Help us grow wisely & well . . . become an MBRA member!

Marshall *Minute*



FREE Dinner & Conversation on the Marshall Main Street Improvement Project, Beginning 7:15 pm, Tuesday, October 9th followed by Candidates Visit at 8:30 pm: Leslie Cockburn, D, U.S. Congress & Wendy Gooditis for Tim Kaine, D, U.S. Senate will speak New Location~Meeting held at the Marshall Ruritan Building

8400 Salem Avenue, Marshall ~ Joe's Pizza & Lasagna for Dinner!

Marshall Sidewalk Project Meeting #It's Time

WHY: *It's time* for all of you, the Marshall community, to be heard and considered, and for the process of our local government to go forward in an open and transparent fashion with Marshall residents & businesses being fully informed about plans that greatly impact them and the town in which they live/work.

Towards that end, the MBRA is hosting a FREE dinner for all of our community so we can discuss the planned Marshall Main Street Improvement Project and have a productive question and answer period with **Marshall District Supervisor Mary Leigh McDaniel**. If you have unanswered questions, we encourage you to attend.

The MBRA has also invited current and former Main Street Project Managers **Erin Kozanecki**, (Fauquier County's Director, Office of Management & Budget and current Project Manager), **Peter Schwartz** (former Marshall District Supervisor and Project Manager) and **Paul Lawrence** (former Project Manager) to share the updates from their recent private meetings on the Marshall Main Street Improvement Project.

BACKGROUND: While discussions on improving Marshall's Main Street have been going on for decades, the specifics of what to do have come about in more recent years, and in fact, were not finalized until this August.

Mary Leigh explained in June and July that the County would not be ready to present the project to the Marshall community until our September meeting, and that changes with the project were still happening weekly. During the summer the MBRA Board was working to obtain as much info about this project as possible, and met as frequently as was necessary to review new info when we received it from the County.

The County sent us the requested design plans for the project on the evening of August 29th, and our Board proceeded to study them. For a variety of reasons, one of which was the lack of undergrounding, the majority of our Board did not support the project in its current form (our Board was divided, with the majority voting against the current project). Since the MBRA is the organization that originally began the grant process for this project, a current Board opinion was most relevant.

WHAT NOW?

Come hear about the project and decide for yourself. Our society and system of governance provides a process for citizens to effect positive change for themselves and their community. If you are in the Special Tax District (Lighting Tax, MELBID), that tax rate will increase 400% (from ½ cent per \$100 value to 2½ cent per \$100 value) beginning the January after construction begins for this one block project. Do you like the project? Do you want the County to send it to bid? For more info, go to www.MarshallVirginia.org,Main Street tab or to the non-MBRA website with alternative options & dialog: www.ShapingMarshallTogether.com.

OCTOBER 2018

Saturday October 27th 7-9:30 pm
Big Band Halloween Hop at the
Marshall Community Center
\$10 at the door, Free Refreshments
Costumes encouraged, not required
Prize for best costume!
4133 Rectortown Road in Marshall VA
540-422-8580

Don't miss the MBRA's October SHOWCASE MIXER

All businesses and residents, both members and non-members, are invited to this FREE Event on Monday, October 29th

Stop in from 5-6:30 pm and enjoy delightful refreshments and door prize raffle provided free to you courtesy of:

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8482 West Main St, Marshall VA www.cjscustomcuts.com

Whether 5, 15, or 50 attend, magic happens when we network together!

Enjoy neighborly Southern Hospitality as we celebrate this <u>local business treasure!</u>

Marshall United Methodist Church will host a free Harvest Luncheon, Sunday, November 4th from 12:30 - 3 pm.

Our guest chef, Mike Sweeney, & friends will be cooking turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, carrots, green beans, cranberry sauce, rolls, salad and desserts.

Everyone is welcome! 540-374-2506

www.marshallumc.org

Have questions or suggestions for speakers? Contact Mary Wilkerson, MBRA President www.MarshallVirginia.org

(540) 364-3400; mbraeditor@gmail.com

Editor: Mary Wilkerson; Copyright October 2018

MBRA September 11th Meeting Notes

Mary Wilkerson, President, called the meeting to order at 6:37pm. She welcomed and thanked everyone for coming, and talked about the handouts everyone received when they entered. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence and a prayer for the anniversary of 9/11, led by Pastor Mark Bryant, Marshall Baptist Church.

