

2010 State of the Town Address

Good afternoon and Happy New Year.

It is my pleasure to join with you once again to present my State of the Town remarks. I appreciate the Purcellville Business and Professional Association's invitation to join with you. As always we deeply appreciate all that the Association and its members do to make Purcellville a great place to live and raise a family.

Strong Fiscal Performance

While the headlines regarding the Federal, State and County budgets have been bleak; I am pleased to report that with strong fiscal discipline and management the news from Town Hall is positive.

We ended fiscal year 2009 with a surplus of more than \$620,000, the Town's largest, and in keeping with our fiscal policies the Town's rainy day fund has grown to \$3.8 million - up from \$2.2 million just three fiscal years ago. Furthermore, the Council for three consecutive years has adopted a tax rate that has led to the average homeowner seeing their property taxes frozen or cut.

In recognition of the Town's outstanding performance I am proud to report that not only did our Consolidated Annual Financial Report, but our budget as well received national awards. Less than 1% of the municipalities of our size in the entire nation have an award winning Annual Financial Report and Purcellville is the smallest jurisdiction in Virginia to receive a Distinguished Budget Award.

While we need to see be cautious as to how the State's budget woes will impact the Town, it is my stated personal goal for this upcoming budget

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season that the Council once again adopt a tax rate that either cuts or freezes taxes for the average homeowner.

Transportation

Much is happening on the transportation front and I am excited by the progress we are making with long planned transportation improvements. Some of these improvements were adopted as part of the Town's Comprehensive plan more than thirty years ago.

With respect to the Southern Collector Road the Town is taking the necessary steps to complete this long-planned and needed roadway. We appreciate the public support of the Business Association, Loudoun County Public Schools and the Purcellville Volunteer Fire Department and our residents in these efforts.

Most recently the Town hired the engineering firm to develop a final design for the roadway. Just as importantly we are working with an adjacent property, the O'Toole family, who has agreed to place the majority of the alignment of the road on their property.

Just as exciting is the news that through the good offices of our Congressman, Frank Wolf, and with the support of both Senators Webb and Warner, the Town has received a direct appropriation of \$500,000 in the recently passed transportation appropriations bill which was signed by the President in December. This is the first time our Town has been the recipient of a direct appropriation and we are grateful for this assistance. There is no one solution to the Town's transportation challenges and fixing Main and Maple is one of the projects we must complete.

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Recognizing that transportation is not just about cars, but revolves around public transportation and bike/pedestrian access as well, we have worked well with our friends at Virginia Regional Transit. While ridership on the trolley between here, Lovettsville and the MARC station needs to be bolstered, I am encouraged by the enthusiasm by which the folks at the agency are addressing the issue. I would hope that Round Hill and Hamilton would both consider joining in this effort.

We completed a very important multi-utility transportation improvement project on 32nd Street this fall and most importantly completed a critical link of sidewalk as part of the project. This spring a number of sidewalk projects will break ground to assist us in better linking our neighborhoods with Main Street and our shopping districts.

Finally, and most importantly, the Council adopted our Town-wide Transportation Plan and incorporated it into our Comprehensive Plan. My sincere thanks to Mark Nelis and Mike Socha for their participation as members of our citizen steering committee. The Plan provides a great framework for us as we look at future transportation planning and improvements.

Critical Infrastructure

Ensuring that the Town's critical infrastructure meets all federal and state requirements and is sized to meet the long-term demands of our residents and business community, I am pleased to report the Town's upgrade to our waste water treatment plant is not only ahead of schedule, but under budget. We anticipate we will take final operation of the plant this spring well ahead of our fall deadline.

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Furthermore, our maintenance facility is nearing completion and will be in full operation in the spring. This modern facility, which replaces a dilapidated, outdated garage, will serve our community a long time and will provide operational efficiencies to allow our public works department to better serve our Town and protect and maintain the very valuable equipment that serve our citizens.

On the water resources front I am pleased to report the Town closed on a 193-acre parcel of property adjacent to our water treatment plant in December. This property with the necessary infrastructure will yield up to 300,000 gallons of new water a day into our system. Furthermore, we are nearing completion on bringing the well at Fields Farm on line which will provide up to 40,000 gallons of new water a day into our system and a well on the Marsh Farm that will provide up to 125,000 gallons of new water.

All total we will have access to more than 1.1 million gallons of water for our community when all of the necessary infrastructure investments are made. With other agreements we are currently working on we will have secured enough water resources to meet our community's needs through 2048. That is a significant achievement.

Protecting the Environment

While adding these water resources is critical, protecting them is just as important. That is why I am so proud of our Council when they voted to place a conservation easement on the 1,271 acres of our watershed protecting it forever from development. The easement is the largest easement recorded in Loudoun and the first by a government in our County as well.

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I am pleased to report that our activities to protect our environment have garnered several awards. Our public works, wastewater and water departments have achieved environmental excellence awards and our Town won First Place in the statewide “Go Green” environmental competition. Our citizen led environment committee has undertaken two well attended sustainability day events and are working on several important programs as well.

Finally, our community shred event and prescription drug collection program event were successes. As such, we will be working to combine the two for a collection program in April – you can empty out your old file cabinet and medicine cabinet at the same event.

