

# Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN

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SEPTEMBER 2024

Town of Purcellville  
Election Interviews  
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# LOUDOUN Today

## “We have the DNA of the community in our Comprehensive Plan” - Former Mayor Kwasi Fraser

BY REED CARVER AND VALERIE CURY

On Aug. 13 the Purcellville Planning and Community Development Department hosted a workshop, along with the Virginia Main Street program. The meeting was held at the Train Station. In attendance were seven staff members to include the Purcellville Planning Department, members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, Purcellville residents, Planning Commissioners, and developers.

The main impetus for the meeting was for the town staff, stakeholders, and residents to listen to a presentation from Blaire Buergler, one of the program administrators for VMS. Currently Purcellville is in VMS's most basic introductory tier.

John Heather, Purcellville's Economic Development Advisor, said the town is

looking for what appropriate projects may be developed in downtown, and they wanted to “understand the DNA of the town, and we need the input from the community,” he said.

However later, former Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser said, “We have the DNA of the community in our Comprehensive Plan. I believe all of this starts with understanding that the Comprehensive Plan is the aspiration of the people for their community.”

VMS is a preservation-based economic and community development program which seeks to revitalize downtown historic districts, said Buergler. EDAC and John Heather had reached out to VMS to join the program.

When towns are accredited under this system, they can receive grants for various downtown improvement projects.

Fraser cautioned that the town would have to be careful not to spend the same amount of money to hire a grant writer, to get back nearly the same amount in grant funds.

Buergler said, for the program to be successful, it will require the community, not government, to take ownership of it. Vice-Mayor and EDAC liaison Erin Rayner said the town government should be involved because they control the infrastructure.

The central topics were business engagement, downtown planning, tourism, branding, and infill development.

Mark Nelis, an attorney and one of the Vineyard Square and Valley Business Park owners said the last time he built residential units in downtown was 30 years ago. “And that’s a shame. You can’t build downtowns without people,” he



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said. “We need people downtown.”

The Vineyard Square project on 21<sup>st</sup> Street is a six-story, 40 condo approved project. The project has been approved for 14 years and the developers are now asking to change the site plan, but they want to operate off of the same permit. If their permits expire (June 2025), they could not get the approved density they currently have.

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## School Board approves Collective Bargaining, and stronger union control

BY REED CARVER

The Loudoun County School Board voted to allow Collective Bargaining, a unionization vote the night of Aug. 13 at their Board Meeting. Loudoun Education Association will become, “the exclusive bargaining unit” for teachers in Loudoun.

Teachers are now unionized, but more is needed, said members of LEA outside in the gathering area

before the meeting. Teachers need to become part of LEA, and then they will be able to vote on what they desire to do as a body. The whole body then is able to use their numbers as a bargaining advantage to secure higher wages and benefits.

Other Loudoun entities are already unionized, like the Loudoun Career Fire Firefighters Association. Jon Myers, the president of

that union, was on site to support teachers in their cause.

Three speakers addressed the group with a megaphone: John Myers, Julius Reynolds, and Kris Countryman, who has been the president since Aug 1.

Afterwards, a member of the group led a chant, saying in response to those who were against bargaining, “They want private

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# Kerley makes the calls for Junior Little League World Series

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

Last month, August 4-11, the Junior Little League World Series was held in Taylor, Michigan. Upper Loudoun Little League's Umpire-in-Chief, Chris Kerley, was chosen from hundreds of umpires nationwide to be in one of the seven World Series events.

Kerley began to play baseball "late in life" at age 13. This was past the starting age of that when most players are not



much taller than the bat itself. Kerley admits that despite having participated in several other sports, when it came to baseball, he was "not great, unfortunately." However, this did not dampen his love of the game.

Growing up in Maryland, Kerley was a devoted fan of the Baltimore Orioles. He saw them play at Memorial Stadium up until 1991, and when the team moved to Camden Yards in 1992. As Kerley's sons became interested in playing, he and his wife coached at the levels of T-Ball,

Coach pitch and Upper Loudoun Little League making baseball a family affair.

Coaching the Little League team that played on the fields at Hamilton Elementary, Kerley inquired as to additionally doing field maintenance. That was when it was suggested that he also become assistant umpire-in-chief. Kerley was asked to take over when Chief Umpire Bill Roth retired around 2011. Coaching and being an umpire sometimes brought Kerley to the brink of a "conflict of interest" on the field. However, his integrity and character deemed any accusations as unfounded.

Now in a serious position as Umpire-in-Chief, Kerley was umpiring All Star, District and State Tournament games as well as attending umpire school in Georgia. During his time in the week-long school, he was encouraged to apply for umpiring World Series and he would umpire three state tournaments

that year.

2020 brought interruptions due to Covid so in 2022, Kerley was umpiring at the Regional level. During the Regionals, "you are always being evaluated," and the goal there is to get your World Series recommendation says Kerley.

Kerley did receive those recommendations—two actually—for the two different field sizes. The 60 foot diamond being for players age 12 and under and the 90 foot (regulation size) for

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## 21st Anniversary of the Purcellville Tag Sale—Oct. 12 rain or shine

Save the date—it's that time of year again for the Purcellville Tag Sale. On Saturday, Oct. 12 join the community for a day of fun, shopping, and deals. Oh, and treasures, too. Sign-up will end Tuesday, Sept. 24. The Tag Sale will take place rain or shine.

The Purcellville Tag sale is perfect for the hunter, collector, picker, and hoarder in us all. The event starts bright and early at 8 a.m. and goes to 6 p.m. – rain or shine. "We have people selling vintage clothing, antiques, candles, household items, handmade jewelry, collectables, and the list goes on," said Tag Sale organizer Silas Redd. "There is truly something for everyone."

All vendors wanted. Go to [Purcellville-VaTagSale.com](http://Purcellville-VaTagSale.com) to sign up.

The Purcellville Tag Sale is organized and also sponsored by Silas Redd, owner

of Nostalgia Boutique located at 142 E. Main Street in Purcellville. Said Redd, "I am happy to be doing the Purcellville Tag Sale again this year. It is our 21st Anniversary. It's a great opportunity for the Town of Purcellville community to showcase the variety of businesses. It's also great for our neighbors to come together and have fun. It's always exciting to find fabulous treasures from vendors and local businesses."

Sign up at [PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com](http://PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com). The first 40 to sign up will be listed on the printed map.

But no worries—most everyone who signs up will be listed on the website. Don't forget the deadline to sign up is Sept. 24.

Redd said, "After the huge turnout from last year, I am really looking

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# Mayberry vs. Metropolis

BY BEN NETT

My name is Carl Benjamin Nett, but everyone calls me “Ben.” My name on the ballot for the upcoming Town of Purcellville election is Carl B. “Ben” Nett, in keeping with the naming options available by state law. I’ve been known by a great many names and monikers over the course of my national security career – Nick Brewster, Phillip K. Whitehead, K5002, PT-10, Badge 0903 and, now, Badge 5263– but feel free to call me “Ben.”

I’m running for Town Council with a dedicated team: Chris Bertaut, Susan Khalil, Brian Green, and Jon Arnborg. We’re running under the slogan “Mayberry Not Metropolis,” reflecting our commitment to preserving Purcellville’s small-town charm and managing growth responsibly.

We chose “Mayberry” as a reference to the classic sitcom, *The Andy Griffith Show*, which takes place in the charming, community-oriented town of Mayberry.

We are committed to maintaining Purcellville as a wonderful community of neighbors, managing growth in keeping with the aesthetics and unique character of our town, and finding alternatives to

our opponents’ plans to implement double-digit rate increases for the utility fund every year for at least the next four years.

We are against growing the town’s borders through annexation and any projects which compromise the small-town feel – no six story buildings for example.

There is an old saying in politics, and in life: “Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, and small minds discuss people.” Thus far, I’ve focused exclusively on my ideas for improving our town. This includes reducing the wasteful spending of our general fund and dedicating a portion of our meals tax revenue, once we have a policy in place, toward reducing our utility debt in order to minimize rate increases on our residents.

We, “Team Mayberry,” are running against “Team Metropolis” – the developer-backed group of candidates led by Mayor Stan Milan, who just two years ago ran on a slow growth platform but has since completely reversed his stance.

The platform of “Team Metropolis” advocates for ever-increasing utility bills as an excuse to annex property for commercial/industrial development, purportedly for the one-time utility connection

fees. We all know that growth begets growth.

Would annexation of the Valley Commerce Center, which is over 1.2 million square feet of industrial development, really benefit the Town of Purcellville? The answer is obvious. Our residents oppose such annexations because it would transform our town and push it towards becoming a “Metropolis.” Additionally, growth doesn’t pay for itself. It imposes significant demands on every aspect of our town’s infrastructure and services.

Will such development—annexed industrial centers, for example—make it rain more often? Our water resources are already strained, with yearly drought conditions the norm. The “Metropolis” team have no answers for this or other substantive challenges before us. They just want the town to grow and grow. That is the reason they have changed the slow growth majority on the planning commission.

Our opponents are drawing party lines where no such lines exist. Dirty partisan politics have no place in our town. Our elections have always been nonpartisan— and issues like taxes, traffic, transparency, and growth aren’t determined by anything except for one’s regard for our quality of life.

Unfortunately, one of the “Team Metropolis” candidates, John Mark Gardner, has resorted to personal attacks— which is exactly what Purcellville residents are sick and tired of from politicians. On July 16, he filed a complaint alleging that I used my status as a police officer to intimidate him and discourage his candidacy. This accusation was completely false and led to an obligatory Internal Affairs Investigation, which confirmed the complaint was baseless. I was fully exonerated.

Mr. Gardner also wants every Democrat in town to know that I ran for public office, years ago, as a Republican, and made headlines when I made a joke on social media.

A Democrat Congressman posted a photo of himself, proudly displaying a lapel pin showing his “F” rating from the NRA. I opined that he should move that pin over to center mass. This same congressman later posted a picture of himself holding an AR-15 rifle. I fully accept the criticism over my humor, but what is Mr. Gardner implying here by dredging this up?

He’s already lied to law enforcement about my conduct as a police officer and he’s continuing the same game in the

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Please include your name, address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary. Deadline for print edition is the third week of each month, or, online any time.

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## A sincere thank you to the three most senior slow growth planning commissioners

BY KWASI FRASER, FORMER TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE MAYOR

First and foremost, I extend my gratitude to each of the three planning commissioners, Nan Forbes, Ed Neham and Nedim Ogelman, whose terms expired on August 31, and were not renewed by the council majority. Your unwavering dedication over the years in revising our 2030 Comprehensive Plan based on citizen input, which the prior Town Council proudly adopted and your commitment to rewriting the zoning ordinances to align with this plan is commendable. The current zoning ordinance you recommended sustains what the Town of Purcellville has and protects our small-town feel.

Many of your critics on council are adamantly opposed to the Comprehensive Plan’s slow growth agenda, even though they dare not label themselves as such. They are acutely aware that a stance against slow growth is not a winning strategy

at the ballot box.

As the November election looms, they aim to infiltrate the Town Council with wolves in sheep’s clothing, eager to drive a pro-growth agenda. They envision transforming Purcellville into yet another Ashburn.

Those who scoff at these words are either wolves in disguise or are blind to the fact that our just recommended updated zoning ordinance replaced our outdated and misaligned one—to align with our newly adopted Comprehensive Plan.

This negligence is a disservice to the current state of our Town. Case in point, we have witnessed brick structures demolished and replaced by Ashburn-esque rectangular monstrosities devoid of character or charm.

Consider the travesty on E Street, where Loudoun County razed a solid masonry home at 410 East E Street, erected in 1966 by a distinguished member of the African American community, Pastor E. Terry, only to

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## Skyscrapers and affordable housing

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Land use, housing, sprawl and property rights have been studied to death, and I don’t think many of those studies have found any universal truths. One recent attempt is from James Barr, an economist and professor, who has just published a book titled, “*Cities in the Sky, The Quest to Build the World’s Tallest Skyscrapers.*” I’ve just finished it.

The book’s title suggests that it will not be a best-seller, but may appeal to a narrow group of practitioners and to skyscraper buffs like me.

Barr presents a lot of history of these buildings, e.g. Chicago was the home of the first tall buildings – six stories, I believe, and he tries to draw conclusions from his vast amount of historical data. His history is better than his conclusions, a number of which appear to be wishful thinking, but one observation is thought provoking: Billion-dollar, 1000-foot-tall residential skyscrapers increase

the availability of affordable housing.

### Barr’s Counterintuitive Idea

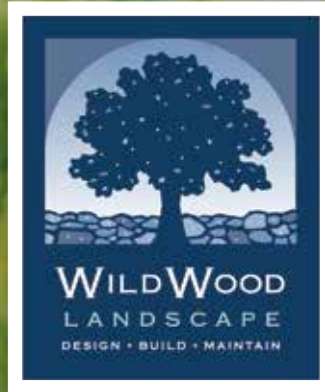
Some may say that Barr is nuts, but I think he may be onto something.

You may be familiar with the needle-thin, 1000-foot-tall apartment buildings at the south end of Central Park in New York City. They call it “Billionaires Row.” Many people are offended by these towers, at the idea that a relative handful of rich folks will pay enormous sums – perhaps a \$100 million – for a full-floor apartment on an upper floor. Barr correctly dismisses this as envy.

He explains that housing is a continuum, from shacks to palatial abodes. We know that. What Barr is saying is that along this continuum, each tranche (a slice of the whole) is linked to the more expensive segment above it and to the less expensive slice of housing below it.

Barr then applies the law of supply and demand to his data.

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# Just like nothing (else) on earth: Harpers Ferry

BY TIM JON

Believe it or not the prospect of a new artistic project often includes a healthy dose of fear: not due to any real or even imaginary danger involved with the adventure, but—for me—a feeling of inadequacy. What if I go to the well of inspiration and come up empty? What if I have nothing original and unique



TIM JON

to share with the world in this wonderful opportunity? I imagine this impasse has been faced by actors taking on a famous role like King Lear, or a painter examining a classic piece of architecture or natural formation—or even a successful musician wondering, “How do we follow up on ‘Yesterday,’ or ‘I Can’t Get No Satisfaction,’ or ‘Layla.’

If these creative forces were anything like mine, they blundered ahead through a fog of stupidity. Yes, it’s always worked for me.

