



Town of Middletown ♦ 7875 Church Street ♦ Middletown, VA ♦ (540) 869-2226 ♦ Volume 12, Issue 3 ♦ May 17, 2021

### *From the Mayor*

*Charles H. Harbaugh, IV*

Planning is underway! The July 4<sup>th</sup> committee and town staff are busy preparing for another successful event for our community. Middletown's annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration will be held on Sunday July 4, 2021. We have a full day of events planned starting off the morning with the annual softball tournament at the ballfields in the town park. We will host a cornhole tournament again this year which will take place later in the day. There will be live music throughout the day which will showcase some very talented local musicians and band. There will be plenty to keep the kids entertained throughout the day. We will have a bounce house, water slide, kid's games, magician, and for the adult's local artisans & crafters, food vendors, NASCAR simulator and a Veterans lunch.

The grand feature parade will kick off at 5:00 p.m. at LFCC and continue down Historic Main Street. The parade will feature the Citizen of the Year and Grand Marshal which will be announced at a later date. We will end the day with an over-the-top firework display which will amaze young and old alike. Come on out and help us celebrate Independence Day. There will be something fun for everyone to enjoy. Hope to see you there!

If you have a citizen in mind that goes above and beyond for the Town of Middletown and would like to nominate this person for Citizen of the Year, please submit your nomination to [clerk@middletownva.gov](mailto:clerk@middletownva.gov) or drop it in the payment drop box at the town office and note Citizen of the Year nomination.

Reminder the town will host the July 4<sup>th</sup> House Decorating Contest again this year. Entry forms will be available online at [www.middletownva.gov](http://www.middletownva.gov) Entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday June 28, 2021. Judging will take place on Monday July 1, 2021.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual City National Bank Car, Truck & Tractor show will be held on Sunday August 15, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Historic Main Street. The rain date this year will be Sunday August 22, 2021.

### *From the Police Chief*

*Gary Benedict Jr.*

No handheld devices while driving, Virginia Law effective January 1, 2021. Phone Down. It's the Law. A person who violates 46.2-818.2 is subject to a fine of \$125 for the first offense and \$250 for the second and subsequent offenses. In the event that you are pulled over for holding a handheld personal communications device, act in the same manner you would for any traffic stop. You will not be asked to hand over your device. Keep in mind that what you are doing with the device is irrelevant, it is the act of HOLDING the device while driving that is illegal.

If you have police matters, please do not call the Town office staff. This creates confusion, possible miscommunications and takes up unnecessary time in having an officer respond to the complaint. For all non-emergency police issues please contact the Middletown Police Department directly Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 540-868-0535. Only leave a voice message at the Middletown Police Department if the return call is for administrative or information only.

All non-life-threatening matters which require an officer please contact Frederick County non-emergency dispatch at 540-662-6162. If you have an emergency, please call 911. All calls for service must first go through Frederick County dispatch. Frederick County dispatch will contact the officer/deputy on duty who will be handling the complaint. This will ensure that all calls are handled properly and in an efficient & timely manner.

## *From the Town Manager/Treasurer*

*Rebecca Layman*

Please remember to retain your tax bill(s) and receipt(s) of payment(s) from the town for your tax filing purposes. There will be a fee of \$3.50 for each account requested. Due to the large number of requests, we receive each year we have had to impose this fee to cover administrative cost. Thank you for doing your part of being a great record keeper. Our small quaint town is growing at a rapid pace but staff has not and we hope to keep it this way for as long as we can to keep expenses down for you, the tax paying citizen who could potentially be impacted.

If you have not paid your Real Estate or Personal Property taxes, please do so no later than June 30, 2021. After this date there will be an 8% penalty applied to all delinquent property accounts. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the town office. If a lien or DMV stop has been placed on your property there will be additional fees applied. The lien or DMV stop will not be removed until the entire balance has been paid in full.

Reminder when you buy, trade, sell or dispose of a vehicle you must notify Frederick County (540) 665-5681 extension 1. The Town of Middletown receives all billing information from Frederick County therefore they must have the correct information on file for you in order for the Town of Middletown to bill you correctly.

DMV stops have been issued on last year's unpaid accounts. If you have not paid your personal property taxes, please drop your payment off at the town office before heading to DMV. Once paid we can remove the stop. There is an additional fee of \$40 to remove the stop. The stop will not be removed until the entire balance is paid in full. If paying by check the amount must clear your bank before the stop can be removed.

