

TALK OF THE TOWN



A NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND

Fall

2023 EDITION



Message from the Commissioners of St. Michaels

Congratulations St. Michaels! You are now the proud owners of seven-and-a-half acres of waterfront land that will never be developed—an extension of San Domingo Park for you and future generations to enjoy and treasure. The purchase of the Environmental Concern property was finalized in September and planning for its future is well underway. We've had several community feedback sessions and the priorities raised in those sessions will help shape the new park's Master Plan. The Commissioners currently intend to repurpose the existing office building on the property to become our new town office at a considerable saving over previous options. The remainder of the property is a blank slate. As part of our agreement of sale, Environmental Concern will continue limited operations on the property until next Spring. In the meantime, we ask that residents and visitors refrain from entering the property to limit our liability and to allow EC to safely operate its heavy equipment. Residents will be welcomed to explore the site during several open houses under safe conditions.

Other important projects are also progressing well. We have recently received a grant to produce construction drawings for the extension of the nature trail. The completed extension will double the length. Once completed, the trail will stretch two-and-a-half miles north from the school complex to the ball fields at Perry Cabin Park and beyond.

Our Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Commission continues its important mission to prepare the town for the inevitable impact of climate change and rising water. The CC/SLR Commissioners, led by Chairman Roy Myers, have lined up substantial state and federal grants to pay for the design stage of mitigation projects in the most vulnerable areas of town. The Commissioners recently awarded construction design contracts to Rauch Engineering for two initial projects.

In office staffing news, we say hello and welcome to our new Town Clerk Kristen Payne, and wish a fond farewell and happy retirement to Kathy Eglseder, our bookkeeper and finance officer. Kathy spent eight years with the town and her steady hand and cool head helped guide us through the uncertainty of the pandemic and the financial headwinds that followed. Kathy will continue to be a familiar face around town and we encourage you to thank her for a job well done when you see her. Our former Town Clerk Vickie Sharp has stepped in to replace Kathy.

Finally, we send a note of appreciation to the volunteers on our Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and to St. Michaels in Bloom for all their hard work to beautify the town for the fall visitor season. The town looks great and they really have succeeded in putting our best face forward. Thank you!

Outdoor Burning Regulations Approved by Town Commission

Legislation Promotes Safer Outdoor Burning Practices

Based upon comments from residents regarding unsafe and inappropriate burning practices, the Town Commission passed an ordinance establishing new regulations for outdoor burning. Ordinance 551 was coordinated with the Talbot County Fire Marshall and is consistent with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regulations.

Highlights of the ordinance include conditions under which outdoor fire pits can be operated, appropriate location of gas-fired heating appliances to protect buildings, and the prohibition of burning rubbish, construction debris, grass clippings and/or leaves and any pressure treated wood. The ordinance also addresses the dangerous storage of oily rags and waste. The St. Michaels Police Department will be working with residents to encourage compliance with the new regulations. The ordinance can be viewed under Legislation on the Town's website at www.stmichaelsmd.gov.

Community Events Calendar



December 2

Midnight Madness shopping drawing begins at 11:00pm



December 9

Christmas in St. Michaels spectacular Christmas Parade commences at 10:30am



December 9

Christmas Boat Parade along the St. Michaels Harbor begins at 6:00pm

The Jack Nichols

Preserving a Legacy and Building Beautiful Memories



In the summer of 2022, discussions began by town staff on the prospect of restoring the Jack Nichols boat located at Bradley Park. It was at that time that the late Bill Gilmore, former Town Zoning Officer met with long-time Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum volunteers, Mike Sweeney and Bob Petizon, to discuss the restoration. The boat was dedicated in September 2005 in memory of Jack Nichols (Sept. 20, 2002 – Nov. 18, 2003), who would have turned 21 this past September. It was originally built by the Mid-Shore Chapter of Mothers and More with Jeff Desjardins of Sunrise Land and Sea.

Sweeney and Petizon took a look at the boat to see what they could do to restore it. The two have worked together as volunteers over the past 20 years at CBMM, most recently on the reconstruction project of the Maryland Dove. Mr. Sweeney recalled meeting Mr. English, Jack's father, many years ago at the boat shop. He was touched by the tragedy this family had endured.