I’d been meaning to get back up to Harpers Ferry National Historic Park for ages. I’d taken my parents there a couple of decades ago, and had a few intermittent visits over the years, but never for an official exploration and photo session. And this, I’m sure, is where the sense of trepidation came in. First of all, this iconic site represents an important part in our nation’s past. Secondly, the setting of the confluence of two well-known Rivers—Shenandoah and



Potomac—abutted by the hilly terrain and architectural silhouettes make this an instantly recognized spot on the map.

So, driving up Harpers Ferry Road in Loudoun County, then traveling along Route 340 into West Virginia for a short stretch, I was thinking about treating

this historic subject with its due reverence. Now, I hadn’t really been there for a full-immersion visit for something like 20 years, and had no idea what kind of tourist numbers the place would attract.

It was a blisteringly-hot day in the middle of the working week. I had a blessed vacation from my stint at the Post Office, so I figured the visitor numbers may be rather light, and I could just park along one of the many streets running to and from the actual ‘tip of the spear,’ as it were.

Well, by the time I’d negotiated all the proper turns and started onto the property, it appeared as if about half the Earth’s population had descended on Harpers Ferry on this particular day. Official Parking lots appeared full to capacity, so I meandered through the

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## Skyscrapers and affordable housing

Dear Editor:

Ah, Mayor Milan, what a triumphant declaration! One could almost hear the trumpets blaring as you proudly announced the town’s new AAA rating—a feat, according to you, unmatched in the annals of municipal governance. But before we shower you with laurels, let’s take a moment to pull back the curtain and see what’s really behind this theatrical performance.

Not long ago—if memory serves, though it seems to fade at the most convenient times—you and your esteemed Team Metropolis (Milan, Stought, Gardner, and Dean) took to the newspaper, warning the voters of Purcellville that the town was under the watchful eye of Fitch Ratings.

The reason? According to you, the previous Town Council didn’t raise rates high enough to meet your lofty standards. But how quickly things change. Now, here you stand, flaunting this AAA rating as if it were a golden fleece, claiming it as a direct result of the 16% and 18% rate hikes you so graciously imposed on our weary taxpayers.

But let’s pause and consider the reality behind your “achievement.” This AAA rating didn’t simply materialize because you decided to burden Purcellville’s residents and businesses with double-digit rate increases.

No, this rating is the result of years of careful stewardship and a gradual improvement in our debt

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## The Trojan Horse of Annexation

Dear Editor:

I keep hearing again that Purcellville needs to annex property outside of its borders so they can control what is developed on the land. Let’s call this what it is—a flimsy argument wrapped in the guise of concern. The notion that annexing land into the Town will magically grant us control is, at best, a clever ruse.

The real power to control development lies in the water and sewer rights we already possess. High-density development, the kind the county and others quietly crave, hinges on municipal water and sewer services, and guess what? Only Purcellville has the infrastructure to support that.

Sure, someone could dream up a standalone water and sewer plant, but it would never meet the demands of the dense development these folks are plotting. The truth is, we already hold the cards. By withholding sewer and water services, we dictate what a developer can and cannot build on land near our borders.

Land in the county is indeed “controlled” by the county at significantly less density. Take the Valley Springs Annexation proposal. It is already “controlled” in the county for 39 homes on 117-acres. If annexed into the town, it would indeed be “controlled” by the town at 1.2 million square feet of industrial. Who would you rather “control” it?

So, let’s not be fooled. The push for annexation isn’t

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## Votes in this Town are Not for Sale

Dear Editor:

A friend of mine supports Ben Nett for Town Council and has had his sign in their yard for a month. This week, Mayor Milan knocked on my friend’s door and tried to convince them to remove Ben’s sign and support his slate of candidates instead. They declined.

The next morning, Milan (or someone from his campaign) returned to their house and removed the “Ben Nett” sign. At the same time, he planted signs in their yard for himself and his running mates.

All of the signs were removed, which Milan planted without permission, and were discarded. Hours later, Milan’s running mate, John Mark Gardner, acted as Santa. While my friend and I were talking, he pulled up across the street in his big red sleigh—I mean, Jeep—delivering presents. He handed my friend a \$30 gift card to an ice cream shop with a “Town of Purcellville Virginia, Stanley J. Milan Mayor” business card attached.

Is there a gift card for everyone in town? I was present for this encounter and was surely surprised. How many more gift cards is Mr. Gardner delivering to voters around town? I interpret this as a bribe.

On August 31, after my friend replaced the stolen “Ben Nett” sign, Mayor Milan returned to their home, angry, and demanded to know what happened

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## TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE ELECTION

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## Elections are November 5th

The Town of Purcellville election is Nov. 5 and early voting starts Sept. 20 at the Loudoun County Elections and Voter Registration office. The Purcellville candidates' interviews are in the order in which their names appear on the ballot. There is also a special election for the term of two years to fill the rest of Boo Bennett's term.



## Chris Bertaut

*Chris Bertaut moved to Purcellville in 2005 with his wife and young children because they loved the town's community and small-town feel. He has been employed locally in the telecommunications and IT industries for the last 22 years. Bertaut was elected to Town Council in 2020. He has served on Purcellville's Economic Development Advisory Committee, served as Vice Mayor for three years, and currently serves as Council Liaison to the Planning Commission. In his spare time he enjoys fixing his son's cars and spending time with his family.*

## Stan Milan

The *Blue Ridge Leader* provided interview questions to all candidates for the Town of Purcellville elections, and as of press time Stan Milan was the only candidate from whom the *Blue Ridge Leader* did not receive responses.

**Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.**

**Chris Bertaut:** I want to be elected to preserve the town's character through slow growth, minimize the burden of rates and taxes on our residents, and fulfill citizen direction captured in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. I have proudly served this great community for four years on Town Council. I am running for Mayor because Purcellville's citizens deserve a Mayor with integrity who places their interests first.

Unlike my opponent, I kept my campaign promises to protect the town we all love. As Mayor, I will continue to listen to citizens, who overwhelmingly want to preserve our small town, by implementing their 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

When I first ran for office, a top citizen priority was protecting our town through slow growth. It remains on everyone's mind. Unlike my opponent, I will be the strong, transparent Mayor Purcellville needs when annexation and development applications come before the town.

With each developer proposal I will focus on the impact on our residents. As Purcellville's history shows, we cannot grow our way out of debt. Since my opponent's about face on the issues he ran on, he has emphasized double-digit water and sewer rate increases and massive development. Developers are speaking with Council Members privately, instead of presenting their ideas in a public forum. This is unacceptable.

My administration will focus on fiscal responsibility with full transparency, administrative integrity and open discussions. My opponent's false claim that the town's debt principal would have been \$12.6 million lower without the debt restructurings in 2017 and 2021, because the amount of principal due would not have been reduced through refinancing. At the time, decisions to refinance were guided by Purcellville's financial

advisers to increase reserves and reduce the burden on our citizens from our inherited debt in 2015.

I will work with Team Mayberry to reduce projected water and sewer rate increases immediately. We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. I will streamline our government for more efficient operation, and reduce debt. I voted against this year's utility rate increases. Our town has a population of approximately 9,000 residents—yet our budget is \$30.6 million.

My opponent is taking the low road by playing on fear to sway voters to his agenda rather than represent their interests. He claims to favor keeping our small town charming and livable but supports unwanted annexations and inappropriate density not envisioned by our citizens in our Comprehensive Plan. His agenda pushes government and infrastructure costs onto our residents. My opponent says that businesses are the economic engine of this town. I say we, the residents, are the economic engine, and we are empowered to make this small town better.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Bertaut:** I do not support the Valley Commerce Center (VCC) annexation, and I do not support other recent annexation proposals. Purcellville's citizens have spoken loudly on this issue. It is also clear in our Comprehensive Plan that most residents do not want annexation.

Furthermore, the Loudoun County Planning Department has stated that Loudoun County's General plan does not allow the proposed Valley Commerce Center for this parcel in the County. A proposal to grow the town's borders and add 1.2 million square feet of industrial space is inappropriate. It doesn't stop there. If my opponent succeeds with this annexation, we will likely be pressured to

annex more properties in that corridor.

This annexation would also bring 3,500 additional weekday vehicle trips, which is unacceptable to both the town and our neighbors. With my vote I refused to pursue this annexation. Unlike my opponent, I have also refused to meet in private with the developer.

Annexation fever doesn't stop with this proposal. My opponent recently expressed disappointment that he couldn't annex Valley Springs Estates on A Street across from Blue Ridge Middle School. Citizens rejected this annexation because it would have increased the number of homes from 26 to 242, resulting in 726 new cars instead of 78. Also, during a review of another developer annexation proposal to build a large hotel, gas station/convenience store, and market at the corner of Rtes. 7/287, my opponent said the proposal is what he wanted to see, and asked "What's next, annexation?"

My opponent, and members of his slate say, 'If we annex it, we can control it.' Land outside the town's borders is controlled by County zoning at far less density than in-town zoning. Regarding the Valley Commerce Center proposal, citizens have said they prefer 39 homes in the County to 1.2 million square feet of industrial in town.

It is unlikely that the County will allow this project if it remains in the County. The County cannot provide off-site sewage treatment, while on-site sewage treatment requires large amounts of land for septic and wells. This is an example of playing on our residents' fears.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Bertaut:** Previous utility rate projections from the town's utility consultant and a careful look at the way the rates were modeled reveal that the outrageous rate hikes foisted this year on Purcellville's

residents are the result of uncontrolled operations costs in the utilities coupled with a refusal by the current Council majority to consider savings in the general fund.

A portion of the existing \$3 million in Meals Tax revenue can be applied to debt service for the town's utilities by policy. In addition, more than \$1 million is siphoned out of the utility funds into the general fund through charging for services rendered by general fund personnel for the utility fund. These chargebacks need to be audited for accuracy, and trimmed to reflect the true value of services.

Recently my opponent said the rating agency, Fitch, might downgrade Purcellville's AA+ rating, after Fitch changed their rating criteria. After reviewing the town's revenue and debt profile for the past several years, Fitch upgraded our rating to AAA. Our upgrade was due to several factors, including lowering the town's debt by \$10 million during former Mayor Kwasi Fraser's terms in office, keeping at least a 7.5% reserve in the general fund (we've had no less than 52% over the last ten years!), and by not incurring new debt.

Standard and Poor's continues to give Purcellville a AAA rating.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Bertaut:** I am 100% in favor of continuing to revitalize our historic downtown area. The permits for the ill-conceived Vineyard Square, approved 14 years ago, expire in June 2025. The developers need to come to the table with a serious proposal that matches the scale and scope of the area. A six story 40 condo building is inappropriate. Plus, the zoning they were given was and is not allowed in the Historic Downtown area. I do not support giving developers special favors.



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TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE ELECTION

CANDIDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL

Elections are November 5th



Caleb Stought

Caleb Stought works from home as a software engineer, and in his spare time he enjoys studying history and doing CrossFit. He previously served in the military for 10 years as a linguist, speaking Spanish,

French, Arabic, and Persian. Stought lives in the Mayfair community with his wife, who grew up in Loudoun County, and their three daughters.

Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

Caleb Stought: First, service to others is a big part of my life and my family's life. I served as a military linguist for 10 years, and my family and I enjoy serving in our church and our local community. My family and I are grateful for the community we are a part of in Purcellville, and it is a privilege to give back by serving on town council.

Second, I'm running to preserve Purcellville's small-town feel. Our historic 21st Street and beautiful Main St are representative of small-town America. We must preserve our town's character by allowing our local

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »



Carl B. "Ben" Nett

Carl B. "Ben" Nett lives in Locust Grove with his wife and two children. He is a former member of the Presidential Protective Division of the U.S. Secret Service and the National Clandestine Service of the CIA,

with warzone assignments in Afghanistan. He spent more than a decade as the Director of the Military Commissions Privilege Team at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In 2022, Nett began a second career with the Purcellville Police Department, graduating first in class from the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy. Nett has earned the Sheriff's Meritorious Action Award and was recently voted "Purcellville Police Officer of the Year" by his peers due to his work investigating financial frauds. He enjoys hiking the Appalachian Trail with his family, playing basketball with his son, and taking his daughter to gymnastics classes.

Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

Ben Nett: I have a strong aversion to dishonesty, bullies, and corruption. Does that count as one reason

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »



Brian Green

Brian Green lives in Mayfair with his wife and two children. He has been a resident of Purcellville for over eight years and has lived in Loudoun County for twenty-five years. He brings a diverse background to the table across several areas of engineering, information

technology, project management and customer service—in management and supporting roles. Green serves on the Town of Purcellville Planning Commission. In his spare time Green is a handyman at home and one of his passions is cooking and making homemade pasta and ravioli, much to his family's delight.

Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

Brian Green: When elected, I will maintain the small-town feel of Purcellville through appropriate and responsible slow growth that is guided by the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and not influenced by the outside developers/interests who are present at every meeting pushing their agenda. They want very little rules so they can build what they want without citizen input.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »



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**CANDIDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL**

**TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE ELECTION**

**Elections are November 5th**



**Susan Khalil**

*Susan Khalil was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. She moved to Virginia in 1986 and has been a Purcellville resident for nearly 25 years. She held a career in mortgage banking asset management and currently holds a position*

*in finance for a national non-profit. Khalil has two adult children and notes they always look forward to coming home to visit and show off their hometown to their friends.*

**Blue Ridge Leader:** Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

**Susan Khalil:** I would like to, once and for all, get rid of the monetary waste that is happening within our local government. The current expense levels for our Town are out of proportion with the size of our Town, and my running mates and I intend to begin getting expenses in line on day one. I would like to ensure that the infrastructure of our Town is solid.