Mary Wilkerson then talked about FAQ, the Marshall Minute; she announced an MBRA sticker for members next year. She then asked the MBRA Board of Directors who were present to stand, to introduce them to the audience. Mary shared upcoming announcements: Ruritan Car Show, Robert Sinclair history talk, MBRA-Hottle Showcase Mixer, and more.

6:44pm Mary Leigh McDaniel, Marshall District Supervisor explained that tonight, she will give the process overview and a time for questions. She said this project has been in process for approximately 10 years. When she came into office, the design work had essentially been done and easement work was in process.

Mary Leigh announced the Marshall Main Street Project poster boards at the front of the auditorium that the engineers have given us to see how the project designs will look. She then introduced Erin Kozanecki, Fauquier County Director of Office of Management & Budget and current Project Manager. Mary Leigh also said we have with us Mallory Stribling, Fauguier County Budget Services Manager who has helped with grant-writing for the project; Tristan Cleveland of Land Planning & Design Associates; Zak Bradley of Carson Land Consultants; Donnie Kozanecki, **Fauguier County Construction** Manager; and Mark Nesbit, VDOT Regional Representative.

The audience of approximately 80 then had time to view the design boards and speak with the above officials before returning for community Q&A time.

Mary Wilkerson, President, then shared an announcement from the MBRA Board: "the MBRA Board does not endorse the project in its current form;" - the audience interrupted with applause - "our Board is divided on the issue, but the majority is against it."

Community Q&A began:

Mary-Elizabeth Wilkerson: How wide is Main Street right now curb-to-curb, and will it be narrowed at all in this project from what it is now? Tristan Cleveland answered that yes, this block of Main Street will be narrowed from 12 foot travel lanes to 11 foot travel lanes, which still meets VDOT's minimum requirements She said Main Street is currently 40 feet wide curb-to-curb, but under this project it will be narrowed by two feet down to 38 feet curb-to-curb.

Gary Wink: The MBRA Board does not support the project as it is, so what does that mean? Mary Leigh said that she has just now learned that decision, but at this point the project is going to go through. All the funds have already been obtained and all the work has been done. Gary: So the MBRA Board does not support it so you are just going to ignore that and do it anyway?

Jeff Symanski, MBRA Board member, explained that the MBRA is not connected to the County in any way. The reason the MBRA announced our position on the project is because we were associated with the project years before. The project is very different now and we are just saying we are not 100% behind it at this point.

Patty Cloud, MBRA Treasurer and Board member explained that when this project was presented to us years ago, the driving force for moving forward with the project was the idea that power lines and poles were to be undergrounded. If we are now being told that this project is going to bid in November, why are we in September being told we won't get what we want? To do the project without undergrounding is like putting lipstick on a pig. For a project to cost almost \$5 million for one block, plus our taxes are going up, we should get what we want. This one block will also be our prototype for what is continued on the rest of Main Street in the future. She said that if lines won't get buried in front of her business, that means no one else will get it either. *Applause from audience*

Mary Leigh gave a brief recap, explaining that Fall 2015 was the last budget update and since that time, the costs have gone

up. She also said that there are fewer workers in the construction market, so labor costs have increased, too. She explained that, in March of 2018, the Board of Supervisors said they were not willing to pay for the \$6.1 million cost of the project that still included undergrounding at that time. So they had to work something else out. She had a heartto-heart with 15 people in the room a month before, in February, and asked why we cannot have undergrounding. There were three reasons: 1) the County had run out of time, 2) the costs increased, and 3) the County still cannot get the necessary easements signed to do undergrounding.

Mary Leigh said that even though it's not what everyone wanted, this current project will be an economic benefit to the community. She said that someone showed her drawings from 1999 and the community has wanted something like this.

Marion Cloud: You keep saying it is an economic benefit to us; can you explain how exactly it is an economic boost to businesses? Mary Leigh answered that these projects tend to draw people into these areas. She said other areas it has been a benefit for are Purcellville, for example. An audience member asked if we could use the funding for water or internet in Marshall? Mary Leigh answered that we cannot.

Chris Cloud: It is a really neat, beautiful concept, and would have been good if it was what people wanted 10 years ago. If we can't underground it, scrap it. This is being foisted on us as an alternative that nobody wanted.

Laura Wyne added that narrowing Main Street causes problems for businesses.

Chris Cloud: Let's not lose sight of what's happening: we are here being told what has already been decided. So why don't we cancel the project?

Mary Wilkerson stepped up to assist Mary Leigh with audience questions and explained that we on the Board felt that the MBRA had a responsibility to let people know where we stood on the project, but we wanted to first give the County its fair shot to present the project before announcing our decision so that it would not get in the way.

