



Stephens City Newsletter

Volume 34 Issue 1 January and February 2015

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 between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:00 pm.

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From the Town Council, Appointed Officials and Staff of Stephens City, we wish you and yours a joyous and prosperous New Year!

TRASH AND RECYCLING

A Message From American Disposal Service Inclement Weather Policy

“Safety in your community is our primary concern. Roads and/or areas which are deemed unsafe due to snow or ice will be suspended for collection. If suspension occurs, services will resume on the next regularly scheduled collection day.”

From the Office of the Mayor:



I would like to take just a moment to express to the citizens of Stephens City my sincerest appreciation for their support in the past election.

I vow to attempt to live up to your trust. I am looking forward to serving you over the next four years.

This is our town, with the emphasis on OUR. For a government to function in the best interest of all, it is essential that its citizens take an active part in its process.

I encourage all to become involved by attending meetings, volunteering for committees, and in general, taking an active role in all of your government processes.

Together we can make Stephens City an even better place to live and raise our families.

Respectfully,
Mike Grim

SNOW REMOVAL

After our first snowfall we thought it might be a good time to remind all citizens about their responsibilities with regard to snow removal.

Property owners or occupants must clear all public sidewalks of snow where sidewalks front their property. This must be done within 6 hours after snow has ceased to fall or no later than noon the next day if snowfall stops overnight. Please contact the Town Office if you have any questions.



If you are willing to volunteer to "adopt" a neighborhood fire hydrant for snow removal, please call or email the Town Office. Together we can make a difference.

FROZEN WATER LINES

Most of the time the first place to check for a frozen water line is an exposed drafty area beneath or within your home or business. Find and be aware of where the cutoff valve is within your home.

Town water meters are insulated and are not prone to freezing. **Do not open a water meter box unless you have contacted the Town.**



If you have a problem with frozen water lines, during office hours you may call 540-869-3087; after hours contact 540-662-6162.

BUSINESS LICENSES

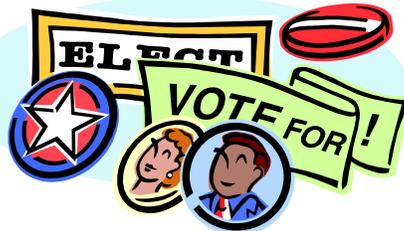
Business licenses must be renewed annually, after January 1, 2015 and are due by March 1, 2015. Renewal forms will be mailed to existing license holders. The cost of the business license is based on gross receipts or a minimum of \$15.

Please be sure to have your gross receipt records available when applying for your license.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 869-3087. Business and equipment taxes must be paid in full prior to license renewal.

Assistant Town Clerk,

Susan Jarreau



The results of Election Day are in. On November 4, 2014, residents of the Town of Stephens City elected a new Mayor, Mike Grim. Also newly elected is Town Councilmember Regina Swygert-Smith. Town Councilmembers Linden "Butch" Fravel and Jason Nauman were re-elected; all will serve 4 year terms. If you are interested in volunteering for service to the Town on one of the commissions please contact the Town Office.



Recycled Christmas Trees will be picked up on Monday, January 5th and Monday, January 12th

Congratulations to Darell Kerns, the winner of the Veterans' Memorial raffle. Mr. Kerns won a signed and framed print donated by Kevin Bowers titled "The Palace Bar" by Mort Kuntzler. Thanks to everyone who participated in the raffle to benefit our memorial.

From the Town Manager's Desk...

Due to recent legislation, road projects in the Stephens City area have been placed on indefinite hold. At the direction of the Town Council, the Town Manager sent a letter to the Transportation Secretary expressing displeasure at the low priority given to road improvements in Stephens City and Frederick County. Following is an excerpt from the letter.

A Letter to Transportation Secretary Aubrey Layne

Dear Secretary Layne,

We have learned that for the third time in 15 years the widening of Route 277 in Frederick County has been defunded as a result of House Bill 2. As well, the study for relocation of the 307 Interchange on I-81 was affected by said legislation.

The delays in making improvements to Route 277 east of Stephens City will continue to have a negative impact upon our community. The proposed project not only included the widening of Route 277, an increasingly busy corridor, but perhaps more significantly intersection improvements for access roads parallel to I-81. How long does this community have to wait for relief to a dysfunctional road system created by the bottleneck of the I-81 overpass?

The congestion problem is not a recent occurrence as the problems go back to at least the early 1980s. The band-aid solution has been to add more and more stop lights in an effort to move traffic and necessarily preventing stacking on the off ramps onto the Interstate highway. However, it has caused a domino effect by transferring the stacking problems at other intersections in the town.

When traffic is detoured to Route 11 because of an incident on I-81, which happens quite often these days, Stephens City is often in grid-lock status for hours. The major problem seems to be a result of tractor-trailers attempting to make a short radius turn at the stop light at Main Street and Route 277. Automobiles are already jammed into the intersection due to being

caught in the traffic light cycle. This is repeated at each stop light and intersection for some distance in each direction.