Protecting our environment not only has quality of life benefits, but saves taxpayers money as well. That is why I am proud of our partnership with Dominion Power and the installation of LED street lights along South 20th Street. For the first four months of operation these lamps have saved taxpayers nearly \$1469 with an annualized savings of \$4408. All total the payback period on the installation of the lamps is a little more than 2 ¼ years. Over a ten-year period these lamps will save taxpayers more than \$40,000. We have recently requested Dominion Power to extend this program to replace all of the lamps on Main Street. We are also requiring LED lamps for our Downtown Improvement Project and for non-field lighting at Fireman’s Field.

Economic Development

I cannot understate the importance of our business community to the wellbeing of our Town. As I have outlined in previous remarks before this organization, the Town has undertaken a number of process and ordinance amendments to ensure predictability, timeliness and flexibility.

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We are constantly reviewing and working to ensure that our Town does not unnecessarily place obstacles to economic development projects. Over the past four years our business tax base has grown from 14% to nearly 23% of our tax base. It is our stated goal in the Comprehensive Plan to achieve at least a 30% business tax base.

With that said, I would like to announce a number of initiatives directed to the business community in an effort to continue to utilize your expertise and experience and also to present additional business opportunities to our local businesses.

First, I am recommending the Town expand the number of seats on our Economic Development Advisory Committee by at least three more positions dedicated to business. EDAC provides valuable input to the Council and I believe its expansion will well serve our Town and citizens. I hope some of you in this room will consider your participation on this valuable committee.

Second, while the debate in Washington rages over the issue of health care, we are blessed as a community with the significant investment Inova has made in our Town. As such, I am pleased to report that Inova has agreed to hold the first of what I hope will be a series of outreach sessions to our business community to discuss how they can help reduce your health care costs through such items as employee physicals, drug testing and workers compensation reviews just to name a few. The first outreach session will occur on February 8. We will host the session at Town Hall.

Third, I believe the Town can play a more active role in helping residents shop in our local stores. As such, the Town will initiate a senior citizens discount guide and work with our local businesses that are interested in

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helping our older Americans by providing them discounts at their stores. The Town will provide the guide free of charge to our residents and will allow local businesses to list their discount for free in the guide.

Fourth, the Town Council as part of its legislative program is requesting more flexibility from the Commonwealth with respect to local business preferences. I also believe we can achieve that result through a sustainable procurement policy. In fact, this past week the Ways & Means Committee adopted a resolution directing staff to research and present to the Council by the end of April such a policy. I believe a strong local preference module needs to be a part of that policy.

Finally, I am pleased to report that after many years of planning and hard work, the Town will break ground on its downtown improvement project this spring. Through the hard work of Town staff, in particular Marty Kloeden, the Town has been able to obtain more than \$1.1 million in Federal funding to move this project forward. I can tell you it is exciting.

Purcellville Pride

There is much to take great pride in our community. We as a Town government are committed to ensuring the actions we take preserve and protect the small town character and quality of life of our community. We are also thankful to our citizen volunteers who help in these efforts.

Towards that aim I am pleased this past year our investments in our Police Department led to it being the smallest jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Virginia to be an accredited Department. This is no small task and it is a testament to the men and women of the Department and its leadership. They keep our families and businesses safe and are a key component to the quality of life in our Town.

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Furthermore, the structures that make Purcellville a unique place are important to maintain and protect. As such I am pleased to report the Town is well underway of having both the Tabernacle (skating rink) and the Train Station designated for the national historic register. This action is consistent with the long stated goals of our Comprehensive Plan to protect such historic resources and we are pleased to do so.

On a related note, we expect to award the contract for the renovation of the Tabernacle later this month. The Council rejects the ridiculous calls of a few to let it deteriorate as is. As the Town will once again proudly play host to the 2010 Babe Ruth World Series the renovations to the facility will be completed prior to the World Series. Furthermore, I must give sincere thanks to Larry Ferrigno and the members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for their successful “Rock the Field” events that brought literally hundreds of families to Fireman’s Field for free entertainment.

As a Town we are fortunate to have an active faith community that adds so greatly to the quality of life of our Town. The recently formed multi-faith “Tree of Life” ministry which encompasses a food bank and job seekers program is a great example of how our faith community works together in a common mission to address critically important issues. The Town is pleased to support these efforts and I expect that our “Purcellville Jobs” web site will be up in running shortly so that our business community can list for free job openings for residents to consider.

Finally, I would like to announce the Town will undertake a design contest for our 9/11 First Responders Memorial, which will be placed at Fireman’s Field. As you know, the Town has received approval from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to receive a piece of steel from the

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World Trade Center to incorporate into this memorial. What better way to not only remember the events of September 11, but to honor our first responders – our Police, our Firefighters and our Rescue personnel? They are true heroes.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

With that said I would like to thank the members of the Council who have stood together time and again for undertaking the sometimes difficult, but necessary work of governing. Working together this unique group of men and women have worked to successfully address some of the most complex issues facing any municipality in our Commonwealth or the nation. I am proud to serve with them.

We are also fortunate as a community to have a dedicated, loyal and hard working staff. They like the Council put the needs of the community ahead of their own personal self-interests. I know speaking for the Council we are eternally grateful.

Thank you once again for allowing me to join with you today. God Bless Purcellville.