The restoration project was very meaningful to Sweeney and Petizon, who

are both fathers to three adult children of their own. The feeling of losing a young child truly hit home and they would do whatever they could to preserve the boat. It had been out in the elements for nearly 18 years and desperately needed new coverboards, floorboards, and a new roof. The project took a few months to complete. After the boat was power-washed from top to bottom, it was time for the woodwork part to begin.

Most of the woodwork and cuts were performed by Sweeney offsite in his St. Michaels home workshop. The roof was restored onsite.

One year later, on Jack's 21st birthday, September 20th, the family performed the final touches by sanding the fresh wood grain and giving the boat a new coat of paint. In the words of Jack's mom, Annette Fuentes English, "We miss our son so much it hurts. It's been an emotional day! Our hearts are full knowing how many children have enjoyed this boat for the last 18 years. We always wonder who you'd be today." English has since received countless photos from parents and grandparents of their own children and grandchildren playing on the boat and this gives the family joy to know their son's memory continues to live on.

The Jack Nichols boat at Bradley Park, now restored, will continue to honor Jack English and allow children to continue to enjoy it for many years to come.



Plan Your New Park!

Boundary Lane Waterfront Park Master Planning Efforts Begin

The anticipated planning and design efforts for the Boundary Lane Waterfront Park Master Plan are underway. The 7.5 acre parcel was purchased by the Town in late September and the Town began reaching out to the public for input. There were two initial public meetings held in early October to solicit design ideas and preferences. They were well attended with over 50 participating in person. A plan preference survey was also developed for consideration.

There are still plenty of opportunities to participate with various meetings to be held from November through January. We will continue to post updates on line. Check the Town's web page for details on upcoming meetings and the project status at: www.stmichaelsmd.gov. Look under the "View News and Meetings!" posting.



Come join in planning this exciting new project for the future.



St. Michaels Youth and Law Enforcement Popular Program Celebrates its 15-Year Anniversary

In 2008, St. Michaels Police Chief, Miguel Dennis (Retired) set his sights to improve upon the trust and working relationships with our local youth. In doing so, he established St. Michaels Youth and Law Enforcement (SMYLE), a locally funded community policing initiative that focuses on mentorship and education through team-building activities. Since inception, SMYLE has partnered with all sectors of the community and has offered far-reaching programs including the Junior Police Academy, Cultural Day, educational cruises on the Patriot, Character Counts, National Night Out, Career Day, Back to School Night, driver's education, Lunch with a Cop, block parties, and our holiday favorite, Shop with a Cop.

Chief Oswald commented on how SMYLE programs create change and are our building blocks for trust and community engagement. He stated, "Proof of this happens as our officers continue to have positive daily interactions. Whether it's to get a band-aid, a lollipop, an ice cream, or to just settle a dispute between each other, these encounters, however small, truly carry weight into adulthood. As I've patrolled the town and been approached by those who have outgrown the program, I often get a handshake, a fist pump, or just a smile as we reminisce about what it meant to them to be mentored to make positive decisions for their future. You see it's not about them making mistakes. We all do. It's about how the police treat our youngest citizens when those mistakes take place."

As the Police Department continues to move SMYLE forward, it is equally important that we step back and thank Chief Dennis, who founded the program, and retired Police Chief Smith, who spent over a decade taking SMYLE to the level you see now. Many thanks also to all of our locals who have given their time and the much-needed financial support. We can't thank you enough for making SMYLE a success story for 15 years running.



Canton Street Improvements Underway

Grant to Assist in Funding New Road and Sewer Infrastructure

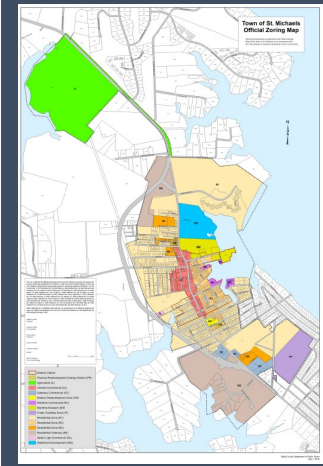
Working in partnership with Talbot County and a local landowner, the Town of St. Michaels recently received grant funding for road and sewer line extensions on Canton Street between Miles Avenue and Glory Avenue. The estimated \$344,000 project is being partially funded by a \$256,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture. The remainder of the funding will come from a landowner in the area who is planning to develop one of the lots accessed by this new road for a single-family home.