Meeting Notes Continued on Page 3——

<u>September 11th Meeting Notes, continued:</u>

Joe Sarsour: Whose taxes will go up? Bill Hines: everyone in this special lighting tax district. [Showed MELBID taxing district map. Audience wowed and groans].

A lady in audience: Why don't the people who benefit from this one block project pay to benefit their own block?

Man in audience: In one block, spend \$5 million to repair dilapidated buildings on that block of Main Street instead.

Audience member: It's not truly \$5 million; it's a \$3.9 million grant, right? Mary Leigh answered that the County has received \$3.6 million in grants for the project.

Mauren Pereira: So adding undergrounding would add \$1 million; have there been any studies to show how much money it will be in 10 years? Mary Leigh answered that some people went over to Reston and worked on stuff but there are time constraints for this.

Mauren: As a business owner, I am concerned about the cost of the road being torn up in front of my business and then doing undergrounding in the future. Mary Leigh said the issue is that we can't do it with this particular project at this particular time.

Candi Verrelli: Sidewalks do not draw people; businesses draw people. At this point, do we have any say, or can the money be reallocated?

Mary Leigh said the money cannot be reallocated.

Jeff Symanski: Why was undergrounding, which is what everyone wanted, the first thing cut and not the brick sidewalks?

Erin Kozanecki answered that easements are the main thing and the County cannot get them in time.

A lady in audience: What about eminent domain? Mary Leigh said that is possible but people fight that tooth and nail, it gets hung up in court and the County would be in court for years.

Mary Leigh was asked what is holding up obtaining easements, but she would not state those who choose not to give the County easements.

Audience member: Now we're hearing that you're going to be narrowing the street; VDOT and the highway division should do something about the already dangerous traffic.

Another audience member: Traffic is a huge problem. Narrowing Main Street makes it worse. All that's going to do is put more traffic on Salem Ave, and make it so people can't even walk down Salem.

Brenda Payne: There are lots of concerns: 1) Marshall is not incorporated; you can say all these bricks are the County's responsibility, but dead trees and weeds are going to happen. The concern is it will not be beautiful; it will be maintainable. Beautiful the first year, but not thereafter.

Brenda said Warrenton has a crew to handle such maintenance. Marshall does not. If anybody remembers the wine barrels put out in Marshall years ago to beautify the town: grass and weeds grew up in them, they were not maintained, and they were ugly. This type of project is expensive. We have no way of monitoring, cleaning, and enforcing what you're going to spend \$3.2 - \$5 million on. That's a lot of money to spend.

Audience member: Is the grant part of a larger grant to the County? Mary Leigh: No, it's specific to this project. The County is fronting the local match [until it is paid off through taxes].

Gary Wink: This project has been in the mill for 10 years. It seems like these concerns should have been addressed 10 years ago. It seems like you don't have the public behind you.

Troye Plaskitt: Bump outs are a problem for handicapped people and tractor trailers. It is the single worst design flaw in Middleburg. Mary Leigh explained Marshall will not have bump outs.

An audience member: If you narrow the roads, you're going to deprive the businesses and storefronts of business. It will be difficult to access businesses, *after* construction is completed.

Mark Nesbit, VDOT Regional Representative, answered that 11 feet should accommodate most traffic.

Joe Sitton: Do we have easements for the sidewalk work? Who was the landscaper

planting these trees right where the power lines are? That is a terrible idea. *Applause from audience*

Mary Leigh: there are still two properties from which the County needs easements.

Marion Cloud: Are you saying that no matter what is said here, you're going forward with it? And when did you notify Marshall that there would be no undergrounding?

Mary Leigh: For the last 6 months, we knew there was a distinct possibility there would be no undergrounding. So we have been working on options ever since then.

Lora Cloud: My suggestion for the \$5 million is that we scrap the whole darn thing and start over. *Applause from audience* The County did not respond.

Laura Wyne: Can you begin construction in February when businesses are slower, instead of in the Spring when businesses are starting to pick back up and recover from January? Is there a legal way we can scrap it and give it back to someone else in Virginia who needs it? *Applause from audience* The County did not respond.

Debbie Cloud: The County has a really big PR problem. The MBRA notes go back to the '90s and there is a newspaper article in 2013. Have people not given feedback since then? Mary Leigh explained that the County is on the hook for \$450,000 if we do not go through with the project.

Joe Sarsour: Of course it's not too late because all we have to do is let the clock run out in November. Also, can we bury the powerlines just on one side of Main Street?

Chris Cloud: We could bury them on the south side under the parking area.

