

# Stephens City Newsletter

Volume 31 Issue 6 November and December 2012

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The Town Newsletter is published by the Town Government of Stephens City for its citizens; to inform, to apprise, and to clarify the issues and undertakings before the Town Government. Citizen feedback is encouraged. Contact the Town Office at 1033 Locust Street weekdays between the hours of 8:30a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or by mail: P.O. Box 250, Stephens City, VA 22655

Phone: 869-3087

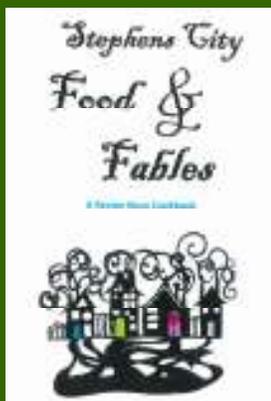
Fax: 869-6166

Police: 868-1012

Website:

[www.stephenscity.vi.virginia.gov](http://www.stephenscity.vi.virginia.gov)

The Newtown Heritage Festival is proud to present the 2nd addition of "Food & Fables" A recipe story cookbook around Thanksgiving with new stories and recipes. Swing by the Town Office or other local businesses to pick up your copy!



*Come One, Come All!*

**5th Annual**

## Christmas on the Commons

*SPONSORED BY THE STEPHENS CITY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION*

**Saturday, December 1, 2012**

*(Rain Date: Sunday, December 2, 2012)*

**3:30pm to 5:30pm**

**at the Newtown Commons on Main Street in Stephens City**

This is a social celebration for 5th grade and below, their families and friends.

Events include: Ornament Decorating for kids, the ever popular Critter Tree, Fresh baked goodies and seasonal beverages for all, Music by the Sherrando Band and Chorus, the Taylor Middle School band, the Tree Lighting Ceremony and much, much more!



*Hit up your horse and sleigh and come on down to the Christmas on the Commons!*



*From the Town  
Manager's Desk...*

**All's Not Quiet on the Western Front**

Since early spring there has been little to no media coverage of Stephens City's government activities or decisions by any of the local news agencies.

However, during that time there have been several ordinances passed including the Town's one and a half million dollar budget adopted for the new fiscal year that began on July 1. Tax rates remained the same with the exception of an increase of the meals tax by 1 percent.

Another ordinance that passed that effects property owners was a state mandate that changed the way delinquent water bills are handled. The town may now place a lean on properties for unpaid water bills.

In July the town was hit with \$4,150 month increase in debt service for sewer plant upgrades and a 36 % increase in sewer treatments costs from Frederick County Sanitation Authority. After review of these increases by the town's

accountant the fees were adjusted downwards by half for the sewage treatment costs. Other news includes the upcoming town elections which were moved to November 6th, don't forget to vote. In September the town settled on the purchase of old Stephens City school complex from Frederick County for \$100,000. The 3.5 acres and buildings were paid for through reserve funds. Mayor Shull –Gellner has established a committee to begin looking into the potential uses for the buildings.

Throughout the year the town has met the legal notifications for public notice to keep its citizens informed but now with the lack of media coverage it is all the more important that we reach out to you with whatever means available to keep our citizens informed and encourage public participation. This newsletter is one means and the town's website and Facebook page are two more. Look for notices at the kiosk at the Newtown Commons on Main St and by all means you are encouraged to attend council and planning commission meetings whenever you can. Even though things seem quiet, a lot has been going on throughout the year.

Town Manager,

**Mike Kehoe**

**Did you hear about the  
Town providing leaf  
collection throughout  
November?**



**Throughout the month of November, the Town  
will provide leaf collection.**

**Please place leaves in either plastic or paper bags at the curb where you  
leave trash on Monday mornings by 8:30am.**

**Your leaves must be bagged! Piles will not be picked up.**

**TOWN OFFICE CLOSED**

*on the Following Dates:*

*Thursday,*

*November 12, 2012*

*Veterans Day;*

*Wednesday,*

*November 21*

*Town Office Closes at Noon;*

*Thursday and Friday,*

*November 22 & 23*

*Thanksgiving Holiday;*

*Monday,*

*December 24 & 25, 2012*

*Christmas Day;*

*The Office will re-open on next*

*Business Day at*

*at 8:30am*

*November and  
December are filled  
with such wonderful  
times to spend with  
your family and friends.*

*From all of the Council  
and Town Staff, we  
wish you all the most  
joyous Holiday Season.*



## Christmas on the Commons– Veteran’s Memorial Fundraiser

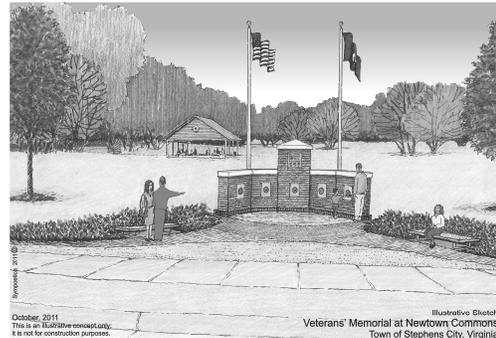
This year as always the Christmas on the Commons will have a tree lighting ceremony, but as last year the tree will be decorated in nothing but red, white and blue and you can help!

Do to the success of last year, the Business Association, along with the Town is holding another fundraising effort for the construction of the Veteran’s Memorial on the Newtown Commons. You can help by donating and sponsoring red, white and blue Christmas ornaments for the town tree. Our goal is to make sure every branch has an ornament and the tree is covered in red, white and blue.

Ornaments can be donated for \$10 a piece or 3 for \$25. Donation forms can be found at the Town Office and online at the Town’s Website. Your donation will go directly to the Veteran’s Memorial Fund. Please help us make this year’s tree patriotic by honoring our veteran’s!

