

Newcomb

Introduction

The village of Newcomb is situated along, and divided by, a stretch of Maryland Route 33 (St. Michaels Road) at the confluence of the Miles River and Oak Creek. Newcomb is in a rural area bounded by tidal waters and lies entirely within the Chesapeake Bay critical areas.

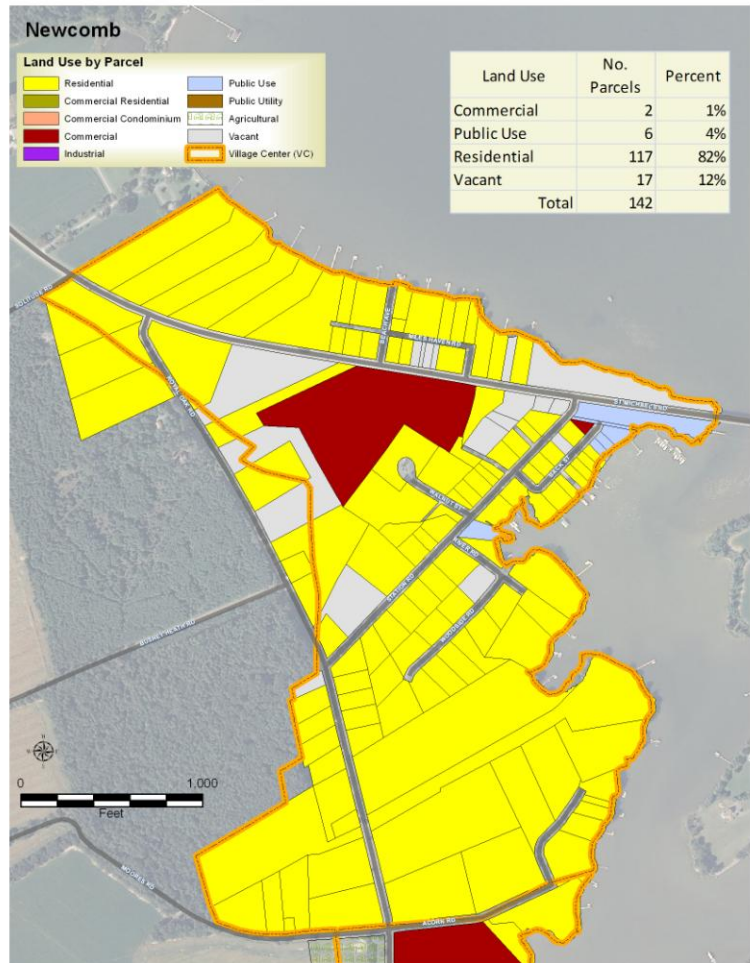
Newcomb is primarily residential and has approximately one hundred homes, combining permanent and seasonal units.

The older and larger section of Newcomb is south of Rt. 33. This part of the village consists of single-family residences, plus the only remaining commercial development in Newcomb. Also it is host to a County boat ramp adjoining a small County park and the village Post Office. The north side of Newcomb is comprised entirely of single family residences, with views or direct access to the Miles River.

North of Rt.33, occupants are generally retirees, seasonal residents or renters of vacation homes, on lots ranging in size from about 1/4 acre to 2 acres. The original community south of the highway hosts families that may have lived in the area for generations along with more recent arrivals. The larger lots on the south side of the village feature more recently constructed homes and a variety of families.

History

Before a railroad line spanned Oak Creek near the Miles River, the area that became Newcomb was devoted to agricultural and



seafood production. The area was developed in the 1890s in conjunction with construction of a rail line linking the Atlantic seaboard with the Eastern Shore and ferries to Baltimore and the Western Shore.

Newcomb was laid out around a drawbridge over Oak Creek and a rail station. Commercial activity in the village included boarding houses, a post office and a variety of retail establishments.

In time the trains ceased to run, a direct route to St Michaels, which became a highway (Rt.33), was laid parallel to the rail line, bypassing the old passage through the village of Royal Oak. The train tracks, station and

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stores eventually vanished from the landscape.

Sewer Service

Newcomb is served by the sewer line that follows Rt.33 from the St. Michaels treatment plant. Sewer service was originally extended to eliminate existing failing septic systems within the critical areas.

As explained in the 2005 County Comprehensive Plan, many of the village centers have problems with failing septic systems because of the small lot sizes, poor soil conditions and a high groundwater table.

Newcomb has partial sewer services, where only the liquids are pumped to the St. Michaels facility and solids remain in individual residential septic tanks to be collected.

System improvements have increased capacity at the St. Michaels treatment facility thereby creating capacity for additional connections to existing or newly created lots in Newcomb village and elsewhere. The original intent of protecting the environment by replacing these existing failing systems could be undermined by the impacts of increased development.

