

Mayor's Report - May 2014

Election - The election is over and we have veteran Councilman Scott Strong returning to office and a new addition in Councilman Ken Phebus. Of course Councilman Phebus has lived in Mount Airy all his life and served in various town roles, so it's hard to call him new. Thanks to John Stuehmeier who made an impressive run for office. I look forward to continuing to work with John Stuehmeier as the Mayor's State Police Liaison and as a Streets and Roads Commission member, where he is heading up many beneficial safety programs.

As we convert to having our Town elections held on the odd year, in correlation with the rest of Carroll and Frederick municipalities, the term in office for the recently elected officials will be for 3 years, as the term in office for the Councilmen elected in 2012 was also for 3 years. The upcoming election will be the first Monday in May 2015, and there will be three Council seats up for grabs. This is the first time in our history to have back to back elections. The purpose of changing the Town's election year to the odd year, is so Mount Airy's elections won't occur in the same years as the State elections, which interferes with the Frederick and Carroll County Election Boards assisting us with our voter registrations, etc.

I would like to thank the citizens of Mount Airy for the honor of serving another term as your Mayor. I look forward to working with everyone to continue to make our home a better place.

Taxes - As required by the State of Maryland we ran an ad noting a tax increase. The Town did not increase the tax *rate*; we kept the rate the same as it has been for many years. The notice was required because the Town will be receiving an increase in tax *revenue*. This is because: (1) some assessments went up slightly and therefore the amount some paid increased, and (2) new construction added some homes and businesses to the tax rolls. This increase in tax revenue triggered a State required notice. Those residents that are covered by the Homestead Tax Credit, which we have always maintained, were not affected by the increased assessment. The good news is our property values increased. Mount Airy's tax rate is the lowest in Carroll County, second lowest in Frederick and the lowest of all comparable sized municipalities in the State of Maryland.

Caboose at Watkins Park - It finally here! Thanks to the drive, determination, and tenacity of Larry Hushour, The Parks and Recreation Commission, Diane Martin and MACFund for having the grit to make it happen, we now have a real caboose at Watkins Park! Also, big thank you to Steve Hoke and Digging and Rigging for physically making it happen. Thank You to Zell Olson of the B&O museum that came in and provided expertise throughout the day! Rob Scranton and family for their donation to the Mt. Airy Community Fund and Mt. Airy, Mary Hushour, Realtor, who spent the whole day keeping Facebook up and running and The Mount Airy Town Staff, Brian Johnson and Phil Raines, and Steve Mullinix.

PLEASE go by and take a look! The caboose will sit in this location for approximately 1 month. This is a "fundraising" stop! So please forward to your friends and relatives across the country. Guide them to: www.mountairyrailstotrails.org.

Following this fundraising stop, they hope to get an authentic restoration from the B&O museum restoration shop. The restored caboose will sit right next to Main Street on the old right of way and current Rails to Trails project as a "Visitor Center" and mini museum. Go Mount Airy Parks and Recreation Commission!

Farmers Market - Mark your calendars now for Farmers Market beginning on May 21 through September 10, every Wednesday from 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. in the Downtown Municipal Parking Lot. Each week you will find a different live entertainer, local vendors with seasonal produce, fresh breads, natural care products, crafts, and desserts and much more. Not only do you get great product and value at our Farmers Market but all of the revenue from shopping local goes right back into supporting our community. We look forward to seeing everyone this spring!

Mount Airy Gem – We usually refer to our businesses when speaking about our Mount Airy “gems”, but I would like to highlight a family that made volunteering and giving back to the Mount Airy Community their business. The Perry Family could often be seen walking through the community picking up trash or shoveling snow covered public sidewalks. When not volunteering to improve the appearance and safety of the Town, the family graciously contributed their talents to provide custom benches for public use. Additionally, Jim Perry, the patriarch of the family served as a HOA volunteer. Year after year the family continued without any expectation for recognition. Unfortunately, the Perry Family is moving on, but not without a big “Thank You” from the Town of Mount Airy for making our community a better place.

Community Forums - The Mayor's Community forum will resume in June. Residents are encouraged to stop by Town Hall on Main Street and discuss any town-related topics. Town Council members are also invited to attend. The setting is comfortable and informal. Grab a cup of coffee and stop by for a chat!

Volunteer Opportunities: Please visit our Town website (<http://www.mountairymd.org/>) for a list of volunteer opportunities on one of our many commissions. We have two openings on our Water Commission. This volunteer Commission is made up of Mt. Airy residents who study and advise the Mayor and Town Council on all issues related to water, cost structure, conservation, capacities, etc. Interested citizens can let me know they're interested in serving on a

commission vacancy by calling Town Hall at [301-829-1424](tel:301-829-1424) or emailing me directly at prockinberg@gmail.com.