach, including the creation of Town of Bladensburg Facebook page; posting information about what is happening in the Town of Bladensburg
  - b. Designed and developed weekly news E-blast to keep residents informed of Town meetings, Mayor and Council Work Sessions, Announcements, Events Job Opportunities, Newsworthy items etc.
  - c. Created and Designed the Town's print quarterly newsletter, informational promotional materials/flyers to keep town residents informed.
8. Contracted with a website design firm to redesign the Town's

website (**Launch Date is Early May 2017**).

9. Our Code Enforcement staff continued to provide exemplarily service to the community including:
  - a. Assisted Public Works with the removal of over 29 inches of snow from Town Streets and sidewalks during the Blizzard of 2016.
  - b. Responded to over 1500 calls for Service.
  - c. Collected over \$ 76,000 in Business, Liquor and Sign Licenses fees.
10. The Police Departments COP's division successfully coordinated and assisted with several events, including:
  - a. National Night Out in collaborated with our neighboring Port Town Communities.
  - b. Autumn Woods and Hamlet Woods Community Days
  - c. Launched a Lunch with a Cop at the elementary schools
  - d. Coordinated the Police Departments Annual Shop with a Cop where 27 youth participated (they were able to secure a \$3,000 contribution from Walmart).
  - e. Coordinated a Town Halloween event, with over 100 residents and children coming out to participate in the event.
  - f. Hosted in collaboration with the Prince Georges County's Economic Development Corporation a "Re-Entry Seminar" to assist residents with a record on how to apply for jobs, where to get job training, how to address their record on their resumes and how to present themselves when seeking employment opportunities.

### 11. The Police Department:

- a. Applied for reimbursement of funds through FEMA for Winter Storm Jonas. FEMA reimbursed the Town \$13,000.
- b. increased the use of Social Media to alert residents of police incidents and to notify the community of upcoming events coordinated through the Police Department.

### 12. The Public Works staff worked hard to keep the Town clean and beautiful including:

- a. Filling 27 pot holes.
- b. Mowing and maintaining 9.5 acres of Town owned property.

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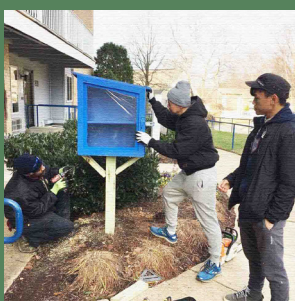




## TAKE ONE - LEAVE ONE LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Town of Bladensburg kicked off 2017 with the completion of 'Little Free Libraries' in January. With the help of Town of Bladensburg Public Works Department, Eagle Scout Guillian Canete has built four bird house libraries in four different locations throughout the Town:

- Bladensburg Tot Lot
- Libraries at American Legion Camp
- Two at Autumn Woods Apartment



If you have spotted any of the 'Little Free Libraries' in town or have borrowed/shared a book, please let us know on Facebook @TOBladensburg/ Town of Bladensburg or e-mail [cdureke@bladensburg.net](mailto:cdureke@bladensburg.net)

## Upcoming March/April Meetings

**March 13, 2017**

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION – 5:30 PM

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 PM

Location – Town Hall

**March 15, 2017**

SPECIAL COUNCIL WORK SESSION – 6:00 – 7:00 PM

Presentation by Ernest Maier to discuss request for Special Exception Permit to build a Batching Plant on their current site located at 4700 Kenilworth Avenue

Location – Town Hall

**March 22, 2017 – 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning

Rosina Baldi Park Community Meeting

Location – Town Hall

**March 27, 2017 – 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

PUBLIC HEARING

Ernest Maier – Request for Special Exception Permit to build a Batching Plant on their current site located at 4700 Kenilworth Avenue

Location – Town Hall

**March 28, 2017 – 6:30 to 8:00 PM**

TNI MEETING

Location – Town Hall

**April 10, 2017**

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION – 5:30 PM

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 PM

If you would like a copy of the newsletter in spanish, please contact Town Hall at 301-927-7048 or e-mail [cdureke@bladensburg.net](mailto:cdureke@bladensburg.net)

## EX-REDSKINS CB BRYON WESTBROOK HIRED AS NEW FOOTBALL COACH AT BLADENSBURG HIGH SCHOOL

The school announced in January that it has hired former Washington Redskins cornerback Byron Westbrook as its football coach, moving on from Lester Overton after a three-year stint.

Westbrook, a 32-year-old Fort Washington native, played football at DeMatha and Salisbury University before signing with Washington as an undrafted free agent. He played three seasons for the Redskins, from 2009 to 2011.