The west side of Mulberry Street is often used as a bypass to avoid the stop light, which only causes more tie-ups when re-entering Main Street.

On the east side of the overpass there are three stop lights within one tenth of a mile, adding to the confusion to someone not familiar with the road patterns.

Not only does our small community of just over 1,800 in population experience the gridlock problems of larger, more urban areas, but the town businesses suffer because their customer base avoids shopping in the town and goes elsewhere. For the same reason, potential new businesses choose to locate somewhere else. The Stephens City business corridor suffers revenue loss as a result of the gridlock problems; especially during the morning and evening rush hour times. The majority of the existing businesses don't open until after 9:00 am and close prior to 5:00 pm because of the constant stream of traffic during these times. Anyone who would want to stop and shop for a short or a long time would be hard pressed to pull out of the steady stream safely to do their shopping and then back in to the stream to head to their next destination. Instead, the potential revenue is gained by the nearest box store, making it difficult for small businesses to succeed in the downtown. This is perpetuated by the fact that potential new businesses are not interested in locating to the Stephens City business corridor. Instead they are opting to locate in other areas where they are guaranteed a higher revenue stream, which of course is losing the town of Stephens City a sustainable stream of revenue as well.

The long delays in making improvements and defunding the Route 277 project once again sends a message to this community that its traffic problems are insignificant in the big picture. The citizens of Stephens City cannot continue to put up with an intolerable situation in the level of service (LOS) of roads and intersections rated at D & F; C- at best.

If nothing else, VDOT should consider moving Aylor Road and Town Run Lane intersections as shown on the plans for the Route 277 widening. Immediate improvements would be seen.

Stephens City and Frederick County have done their homework to plan for alternate roadways and improvements to mitigate the current situation by adopting a long-range transportation vision in their respective Comprehensive Plans, obtaining proffers for rights-of-way and traffic improvements, working with the MPO and other organizations, but it seems like nothing ever gets done.

Michael K. Kehoe
Town Manager



Water and Sewer Billing

Water and sewer bills for the bi-monthly billing end **Monday, December 22, 2014** and are due upon receipt.

After **Monday, February 2, 2015** a 10% penalty will be added. On **Monday, February 9, 2015** service will be discontinued for delinquency. An administrative fee of \$25 plus the full amount of the bill must be paid before service can be restored.

For your convenience a night drop is available at the Town Office to pay by check or money order. Also, payments can be made online at the Town's website. *It is important to note that*

payments made after midnight will not be posted until two business days after the due date and will be subject to additional penalties. The Town does not accept payments over the telephone.

Water/Sewer bills can be paid using a Visa or MasterCard or Discover. 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 administrative fee will need to be paid as well, prior to reconnection.

PLEASE DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE DROP BOX!



Memorial Bricks for placement at the Veteran's Memorial site are still available. Application forms can be picked up at the Town Office or on the Town website. The cost per brick is \$50. All American Veterans are eligible for honors. Please contact the Town Office with any questions.

Town Calendar of Events

January 2015

Jan. 1	Town Office Closed <i>New Year's Day</i>
Jan. 2	Town Office Closed
Jan. 6	Town Council at 7:30pm
Jan. 13	Personnel Committee meeting 5:00pm
Jan. 15	NHF Meeting 7:00pm
Jan. 19	Town Office Closed <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>
Jan. 20	HPC Meeting 7:30pm
Jan. 21	Public Works Comm Meeting 4:30pm Water/Sewer Comm Meeting 5:30pm
Jan. 22	Public Safety Comm Meeting 5:00 pm
Jan. 26	Parks & Recreation Comm Meeting 5:00pm
Jan. 27	Planning Comm Meeting 7:30pm
Jan. 28	Finance Comm Meeting 4:00pm

** All meetings subject to change without notice with the exception of the Town Council meeting.*

February 2015

Feb. 2	Water/Sewer Bills Due without penalty.
Feb. 3	Penalties added to Water/Sewer Bills
Feb. 3	Town Council Meeting at 7:30pm.
Feb. 9	Water Shut Off Date
Feb. 10	Personnel Committee at 5:00pm
Feb. 16	Town Office Closed <i>Presidents Day</i>
Feb. 17	HPC Meeting 7:30 pm
Feb. 18	Public Works Meeting 4:30 pm Water/Sewer Comm Meeting 5:30 pm
Feb. 19	Newtown Heritage Festival at 7:00pm
Feb. 23	Parks & Recreation Comm. at 5:00pm
Feb. 24	Planning Commission at 5:00pm
Feb. 25	Finance Committee at 4:00pm
Feb. 26	Public Safety Comm 5:00 pm

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