"With limited vacant land for new residential development in St. Michaels, we are excited to receive grant funding to extend the needed infrastructure to develop this underserved area," stated Town Administrator Rob Straebel. "The project will encourage more housing stock in our community where demand is outstripping supply for more residential housing options."

The project entails installation of 750 liner feet of 2" sewer main with five sewer lateral services incorporated into the design to serve adjacent lots. The new sanitary sewer line will replace an aging and undersized sewer line currently in place potentially facilitating more residential development in the area. Once the underground infrastructure is in place, the current gravel roadway will be paved either this Fall or Spring 2024. Best stormwater management practices will be closely adhered to during the duration of the project. Once completed, all disturbed areas will be reseeded, and trees will be planted along this new roadway section. The Town anticipates the project will be fully completed in the first quarter of 2024.



Building Permit Update:



We had a very busy summer season with building permits! In July/August/September, 41 building permits were issued.

Once a building permit is issued, an email survey will be sent out asking for your feedback.

We greatly appreciate your participation in the survey and look forward to improving its approval process.

Any questions regarding the building permit, can be directed to Jen Whiting, General Services Clerk, jwhiting@st.michaelsmd.gov

Please note that the Town utilizes MDIA (Middle Department Inspection Agency) for ALL inspections once a building permit has been issued.

MDIA can be reached at 410-822-8300 when you are ready to schedule any inspections.

Also, a reminder that if you live in the Historic District that a Historic District Commission review is required for any exterior architectural design changes, additions, new construction and demolition.

Once the Historic District application is reviewed and approved, a building permit can be obtained.

The Town's official zoning map can be found on the Town's website under "[Zoning Department & Land Use Permits](#)" to see if your address is in the Historic District.

Electronic Water Payments Now an Option!

Over the past several months the Town has invested in our antiquated water meter system by partnering with Core & Main and VEPO to assist with implementing new meters and software. The new technology has proven to be extremely useful in detecting and narrowing the source and timing of water leak issues our residents may experience. We are pleased to announce that as part of these strides forward, we have now integrated some electronic features into our water billing process.

For those water customers who would like to receive their water bill electronically, we ask that you email a request to the water department at waterdept@stmichaelsmd.gov including your name, property address, your email address and an updated contact phone number. This information will aid the Town in updating the above information in the system.

If you would like to utilize the electronic payment option please follow the link and instructions below or on our website at www.stmichaelsmd.gov.

Link to the portal to pay your water bill:

<https://wipp.edmundsassoc.com/Wipp/?wippid=STMT>

The utility account ID and utility account pin is located on the return stub of your water bill (it will be right above your address).

You can choose to register as a new user or simply put your information in the utility account information box and follow the steps.

You will receive an email confirmation once payment is received.

If you have any questions, please contact Vickie Sharp, in our Water Department, at 410-745-9535.

Kayak Rack Rentals for 2024:

Looking for a place to house your kayak? The Town has 40 spaces available for rent by lottery, for the season from April 1 through December 31, 2024.

Applications will be accepted starting January 1st of the new year until March 22nd with the lottery commencing on March 29, 2024. Kayak rack applications and regulations can be found on the Town Website.

A reminder for current kayak renters to remove their kayaks from the racks by December 31st or they will be removed at the owner's expense.



Boat Slips:

It is almost that time of year for boat slip renewal applications.

A 2024-2025 renewal application will be mailed to the address given on the 2023 application.

A 2024-2025 boat slip waitlist renewal application will also be mailed to the address given on the 2023 waitlist application.

The waitlist renewal applications are due by January 15, 2024 and failure to submit the renewal application will result in removal from the waitlist.



For more information
visit www.stmichaelsmd.gov