

I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone or via email.



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## The Final Parcel

Twenty years ago, Seawillow and Cecil Jackson had a vision to preserve the property now known as Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum. The Town of Wytheville is very thankful that the Jacksons believed in and trusted the Town to preserve this property. Once it was the birthplace of Seawillow (Umberger) Jackson. Now, it is a museum for educating and inspiring the children and all citizens of Wythe County as well as visitors. The final of four parcels making up this property has recently been conveyed to the Town of Wytheville from the Jacksons.

Seawillow's and Cecil's daughter Kay shared these memories with us. Kay was present in 1964 when her Grandfather Umberger passed away. She recalls that he had made a deathbed request, asking Kay's mother (Seawillow) "to take care of the farm." With tears in her eyes, Seawillow made a promise to her father that she would make sure it was preserved. In 2000, the Jacksons entered into an agreement with the Town to convey four parcels of property over the next 20 years.

The property dates to the 1800's. On January 8, 1850, William Huffard, a master stonemason, purchased the property from Henry Harkrader. All or part of the property then went into the hands of F.B. Greenwalt. In 1924, Herbert R. Umberger purchased 60 acres of the Huffard/Greenwalt property. The Umberger Family owned the property up till his death in 1964 at which time it transferred to his daughter Seawillow. Seawillow passed away in 2020 and her husband Cecil still lives in the house at the Homestead. The house that was built on the Willow Brook Farm still stands today. It is a large mid-19th century farmhouse which is a two-story, single-pile, I-house of brick construction on a cut limestone foundation. The floor plan is that of a typical I-house, a centered two-story stair flanked by single rooms on each level. Much of the early interior is Greek Early Revival woodwork, including the staircase, mantelpieces, window and door trims, survives from the original time period. Several rooms retain their original random-width yellow pine floorboards as well.



The Homestead House & Cabins



Cabin Cooking Hearth

The Jacksons' mission for the property use includes the education and inspiration of the citizens of Wythe County and visitors through exhibits and educational activities. Fostering an understanding of the significant role played by the Great Lakes to Florida Highway System, interpretation, living history and educational programs for children and adults alike are included. Other aspects to look forward to in the future include creek restoration and ecology learning labs, interpretation of "food ways" in the springhouse, smokehouse and open hearth, walking tours and workshops, such as blacksmithing, artisan fairs, and an event center. The Homestead Museum is looking forward to receiving another cabin donated by Mrs. Wanda Manuel in memory of her late husband who rebuilt it on their property and spent years working on it. The cabin will be placed by the E. Lee Trinkle Visitors Center to be used as the entrance gateway for visitors to the Willow Brook Jackson/Umberger Homestead Museum.

On behalf of Wytheville Town Council and the Town of Wytheville, we want to thank Seawillow and Cecil Jackson for this generous donation. We will continue to "take care of the farm" and preserve it to educate people for generations to come.

## Snow Removal

We've already seen a couple of small winter storms this year. I thought it would be an appropriate time to remind you about the Town of Wytheville's procedures for snow removal.

Did you know that there are over 180 miles of streets within town limits? That makes snow removal a big job for our Public Works Department when mother nature leaves a blanket of white stuff on our community.

The Town of Wytheville gives priority and emphasis to clearing the main arterial streets first and then the collector and local streets. The Town has an emergency snow route plan in the event that Interstates 77 or 81 are closed due to an accident. Parking spaces in the downtown area are cleared as soon as possible and access roads to school parking lots are cleared to allow early dismissals.

During snowstorms, the Public Works Department works twenty-four hours a day to keep the main arteries clear within the corporate limits. Lesser connector roads are cleared after the main arteries are sufficiently maintained.

Here are some of the steps taken during the winter season to make sure snow removal is a priority and the process goes as smooth as possible:

- Snow forecasts are monitored to determine the anticipated extent of storms and expected temperatures.
- Snow removal personnel are notified of anticipated shift times. All employees of the Public Works Department are available twenty-four hours a day for snow removal.
- Anti-icing product is applied to arterial roadways when temperatures are appropriate to minimize bonding of snow to pavement.
- Snow removal equipment and personnel are deployed when snow starts falling.
- Prioritization criteria is used on snow routes with arterial roadways being addressed first, followed by collector roadways and residential streets.
- Abrasive materials are applied to roadways when required to provide traction. Curves, hills, and intersections normally receive a salt and pea gravel mixture.
- Roadways are widened to completely remove snow from driving surfaces. Several passes are sometimes necessary to completely remove snow.
- Ice removal and cleanup operations may take place several days after a snowstorm.

These procedures must be followed for each snowstorm that occurs in order to provide the safest roadways possible. When crews reach neighborhood streets, if the amount of snow warrants, it may be necessary for there to be two plowings of a street to get it properly cleared. Citizens are encouraged to, if possible, wait until after the second plowing before digging out of their driveways. If it is not possible to wait, please pile the snow on your right facing the street. Also, please park off the street, if possible, so that crews can plow the entire width of the street.

Our Public Works Department works around the clock after a snowstorm to clear roadways. We appreciate their hard work to make our streets safe to travel on. We appreciate our citizens patience as Public Works crews do their jobs.



## Council Actions

### January 11, 2021:

- Appointed Jeff Lucas to the Joint Industrial Development Authority (JIDA) of Wythe County for a four-year term.
- Adopted Ordinance No. 1392 an emergency ordinance to effectuate temporary changes in certain deadlines and to modify public meeting and public hearing practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with pandemic disaster.
- Adopted the Fair Housing Act Resolution.

### January 25, 2021:

- Reappointed Bradford Litton to the Wytheville Planning Commission for four more years.
- Appointed Michelle Clayton to the position of Town Attorney and as the Town of Wytheville Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer.