

Town of Milton

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TOWN MANAGER REPORT APRIL 2013

New Mayor and Council, New Vision

In April 2013, the Town Council was re-organized with a majority of the members in “new” seats. Councilwoman Jones became Mayor Jones and Esthelda Parker Selby was appointed to serve as Councilwoman for the remainder of Mayor Jones’ term as Councilwoman. Councilman Michael Cote’ was seated and appointed as Treasurer. Councilman John Collier was seated and appointed Chairman of the reconstituted Streets and Sidewalk Committee. Councilman Booros was appointed Vice Mayor.

There were two Council Workshops in April and a Town Hall-style meeting is scheduled for May 18. In all three meetings, ideas that would serve to create a new vision for the Town of Milton have been (or soon will be) solicited. Some ideas will be used to establish priorities in the near term – while others are better suited for long term planning.

Referendum Defeated

For the second year in a row, the voters of Milton declined to authorize the Council to borrow funds in order to make water system improvements. The 2008 Water Facilities Plan was the basis for the March 2012 referendum. It included a water tower, new well and a comprehensive package of upgrades. These improvements were estimated to cost \$3.45 million.

The Water Facilities Plan was updated in the months that followed the 2012 referendum defeat. The updated plan was used as a basis for proposed system improvements. The proposals were vetted, over a span of several months, by the Water Committee. The plan was presented to Council, amended and then put before the public as the April 2013 referendum. The second referendum did not include a new tower and included a “rehabilitated” well, as opposed to a new well and treatment plant. This modified plan was the basis for the proposal to borrow up to \$1.725 million.

The Water Committee met in April and is considering options that would help to increase the supply of water to our residents and businesses. A contingency plan for emergency operations is also being considered. Peak demand for water in the summer months requires that our pumps operate 21 hours per day. This rate of consumption makes no allowance for fire suppression needs and there is only one treatment plant. The committee will study system improvement alternatives to borrowing and make recommendations to Council.

In the meantime, data collected from metering improvements, on both the production (well) and consumption (home and business) ends of the system, is showing a significant reduction in the accounting gap related to water use. Because meters are read quarterly, it will likely be another six months until the full effect of the 2012-13 metering upgrades is known.

Streets and Sidewalks

Selected streets in Shipbuilders Village were re-surfaced in April. A vendor proposal for signage upgrades in Cannery Village was reviewed by the Ad hoc committee created for this purpose, too. The street re-surfacing project was the culmination of more than a year of work. It was made possible because of a public streets grant through our elected state legislators. In Cannery Village, the streets have not yet been dedicated to the Town of Milton. Funding for signage upgrades in this community is going to be much more difficult. State grants cannot be used for “private” roads.

In 2009, the Delaware Center for Transportation conducted a comprehensive “Transportation Elements Assessment” in the Town of Milton. Selected sidewalk and parking areas were studied more closely, at the direction of Mayor Newlands, during the winter months of 2012-13. The information contained in these documents will help the newly constituted Streets and Sidewalk Committee to set priorities and to develop a plan of action, related to repair and preventative maintenance, in the coming months.

Events and Web Site Updates

The Events Calendar at www.milton.delaware.gov is the framework by which all meetings and events are posted. It will provide you with not only dates and times, but also directions and more details.

In April, Memorial Park was the site of a Shakespeare Festival and, on the first weekend in May, there was a town-wide yard sale. The Friday afternoon Farmers Market is up and running. Wednesday evening concerts in the park are detailed on the web site Events Calendar – as is the Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Festival on Memorial Day weekend.

In the “Our Community” section of the web site, you will find an expanded list of “links” to our non-profit partners and the Town of Milton Profile, too. In addition to the “home” page for Our Community, there is sub-page that provide a wealth of information about Outdoor Recreation opportunities in the Milton area.

There are more details about our departments and committees on the website. And more documents and resources are being added every week. For example, check out the Emergency Preparedness Committee page.

Be sure to “bookmark” www.milton.delaware.gov on your browser and visit often!

Improving the Quality of the Broadkill River

You may have read about the quality of the Broadkill River in recent weeks. Our river has been known as an “impacted” waterway for more than a decade. The quality of our local waters has been steadily improving over time, though.

One way to improve the quality of water in the river is to minimize “run-off” by allowing the land to filter rain and melted snow – before it enters the watershed. Rain gardens and bio-swales are one way to accomplish this objective. Rain gardens can be found at H.O. Brittingham Elementary School and on the north side of the Milton Public Library. Soon, there will be another rain garden in the “island” of the parking lot behind the library. A bio-swale is being proposed for an area near the M&T Bank parking lot, too.

The installation of these rain gardens is funded by a grant from the Department of Natural Resources, through the Milton Community Foundation. With technical assistance from the University of Delaware and maintenance often provided by volunteers, the gardens demonstrate not only good stewardship of our river, but also a collaborative community project in action.