My running mates and I intend to conduct a full evaluation of the existing life of all of our Town's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 »



**John-Mark Gardner**

*John-Mark Gardner and his wife Becky celebrate their 20th Wedding Anniversary this month. They have three children, a high schooler at Loudoun Valley, a middle-schooler at Blue Ridge, and a*

*3rd grader at Emerick. He is an Army veteran and a Federal Civilian program analyst for the Department of Defense. Gardner dedicates much of his free time getting his children to and from lacrosse, baseball, soccer, and basketball events.*

**Blue Ridge Leader:** Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

**John-Mark Gardner:** My children, my neighbors, and my fellow townsfolk are my three reasons. Being elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville allows my three children and their large cadre of friends to see, firsthand, a community volunteer act with integrity and honesty in the best interest of their hometown. My goal as a member of Town Council will be to ensure they grow up in the best town in America. I hope to instill the love and appreciation I have for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »



**Brian D. Dean**

*Brian Dean lives on Main Street in Purcellville with his wife and two elementary school-age children. Dean currently serves as a member of the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and his wife Tamara is Vice Chair of the town's*

*Economic Development Advisory Committee. He is a producer, writer, and media executive who leads creative teams. He enjoys hiking and biking with his family, traveling, and cheering on his daughters at their sporting events in and around Purcellville.*

**Blue Ridge Leader:** Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

**Brian Dean:** First, I'm running for town council because I love Purcellville. In our small town, community still means something—living, working, and playing together. Whether you're a lifelong resident or new to Purcellville, I believe our future is bright because you have chosen to make this special place your home, just as my family and I have. My commitment to the citizens of Purcellville is to serve as an independently minded, hardworking, collaborative representative whom you can count on to lead with integrity and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

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TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE ELECTION

CANDIDATES FOR SPECIAL ELECTION

Elections are November 5th



Jonathan "Jon" Arnburg

Jonathan "Jon" Arnburg, his wife Cassandra and their 4 children live in Locust Grove. He has over 15 years of experience in public safety and emergency management. Arnburg is currently serving as the System Senior Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management for Inova Health System, where he oversees strategic planning, policy development, and program implementation. Arnburg and his wife are active in the community and volunteer at their children's schools, youth sports, and their HOA.

Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

Jonathan Arnburg: My top priority as a candidate for the town council is to enhance the quality of life in Purcellville, focusing on infrastructure development, responsible spending, and most importantly our citizens to ensure our Purcellville thrives and remains a wonderful place for us to call home. I am committed to fiscal responsibility, aiming to manage the town's resources wisely and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used effectively to support projects and services that benefit residents while maintaining a

balanced budget.

Building trust is crucial, and transparency in decision-making fosters confidence between the town council and the community. By ensuring clear and honest communication, residents will be better informed about issues and developments, enabling them to participate more effectively in local governance. This transparency also holds council members accountable, maintaining a high standard of integrity and ensuring that the council remains answerable to the citizens it serves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »



Kevin B. Wright

Kevin B. Wright is a 3rd generation resident of Loudoun County and called Purcellville home for over 50 years. He lives in the Hoopes Subdivision with his wife Trish, also a lifelong resident of the county, as is their son. Wright is a retired Loudoun County firefighter with over 34 years of service.

Blue Ridge Leader: Name three reasons why you want to be elected to serve the citizens of Purcellville.

Kevin Wright: To start discussing the impact that the growth occurring throughout Western Loudoun is having on the town. The focus of prior discussions has been centered around controlling the growth inside the town. The reality is growth outside of town has just as much impact as any in-town growth.

Purcellville has always been and continues to be the economic hub for Western Loudoun. As such, Purcellville will continue to be the place everyone comes for their groceries, car repairs, dine, socialize, and where

their doctors are located and their kids go to school. The population of Western Loudoun continues to grow, and Purcellville needs to develop plans to address the increased traffic and the need for additional space where small businesses can open and provide goods and services.

Work to have the County give the Town a 'seat at the table' when they are making decisions regarding Western Loudoun. Many decisions made by the County have an impact on Purcellville. Providing all the towns of Western Loudoun a voice in those discussions would provide the opportunity to address and minimize

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »

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# Wheatland Concert Series at Shiloh Manor Farm Sept. 28

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Couperin's concerto for two harpsichords. Sign up for the Wheatland Concert Series Autumn 2024 recital and French wine dinner on Sept. 28. Details and tickets at [www.shiloh-manor.com](http://www.shiloh-manor.com).

No instrument better defines the Baroque period than the harpsichord. The plucked strings of the harpsichord have a rich and distinctive sound whose

clarity uniquely informs the complex melodies characteristic of Baroque music.

The Wheatland Concert Series is again teaming up with Professor Mark Janello and Professor Paula Maust, both of the Johns Hopkins University Peabody Conservatory, to present selected works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Francois Couperin, Arcangelo Corelli and Johann Ludwig Krebs composed for two harpsichords. Our repertoire for the evening includes: (i) Corelli's,

Trio Sonatas (Op 3 No. 1, 3 and 4), (ii) Krebs' Concerto for Two Harpsichords in A Minor, (iii) Couperin's, "The Apotheosis of Corelli" and (iv) Bach's Concerto for Two Harpsichords in C Major.

A four-course dinner will be served during intermission by Chef Erik. The menu consists of a chicken- mushroom cassoulet, served with local cheeses and wines with a brandied cherry pot du crème for dessert. A vegetarian dinner option is also available.

Probably invented in Italy in about

1400, the harpsichord was not only a remarkably innovative instrument, but it also marked the emergence of a revolutionary system of partially improvised accompaniment called *basso continuo*. *Basso continuo* is an Italian term that means "continuous bass," referring to a continuous bass line with harmonies that came to define Baroque music. The rhythm section in jazz music can be thought of as a modern equivalent to *basso continuo*. Details and tickets at [www.shiloh-manor.com](http://www.shiloh-manor.com).

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## Breaking the Mold: Netflix's *Damsel* Delivers an Exhilarating Spin on the Fairytale Genre

BY NAOMI FRASER

Netflix's original film *Damsel* presents a fairytale like no other. Released in early March, the film follows a young princess named Elodie who accepts a marriage proposal from a wealthy kingdom to save her impoverished nation. Unbeknownst to Elodie, however, beneath the wealthy kingdom's glistening facade lies a centuries-old debt that Elodie's new family expects her to pay. Now trapped in the cave of a blood-thirsty dragon, Elodie must find a way to save herself and avenge the generations of women who came before.

Though a bit skeptical coming into the film, I really enjoyed *Damsel*. An exciting, suspenseful, and unconventional take on the fairytale genre, the film pulls you in early and keeps you glued to your

seat until the end.

One area in which *Damsel* particularly excels is its visual storytelling. As Elodie spends a significant amount of time trapped in a cave by herself, there are few opportunities for dialogue. Therefore, the film heavily relies on visuals to keep the story moving and bring the audience deeper into the world. For instance, as Elodie moves further into the cave, she discovers artifacts and scrawled messages from past victims that allow her, and us, to piece together the kingdom of Aurea's dark history and construct an escape plan. Throughout the film, the writers continually find creative ways to tell a story without many words leading to a visually captivating experience that leaves audiences enthralled.



Rating: 5/5

In line with visual storytelling, *Damsel's* filmmakers skillfully use set design to reinforce important themes within the story. The

kingdom of Aurea's design hints at the facade the royal family maintains. From the foreboding mountain range surrounding the majestic kingdom to the ominous dragon statues looming over the front gates of the sparkling palace, the film's sets warn audiences of the horrors lurking beneath the surface. This effective use of set design allows for suspense and unease to arise. As Elodie gets situated in Aurea, the audience senses trouble on the horizon and waits with bated breath for something to finally blow.

The acting in *Damsel* also makes for a great watch. Millie Bobby Brown delivers a stellar performance as Elodie. Her talent shines through every scene, whether acting alone, alongside co-stars, or opposite a CGI dragon. While I admire many aspects of her performance, her ability to authentically portray a wide range of emotions stands out the most. From hate to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »

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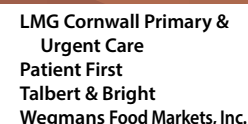
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# How your brain is telling you to vote

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

As another presidential election approaches, political conversations seem to be everywhere. These discussions can quickly become heated, often leading to frustration, misunderstandings, and strained or even terminated relationships.

But what if the way we vote is influenced more by the biology of our brains than by our rational, conscious thoughts? What if our political beliefs are, to some extent, preordained by our genetics and brain structure?

Research in neuroscience and psychology suggests that this might be truer than we think. That whether we vote red or blue, our grey matter matters a lot.

We know that the human brain is an intricate, powerful organ that governs almost every aspect of our lives, from our daily routines to our deepest beliefs and convictions. It's no surprise that the brain also plays a significant role in shaping our political beliefs and voting behaviors. Evidence using Functional MRI (fMRI) appears to support that position.

By observing the brain's activity with brain imaging technology, scientists have been able to identify key differences in how conservatives and liberals process political information.

Studies using brain imaging have shown that conservatives tend to have a more active amygdala, a region of the brain that is heavily involved in processing fear, threat detection, and emotional responses.

This heightened activity might explain why conservative individuals are often more focused on security, stability, law and order, and tradition over rapid change. They might be more sensitive to perceived threats and therefore more inclined to support policies that emphasize order and control. For these voters, Former President Donald Trump's "Make a America Great Again" slogan may encapsulate a vision of the US that prioritizes traditional

family values, a stronger or closed Mexico border, a more thriving economy and religious values and morals.

Liberals often show greater activity in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), a region associated with processing complexity, uncertainty, and conflicting information. This area of the brain is crucial for

tasks that require cognitive flexibility and openness to new experiences.

As a result, liberals might be more comfortable with change and more likely to support policies that promote social progress and innovation. They might also be better equipped to handle ambiguity and to reconcile conflicting ideas. For liberal voters, then Former President Barak Obama's "Hope and Change" slogan is fitting.

These brain-based differences are not just theoretical; they manifest in how people respond to real-world political issues. For instance, when confronted with a topic like immigration or national security, conservatives might experience a stronger emotional reaction that leads them to prioritize safety and control. Liberals might approach the same issue with a focus on empathy, inclusiveness, and long-term social benefits.

On the topic of the Mexico/US border, a conservative person might think, "Over 10,000 aliens are crossing into the US from Mexico illegally daily. That's unsustainable, and that will lead to increased crime, fewer job opportunities for taxpaying US citizens and a weaker economy via more free government handouts."

A more liberally minded person might think, "Well where are all of those desperate people who are fleeing their countries from persecution and violence going to

go?" Or, "Taking them in is the right and the American thing to do."

For the former group, the focus is on keeping "illegal aliens" out, and for the latter group, it's more about understanding the problem to empathically support "undocumented immigrants" toward US citizenship.

Recognizing these very differing neurological underpinnings can help explain why political debates on topics like the border often seem so intractable and combative—our brains are literally wired to see the world differently.

While the brain's structure and function play a crucial role in shaping our political beliefs, another factor comes into play—genetics. It might seem strange to think that something as complex as voting behavior could be influenced by our DNA.

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence comes from studies of twins, particularly identical twins. Identical twins share nearly 100% of their genetic material, while fraternal twins share about 50%, similar to any other siblings. By comparing the political attitudes and voting behaviors of these two groups, researchers have been able to estimate the extent to which genetics influence

political beliefs.

The results of these studies are striking. Identical twins are significantly more likely to share similar political views compared to fraternal twins, suggesting that genetics plays a substantial role in shaping our political leanings.

Some studies estimate that about 40-50% of the variation in political attitudes can be attributed to genetic factors. This doesn't mean that there is a specific "voting gene" that determines how we vote. Rather that genetic predispositions can influence how we interpret and respond to political information.

Genes related to personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness have been linked to political orientations. Individuals who are genetically predisposed to be more open to new experiences might be more likely to adopt liberal viewpoints, while those who are naturally more conscientious and risk-averse might gravitate toward conservative ideologies. These genetic influences interact with environmental factors, such as family upbringing, to shape our overall political identity.

So, what does all this brain science

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »



## Ask Dr. Mike

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.



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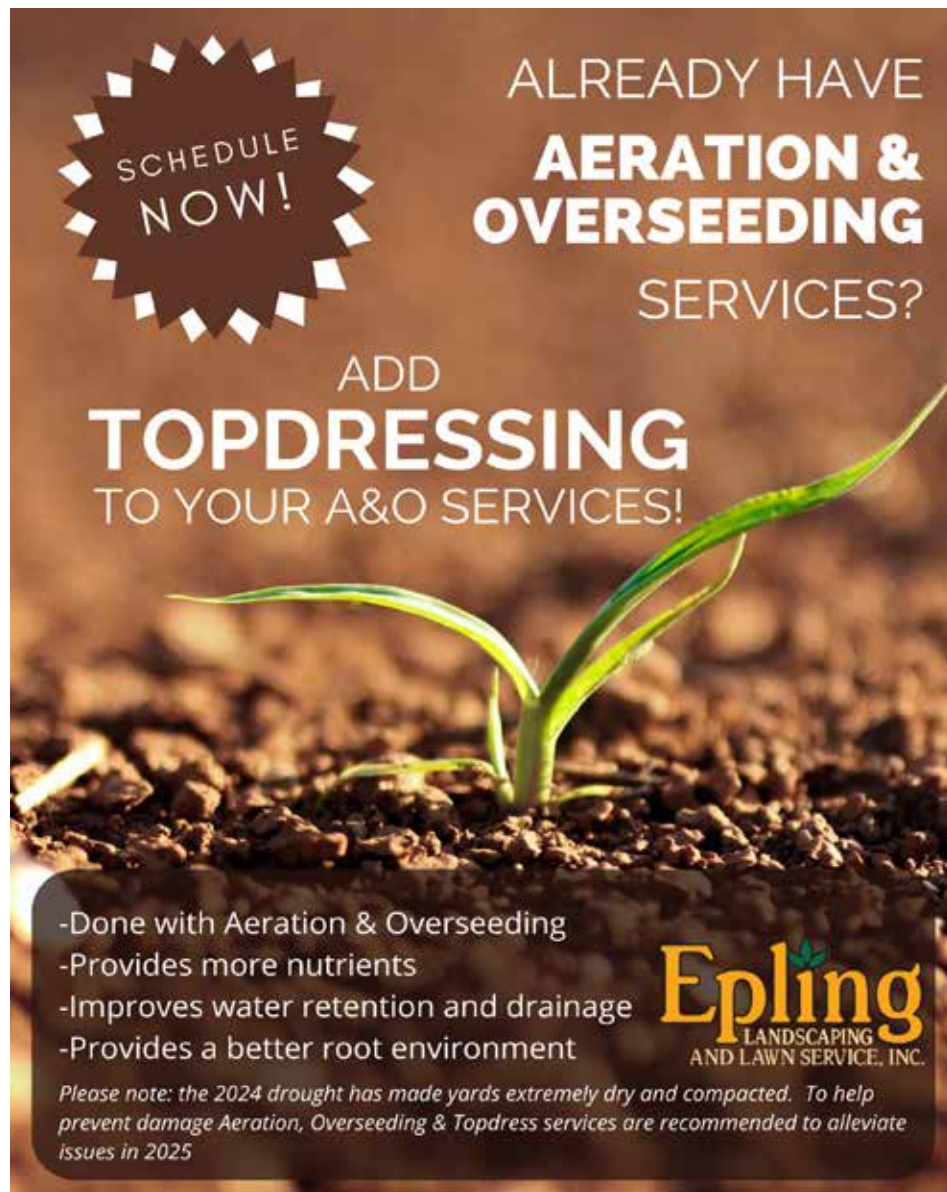
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TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE

## Candidate Forum

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6:30-7:30 pm	Mayoral Forum
7:30-9 pm	Town Council Forum

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Come with your questions. All candidates invited.



