

From the Desk of President

August 2019

Where has the summer gone? It seems that the Dog Days of Summer are rapidly coming to an end, pre-season football has started and back to school sales are in every store in the area. For the second year, St. Michaels/ Bay Hundred brought together local law enforcement departments, county, and state agencies, as well as private community partners to speak out against crime and promote diversity at the annual National Night Out. Of special interest this year at the event was when the St. Michaels Commissioners and Talbot County Council presented Hometown Hero, Harold Baines, with a road sign and plaque acknowledging his induction into the MLB Hall of Fame. Harold has been a quiet giant in the baseball world and a humble man. His accolades are well deserved as we honor his dedication to our community and his lasting legacy in the MLB Hall of Fame.

The National Guard Preparedness Center on Route 50 in Easton is finally finished and ready for service. State, County, and local dignitaries recently came together to welcome the military personnel into their new, state of the art, facility. The National Guard in Easton serves as an important part of the County emergency response network. Guard-members have worked hand-in-hand with the County Operation Center during past natural disasters to render assistance to stranded motorists and trapped homeowners.

The County Council has currently secured .17 acres at the rear of the Talbot County Senior Center on Brookletts Avenue in Easton. The land will be used to provide much needed additional parking at Brookletts Place, the Talbot County Senior Center. The Center has been a popular meeting place for the County's senior population, as well as for other community groups that use the building for meetings. The Council will move towards deciding on a parking plan to incorporate the additional land into the existing parking area.

This summer, the Advisory Committee for the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe near the town of Queen Anne began to work in earnest to build the infrastructure for this 107-acre park. LSG Landscape Architecture of Tysons, Virginia, has been awarded the bid to develop the master plan and the interpretive plan for the overall park design. The company will hold a series of community meetings later this fall to generate ideas from the public. In the near-term, Preservation Green of Maryland and New York, LLC will develop an interpretive element that will be installed as soon as possible to help orient park visitors while the plan is under development.

Talbot County still has largest senior population in the State and many of these residents are in need of routine medical assistance. To help meet these needs, Talbot County is rolling out its Mobile Integrated Health Program. The Talbot County Health Department, the Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, and the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health are joining forces to proactively address the needs of this vulnerable population. Through home visits and educational outreach, the program hopes to reduce calls to the County's 911 Center and free up the County's ambulance units to respond to other emergency calls.

Due to budget constraints, the County will be implementing a freeze on hiring new employees. The County Manager and Finance Director recommended to not fill any new non-essential positions without Council approval as the County will need to tighten its belt financially. Without the much-needed

adjustment to the Council's property tax cap, citizens will start seeing a reduction in County services as personnel are not hired to fill vacancies. The Council will be exploring placing another ballot question on the 2020 Presidential election ballot seeking citizen approval for an adjustment to Talbot County's property tax.

Coming up in September, the County will honor its employees who have reached service milestones. We hope you will join us in congratulating these employees who daily go "above and beyond" in their jobs to help Talbot County residents. Talbot Goes Purple will again increase awareness in September about the impact of opioids in our communities and we applaud Sheriff Joe Gamble and Lucie Hughes for spearheading this effort.

Finally, the Talbot County Council and Easton Town Council will pause and reflect upon the lives lost and the heroic acts by first responders who answered the call on September 11, 2001. Both Councils, other civic leaders, first responders, and the Easton Middle School band will gather at the intersection of West and Dover Streets in Easton on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 beginning at 8:30 a.m. to honor those impacted by the terrorist attacks on 9/11. We hope you can join us for this moving annual remembrance.

Enjoy the changes that come with fall, including a time of reflection about all that has happened and great anticipation about what is to come.

Corey Pack, Talbot County Council President