Sincerely,

Brian P. Henshaw, Assistant Town Manager



## Why did I get Another Tax Bill this Month?

Currently, the Town of Stephens City sends out tax bills twice a year. The first bill you received was due in June and was for half of the amount of tax you owe for the year. The first half of the personal property tax bill included the decal fee for your motor vehicles or trailers.

The bill you will received this month is for the second half of what you owe for this year. You did not get billed for town decals as you have already paid for them. Please read your tax bills carefully. If there is a prior balance unpaid, you will need to add that amount to the current tax due in order to be in compliance

*(Remember, interest is added each month to unpaid tax bills and leaves you open for DMV stops and liens against your property!)*

The Town of Stephens City is a non-prorating jurisdiction. That is to say, any property you own on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year is taxed. If you should acquire other property on any other day of the year, you will not be taxed on it until the following tax year. Likewise, if you move or dispose of your property (real estate, vehicles, etc.) throughout the year, you still owe the entire year’s tax to the Town.

The value of the property both real and

personal is set by the Commissioner of Revenue, Frederick County. Based upon the value their office assesses, Stephens City applies the tax rate and that is how we arrive at the amount of tax you owe.

For Frequently Asked Questions concerning reassessment of values, please see this web site:

[http://taxes.co.frederick.va.us/comm\\_rev/re\\_reassessment\\_faq.aspx](http://taxes.co.frederick.va.us/comm_rev/re_reassessment_faq.aspx)

Town Treasurer,  
**Shannon D. Rothemick**

## Water and Sewer Billing

Water and sewer bills for the bi-monthly billing period ended on **Tuesday, October 23, 2012** and are due upon receipt.

On **Monday, December 3, 2012** a **10% penalty** will be added. On **Monday, December 10, 2012** service will be discontinued for delinquency. A reconnect fee of **\$25** plus the full amount of the bill must be paid before service can be restored.

Just a reminder for your convenience a night drop is available at the Town Office for dropping off **check or money order** payments and payments can also be made online at the Town’s website. ***It is important to note that, if you pay your bill online after midnight the day it is due, it will not be posted until two business days after the due date and will be subject to additional penalties or shut off.***

Water/Sewer bills can be paid using a Visa, MasterCard or Discover (at the office). If you pay a bill online after the due date, you will still be responsible for the 10% penalty and if the bill is paid after the shut off date, the \$25 reconnect fee will need to be paid as well, prior to reconnection.

**DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE DROP BOX!**

## NOTICE TO WATER/SEWER CUSTOMERS

Because of changes made by the State Legislature effective July 1, 2012, some changes will be made to the Town Code Chapter 22 governing the water/sewer accounts in the Town. Some of these resulting changes impact the policies that guide the administration of water/sewer accounts. Residents of the Town of Stephens City with water and sewer accounts should be aware of their responsibilities regarding this service which are as follows:

- All customers are required to complete an application and provide a security deposit when establishing a new account.
- New customers will be required to submit authorization from the property owner prior to establishing a new account effective September 2012.
- Water/sewer bills are sent every two months.
- Non-receipt of a bill or cut-off notice does not cancel out the customer's obligation to pay by the penalty date or cut-off date. It is the customer's responsibility to contact the Town Office if you have not received a bill.
- Bills are due and payable upon receipt.
- Payments must be received by 5:00 pm on the penalty date printed on the bill to avoid a penalty or by 5:00 pm on a cut-off date to avoid a turn off. If paying after 5:00 pm on a cut-off date, the \$25.00 administrative fee must be included whether service is turned off or not. A postmark date or bank process date does not represent receipt of payment.



**Don't forget to turn your clocks back 1 hour on  
Sunday, November 4th!**

## Town Calendar of Events

### NOVEMBER 2012

Nov.	6	<b>Town Council at 7:30pm</b>
Nov.	11	<b><i>Veteran's Day</i></b>
Nov.	12	<b>Town Office Closed</b> <i>(Veteran's Day Observed)</i>
Nov.	13	Personnel Committee 5:00pm
Nov.	15	Water/ Sewer at 5:30 pm Public Works at 6:00 pm Newtown Heritage Festival Committee at 7:00pm
Nov.	20	Historic Preservation at 5:00pm
Nov.	21	<b>Town Office Closed at Noon</b>
Nov.	22	<b><i>Happy Thanksgiving</i></b>
Nov.	23	<b>Town Office Closed</b>
Nov.	26	Parks and Recreation Committee at 5:00pm
Nov.	27	Planning Commission at 7:30pm
Nov.	28	Finance Committee at 5:00pm
Nov.	29	Public Safety at 7:00pm

***\* All meetings subject to change without notice w/  
the exception of the Town Council meeting.***

### DECEMBER 2012

Dec.	3	<b>Water/Sewer Bills Due without penalty.</b>
Dec.	4	<b>Town Council Meeting at 7:30pm. Penalties added to Water/Sewer Bills</b>
Dec.	5	Tax Payments due without penalty
Dec.	10	<b>Water Shut Off Date</b>
Dec.	13	Personnel Committee at 5:00pm
Dec.	18	Historic Preservation Commission at 5:00pm
Dec.	19	Water/ Sewer Meeting at 5:30pm Public Works Meeting at 6:00pm Newtown Heritage Festival Committee at 7:00pm
Dec.	24	<b>Town Office Closed</b>
Dec.	25	<b><i>Merry Christmas</i></b>
Dec.	26	Finance Committee at 5:00pm
Dec.	27	Public Safety at 7:00pm
Dec..	31	Parks & Recreation Committee at 5:00pm