The Town of Purcellville election is November 5  
at Emerick and Mountain View Elementary

# Board directs future students away from Madison's Trust Elementary

BY REED CARVER

On Aug. 13 the Loudoun County School Board considered school redistricting – redrawing the boundaries that dictate school attendance. Projected student population will go from Madison's Trust Elementary, to Sycolin Creek Elementary, which matriculates to Brambleton Middle, and Independence High School.

However, at least 18 students were already counting on attending Madison's Trust this year.

"I stand here as a concerned parent," said Sashi Kandru, "We were surprised to hear that there was a rezoning – we would like to ask the board to reconsider, so our kids can get the best education possible."

Madison's Trust has student reading and math scores in the 90's, while Sycolin's scores are in the high 70's, according to US News and World Report. In general, it takes eight minutes or less for students to arrive at Madison's; it will take an estimated 25 minutes to reach Sycolin.

About 30 other parents attended the Public Hearing to express their shared opinions.

### Comments

Tina Kapoor said she opposes the proposition that her children could not attend Madison's Trust. They would be commuting farther to school, and it will lead to less sleep for them. "We bought our house where we bought it because we wanted [our children] to attend Madison's Trust."

Another parent said, "We came here because of the school... sleep is so important, kids are going to lose sleep with this commute. I was transferred when I was in school and it was one of the most disruptive experiences in that time."

"Proximity has been big for us," another continued. "Kids would have to go half an hour to attend the school [Sycolin]."

An online speaker addressed the Board, "For a decade, you knew this was coming, and just thought you would move our children to another school." She ran out of time and her microphone was cut off in mid-sentence.

A father said, "We bought homes here considering the fact that we would go to Madison's. We literally spent one year researching the ratings to be sure this would be good. I [also] have a strong security concern about my six year-old riding that far alone in a bus."

"I am a mother of a kindergartner," said Smitha Paramesh. "We are just four minutes away from the school, [Madison's]

and that is an important part of our life because my child gets motion sick, and we are being rezoned to go to Sycolin, 20 minutes away."

Shrinivas Babu Ganga said, "I saw Madison's Trust as a school which is less than a mile from the community; it was a primary factor for us moving to the community."

"[I want] the best for my kid," another parent said. "[bus riding] takes a toll on my kids' health because they get up early and go to bed early. We are both working parents and this restricts the time we can spend with our kids."

"In case of need for our students to walk, [to school] there is no place to walk. There is a 30 percent degradation of learning outcomes [associated with school changes]," said Saurabh Chatterjee.

"The topic of zoning is never easy," said an online speaker, "but changing our school will increase commutes from below the national average, to above it, and this will impose stress on our children."

"Our children are within walking distance from Madison's Trust. It is already a big change - a big stress added - it will be hard on mental health. Rezoning can weaken the bonds of our community, which has been built around Madison's Trust," said another parent.

"[I oppose] for several reasons: our children wake up extremely early. LCPS is short on bus drivers, so parents have to arrange rides. Parents also need to respond quickly, which they will not be able to do with this rezoning," said a parent.

Rishabh Shrivastava said, "we strongly oppose the rezoning – this will increasingly exhaust our children, especially when they are to be learning."

### Board members vote

Kevin Lewis, Chief Operations Officer for LCPS, explained, "Madison's Trust is approaching overcrowding already, and it will be severe in the coming years. ... We are close to the third grade being completely overrun."

Beverly Tate, Director of Planning & GIS Services supported the idea of the rezoning, saying that Sycolin has space in the long term. Madison's Trust opened in 2016, and it was already over capacity, she said. "It was overcrowded, and will become more so in the next few years."

The neighborhoods in the zones to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »

**CANDIDATE: KHALIL**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

infrastructure components and develop a capital improvement plan that addresses our needs. We will correct any issues that arise, and we will develop a preventive program that will ensure no surprises occur that will cause unnecessary expenditures.

We will ensure that the appropriate funding is identified and allocated. I have the opportunity of running with a slate of like-minded, experienced professionals dedicated to bringing all of the above to fruition. When elected, we will constitute a working majority on Town Council, and thus be in a position to make the necessary changes for the benefit of our community.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Khalil:** I do not support the 117.07-acre annexation of the Valley Commerce Center located on Purcellville Road across from the Mayfair community. Our residents have spoken loud and clear for over a decade that they want to preserve our special town.

Annexation is not the way to preserve Purcellville's small town charm. In our town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, residents in numerous outreach meetings and surveys spanning several years have distinctly reiterated that they do not want the town's borders expanded.

The county has already weighed in and said that should the town annex this property, we will also have to annex a 12.5-acre property next to it. Town staff added there are other properties along Purcellville Road which would want to be annexed. Where would it stop?

If annexation paid for itself, Purcellville and all cities around our nation would have extremely low taxes. I do not agree with the false premise that we have to annex this property and others to lower our utility bills. Not to mention, where would the water come from?

Also, I will not play the fear game that if we don't annex this property and others, the county will agree to rezone this property. The county's planning department has already weighed in, recommending denial at the county level. As such, I do not ascribe to the philosophy of our current mayor and his "Team Metropolis" running mates—and what they may be telling residents on the campaign trail—that the town should annex properties to "control" what goes in. The land is already "controlled" in the county at low rural density. The only reason to annex is to create in-town density, which would turn our town into Ashburn 2.0.

Indeed, Team Metropolis cannot point to a single annexation in the Town's history where it resulted in less dense development than when the land was in the County. Annexation is to increase density and with that comes more traffic congestion. It's the Trojan Horse at the gates.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Khalil:** The double-digit utility rate increases planned by our Team Metropolis opponents will not be sustainable for our residents. If our bills more than double within five years, as their modeling suggests, many of our single-income families and seniors will leave out of necessity. I feel sorry for the young families that move to Purcellville, so excited to be part of our Town, and then they get the surprise. It is imperative that the water and sewer situation be addressed immediately.

My running mates and I have a plan to hit the ground running with immediate impacts to reducing the current utility rates, one of which is to dedicate a portion of our meals tax—a tax that is not only paid by residents, but by outside visitors to Purcellville, to reducing the current debt. Meals tax revenue increases yearly, having risen from \$1 million to over \$3 million in the last ten years. A portion of that could easily go towards utility expenses after strategic cuts in

operational expenses. Doing so, with a clearly defined policy in place, will not impact our credit rating.

It's good to see that Fitch continues to recognize that we are a AAA town based on its new rating scale—something that S&P had realized for the past 8 years with their rating of AAA for the Town. In other words, the claim by Team Metropolis that their recent 16% and 18% water and sewer rate increases resulted in the Fitch AAA rating is a fallacy. If there were truly "missed opportunities" for rate increases in years past and if past administrations had "kicked the can down the road," then why did S&P not downgrade us from AAA in the past ten years?

Team Metropolis can't answer that question, because they don't want to admit that our strong financial footing, to include paying off millions in debt under Mayor Fraser, is at odds with their previous phony "fiscal cliff" narrative. Indeed, some people will say absolutely anything to get elected.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Khalil:** Until recent renovations, the property in question accounted for the highest vacancy rate on 21st Street. The property owners failed to develop what they planned, or even a modified version of what they planned, while other businesses invested over \$10 million combined on 21st Street in renovation and restoration. Now, the owners are working with our current mayor and his Team Metropolis allies on a bailout under the guise of revitalization. The major property on 21st Street that is in the need of revitalization is Vineyard Square and it should not be done at the expense of taxpayers. Bia Kitchen, American Legion, Catocin Creek Distillery, Monk's Barbecue, Another Turn Tack, Nichols Hardware, Tree of Life Ministries, Enhanced Beauty & Wellness Clinic, and Southern States invested millions in renovation and restoration on 21st Street without bailouts from the Town.

Why should the Town bail out one property owner who has consistently failed to act on his plan for the property? Why is the Vineyard square proposal on the Town's Website and not the proposals of White Palace or other commercial properties?

I am not in favor of working out backroom deals with developers. I am not bought by developers. Our team's largest donation thus far is from a farmer who put his land in conservation easement and wants to preserve Purcellville's small town charm.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Khalil:** The revised zoning ordinance follows the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which is in accord with the wishes of the Town residents. These efforts are fully aligned with our campaign slogan "Mayberry Not Metropolis." We want to maintain Purcellville as a small-town community, avoid mass urbanization, and reign in our rising utility costs with a renewed focus on fiscal discipline and common sense. Our Zoning Ordinance protects homeowners' property rights, and protects our residents from development that is out of character with our town.

As such, I was stunned to see an op-ed written by John-Mark Gardner, an opposing candidate running with Stan Milan as part of "Team Metropolis," who basically accused me of being a racist. He wrote: "Mayberry is a fictional town set in the Jim Crow South, an unpleasant era for many." He accuses me, and my running mates, of "dog-whistles seeking to divide our community."

What? How does one extrapolate institutional racism from wanting to lower our water bills and avoiding mass urbanization? Next, he'll be attacking me for having ovaries.

John-Mark Gardner owes me, and my running mates, a public apology for his malicious personal attacks and whisper campaign of smears. There is no room for dirty politics like this in our small town.



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# 54th Annual Bluemont Fair Sept 21 and 22

The 54th Annual Bluemont Fair will be held on Sept. 21 and 22, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. both days, rain or shine. An old-fashioned Country Fair, the Bluemont Fair features traditional crafts (juried), local art and authors, craft and farming demonstrations, music to include traditional, blues, country. There will be a free Children's Fair, petting zoo, Llamas and Alpacas.

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Snickersville Academy—a restored 1825 log schoolhouse, beekeepers and hives, antique caboose, pre-Civil War Country Store, Farmers Market, model trains, and lots of hands-on activities are part of the fair. The Plaster Museum of Bluemont Heritage will offer a special exhibit on the history of Native Americans in the area, and be on the look-out for other delights.

Fun for the whole family. The Fair is set throughout the historic village of Bluemont in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in western Loudoun County, Virginia—off of Rt. 7 or Rt. 734 Snickersville Turnpike.

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**CANDIDATE: GARDNER**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Purcellville in them. For example, a sidewalk out to Franklin Park is a great start to keep young families engaged and involved in our magnificent town.

Secondly being elected to serve on Town Council allows my neighbors and friends in town to breathe a sigh of relief. Purcellville Town Council is much like a volunteer home-owners association (HOA) board but with more serious legal powers. Wherever you live, the last thing you want is a crackpot on the local board making life miserable for everyone, add extra legal powers and you get commotion and chaos instead of clarity and candor. My Purcellville friends and neighbors have been very concerned about this town council election and have blessed me with tremendous support in trying to help elect me and other similarly thoughtful decision-makers.

Lastly, being elected to serve on behalf of my fellow townsfolk is an honor and privilege I will take with solemn resolve to do no harm. We have an extraordinary town full of PTO members and little league coaches. I have spent countless hours meeting, working, and coaching with these amazing fellow citizens. Purcellville is such a great place to live in and near, the surrounding county farms and woodlands are quickly disappearing. While we cannot go back in time, electing careful decision-makers to town council will enable Purcellville to work with tools available to the town to improve traffic issues, reduce future water prices, and bring the cost of living in Purcellville under control. A vote for me will not solve all the issues Purcellville faces, but I will truly and earnestly dedicate myself to the town's best interests.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley**

#### Commerce Center and other annexations?

**Gardner:** Green fields, rolling hills, and pristine woodlands are what everyone wants around Purcellville. No one in Purcellville wants to pave over paradise to put up a parking lot. Our current Mayor, town council members, and even those of us running for town council all likely agree on that same end-state. The county, on the other hand, does not seem affected by community concerns. Eastern Loudoun is crammed with data-centers, traffic lights, and unincorporated HOAs. Not a soul in Purcellville wants the traffic and congestion of Ashburn. So how do we stop, constrain, and/or restrict unwanted development? I fear walking away at step 6, for example, in a 20-step annexation process needlessly speeds up unwanted development. "No" during interim steps in an annexation process does not mean "no" to the development. More likely, the first "no" vote from Town Council ending an annexation process means "over to you Loudoun County," and I do not trust the Loudoun County Zoning Board to select the town dog-catcher in good faith. If unwanted development is proposed adjacent to town, using an excruciatingly long, drawn-out process to methodically deliberate the possibility of future annexation is the only tool the town possesses to restrain the money and power of developers seeking to pave over our paradise. Eastern Loudoun proves the county won't save us from developers if we leave it up to them.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Gardner:** My youngest will graduate in the LVHS Class of 2034. Double digit rate increases for that foreseeable future are completely unsustainable for my family and most every citizen. No one wants to pay more for

water. All solutions are on the table for the next Town Council, save for one: we cannot keep kicking this can down the road. Purcellville's FY25 Proposed Budget includes a lot of information about utility rates going back decades. Utility service cost the town more than it was charging for many years. All that debt piled up. Past councils basically took out a utility debt consolidation loan in 2013 and even refinanced the loan twice already in 2017 and 2021. We can climb our way out of this hole, but Town Council needs rational actors who make responsible decisions. Finally on the topic, I would like to implore voters to be wary of those running for local office shilling magical budgetary elixirs that claim to cure all utility ills. Twenty years of temporary tonics and monetary potions are what got us into this utility mess in the first place.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Gardner:** Absolutely. Empty buildings and blighted lots cost the taxpayers money. The new 2-story building project on Main Street by Market Burger and Gruto's looks terrific. If a similarly beautiful project of that size and scope is completed along 21st Street, I do not know a reason of public good for the town to block private investment like that. No one supports turning Purcellville into a metropolis. The senseless metropolis threat seen in a few signs around town is just as imaginary as the fictional town of Mayberry. Bad faith politics and divisive sloganeering will not bring local small business owners into empty store fronts and voting against every local business proposal cost taxpayers more money in lost revenue from out-of-town shoppers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



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**BOARD DIRECTS FUTURE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16**

changed are either under construction or for sale, and upon occupancy, 288 elementary aged students are expected to live there.