## *From the Planning and Zoning Administrator*

*Eric Bittner*

As a reminder, permits must be secured through the Town office prior to any work. All renovations to buildings need a zoning permit. All accessory buildings such as sheds and/or outside storage containers also need a zoning permit. When in doubt please contact the town office.

Please take a minute to review the Town's ordinance on grass, weeds or like vegetation as well as littering. When mowing or weeding it is unlawful to leave your grass clippings on the sidewalks and roadways.

### **Town Code section 6-2 | Duty of owners, etc., of premises - To cut and remove tall grass and weeds.**

- a.** It shall be unlawful for any person owning, occupying or having charge of any real estate or an interest therein, located within the corporate limits of the town, where the parcel is one acre or less, to allow grass, weeds, or like vegetation grow on the property to a height of no more than 10 inches.
- b.** Parcels greater in size than one acre that lies within 25 feet of the right of way boundary of a public roadway (except for interstate highways) must also keep the grass, weeds or like vegetation to a height of no more than 10 inches.
- c.** If any owner, occupant or person in charge of such land or interest therein shall fail to have such illegal growth of grass or weeds on his land cut or otherwise removed within 7 days written notice of violation of this section, the town shall have the right to cut or remove such unlawful growth at the expense of the landowner, and such expense may be collected by the town as taxes are levied and collected. In addition, the owner shall pay a penalty of \$50.00 as a fine of this section.
- d.** Each day that any owner, occupant or person in charge of such land or interest shall fail to have such an illegal growth of grass or weeds on his land cut or otherwise removed after the above mentioned 7 days has run shall constitute a separate offense. Subsequent offenses in the same calendar year shall double until the fine reaches \$200.00. The fine per calendar year is capped at \$2000.00.
- e.** This section shall not apply to any land used for agricultural or industrial purposes.

*From the Planning and Zoning Administrator continued:*

Please remember to be courteous and do your duty as a responsible pet owner and clean up after your pet(s) when out and about in town. This is an enforceable ordinance which can be found in the town code section 3-8 *Littering*.

**Town Code section 3-8 Littering**

No person shall allow feces deposited by his/her animal to remain on any public highway, street, sidewalk, part of other public property, or on private property without written consent of the owner thereof or his agent.

Penalty – Any person who knowingly violates this Ordinance shall be guilty of a littering infraction and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$25.00 per occurrence. (Middletown Town Code § 3-8)

*From the Town Clerk*

*Christina Smith*

The town offers online payments for your convenience. Have your bill handy because you will need your account number in order to get started. Once there you can register your account and set up the many features that make paying your bill(s) easy such as automatic and recurring payments, text and email reminders, paperless statements, etc. Please go to [www.middletownva.gov](http://www.middletownva.gov) and check it out. You may also pay over the phone, available 24/7 by calling (855)844-0226. If you need assistance registering your account, please feel free to contact the town office.

Yard sale season has begun, please make sure you get a yard sale permit with the exception of the Route 11 Yard Crawl which is scheduled to take place on Saturday August 14, 2021. You do not need a permit the day of the Yard Crawl. If you post signs, they must be ***free standing*** and not attached to any utility poles or roadway signs. Signage must be removed immediately following your yard sale. Permit and rules & regulations can be found online at [www.middletownva.gov](http://www.middletownva.gov) under the Resources tab. Complete the required form and drop it in the payment drop box located at the town office and we will sign off on it and get it back to you before your sale.

Homeowners with the start of warm weather and outdoor clean up to begin, please remember if you are having contracted work done at your home such as landscaping, roofing, plumbing, electrical, additions, fencing and decks, etc., please make sure the contractor(s) has a valid Town of Middletown business license. This helps ensure you are dealing with a legitimate business and if recourse needs to be taken, we have information on file for the business that we can provide to you. No one should be soliciting business door to door in town limits without a valid Town of Middletown business license.

Please remember to update your contact information with the town office. Telephone numbers are very important to the staff in case we need to contact you in the event of an emergency or to discuss your account. Email is also a way we can communicate with you regarding account matters or issues at your property. Please feel free to email me with your updated information and email address which I will add to your account for future reference should we need it to contact you. [clerk@middletownva.gov](mailto:clerk@middletownva.gov) We still have a good bit of contact information that needs to be updated. I came across several accounts just recently with bad contact information.

