



TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY REPORT

August 2023

Dear Town Council, Residents, Business owners, and Employees of the Town of Bladensburg;

Introduction: As the newly appointed Town Administrator, I wanted to put together this monthly report to keep everyone abreast of activities and updates on things happening in the Town. This report is designed to both be informative and act as a mechanism to provide additional transparency to the operations of the Town.

To provide some background, I am an experienced local government professional who has worked in many localities and agencies in Maryland and throughout the country. My specialty and passion are local government operations and problem-solving. My mission here at the Town of Bladensburg is to revive and enact some long-standing projects and move the Town forward. I cannot do this alone, so with your help and that of our team, I look forward to tackling issues and showing results.

In my first few weeks here, I embarked on a few critical tasks to get the Town to some of its long-term goals. This includes putting out requests for proposals (RFP) and requests for qualifications (RFQ) for consulting services to aid me in the grants, economic/redevelopment, and the feasibility of annexation. In the next few months, several more bid packages will be issued. I also am looking at operations and ensuring we provide quality services to all residents.

What to expect in this report? This report will contain updates and summaries of the items that have occurred. It will also provide you with a preview of things coming on the future Council agenda.

How can you provide feedback? If there are items that you notice or see missing, there are two avenues that you can use to bring these matters to my attention or get them resolved by staff.

1. **MyBladensburg App:** The Tow has developed this application to track citizen issues and areas of concern. The application is mobile phone-based, and it can be downloaded using Google Play or the Apple Store for **FREE**.
2. **Contact me directly:** If there are issues or matters, please call me at 301-927-7048.



Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth, Town Administrator

July and August 2023: Projects and Activities:

57th Avenue Repaving Project: The road construction was completed on Friday, August 25, 2023. This project repaved a significant portion of 57th Avenue within the Town. The Town Council approved the project in July 2023. The Town contracted with the lowest bidder, MT Laney, and work began on August 14, with concrete repairs and milling starting immediately after. The project was completed on budget with a final cost of \$215,915 and included the striping of new crosswalks and striping. I want to commend the work of Purnell and his team for getting this done before the beginning of the school year.

Green Initiatives: In preparation for the Town's Sustainability certification renewal, we have been working on a few items to place Bladensburg at the forefront of Maryland Communities. Below are some items that the staff has been working to implement;

- **Walkable Watersheds Projects:** The Town is working with other Port Towns on this project with the University of Maryland – EFC. In August, we met with Congressman Ivey to tour the watershed and look at future Projects for collaboration.
- **300 Trees:** In the fall, the Town will work on a Tree planting project with CKAR (Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization: Community Development Corporation). The Chesapeake Bay Trust funds this project to provide shade in urban areas.
- **Rain Barrels:** The Town is working on a joint project to fund and teach residents how to install Rain barrels at their residences.
- **Join the Green Team!** As part of our sustainability project, we will need your help on our Green Team. Members assist the Town in making Green Policy decisions and help us to spread the word about our events and initiatives.
- **New Charing Station Update (PEPCO):** The newly installed rapid charging station is in progress; we have contacted Pepco to set up a date for a small ribbon cutting this fall. This will add two more charging spaces to the Town Hall and allow vehicles to charge faster than our existing stations.

Projects and RFPs: The Town Council tasked me with getting many things over the next few months. One task is assembling a series of requests for services. These will be posted on the Town Website. On the September agenda, we will select some consultants for the Economic Development and Grant Writers. Over the next few months, you will see solicitation for our documents process, town hall planning, and other public works projects. My priority is ensuring that things are transparent and that we are getting a variety of bidders on projects.

Beautification is on my mind: As I walk through the Town, I want to make this a place that makes everyone proud. Over the next few months, we will begin a Town Beautification Team to help maintain our right of way and update the monument and gateway signage. This process will take place over the fall and next spring.

Flood Channel Project: On August 2, 2023, the Town and the County met with residents at Bladensburg Elementary. Residents raised some significant issues, and we have been collaborating with the County to ensure we address their concerns. We are working hard with the County to provide information on the flood channel project. We have another presentation scheduled at the September 11, 2023, Council Meeting so residents can learn more about this vital project.

Business Area Beatification Team (PW): An item is on the September Council meeting; the concept is hiring part-time labor to enhance our current public works teams during the fall and spring to give us some additional “people-power” as we close the year. ARPA funds will fund this vital project. This team will focus on commercial corridors to spruce up our curb appeal.

Security Camera Reimbursement Program: The Town started advertising the program in early August, and information is on the website. We have also posted announcements on the Town’s social media. The program is funded with \$50,000 in ARPA funds. This is estimated to assist 50 households in each ward. Please make sure to apply today!

Capital Grants Training: Both myself and Mr. Charnovich attended the training for the capital grant process or Bond Bills. Currently, the Town has three projects totaling \$1.5 Million. There are two \$500,000 Bills for the Town Hall and one \$500,000 bill for Bostwick House.

Over the next few months, the goal is to complete the initial information and develop a plan of how to spend our funds to share this with the delegation so that we can make requests for future funding.

769C Construction Update: Work is almost completed on this project. The State had a slight delay when they had to order a different kind of barrier, which will be installed later this month. The work done will improve access and pedestrian safety in the area. The Town will send information updates on Social Media and the Port.

Election Update: The period for candidate filing closed on August 18, 2023. Four (4) candidates applied for Ward 1, and One (1) candidate applied for Ward 2. The next meeting of the Board of Elections will be on September 6, 2023, at 4 p.m. Candidates will be certified at this meeting. Candidate bios are due on September 7.

The Town Clerk's office is working on preparing other items surrounding the election so that when the ballot is finalized, everything is ready for launch. The Town has posted the application for absentee ballots and has copies available at the Town Hall.

Remember, Election Day is October 2, 2023, and polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please follow the Town website, social media, and email notices as election day draws nearer.