“This is a tough one, Sycolin has a 7:45 a.m. start, Madison’s is 8, so it is a school a distance away and with an earlier start time,” Lauren Shernoff (Leesburg) said. Two parents who stayed for the vote nodded in agreement. “There are many layers here, so we are bringing in those concerns. These are decisions that none of us enjoy making.”

The Board members tried to find alternatives, but other options were eventually exhausted.

This is an issue Loudoun County has dealt with for years, “Neighborhoods change and there is a constant flux,” said Aaron Spence, LCPS superintendent. “We would not recommend modular classrooms, when there is a built school nearby with substantial capacity. The only other option would be to grandfather in those students whose parents moved here with the understanding that their children would go to that school.”

Dr. Linda Deans (Broad Run) said, “We should go with the recommendation,” she detailed that there was administrative hassle involved with the grandfather idea, likely repeated every year. “Kids are resilient; I think it would be better for my kids to just [do the rezone now].”

The motion to vote was passed, with Deana Griffiths (Ashburn) in opposition.

April Chandler (Algonkian) said, “There has not been a change since 2012 [of school zoning]; families really identify with their schools, and there are strong connections. It’s not easy when the neighborhoods are new, and it’s really not easy when the neighborhoods are old.”

The vote to rezone passed unanimously.

# Applications open for “Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays” Program

Loudoun Economic Development has announced that applications are now open for the 2024 “Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays” program. This initiative is designed to support local farms and farm businesses by encouraging residents to purchase locally grown and locally made products during the holiday season.

“Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays” offers a unique opportunity for farms and farm-related businesses in Loudoun County to gain exposure and boost sales. By participating, businesses can showcase their products through various promotional channels, including social media campaigns, local events, and dedicated advertising efforts by Loudoun Economic Development.

Buddy Rizer, Executive Director of Loudoun Economic Development, highlighted the importance of the program, stating, “Supporting our

local farms and businesses is crucial, especially during the holiday season. ‘Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays’ not only boosts our local economy but also strengthens community ties and promotes sustainable practices. When you buy local, you are directly contributing to the vitality of our agricultural heritage and ensuring that these businesses thrive for generations to come.”

Farms and farm businesses interested in participating should apply online at [TakeLoudoun-Home.org](http://TakeLoudoun-Home.org). Two registration forms cover farms who sell turkeys and/or trees for the holidays as well as farms or farm businesses who sell Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown gifts and experiences. The application process is straightforward, and there is no cost to apply. The deadline for applications is Sept. 30.


**HOW YOUR BRAIN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

mean? Perhaps it means we might do well to have more empathy, patience, understanding and less judgement, for those we disagree with.

The next time you catch yourself thinking about Former President Donald Trump as a being a “Dictator” or Vice President Kamela Harris as being a “Marxist,” or the next time you find yourself in a heated political debate, remember: it’s not about


winning the argument or being right. It’s much more important for us all to kindly appreciate the complexities that contribute to our different political opinions and what we individually believe in.

*Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. “Dr. Mike” is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He can be reached at 703-723-2999, and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.*

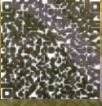


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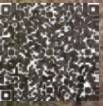
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**CANDIDATE: DEAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

common sense. I'll utilize my experience managing complex problems and finding solutions as part of a team to improve the quality of life for residents.

Second, I will represent families by securing our future as a town that is healthy and prosperous for every generation that lives here. I'll prioritize community events and public parks, improve townwide pedestrian access and bike/trail connections, and champion public/private partnerships such as Adam's Bike Park to meet the activity needs of families with school-age children.

As a homeowner on Main Street, I experience the increasing traffic our town deals with every day. I'll work to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce vehicle speeds while maintaining efficient traffic flow, and ensure safety for drivers and pedestrians within our town limits.

Finally, my candidacy differs from the politically motivated campaigns of my opponents, which seek to intimidate and induce fear among voters with empty threats of data centers in town, high rise office buildings, big box stores, mass urbanization, increased crime, and a looming "metropolis." I oppose these foolish notions and you have my word that I will protect our small town and work to bring us together to strengthen our community as your representative.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Dean:** I do not support the Valley Commerce Center annexation. I have carefully reviewed the publicly available information and all public meetings related to this proposal. I believe we need to prioritize opportunities to revitalize areas within our town limits as opposed to this annexation, which will stress our town resources and provide insufficient returns. As your town councilmember, I will dutifully consider every vote I make with an independent, well researched, and fair assessment of the facts before me. I understand that my job is to serve and represent the people of Purcellville, not special interest groups, developers, or big money political donors. My commitment is to work for you, and I'll seek your input, answer your questions, and listen to your concerns.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Dean:** Purcellville needs leaders that are capable of understanding the complexities of structurally balanced budgeting in order to get our utility fund resources back on track. In order to begin achieving this balance, utility rates were raised this year. As for the future, a comprehensive budget analysis and accounting process is

completed before the town council votes on each year's budget, when utility rates will be assessed again.

What is apparent is that we are in this current situation due to a decade of fiscal mismanagement by our elected officials. Year after year, they refused to listen to utility experts and our award winning town staff's recommendations to address the incremental rising costs of our town's sewer and water bills. Instead, they artificially suppressed the utility rates, kicking the can down the road while they directed our town staff to search for unreliable revenue streams under the guise of 'innovative solutions.' In addition, per town records, the town's utility debt was restructured in 2013, 2017, and 2021, which resulted in an increase to the debt service costs of 12.5 million over the life of the loans and raised the principal by 2.8 million. Now, thanks to Mayor Milan's leadership and the efforts of our finance team, we are finally on the way to improving our town's economic footing. In response, Purcellville's credit rating was just recently upgraded to the highest possible level of AAA, and our town was removed from the "under critical observation status" by Fitch Ratings.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Dean:** The property on 21st Street in our downtown corridor is underutilized in its current state. This central district in the heart of Purcellville represents an opportunity for an appropriate revitalization, matching the existing character and setting of our town. In the fall of 2023, the owners of the property presented revised design options to both the town council and the town planning commission, with the goal of working with the town's elected officials, citizens, and business owners to address concerns with the original plans for the Vineyard Square project. They proposed modifying the design layout, reducing the height, and decreasing the overall size and footprint of the project. I am in favor of continuing these conversations, so that the citizens of Purcellville can have influence over this important project.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Dean:** As an owner of a historic home on Main Street and a strong advocate for Purcellville's heritage conservation, I do not support the planning commission's revised zoning ordinance because it unnecessarily restricts the rights of property owners, rejects our expert planning staff's recommendations, and has been proven to be thoroughly and justifiably

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »

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– excerpt from *Dementia Man*



Samuel A. Simon

Dementia Man, An Existential Journey is the award-winning autobiographical story of a man who faces his diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease, by actor and playwright Samuel A. Simon. It is a peek into the head and heart of the struggle with a broken medical system and a personal and family challenge.

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**CANDIDATE: NETT**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

or three? I was initially motivated to run for Town Council because of our escalating utility costs, the constant bickering amongst council members, and the relentless push for mass urbanization by those proposing annexations that do indeed threaten our “small town charm.” While our opponents publicly express support from the council dais and during their political campaigns for Purcellville’s small town feel, it is evident that they support crony capitalism by favoring their relentless developer allies at the expense of our residents.

To that, I will now add my commitment to maintaining Purcellville as the “Safest Town in Virginia.” I can be more effective as a member of Town Council by leveraging my substantial management and budget experience, managing growth in keeping with the vision put forth in our 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and driving efficiency in government.

Put bluntly, the purpose of town government is to first and foremost protect the health, safety and welfare of our residents, pick up the trash, fix the potholes, enact our zoning laws, keep the water running, and manage waste. When elected, I’ll take care of our public safety and public works employees, curtail wasteful overhead, seek solutions to our traffic gridlock (one needs a police car

to make a left turn during rush hours), and eliminate the double-digit water and wastewater rate increases planned by our opponents, Team Metropolis, that will see our already extravagant water bills more than double within five years.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Nett:** No, and I’ll bet a steak dinner at Magnolias that no candidate for Town Council or Mayor will admit to supporting the Valley Commerce Center annexation prior to Election Day, as the vast majority of residents openly oppose this.

I’ll remind my fellow citizens that Stan Milan, head of Team Metropolis, has broken nearly every campaign promise he made just two years ago. What can one reasonably conclude from his about-face on every issue of substance? He campaigned on a message of slow growth, but is now fully supported by and openly embraces the out-of-town developers intent on transforming Purcellville into Ashburn 2.0. He previously expressed enthusiasm for annexing another property along Route 287 and Saint Francis Court for a proposed 130-room hotel, convenience store with gas station, restaurant, and a market facility. Note, also, developers’ properties (whether owned or occupied) play exclusive host to Team Metropolis political signage

around town, to include the building that houses the Police Department.

If Team Metropolis truly opposed annexations and the mass urbanization that comes with it, then they would be embracing and supporting the Team Mayberry platform—not running whisper campaigns and ridiculing us personally. If voters allow Team Metropolis to prevail in this election, Purcellville will be “Loudoun’s Rural Destination” no more.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Nett:** Do you want to pay lower water bills or do you want to pay more than double your current water bills? That’s the decision you have to make in this election. It sounds like an IQ test, doesn’t it? Our opponents, Team Metropolis, plan double-digit water and sewer rate increases every year for the next several years, resulting in a 102% increase in our current utility bills.

Our plan eliminates the proposed rate increases for residents. We do this by creating a policy to dedicate a portion of the existing meals tax revenue (no new taxes) as a set-aside for debt reduction on our wastewater facility and, with that, reductions in general fund expenditures. Our local government, which serves a population of 9,000 residents, has a

spending problem rather than a revenue problem.

Here are some examples: 1) Nearly half a million dollars in combined yearly compensation for a Town Manager and an Assistant Town Manager along with a current announcement for a nearly \$200,000 “Director of Administration.” 2) A top-heavy police department with four six-figure-salary administrators overseeing an underpaid and understaffed Officer corps that has not been able to provide 24/7 coverage to the town for nearly a year. 3) A finance department that retains original staffing levels long after the county assumed the accounting burden for the collection of town property taxes.

A leading economist said that government spending is the true tax rate. The citizens of Purcellville are way overtaxed. Yet, Team Metropolis is justifying raising the utility rates by criticizing previous councils—including, by the way, votes by Stan Milan, the head of Team Metropolis, in support of the town’s refinancing as recommended by our financial advisors. Team Metropolis is preparing for annexations, higher taxes, and the assumption of even greater debt due to our AAA rating, which is the product of years of steady financial stewardship under former Mayor Fraser.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 »



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- 10/2 One Street Over, Celtic & Irish tunes
- 10/9 Old Dominion Chorus, barbershop
- 10/23 Tutti-tones, jazz band w/ vocalist
- 11/6 Melanie Bates, violin
- 11/13 Project Locrea, world folk fusion, \*presented with VCA Funding



#### Tanglewood Marionettes: The Fairy Circus Wed., September 11 at 10:00am \$5

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Connect with artists and art lovers and learn about the artist Gustav Klimt, a titan of the Art Nouveau movement. After the film enjoy refreshments and post-film discussion while you take in the mixed media exhibit in our gallery.

#### Dementia Man, An Existential Journey Wed., September 25 at 1:00pm Admission FREE

Dementia Man, An Existential Journey is the award-winning autobiographical story of a man who faces his diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease, by actor and playwright Samuel A. Simon. It is a peek into the head and heart of the struggle with a broken medical system and a personal and family challenge.

#### In Our Gallery:

Beyond The Brush:

Thurs., September 12– Sun., October 6

Admission is FREE

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:30pm

**CANDIDATE: ARNBURG**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Arnburg:** No, I do not support the Valley Commerce Center Annexation, and here are some reasons why I do not believe it is beneficial for our town. An annexation of this magnitude is out of character with our 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Residents might find their preferences and needs less prioritized under the broader jurisdiction of a larger town or city. Additionally, annexation can strain the town’s budget by requiring the extension of services like water, sewer, and emergency services to the new area, which can be costly.

If the new property does not generate sufficient additional revenue through taxes to offset these expenses, it could result in budget shortfalls. Expanding Purcellville’s boundaries also demands significant upgrades or expansions to existing infrastructure, including roads, public transportation, and utilities, which can be both complex and expensive—potentially diverting resources from maintaining current infrastructure.

Furthermore, annexation can provoke community and political conflict, causing resistance from both current and new residents and creating tensions over how new areas are integrated into existing plans as we have already seen with the Valley

Commerce Center proposal. According to Purcellville’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan, there is a clear desire to avoid extending our borders, and a potential annexation of the Valley Commerce Center could lead to further annexations of additional properties, raising concerns about where it might end.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Arnburg:** The short answer is no. There are often opportunities to manage costs and improve efficiency within utility operations. By implementing cost-saving measures, optimizing resource use, and investing in technology, a town can potentially avoid drastic rate hikes while maintaining service quality.

We should thoroughly examine the over \$1 million that employees under our General Fund are charging for work related to our Utility Fund staff. Additionally, we can consider applying a percentage of our \$3 million meals tax to the water and sewer fund. This approach, once Town Council sets a policy, will eliminate the need for the double-digit rate increases proposed by our “Team Metropolis” opponents.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Arnburg:** It is important to work with the

developers of the Vineyard Square development on 21st Street to ensure their projects align with the town’s character and the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The Vineyard Square developers, who have held active permits for over a decade, have proposed a plan that conflicts with both our Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Their revised proposal, which still includes 36 condos despite a reduction from 40, remains too dense for the Historic Downtown area. I support allowing their permits to expire next year and having them resubmit a project that better fits in Purcellville.

This approach aligns with our goal of preserving community identity by ensuring new developments enhance rather than detract from the town’s established aesthetic and social values. Strategic growth and planning are also vital, as they ensure that development supports long-term goals, including infrastructure, public services, and environmental sustainability. Engaging developers in transparent collaboration with town officials and residents fosters community support, reducing potential conflicts and resistance. Additionally, well-aligned developments can yield positive economic and social benefits, such as increased property values and improved local amenities, while also ensuring the efficient use of resources and infrastructure.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Arnburg:** I will support only those revised zoning ordinances passed by the planning commission that align with and protect the property rights of our residents, as these rights are fundamental to ensuring that individuals and families can enjoy and utilize their property as they see fit.