As always, all utility payments are due by the due date indicated or by the cut-off date. If the bill is not paid in full by the cut-off date, service will be disconnected for non-payment and an additional fee of \$100 will be added to your account that must be paid before services are restored. Cut-off \$50/cut-on \$50. If you have any questions, or need assistance paying your bill please contact the town office. Please call before the account is past due.

For information regarding the Town of Middletown please visit the town's website [www.middletownva.gov](http://www.middletownva.gov)

## *From the Public Works Superintendent*

*Les Morefield*

Yard waste pick-up is in full swing and will continue through Monday November 15, 2021. If a holiday falls on a Monday, yard waste will be picked up the next day.

We have been picking up some very heavy bags that are beyond the weight limit. Please be mindful of our crew when packing your lawn bags. If you struggle getting it to the curb, please take into consideration what it takes to load it on a truck. This is a courtesy service provided by the town and we would appreciate you following the yard waste guidelines to avoid injury to our Public Works employees. We will leave your yard waste curbside if this becomes a repeated occurrence at your property.

Please review the guidelines for yard waste. **We will no longer pick up any yard waste that does not meet the required guidelines.** Yard waste collection will be every Monday, and must be placed curbside by 8:00 a.m. Yard waste consists of grass trimmings and leaves which CANNOT weigh more than 40 lbs. Branches or twigs can be **NO LONGER** than four (4) feet in length and **NO LARGER** than twelve (12) inches in diameter and must be **tied in bundles** (no wire or plastic string). Yard waste must be placed in biodegradable or paper yard waste bags only, **NO PLASTIC BAGS**. Yard waste should not be placed curbside until the morning of collection. This helps keep the community neat and free of clutter and ensures the bags have not been compromised due to weather. Rain soaked or damaged bags that rip or tear during pick up will be the responsibility of the homeowner/tenant to clean up. If you have any questions, please contact Les Morefield, Public Works Superintendent at (540) 869-7731.

Please make sure the water meter in your yard is free and clear at all times. The meter should never be covered or buried by anything. This can cause serious problems in the event of an emergency if we are unable to find and/or access the meter. The meter should be visible and most importantly easy to access. Please take the time to make sure the water meter on your property is free and clear and accessible at all times.

Please take a minute to read the outdoor water saving tips provided on the next page. We hear from a lot folks in the warmer months that their water & sewer bills have gone up substantially and think they have a leak. To avoid this from happening to you take a minute to review the tips provided. If you think you have a leak, please feel free to call the Public Works Department and we will be glad to come out and check it out (540)869-7731. If you have a billing question, please call the town office for assistance (540) 869-2226. Unfortunately, the Public Works Department cannot assist you with billing and account related questions.

Reminder we continue to have issues with animal waste being left behind by irresponsible pet owners. Please remember to always bring a bag along with you, even on a short walk. "Poop happens" and you as the pet owner need to be prepared to clean it up. The town park and walkways throughout town are littered with animal waste. This is unsanitary and unhealthy for all including your pet. Those who do not own pets and those who do own pets that are responsible pet owners do not need to be subjected to your lack of respect for others. Clean it up!

There's no such thing as  
the poop fairy.



Only you can make your  
pet's waste disappear.

Pet waste contains **harmful bacteria** and **parasites** that **make people and pets sick**. When it is left on the ground, it washes down storm drains and **contaminates our streams** and rivers.

**Scoop it. Bag it. Trash it.**



## OUTDOOR WATER SAVING TIPS

SAVE WATER!



- Wash your pet outside over an area that needs watering.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveway or sidewalks.
- Water plants only when they need it.
- Adjust sprinklers so only the lawn is watered, not the house or street.
- Water your lawn or garden in the morning or night when it's cool & not windy.
- Place water-loving plants in the shade.
- Check for leaky hoses & nozzles.
- Mulch like crazy to keep soil cool & moist.
- Wash your car using a bucket.
- Cover the swimming pool.

[www.nrgideas.com](http://www.nrgideas.com)

**Generally A Healthy Lawn Needs  
Only 1 Inch of Water Every 10 Days.**



**Please do not over-water**

### ***From the Veterans Memorial Chairman***

*Raymond Steele*

Our Memorial Day Recognition & Wreath Laying Ceremony will take place on Monday May 31, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend the ceremony and honor our veterans on this great day of remembrance. We plan to conduct the ceremony at the memorial in person and to live stream it via Facebook for those who are unable to attend in person. We ask if you are not feeling well, please stay home.