Goals

This document is meant to describe the character of Newcomb and promote activities that complements and enhances the village. The goal is to create a document that will reinforce the quality and character of the village without being cumbersome.

Preserve the Character of Newcomb

- New development and infill should conform to the existing village residential character and consider the original intent of the sewer line extension.

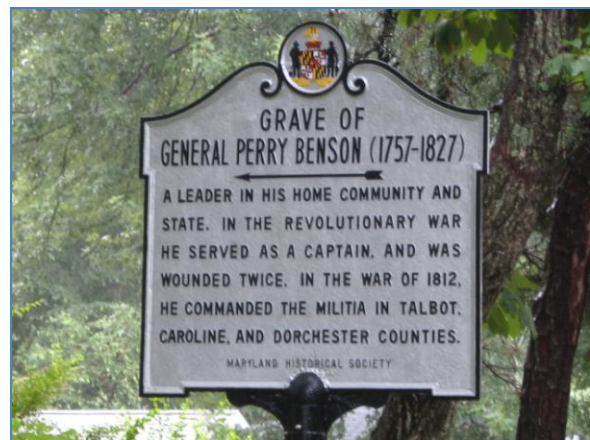
- Reexamine the Newcomb VC zoning district boundaries, including consulting property owners who are now partially in the VC zone to determine whether the zoning boundary is appropriate.
- Require any new subdivision of land in Newcomb to be equal to, or greater than, the average size of adjoining lots by amending the Subdivision Ordinance.
- Back Street is a private road maintained by the property owners. However, it receives considerable through traffic, especially related to activities at the public landing. Some recognition by the County of the growing burden on property owners is due.

Carefully Consider Commercial Activities

- The community impact of commercial activities that may increase traffic or noise, including increased stopping and turning at Rt.33, or require signage or outdoor lighting, should be examined ahead of development.
- Home based businesses shall be allowed and encouraged in Newcomb.

Maintain a Sense of Community

- Preserve the history and land and historical marker of the cemetery at Station Road and Oak Creek, presently managed by the County Parks and Recreation Department.



Encourage the County to conduct a full site survey to define boundaries and features. Explore the possibility of partnering with other groups to preserve this area as green space. Examine options to maintain and preserve the cemetery and restore the eroding shoreline.

- Collect, preserve and maintain a history of the Village of Newcomb. Maintain a stand-alone document that may be added to from time to time to incorporate new information or photographs. Archive materials should be given to the Talbot County Free Library or Talbot County Historical Society.



Ensure Pleasant, Safe and Adequate Public Facilities

- The priority purpose for sewer connections should be to replace failing septic systems to help improve water quality in the Miles River and Oak Creek and not to promote increased development/density. Future development proposals should be reviewed in this context and with consideration for the level of service by the St. Michaels wastewater treatment facility.
- The County should continue to be responsible for routine maintenance of residential tanks on properties that are served by the sewer lines.
- Public facilities should not negatively impact

the quality of village life. The County Department of Parks and Recreation is encouraged to strictly enforce existing parking and use regulations at the public landing and consider the impacts of future improvements.

Maintain a Safe and Secure Village

- Address traffic safety and roadway capacity limitations in the Village, particularly on Station Road. Investigate the establishment of a truck size/weight limit for through traffic.
- Work with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to create safer conditions for turns and merges on Rt. 33, especially involving boats on trailers approaching or departing from Station Road. Clarify signage, speed limit and other restrictions in the VC area.
- Develop a cooperative strategy with the SHA to employ traffic-calming features on State routes including reviewing speed limits, road markings and the placement of center line reflectors.
- Investigate the establishment of a local emergency communication and assistance system, to assure communications in the event of a large scale emergency.
- Address the limited resources that can be devoted to law enforcement on a regular basis. Research the possibility of a Village neighborhood watch program.

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Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment

- Examine the feasibility of walking shoulders and/or sidewalks along Station Road and other areas of Newcomb.
- Review the placement, management and ownership of street lighting in Newcomb.

Protect and Improve Surface Water Quality

- Encourage the County to recognize the fragility of water quality in Oak Creek and to take appropriate measures to improve and safeguard the resource.
- Develop a partnership between Village residents and river protection groups to undertake water quality testing in Oak Creek, to raise awareness of the creek in monitoring studies and other ecological

reports.

- Promote a Village wide effort to improve the quality of the waters that make Newcomb such a unique area through participation in the activities of river protection and water shed awareness groups or programs.
- Discourage any activity that increases storm water runoff into Oak Creek or the Miles River.
- Develop a storm water management strategy to prevent contaminated run off from entering the waterways. Promote a comprehensive strategy to improve and maintain drainage ditches.
- Confer with all relevant agencies to advocate for maintenance of the channel in and out of Oak Creek.