Properly crafted zoning laws should enhance the quality of life for all residents by promoting orderly development, preserving community character, and preventing conflicts between different land uses. When zoning ordinances respect and uphold property rights, they contribute to a more balanced and harmonious community, where property owners feel secure in their investments and confident that their rights are protected against arbitrary or unfair regulations. Ensuring that zoning laws align with property rights fosters trust between the community and the planning commission, supports long-term stability and growth, and maintains the integrity and vitality of our neighborhoods. The current zoning ordinance successfully achieves these goals and safeguards our town from development that is inconsistent with its character. I ask for your vote, and I encourage you to vote for my running mates—Chris Bertaut for Mayor, and Ben Nett, Brian Green, and Susan Khalil for Town Council.

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**CANDIDATE: STOUGHT,**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

businesses to thrive and provide economic opportunity, and supporting local events and festivals that contribute to our sense of community.

Third, I want our town to practice fiscal responsibility. For years our town has suffered from mismanagement that cost us millions in lawsuits and put us on the verge of depleting our cash reserves. This year your town council enacted the best budget the town has had in years, resulting in an upgrade of the town's credit rating to the highest possible rating of AAA. This is the financial management residents of our town deserve from their elected leaders.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Stought:** I oppose the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center project. The project would add 3500 trips per day to Hirst Rd, which is already prone to congestion and gridlock. The town cannot supply the water this project would require, and I don't believe it would be right to place more demands on our water infrastructure at this time. Lastly, the project would likely cost the town more than the revenue it would bring in.

I support our local business community and actively look for opportunities for beneficial development within our town, as I believe this is healthy and necessary for the town to thrive. I believe that we should primarily focus on these opportunities for infill development and redevelopment, and prioritize them over annexations.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Stought:** For years, the town has kicked the can down the road on water rates. Our elected officials have consistently ignored the recommendations of our expert, award-winning staff. For years we have known that our debt service would increase significantly in 2025, and yet we have done little or nothing to prepare for it. Some have even claimed that "innovative solutions" and "alternative revenue sources" make rate hikes unnecessary.

I am certainly 100% in favor of the town pursuing opportunities for alternative revenue sources. Grants, partnerships, and similar efforts are a good opportunity to bring infusions of cash to the town and take some of the burden off those who pay the town's utility fees. As recently as this year the town was awarded \$226k to study PFAS (forever chemicals) in town water. This is a good thing.

That being said, we must ensure that we have this money in hand before factoring it into utility rates. To use the old adage, we should not count our chickens before

they hatch. Unfortunately, this is exactly what previous town elected officials did.

The actions of previous town councils have placed the town in the unfortunate position of having to play catch-up with water rates. Because our staff's recommendations were ignored, we are behind the curve and facing a debt service payment increase next year. In the short term, higher than average rate increases will be required to make up for past mistakes. Once the town is back on solid financial footing, these hikes will no longer be required.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21<sup>st</sup> Street?**

**Stought:** Our historic downtown is the heart of Purcellville. It is the place we take our families to eat and shop, and is a critical part of what gives Purcellville its unique historic character. Sadly, it has been left to stagnate for far too long. Several acres of land in the heart of our town are going unused when it could benefit town residents in many ways.

I support the revitalization of downtown. Recent renovations to the old Blue Ridge Hospice building have provided it with a beautiful new brick facade and made the building usable for new businesses. This type of infill development / redevelopment is highly appropriate for our historic downtown district.

Many years ago, a six-story building project was approved for construction along 21<sup>st</sup> Street. A six-story building would overwhelm 21st street and permanently alter Purcellville's skyline. I do not want to see that project move forward. Therefore, if the property owners are willing to work with the town to reduce that project's scope to a much more appropriate three-story building, I think the town should pursue that opportunity. The alternative is to let the currently approved project be built, and I don't want to see that happen.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the Planning Commission?**

**Stought:** The recent zoning ordinance effort by the Planning Commission was a rushed, politically motivated attempt at government overreach and taking citizens property rights. It is championed and supported by Chris Bertaut, who is currently the council liaison to the Planning Commission and is running for Mayor, and Commissioner Brian Green, who is running for town council. During this process, the Planning Commission consistently ignored the recommendations of our planning staff.

The new zoning ordinance includes a new overlay district that imposes restrictions on what property owners can do with their homes. A similar proposal was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »

**CANDIDATE: STOUGHT,** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

brought three years ago and defeated by town council vote after dozens of residents spoke out against it. The new zoning ordinance moves common sense zoning uses such as PDH (used by Mayfair, Village Case, and Courts of St Francis), to legacy. Lastly, the new zoning ordinance removes clustering, which is currently used by Old Dominion Valley and Villages of Purcellville.

Not only do these decisions fly in the

face of common-sense decision making, they were rushed through by the Planning Commission in less than a month. This process led to many homeowners receiving public hearing notices in the mail just a few days in advance. Many were unclear what changes were impacting them and many also missed the public hearing due to the short notice. This rushed process lacked transparency and was completely unfair to our residents.

**OPINION: MAYBERRY VS. METROPOLIS,** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

public court. He and his colleagues, “Team Metropolis,” can continue to attack my running mates and I until they’re blue in the face, but it should never distract from the local issues that “Team Mayberry” will continue to address.

Incidentally, I grew up in a staunch, but tolerant, Democrat household. My dad served in the legislature for over twenty years as a Democrat State Representative. I love my dad; and my circle of friends is as diverse as our nation itself.

There is a great temptation in today’s social media age to try and put people in a box and quickly label them as friend or enemy, but the truth is people are complex creatures. We all have insecurities, fears, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and some level of anxiety about what is to come. We’re all products of our heritage and environment and, if we’re honest with ourselves, we’re all a mix of conservative and liberal values—with varying shades of each.

The slate of candidates I am running with, and those who back us, are a mix of both parties—as it should be at a town election level. We are united in our commitment to address the issues affecting the Town of Purcellville.

It’s sad that “Team Metropolis” wants to turn this race into a partisan battleground and pointless skirmish of back and forth

personal attacks, rather than focusing on the issues affecting our residents. I will never reduce myself to the mud-slinging game, since one of my stated goals is to return a sense of decency and decorum to Town Hall.

The platform of “Mayberry not Metropolis” is what we are fighting for in this election on November 5. We are fighting to preserve the town we all love. I mentioned The Andy Griffith Show, which many of you probably don’t remember or never had the opportunity to experience. I fear my developer-backed opponents want to similarly wipe the memory of Purcellville from the minds of so many who have known and loved our town and of those young enough to be caught in the landslide of its erasure.

“Team Metropolis” represents high taxes, annexations, lack of transparency, and the loss of our small town feel by turning Purcellville into Ashburn. Residents voiced their feelings and desires clearly at a recent town council meeting on an annexation proposal: they moved here for the real Purcellville.

My campaign for Town Council continues, full steam ahead, focusing on the issues affecting our town and looking for ways to improve our overall quality of life. I ask for your vote, your support, and your friendship.

*Update: This article has been updated to reflect a change that a complaint was filed.*

**CANDIDATE: DEAN,** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

unpopular with Purcellville residents. Sadly, the majority of the appointed members of the planning commission operate under a strict, close-minded ideology and their leadership refuses to collaborate or cooperate with anyone they believe might question their positions. In fact, one of these planning commissioners resigned earlier this year

after shouting expletives disparaging our town during a public meeting. This is an example of why this election is so important. We need councilmembers who are committed to fact-based decision making and who will respect each other despite differing opinions, in order to rebuild trust with the citizens of Purcellville and to effectively address the needs of our community.

**LETTER: THE TROJAN HORSE,** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

about “control;” it’s a Trojan Horse, a clever trick to sneak high-density development through our gates under the pretense of better management, then waving the wand of rezoning. It’s not surprising that the folks who do not support the 2030 Town of Purcellville

Comprehensive Plan are advocating for this kind of “spin.”

Let’s stay wise to their game and protect our community from being overrun by developments that don’t serve our best interests.

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"WE HAVE THE DNA", CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Planning Commissioner Nedim Ogleman said, "I think the jury should be out on what happens with residential or not in downtown. It's up to the voters and citizens of this town."

The Historic Downtown area does not allow multi-family housing, nor does it allow more than two and a half story buildings—with the half story being an attic area. Two apartments per building are allowed in the district.

Buergler said, "The community has the power, Virginia Main Street is heavily reliant on the community members taking ownership of the work. We don't want to tell you who to be." Buergler asked the attendees what they loved about Purcellville.

The group cited walkability, the bike trail, safety, a good place to raise a family, water resources, and Dillon's Woods.

"Parks, that are well-maintained ..." one speaker said. "And threatened," another inserted. "It's a non-cookie cutter kind of community ..." another said.

Fraser added, "It's the balance of old and new." He cited the town's mission statement, "Purcellville, your small town where progress intersects and people prosper. It's not anywhere, USA."

"It's a good place to learn, and we have great schools," added Planning Commissioner Ron Rise Sr. "We have the cleanest water in the state."

Nelis said, "Too much traffic means people want to be here," and that is what businesses want to see.

Buergler continued to say that the approach of the Virginia Main Street should enhance sustainability by using historic assets already present, and she wants whatever work they do together to build community pride.

For VMS to be successful, the consultation of stakeholder groups would be necessary, said Buergler. The group listed property owners, residents, and business owners as stakeholders.

"It's all about, how do we find that balance," Fraser said. He explained that the town could take an action, with the good intention of benefiting a business, but it could in turn have negative impacts on other businesses.

Developer Casey Chapman said, "I don't see how we can continue to base

these decisions on fear of what could happen, instead of taking action on things that need to happen, and that's where we've been living in this town for the last 20 years." Chapman said, "If we did this it might cause this, but we never know, because nothing ever happened. What we haven't seen is the magnitude of investment that this town deserves, and is willing to come."

Fraser pointed out that there's always two sides to a story. "It's unfair to say that nothing has been done in downtown Purcellville." He said Catoctin Creek Distillery invested millions into "revamping their business." He said Bia Kitchen also invested millions "into upgrading an old building." The White Palace will be renovated; so, there's a balance, said Fraser. The Town has invested millions into the streetscape on Main Street, he said.

Both Nelis and Chapman expressed frustration at the slow pace of infrastructure improvements in downtown. Ogelman questioned the long-term impact of these changes, and advocated for a slower approach. "When I see what happens in our town, usually people seem to be thinking about the short term more than the long term. Something can have good short-term impacts and poor long-term impacts."

Fraser said he thought there was a risk of doing projects in a vacuum. If they build a development on the outskirts of Purcellville, it will have impacts on the downtown, he said. People might do all their business on the outskirts, and never come downtown.

Buergler said as a town goes through the levels of Main Street, they must define the downtown district, so destinations outside downtown need to be kept in communication with things that are happening downtown.

"I have a different perspective than Mr. Chapman. I see some of these business interests, as just looking at this place ... as something to exploit," Ogelman said. "So in the context of failure I see two ways that failure can happen: there's a safe failure, as in fail and fail quick, and then there's a too big to fail. What works in communities are small organic-kind of failures. And big massive projects, when they fail, they fail very badly."

CANDIDATE: GARDNER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Gardner:** No. Homeowners' rights are taken away. Article 4, section 3, page 87 clearly authorizes the Board of Architectural Review to limit, restrict, and control homeowners' rights. I cannot support unnecessary government

actions in search of a problem. Government overreach always ends badly for citizens. A nearly identical copy-and-paste version of the onerous Historic Overlay controls over private property was dismissed by previous Town Council due to the large number of citizens speaking out about the negative effects of these same burdensome regulations.

**CANDIDATE: BERTAUT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8**

The developers have shown before Council, after a private meeting with my opponent, a scaled down version, which would reduce the condo part of their plan by 4 condos, and spread those condos among several 4 story condo buildings behind 21st Street.

I am not in favor of working out this kind of “deal.” Rather the owners should come before Council and with public input work on a new plan that contributes to our Historic Downtown area.

Currently two and a half story buildings with two apartments are allowed in this district. My opponent along with others running with him are in the process of changing the make-up of the slow growth Planning Commission. They will then most likely change the Zoning Ordinance the commission just recommended for passage to the Town Council. Then they can amend the zoning to allow taller buildings, and hotels and multi-family in this area.

I do not support turning the 21<sup>st</sup> Street corridor into San Diego’s Gaslamp District—which was the focus of my opponent’s State of the Town address this spring. Revitalization of our downtown corridor is a must, but not at the expense of Purcellville’s small-town character and charm.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Bertaut:** I fully support the revised zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission worked successfully for several years, with the full support of my opponent, until he flipped.

To push his agenda, my opponent and others running with him have said that the town needs a new Comprehensive Plan—even though the plan is a ten-year plan. It’s only been four years!

We have realigned our zoning with the desires of our residents expressed in the 10-year Comprehensive Plan. Our citizens wanted to “protect and sustain” our town.

The revised Zoning Ordinance addresses multiple concerns voiced by residents to retain their current rights, while adding additional protection against unreviewed requests to demolish historic structures—currently any person with a contributing historic property can tear it down with no notice.

Existing buildings and uses are fully protected by the new Zoning Ordinance as conforming uses. This includes cluster development neighborhoods like Kingsbridge, Villages of Purcellville, Locust Grove, and Hirst Farm—well as Planned Development Housing like Village Case, and Mayfair. Existing duplexes are also protected, and duplex by-right uses throughout the R-2 and R-3 districts are no longer allowed.

The developers are not happy with the revised Zoning Ordinance because they want fewer restrictions on what they can do throughout our town.

**BREAKING THE MOLD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14**

love and despair to hope, Brown masterfully captures Elodie’s fluctuating and complex emotions, inviting the audience to experience them beside her. Despite the film’s fantasy backdrop, Brown ensures that Elodie feels real.

The chemistry between Elodie and Prince Henry (Nick Robinson) is another standout element from the film. As the couple bond over shared dreams and deepen their understanding of each other, we momentarily forget the warning that starts the film: “This is not a fairytale.” Though we know Prince Henry is too good to be true, the palpable chemistry between him and Elodie keeps us rooting for the pair regardless. This deceptive connection the actors and writers create intensifies the impact of Henry’s betrayal and solidifies the audience’s support of Elodie’s quest for revenge.