Newly purchased bricks have been installed in time for the ceremony. Please come out and view your newly installed brick(s). Thank you for your continued support. And a big thank you to Myron Kremer for his continued dedication and services. He carefully installs every brick at no cost to the memorial. God bless you, Myron.

Our guest speaker this year is Winsome Earle Sears, Ret. USMC. Winsome Earle Sears was born in Jamaica and partly raised in Bronx, New York. Winsome is currently seeking the Republican nomination for Lt. Governor of Virginia. Winsome has appeared on CSPAN, MSNBC, CBN, FOX, and other media outlets, including nationally distributed publications. She has met with ambassadors and foreign leaders as she toured their countries and discussed foreign policy. Please plan to join us for a day of remembrance and a salute to our veterans.

### ***From the Garden Club President***

*Pat Craft*

If you would like to know about the plants and gardening ideas for our area and to trade ideas with residents of Middletown, consider joining us for our monthly meetings. We are busy now planning and planting the town urns and welcome participation to keep them looking fabulous for the season.

The Garden Club usually meets monthly and we're looking forward to keeping that schedule now that the regulations of the pandemic are easing. Our meetings are held in members' homes or local venues. There are no dues or fees. If you have questions, or would like to be informed as to details of our next meeting, please send an email to [virginiamanor@comcast.net](mailto:virginiamanor@comcast.net) Hope to hear from you. Pat Craft, President, Middletown Garden Club.

### ***From the Heritage Society President***

*Tess Klimm*

The Middletown Heritage Society (MHS) will begin meeting monthly again after having had a small meeting in May. Many projects are on our agenda including a new walking tour and recognition with the Gene Dicks Award. Our regular monthly meetings are the second Thursdays at noon. Please feel free to contact Tess Klimm, President (540) 247-2211 for more information and details about upcoming meetings. We welcome anyone with an interest in Middletown's history.

If anyone has stories to tell, remember we have an MHS Facebook page and if you or someone you know would like to be added to our email list please get in touch with me.

## Middletown Volunteer Fire & Rescue, Company 12

Did you know.....According to IndependentSector.org the current value of a volunteer is \$28.54 per hour? Your volunteers at Middletown Volunteer Fire and Rescue had 4,066.75 documented hours in 2020. This total is lower than typical years because of Covid and the shutdown of fundraising activities for months. The website states “.... putting numbers to volunteer hours will never do them justice, but it is just one way for us to show the contributions individuals and organizations have made in our communities. The estimate helps acknowledge the millions of individuals who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference. Charitable organizations frequently use this estimate to quantify the enormous value volunteers provide.”

We are always looking for new members. Applications are available on our website ([middletownfire.com](http://middletownfire.com)) or at the fire station. You must be 16 years old to apply. Training is provided. Joining a volunteer fire and rescue company is a great opportunity for young people!

If you aren't interested in running fire and EMS calls, there are other opportunities to help with fundraising.

We continue to have Bingo every Tuesday night. Regular Bingo starts at 7 p.m.

Concessions are available from our Auxiliary. We follow CDC guidelines with masks and social distancing. Come on by!



Truck Committee in Wisconsin in 2002 to pick up the rescue engine. This truck will now be replaced with a new rescue engine on order that should arrive in Middletown this summer. Pictured: Dick Legge, Henry Shiley, Scott Horsburgh, Mark Dalton



2020 Training: Jordan Dalton, Cheyenne Reuter, Chris Haley, and Renee Good. The reflection on the firetruck is Chief Dalton.

**BINGO** is back! The doors will open at 5:00 p.m. There will be early bird games, followed by regular Bingo at 7:00 p.m. Things are a little different than they were before. Tables are set for social distancing. Masks are **REQUIRED**. We are limited to one third of our capacity so that means 100 people. Concessions will be available.

## *Calendar of Events*

### **May**

May 17 – Tax Day

May 24 – Planning Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

May 31 – Town office closed in observance of Memorial Day

May 31 – Memorial Day Recognition & Wreath Laying Ceremony 2:00 p.m. via Virtual Communications

### **June**

June 7 – Work Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.

June 14 – Town Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.

June 28 – Planning Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### **July**

July 4 – July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration & Parade, all day event

July 5 – Town office closed in observance of Independence Day

July 6 – Work Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.

July 12 – Town Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.

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