Joe Sarsour: Will school buses reroute on Salem Ave? The County answered no, there is not enough room for buses on Salem Ave, but only one side of Main Street will be closed at a time under this project.

Debbie Cloud: What you have to do is get landowners to agree to the easements. Mary Leigh said they have spent the last 18 months working on getting easements.

September Meeting Notes, Concluded:

Anne Michael Greene: The easements are for transformers to be on properties: it's actually coming in on the property owners; the easements are not in a straight line.

Mike Neish: Thank you, Mary Leigh, for taking these arrows. What if you said no to this project and lose the grant money, is there a cost? Mary Leigh: The County is on the hook for engineering costs already spent.

Bob Zwick: But you're not doing undergrounding in this project.

Neal Wavra: We need to understand what the case is with this: so 10 years ago this project began, and if we spend a quarter, we get a dollar. Some have opted not to give easements. So we have to decide whether we spend a quarter and get a dollar. That sounds like a good deal. Can we say, don't shrink the street and change streets, or does that have to be done by November?

Neal Wavra continued: What's the provision for contingency? Do we have the right to change the scope of design?

Mary Leigh explained there is some contingency in the budget for construction.

Joe Sarsour: This project takes parking away from businesses like Field and Main. Mary Leigh: You're incorrect. We will have parking.

Troye Plaskitt and other audience members: No, Joe is talking about parking for deliveries.

Audience member: When was the last time business owners were asked for easements? Mary Leigh: It is still ongoing. Obtaining one for the Post Office alone was a 9-month process.

Mike Brigante: Are easements being asked for as a one-on-one thing or through a general mailer? Paul Lawrence answered that it is through individuals meeting with property owners.

Mary Leigh explained we still need two more easements for the streetscape project.

Troye Plaskitt: Can construction take place at night? They did not do that in

Middleburg and the project just killed, wiped out businesses. Mary Leigh: That's a construction decision.

Laura Wyne: Will the traffic and parking lanes be designated by paint or by physical markers? Mary Leigh: By individual markers.

Joe Sarsour: Does the MBRA have enough money to hire an attorney to have another meeting in December? If the MBRA received a large donation, would they hire an attorney to stop this and have another meeting in December? Mary Wilkerson: That's not something that we typically do.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06pm. Minutes by Mary-Elizabeth Wilkerson, *Secretary*.

The MBRA would like to welcome the following new members:

Joe Sarsour, Nick's Deli/Glascock's Grocery

Neal Wavra, Field & Main Restaurant

Mary Ann Cunningham, Miracle Valley Vineyard Tri County Feeds Family
Fall Festival
Saturday, October 20th
10 am—4 pm
7408 John Marshall Highway
Marshall, VA
Call (540) 364-1891 for info

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Annual Trunk or Treat!

Saturday, October 27, 6-8 pm

A free fun-filled night of Trunk or Treating, games, a bonfire, and more!

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Thank you! Among other things, your support of the MBRA funds our:

- Website; Marshall Christmas Parade; B2B Events to support local businesses;
- Monthly Community Meetings to hear from our local elected officials and speakers of interest, new businesses, and to meet our neighbors;
- ~ Marshall Minute Newsletter which keeps our citizens informed, even if they can't make it to our monthly Community Meetings



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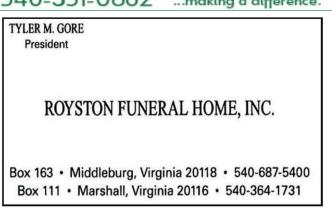
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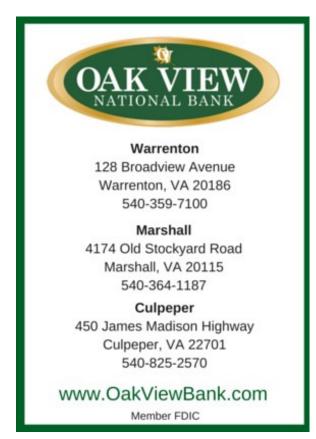




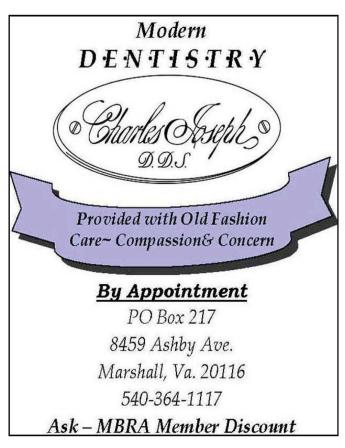












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