*Damsel* also excels in its clever subversion of classic fairy tale tropes. While some subversions, such as a

princess saving herself, feel slightly overdone, others exhibit originality. A prime example is *Damsel*’s characterization of Elodie’s stepmother, Lady Bayford (Angela Bassett). When we first meet Lady Bayford, she fits the stereotypical role of the overbearing, vain, and money-obsessed stepmother. As the story unfolds, however, we discover a deeper, more nuanced character who genuinely cares for her stepchildren and is willing to protect them at any cost. In a genre that often pits older and younger women against one another, it was refreshing to see Elodie and Lady Bayford’s relationship develop beyond a trope and flourish into a loving dynamic.

I highly recommend *Damsel* to any fantasy fan looking for something new. The film captivates from start to finish with its stunning visuals, stellar cast, and refreshing takes on tired tropes. If you are in the mood for damsels and dragons galore, hop over to Netflix and give *Damsel* a watch.

**LETTER: VOTES IN THIS TOWN, CON’T. FROM PAGE 6**

to “his” signs. What are Purcellville residents supposed to think? Additionally, will there be repercussions if someone changes their mind, or changes their

views on which candidates to support.

Nobody’s vote in this town should be for sale.

*Carol Luke  
Purcellville*

**LOUDOUN COUNTY ADULT DAY CENTERS**

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Video online at: [www.loudoun.gov/adultday](http://www.loudoun.gov/adultday)

Administered by Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services

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**SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

school on a public school dime ...What do we want?" she asked. "Collective bargaining!" answered the group. "When do we want it? Now!" they answered.

The crowd representing LEA chanted as they walked to the boardroom. Thirty four were signed up to speak.

**Public Speakers**

The first speaker said that higher wages can help retain teachers. "The high turnover rates are incredibly destructive to the students' learning and to the school system."

"I encourage you to adopt the Collective Bargaining system. I am a first grade teacher at Rolling Ridge Elementary School. [We want] the promise that they [the Board] will sit with them and make this the best school system for our students as well as teachers," said Steve Greenburg.

"I teach high school math," said Charles Hanson. "There is a small vocal minority, who manufacture outrage. Almost 90 percent of families believe that Loudoun provides a strong education. Educators are in our buildings every day; we know what works. All I got in my contract was sign it, or leave." He implied employees need more negotiating power for higher wages.

John Myers, of Loudoun Career Firefighters Association, said, "Teachers are the best guides on their issues, how do we expect to recruit, and retain the best?"

The President of LEA, Kris Countryman said, "There is value in Collective Bargaining, teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. We have heard lies ... these are people who are not

educators, and have their own agenda. It is time for the amendment to pass."

"The current resolution is the result of years of negotiating. Collective Bargaining is the best way to build trust and respect among stakeholders. It will not raise taxes, those are people who have not felt the benefits of CB," said Suzanne Kockler.

"This is the most important decision of your careers ... you choose to be ignorant; you need to take your role as a Board seriously. Loudoun County will never outperform its educators," another LEA member said. "Despite the slander, the libel, you stood for what is right. I implore those who oppose this, to stand with us," said another.

Not all speakers were in favor of the resolution; a minority warned against it.

"I am a fourth grade teacher," said Wallace Judd in contrast, "Unions are a thinly veiled invitation to corruption. Union backed members return favors with higher wages. Who is missing? Parents, and students. Who needs an intermediary?"

"I saw the positive and the negative aspects of unions," said a resident. "I am opposed. I do not see where Collective Bargaining can enhance what our children are learning. FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] said collective bargaining does not belong in the public sector."

Sandy Sullivan clarified that some union practices, like striking, were not permitted by law under these resolutions, so this should not be expected.

Phebe Greenwood said, "I am a resident, and grandparent. I support all teachers, but I ask you to oppose the CB and unionization. A layer of unions between me and the school board is not a

service to me. You increased [the budget] by 10%. I'm sure you can give teachers the benefits they need."

This resolution, "Shifts power away from elected officials, and to bureaucrats. The victims of CB are children," said another speaker.

Darrell Dawson said, "Please pass the resolution. No amendments. How can we retain educators, if we do not have the same offers as surrounding counties?"

"This issue has seen many educators, who are qualified and experienced, leave their positions and their professions," another member of LEA said.

Tracy Lane presented a spoken word poem. "We are determined to make a clatter ... show us that our educators matter," she said.

"I know what it's like to be a public employee, I know public employees need a union. This is a workable resolution," Patti Nelson said.

"It's not just about fair negotiation," said Susan Hammontree. "It's about [bringing partnership] and giving a seat at the table. This will ensure educators have a role in shaping policies that affect their teaching. This is our moment to act for the betterment of our schools."

**More residents were skeptical of the proposed resolution**

One speaker said, "As a resident, it will have a detrimental effect; It will cost Loudoun residents 3 million per year. The County already has a support system—why do we need more bureaucracy? Why would you give away your decision making power?"

"I oppose unionization," said Sylvia Ross. "It will disenfranchise the voter, and unions are unaccountable. It [goes

against] the public trust. It wrongfully gives executive power to non-elected bodies."

One speaker against the Collective Bargaining accosted the Board, saying, "You receive checks from union organizations ... unions are propaganda machines ... they stifle conversations, and create wasteful spending. Hands off the kids!"

**The discussion on the vote**

Board members Lauren Shernoff (Leesburg) supported by Deana Griffiths (Ashburn) and Kari LaBell (Catoclin) sought to modify the resolution to retain more Board control. Those efforts repeatedly failed.

The Board needs to retain authority over policy; [passing the resolution] "will subsequently compromise the authority of the board," Shernoff said.

"The School Board [needs to have] the final authority on wages, if they advocate for wages we can't afford," said LaBell.

Shernoff and LaBell said if Collective Bargaining is passed without amendments, LEA can choose their own meeting times, disrupting the school schedule.

Anne Donohue (At-Large) said, "as has been alluded to, this is a momentous meeting; I grew up with unionized schools. To those opposed, it's not unusual for anxiety to appear, [when a big change happens]. I will support this motion, and I've been consistent about my desire for it to pass."

Griffiths tried to wedge in a legal argument that no School Board members with complex ties and conflicts of interest, like campaign donations, should be not allowed to vote—but it failed. The final vote passed 6 - 3, with Shernoff, Griffiths, and LaBell opposed.

**CANDIDATE: GREEN**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

I will ensure the Town's services—water/sewer, public safety, and roads—are best in class, responsive to the demands of the citizens, and managed efficiently without exorbitant costs.

I will promote Town government transparency through clear and timely communication to citizens, share the Town's priorities, make sure the permitting process is streamlined, and maintain an open door for citizen feedback. As a Council Member, I will act on behalf of the citizens for their health and well-being to ensure prosperity for all.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Green:** I do not support annexations at this time. The Town services (clean water in particular) are already strained. Expanding the borders of the Town will put a heavy burden on the citizens of Purcellville, who have made it clear they do not want annexations. They want to preserve Purcellville's small town character. This cannot be preserved by growing our borders and becoming like Ashburn.

There would be no benefit to our residents if we approved an additional 1.2 million square feet of industrial. It will create unbearable traffic—an additional 3,500 car trips to a residential area on

**LETTER: SKYSCRAPERS**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

profile—a process that began long before you took it upon yourself to raise rates. The inconvenient truth for your narrative is that this credit rating reflects the resilience and sound fiscal management of our town over time, not the sudden stroke of rate hikes in your latest fiscal plan. During my tenure as Mayor, we managed to reduce the overall debt, which we inherited, by over \$9 million without resorting to massive new debt.

And what does this newfound AAA rating really signify in your hands, Mayor Milan? It's not just a badge of honor; it's a license—perhaps even an invitation—to plunge the town into a sea of debt under the grandiose

roads which are in line with the rural character of our town. And no, the developer can not achieve the density he wants if the project were to be approved in the county. The county planning department has already weighed in with a strong voice of not recommending approval.

I do support the property being built at its by right use of 39 homes. This is in keeping with what the citizens in

the vicinity and the town have asked for.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Green:** I do not support raising our water and sewer rates by high double digits. We must get control of spending and the high cost that the general fund employees charge to our utility

banner of annexation. Will you now leverage this rating to go on a borrowing spree, chasing dreams of expansion that could stretch our town's resources—and our taxpayers' patience—beyond the breaking point?

So while you may bask in the glow of this AAA rating, let's not be blinded by its shine. The people of Purcellville deserve to know what you truly intend to do with this newfound financial credibility. Will you continue to burden them with higher costs, or will you finally reveal the real price of your ambitions? The citizens of Purcellville deserve more than a victory lap; they deserve transparency and honesty about what lies ahead.

*Kwasi Fraser  
Purcellville*

fund of over \$1 million. Current strategies, such as dedicating a percentage of the meals tax towards the water/sewer debt and operational efficiencies are a must. Our financial advisor has already weighed in to say we can dedicate a percentage of our meals tax to our utility fund as long as we have a policy in place.

As Council Member, I will ensure

**CANDIDATE: WRIGHT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12**

potential impacts prior to decisions being made.

Work towards improving the image of the town. Over the past several years, several actions taken by the council have tarnished the image of the town. This negative image is slowly fading, but there is still work to be done.

**BRL: Do you support the annexation of the Valley Commerce Center and other annexations?**

**Wright:** As with any item or annexation request that I am asked to consider, I will make decisions based on facts, community input and what is in the best interest for the town today and in the future.

I am waiting for additional information on the requested annexation of the Valley Commerce Center property. I need to know what the positive and negative impacts this potential annexation and requested zoning would have on the town. Once I have the facts, I can then make an educated and informed decision.

**BRL: Is it necessary to raise the utility rates high double digits for the foreseeable future?**

**Wright:** The town has a substantial debt we are obligated to pay off. Unfortunately, past decisions on refinancing and the funding sources used for payments towards that debt did not provide the outcome that may have been desired. This has left few if any options other than to increase utility rates.

The council needs to continue looking for other sources of revenue that could assist in paying down this debt. Each option needs to be fully evaluated to ensure it will not adversely impact the town's credit rating or its financial well-being.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Wright:** I support the council, its committees and town staff working and communicating with all property owners who are looking to develop or revitalize their property. Communicating and working together provides the best path towards ensuring it will be in the best interest of the town.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?**

**Wright:** There are parts of the proposed zoning ordinance that I could "support." However, there are sections that need more consideration,

**21ST ANNIVERSARY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

forward to this year's Tag Sale, and I enjoy seeing all the vendors throughout town. I also want to sincerely thank our sponsors, Wildwood Landscape and Bank of Clarke County – two amazing pillars in our community. Without their generous sponsorship, this event would not be able to continue."

"We recently received a grant from Loudoun County that will be used to help promote this successful event even

further," said Redd. "A lot of people look at the Tag Sale as a one-day event, but the long-term benefits to the Town of Purcellville are undeniable. The Tag Sale is an opportunity for out-of-towners to meet our local businesses, and they do return."

Said Redd, "The reality is the Tag Sale is really the kick off for the fall and winter shopping seasons. People are looking for gift ideas, seasonal clothing options, home décor that reflects the changing

weather, and more.

Text Silas at 540 751-8252 with questions or email him at [ShopAtNostalgia@gmail.com](mailto:ShopAtNostalgia@gmail.com).

Redd noted, "Spaces sell out every year so buy them while you can." Some vendor spaces have been added and other locations have changed altogether so make sure to check out the website for all of the information. Spaces go on sale Monday, Aug. 26—sign up now.

**JUST LIKE NOTHING (ELSE), CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

narrow, cobbled streets, awash with arms, legs, faces and cameras. I still hadn't given up on finding a spot to leave my vehicle and get some shots. The geography and architecture are a photographer's dream— so I headed uphill from the main attractions closer to water level.

It seemed every shop-owner was running some sort of open house or giving away free TV's, at least, as the numbers of patrons made me wonder if I'd be able to park anywhere within the Town borders. I kept driving, and climbing. Harpers Ferry features very little level ground, once you get up and away from the riversides.

After I'd been seeing yaks and sherpas for several miles—not really, but that's about how my imagination was running. I finally located a spot where I could nudge in my vehicle and see about getting back to my mission: John Brown's Fort, from the 1859 abolitionist raid, and some of the views of Maryland and Virginia along the Shenandoah and Potomac.

But first, mind you, I had to interpret the street parking status: was it free parking, or was there some type of payment system? I'm still wondering, since I failed to figure out the

'instructions' along the side of the road.

Not wanting to return to my car to find it ticketed (or worse – towed!) I figured I'd better make tracks if I wanted to capitalize on this impending disaster. I decided to run all the way down the hill to the site of the Fort, get some iconic shots, then run all the way back (did I mention the hill?) to my vehicle before any Rita the meter maid could do her worst.

I remember some of the trip downhill, and I have a few vague images in my mind's eye of the historic park down on level ground, and I've got some very nice (to my mind) photos of the important pieces of history and geography, but I truly recall only one or two brief moments of gasping for breath on the way back up to my car.

My friends will all admit that I'm no longer 21, and I've never auditioned for the role of Tarzan on stage or screen. I did play the Welsh Poet, Dylan Thomas—so that should give you an idea of my physical attributes.

Well, the Harpers Ferry gods were kind: no ticket, no heart trouble, and I think I still had some iced coffee left in my travel mug. See what a well-planned photo shoot can lead to? Who said I was scared?

**OPINION: A SINCERE THANK YOU, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4**

replace it with a vinyl edifice. This was done without any community notice because the Town currently has no demolition policy in the older parts of Town—that our citizens have stated they wish to sustain.

Traffic congestion is another pressing matter. Some might question how zoning can mitigate this issue. To them, I say, adding more commercial zoning to our already beleaguered Main Street traffic circle is folly. This area, where one must brave life and limb merely to navigate in and out of existing commercial establishments, is already congested.

The proposed zoning changes, recommended by a unanimous planning commission vote in July as per our 2030 Comprehensive Plan, promise not to compound this congestion. Those who decry traffic woes in Purcellville should champion this cause, unless, of course, they cater to developers and not the citizens of our town.

For example, the Planning Commission's newly recommended zoning ordinance protects all our neighborhoods, sustaining what the citizens of our town want to preserve. It has eliminated the future allowed use of homes being turned into duplexes, in R-2 and R-3 areas, while protecting the 13 existing ones. The planning commission acted on this as well as cluster and PDH zoning because our citizens expressed a preference for maintaining neighborhoods as they are—and not to add anymore.