"I know everyone's worrying about the record, and winning games. I'm focused on just impacting these kids. Helping these guys become great men," Westbrook said. "Success is creating a winning culture both on and off the field ... that will breed wins."



**Town of Bladensburg**

# DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUM



**SAVE THE DATE**

**MAY 10 2017**  
**6:30PM - 7:30PM @ BLADENSBURG TOWN HALL**

We invite You to Join our Department Heads to learn more about the services they provide and to participate in a live Question and Answer exchange.

TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT DEBI SANDIN, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR  
301-927-7048 DSANDLIN@BLADENSBURG.NET



# Code Enforcement

Spring is approaching and bringing longer days and warmer nights, the growing season also begins. Here are a few suggestions to add to your spring clean-up list:

## SAFETY TIPS

- Check your gutters and down spouts to ensure they are free of debris so when the Spring showers come they run freely away from your house.
- Regularly mow your lawn, and do not allow grass to exceed 9". Keep your property free of trash and debris. Do not park vehicles on the grass
- When you are working on your lawn mower be sure to do it outside and not in your garage or shed to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts
- Trim back any dead branches.
- Respect your neighbors. Keep other noise from disturbing them.



## Message from the Chief of Police

The Bladensburg Police Department is a local or 'municipal' police department. Our jurisdiction is limited to the Town of Bladensburg. Some concern has been expressed regarding immigration enforcement by local police officers. Immigration enforcement is a Federal government responsibility.

We have worked hard to build trust with all members of our community including our immigrant population. We believe that this philosophy of inclusion and trust is key to building a thriving, safe community. I want to ensure all members of our community, that if you report a crime or witness a crime in the Town of Bladensburg, we will not inquire about immigration or citizenship status. To speak with a police officer regarding any matter please call 301-864-6080 or visit us at 4910 Tilden Road, Bladensburg, MD 20710. We will gladly provide translation service if needed.

**Lt. Tracy D. Stone**  
Acting Chief of Police

**BLADENSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
4910 Tilden Road Bladensburg, MD 20710  
(301) 864-6080

PUBLIC SAFETY

## NEW WEBSITE Coming Early May 2017!



## Town of Bladensburg to Create New Website!

The Town of Bladensburg has contracted with MDA Technologies to create a fresh and dynamic website. The site will be designed and organized in a manner that will allow visitors to easily access information. The website will serve as a resource to the public and information about the services or programs provided by the Town.

Additionally, the new website will serve as a tool to market and promote the community and its assets, promote economic and redevelopment opportunities, attract investment, and highlight the quality of life the Town has to offer to residents and businesses. The brand new Town of Bladensburg website is expected to go LIVE early summer 2017.

## Mayor & Town Council

**Mayor**  
**Walter James**  
[wjames@bladensburg.net](mailto:wjames@bladensburg.net)

### Ward II Council Members

• Council Member Beverly Hall  
[bhall@bladensburg.net](mailto:bhall@bladensburg.net)

### Ward I Council Members

• Council Member Selwyn Bridgeman  
[sdbridgeman@bladensburg.net](mailto:sdbridgeman@bladensburg.net)

• Council Member Walter Ficklin  
[wficklin@bladensburg.net](mailto:wficklin@bladensburg.net)

• Council Member Chris Mendoza  
[cmendoza@bladensburg.net](mailto:cmendoza@bladensburg.net)

**Town Administrator**  
**Debi Sandlin**  
[dsandlin@bladensburg.net](mailto:dsandlin@bladensburg.net)

Town of Bladensburg Newsletter Designed & Developed  
by Chidinma (Chi-Chi) Dureke  
E-mail: [cdureke@bladensburg.net](mailto:cdureke@bladensburg.net)

- c. Overseeing the milling and repaving of 46th Street.
- d. Overseeing the installation of sidewalks for 53rd Place.
- e. Overseeing the milling and repaving of 53rd between Tilden and Sheppard St.
- f. Setting up of six events including:
  - i. **Fourth of July**
  - ii. **National Night Out**
  - iii. **Port Towns' Day**
  - iv. **Memorial Day celebration**
  - v. **Veterans' Day celebration**
  - vi. **Annual Yule Log**

13. During 2016, the Town Treasurer put new accounting practices in place to ensure a more efficient and transparent financial process for the Town including:

- a. Implemented a new budget process to improve the transparency of the process and to make it easier for residents to understand the financial standing of the Town.
- b. The Town's accounting system was changed over to QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions. A software conversion normally takes months and costs several thousands of dollars. This was accomplished in-house in less than a month at a cost of \$1,000.
- c. Realized over \$120,000 of insurance savings through policy reviews and adjustments

So, the next time you see one of our Town of Bladensburg team members, please take a minute to thank them for their hard work and let them know they are appreciated.