Since the majority of Town Council voted in its July Town Council meeting not to extend the terms of Chair Nan Forbes, Vice Chair Ed Neham and Commissioner Nedim Ogelman, the new majority appointed Planning Commissioner Troy Brown has unfortunately foreshadowed what will happen when three new planning commissioners will be appointed to the planning commission. Commissioner Brown said he will in the near future be making amendments to undo what the citizens asked

for in their Comprehensive Plan and allow for more duplexes throughout town, more cluster zoning, and more PDH developments.

Your perseverance in the face of bureaucratic resistance over the past two years is laudable. Despite management and a Town Council majority's reluctance to support your citizen-mandated mission, you have remained steadfast. From my vantage point, I commend you for your service to this great community and your fidelity to Purcellville's 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

My household of five voters wholeheartedly support your proposed zoning ordinance. It aligns with our adopted Comprehensive Plan, addresses traffic congestion, curbs overdevelopment that threatens our community's character and charm, and safeguards our precious water resources. I support your approval and advancement of the draft zoning ordinance to the Town Council.

and their potential impacts evaluated in greater detail. I also need to hear from residents prior to determining if the proposed revised zoning ordinance should or should not be supported in its entirety.

The Blue Ridge Leader is pledged to the letter and spirit of Virginia's and HUD's Equal Opportunity Housing Policies. Virginia's Fair Housing Law makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status and handicap. This newspaper will not knowingly accept advertising for real estate that violates the Fair Housing Law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in the paper are available on an equal housing opportunity basis. For more information about Virginia's Fair Housing Law, or to file a Fair Housing complaint, call the Virginia Fair Housing Office at 804.376.8530; toll-free 888.551.3247; for the hearing impaired: 804.527.4290; email – [fairhousing@dporvirginia.gov](mailto:fairhousing@dporvirginia.gov); web: [www.fairhousing.vipnet.org](http://www.fairhousing.vipnet.org).



**CANDIDATE: GREEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30**

solutions are explored, assessed and implemented as fast as reasonably possible in order to reduce future increases for our citizens.

**BRL: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Green:** The Vineyard Square project has the necessary permits to begin development, granted by a previous council. I believe the current approved permits are out of character for Purcellville. It is true the developer has discussed alternatives—meaning reducing the planned number of condos and splitting up the residential to several four-story buildings in the back instead of having it all in one building. However, these alternatives are still out of character with the Historic Downtown and its quaint character. This

is not the San Diego Gaslamp District. This is Purcellville. Allowing this kind of density on 21st Street, which is a narrow one-way street, is inappropriate and will increase traffic in an already congested area.

Our 2030 Comprehensive Plan is clear about what the citizens envision for this area—two-story buildings with commercial/retail/offices and, for residential, two apartments per structure. This is in line with our small town—not multi-family use in this area. It is time to “cater” to our citizens and work with this developer for a realistic development that is in line with our small town and not San Diego’s Gaslamp District—which is what the current Mayor and Vice Mayor envision.

Other businesses have done a marvelous job at renovations. We have Catocin Creek Distillery, Bia Kitchen, and the new Enhanced Beauty and Wellness Clinic.

They knew what to do and didn’t need a Master Plan to do it. Again, our Comprehensive Plan is our Master Plan for that area and other areas around Town.

**BRL:** Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the planning commission?

**Green:** As a member of the Planning Commission, I was a direct contributor to the zoning rewrite and recommended the Zoning be passed on to Town Council for their legislative process. I believe the Planning Commission successfully achieved the mission statement which was to bring the zoning in line with the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as well as to mitigate nonconforming properties. Our goal throughout the process was to sustain and protect. We protected duplex and PDH developments throughout town and moved them to Legacy. This means they are protected and there can not be

more of that kind of development around town, as the citizens in our 2030 Comprehensive Plan have clearly voiced their desire to sustain our small town.

Unfortunately, developers and Team Metropolis are not happy about it. They want higher story buildings and multi-family throughout the town. They want lax zoning so they can do what they want—regardless of what the citizens have said. They are already saying that our 2030 Comprehensive Plan is out of date when it isn’t due for rewrite for several more years.

I will always put citizens first, not developers. I will fight to protect our town and have already done so. I am asking for your support for Chris Bertaut for Mayor, and Ben Nett, Susan Khalil, Jon Arnburg and me, Brian Green, in the Town elections on November 5. Mayberry, not Metropolis.

**CANDIDATE: NETT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24****BRI: Do you support working out a deal with the developers of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street?**

**Nett:** The developers of Vineyard Square on 21st Street have had permits to build for 14 years and vacated their tenants to show they were “diligently pursuing” their project in order to keep their permits active. After a meeting with Stan Milan, the head of Team Metropolis, the developers of Vineyard Square put tenants back in for a two-year period. They have now come before council with a new proposal, which is to reduce the condoportion of the project from 40 condos to 36 and break up the condos into numerous four-story buildings in the back. I am not in favor of turning 21st Street into an area like San Diego’s Gaslamp District—complete with multi-family

housing and a hotel. I am for letting the Vineyard Square permits expire in June 2025 and meeting with the developers to revitalize the area with appropriate commercial/retail which is conducive to our Historic Downtown. I believe the Historic Downtown Corridor holds tremendous untapped potential and is prime for further economic revitalization, such as that seen with the refacing and renovation of the American Legion and the introduction of Bia Kitchen.

My support for downtown development, beyond the approvals already granted, is contingent on such development matching the character and aesthetics of the town and avoiding adverse impacts on our already tenuous traffic situation.

**BRL: Do you support the revised zoning ordinance recently passed by the****planning commission?**

**Nett:** My dad was a Democrat State Representative for over two decades and drew the ire of his party for opposing an eminent domain land grab by city government—seizure of private property, in that case, for other private use. He was ultimately vindicated by the state supreme court, and he was nominated for the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for taking on his own party and big business interests at the cost of his seat in the legislature.

The developers spent millions going after him—just as the developers lustfully eyeing Purcellville are now coming after me. I support zoning ordinances that, first and foremost, protect and preserve private property rights. The zoning ordinance passed at the end of July by the Planning Commission aligns with

the desires of residents as expressed in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

I attended several Planning Commission meetings and witnessed, first-hand, the concerns expressed by citizens in attendance. Members of the Planning Commission listened attentively, made adjustments to address their concerns, and remained focused on aligning zoning with the wishes of Purcellville’s residents to preserve and maintain the character of our small town. Legacy districts were created to protect existing uses such as duplexes and Planned Developmental Housing—and protections were put in place to sustain what the town currently has. As a member of Town Council, I will always support the property rights of our residents. I ask for your vote.

**KERLEY MAKES THE CALLS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

ages 14-16.

In 2023, Kerley was again evaluated during the Little League Regional in Georgia. This led to Kerley being chosen as one of 13 umpires to participate in the 2024 Jr. Little League World Series in Taylor, Michigan.

To better understand what an honor it is to be chosen to umpire World Series games in these leagues is to acknowledge the lengthy and rigorous process. There are the yearly evaluations and ultimately according to the Little League website: “The Little League International selection committee then considers all nominated umpires in coordination with the nine U.S. Region offices before selecting those who most closely meet the selection criteria. Individuals who meet those qualifications are then screened annually by the

Little League International selection committee and region staffs for selection to umpire in a Little League World Series tournament.” Kerley was one of thousands who were reviewed before being selected.

Keeping in mind that the game is ultimately about the players, Kerley recalls the experiences with the younger kids as well as the older ones. There are more rules and regulations as players move up.

At the 13-14-year-old level, players start to show their talents. Years of watching the kids play hundreds of games as they advance and play other leagues as an umpire, one is bound to witness the extraordinary. It was Kerley’s own son who pitched a what was recorded as a one-pitch complete inning; bases loaded and there was a triple-play with all on base being out.

Umpires will also physically

experience the unintended path of the baseball. Especially with the younger players, Kerley says that he was hit many times on the wrists and forearms hence the pads and his hockey-like face mask.

Recently, a ball hit off the bat lodged itself firmly between his mask and his shoulder pad. He was also hit square in the face and despite the protective mask, “I really got my bell rung,” and it would take Kerley a moment to get his bearings.

The umpire also has to be level-headed when it comes to the behavior of players, coaches and even parents during the game. There is a signed Code of Conduct form before each season that now somewhat keeps most in line.

It is rare that a player or coach needs to be removed from the game. There are actions that are considered an “ejectable

offense” such as tossing/throwing the helmet or bat in anger. However, as in any sport, the positive participation is an experience that players carry with them for a lifetime.

In terms of what makes for a good umpire, Kerley says, “I think it takes a love for the game and being out there for the players and not for yourself. Understanding the rules and the ‘gray areas’ that exist in baseball as in everything else.”

As far as his umpire ambitions, Kerley states that his goal is move up. He would be thrilled to umpire at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. “I would really love that,” he adds. Secondly, he would like to get into college baseball starting at Division Three and work his way up if he could. Kerley says, “I’d like to keep going for as long as I can ... just keep progressing.”

**OPINION: SKYSCRAPERS**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

I'll explain that for those of you who have government jobs and those of you who are so wealthy that they can ignore the price of everything, even their Gulfstream jets. Loudoun has plenty of both types.

Here you go: When the supply of anything outstrips demand, prices will fall. Conversely, when demand exceeds supply, prices will increase.

While Barr's research was almost worldwide, New York City was his primary laboratory and the super-tall Billionaires' Row skyscrapers were under his microscope.

**Supertall Apartment Buildings**

There's a general belief that prime US real estate like apartments in these thousand-foot-tall structures is often bought by foreigners as a safe place to hide money. There's some truth to this. For example, in some booming areas a huge portion of expensive properties are bought by offshore owners. It's impossible to know the source of the buyers' funds, or even who the buyers actually are. The titular owners are shell companies and no one will ever know if the money is clean or dirty.

Barr, though, found something interesting in Manhattan's uber-wealthy enclaves: Something like 68% of the apartment owners in these supertall buildings already lived in the city, but in less-opulent quarters. The units they had vacated meant that the supply of their lesser apartments increases, and per the law of supply and demand, prices for those vacated units will fall.

Does this mean that to provide more affordable housing in Loudoun County, we should encourage development of mega McMansions? Maybe, but while

Manhattan is much more of a self-contained economy, Loudoun functions as a small part of a large metropolitan whole: Buyers of our new homes may well have come from far and wide, not just from Fairfax but from distant states. Coming to a provable conclusion would take a host of economists, each with a supercomputer and plenty of time.

Does this mean James Barr is wrong? In the apothegm assigned to economists, on the one hand he may be right, but on the other hand he may be wrong. Moral: Take economists' statements with a grain of salt. (My collegiate minor was Economics, so I know whereof I speak.)

**Is Barr Correct?**

I don't think so. While his logic and methodology are thought provoking, Loudoun is a totally different market than Manhattan. As I see it, there is danger in some of his opinions.

Barr suggests an absolute free-market solution to housing: No zoning. Faster and easier approvals and so on, and thus more houses. That idea would endorse the kind of greed developers spew, which usually goes way too far.

Look at the dreadful new subdivision on Dry Mill Road in Leesburg. Its developer had the audacity to name it "White Oak Farm," after having bulldozed every single tree, every single shrub and every single blade of grass.

**My Conclusions**

Housing is a complicated topic. It's especially so in bedroom areas that feel intense development pressure.

As much as I endorse free-market economics, government must impose some controls and restraints. It must be skeptical about its actions.

I fear that we'll see some poor consequences from the current push to use zoning bonuses to compel developers to set aside "affordable" units in their projects. We'd be much better served by giving grants to lower-income families to use as they see fit.

One benefit from this would be to make older housing stock in Leesburg, Sterling, Purcellville and elsewhere more attractive and more valuable. This would enhance overall home values, while the current plan—the needy get new housing—puts a downward pressure on values.

Citizens are best served by elected officials who truly believe that the county belongs to its citizens, not developers and promoters. That's critical for land use issues. Pity that doesn't seem to be case here. I suggest they begin by eliminating Special Exceptions.

**A Diversion for You**

When you have some idle time, Google "Supertall Skyscrapers" and see what you think. (I favor ones which have sculptural merit.) One tower that you'll see is the Jeddah Tower, now under construction in Saudi Arabia. At a height of some 3,200 feet, it will be the tallest building in the world. By far.

*Charles Houston helped develop six million square feet of office buildings, the tallest of which was only 612 feet. (Only one-fifth the height of the Jeddah Tower.) He lives on an old farm outside Paeonian Springs.*

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**Yes, your water bill is too high!  
Yes, you can do something  
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Rather than tackle the town's spending problem, the current council majority recently voted to raise our water and sewer rates by 16% and 18% respectively.

**Our opponents, "Team Metropolis," plan further double-digit rate increases every year for the next four years! This means a 102% increase in your current bi-monthly water bill!**

We need new leadership and fiscal responsibility in our town government. **Your vote for us, "Team Mayberry," is a vote for the change we need.**



When elected, we will dedicate, through a new policy, a portion of our meals tax revenue (no new taxes!) as an alternate revenue stream for our sewer fund. To achieve this, we will improve efficiency of operations throughout town government while reducing spending and putting an end to crony capitalism.

**We ask for your vote!**

## Water Bill Increase History:

**2014-2015: -3% Sewer, -3% Water**  
*(Decreased against management and consultant Advice - Mayor Lazaro & his Council's last Budget)*

**2015-2016: 5% Sewer, 0% Water**  
*Mayor Fraser's First Budget*

**2016-2017: 5% Sewer, 3% Water**  
**2017-2018: 0% Sewer, 0% Water**  
*Fraser's council decreased water & sewer fund payments to general fund (chargebacks)*

**2018-2019: 2% Sewer, 2% Water**

**2019-2020: 3% Sewer, 3% Water**

**2020-2021: 0% Sewer, 0% Water**  
*COVID-19 Year*

**2021-2022: 5% Sewer, 3% Water**

**2022-2023: 7.5% Sewer, 5% Water**  
*Adopted Budget note on page 15 clearly said this was consistent with what our consultants recommended.*

**2024-2025: 18% Sewer, 16% Water**  
*Adopted by Milan, Rayner, Stought, Wright & Williams.*

Paid for and Authorized by Christopher Bertaut for Mayor and Authorized by Carl B. "Ben" Nett, Brian Green, Susan Khalil, and Jonathan "Jon" Arnburg for Town Council

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