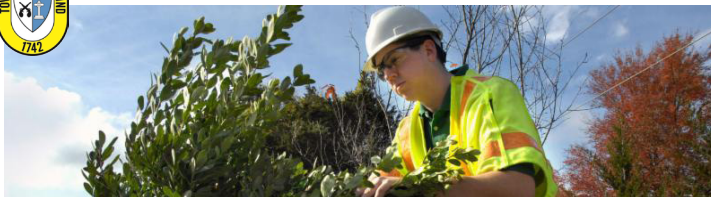
Sincerely,

**Debi Sandlin**  
Town Administrator

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Debi via e-mail at [dsandlin@bladensburg.net](mailto:dsandlin@bladensburg.net) or call 301-927-7048



## Public Works



### PEPCO TREE TRIMMING MAINTENANCE in Town of Bladensburg

Pepco crews are performing scheduled tree maintenance in the Town of Bladensburg area to prevent service outages and damage to overhead lines caused by tree branches coming into contact with overhead power lines.

For additional information about tree planting and our tree maintenance initiatives, [visit pepco.com/treetrimming](http://visit.pepco.com/treetrimming)

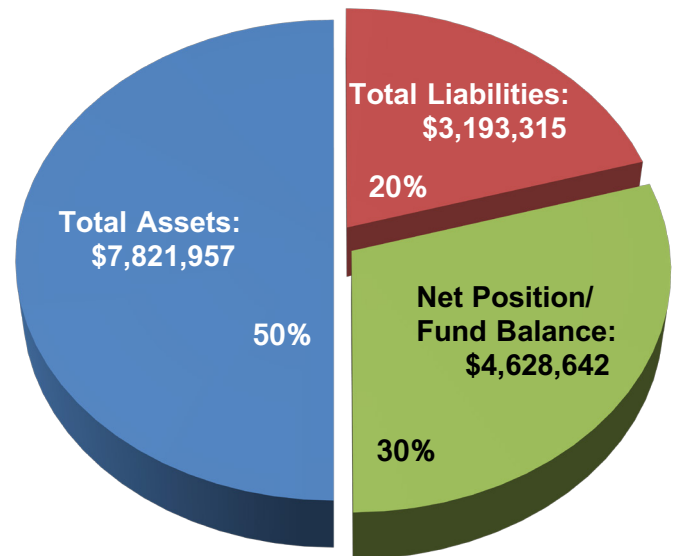


## TREASURER'S CORNER

— FROM VITO TINELLI

### AUDITED FINANCIALS FOR FY16

Below is a summary of the audited Statement of Net Position as of June 30, 2016 which shows the Town of Bladensburg's exceptional financial health:



### NEW REQUIREMENT WHEN FILING YOUR MARYLAND INCOME TAX RETURN

In order to make sure the Town receives the correct amount of Maryland Income tax revenue, please remember to correctly identify the Town of Bladensburg when filing your MD State Income Tax returns this year. This is a new item for 2016 and is part of the required information located on the first page of the returns. Please identify "**Bladensburg**" as the Political Subdivision/City/Town and "**1702**" as the Political Subdivision Code. For further information, please refer to the Maryland 2016 State & Local Tax Forms & Instructions booklet found at:

[http://forms.marylandtaxes.com/current\\_forms/resident\\_booklet.pdf](http://forms.marylandtaxes.com/current_forms/resident_booklet.pdf)

Thank you and look forward to a great Spring in Bladensburg. As always, please feel free to send Vito an email if you have any questions at [vtinelli@bladensburg.net](mailto:vtinelli@bladensburg.net)





## Town of Bladensburg

4229 Edmonston Road  
Bladensburg, MD 20710

POSTAGE  
CLEAR  
ZONE



# Sign Up!

Join our  
Mailing List



## TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

Sign Up For Email Updates, News and More!

Your information will be kept confidential and never shared.



Name:

Date:

E-mail:

Phone:

Address (OPTIONAL) :

Send this form enclosed in envelope to:

**TOWN OF BLADENSBURG**  
4229 Edmonston Road  
Bladensburg, Maryland 20710

Fill out your information above to  
subscribe to our informative  
weekly E-blast newsletter called  
***'Town of Bladensburg Weekly Update'***

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