

The Mayor's Corner

By Mayor Beth A. Taylor

Fellow Citizens,

2020 has certainly been a challenging year for our country and our town on many levels. But through our resilience and strength as a community, we are surviving. As we move into the fall season, let me remind you that there are many things you and your family can enjoy this fall.

While our Town of Wytheville Museums were closed because of COVID-19, there were many changes made to the exhibits. Now is a great time to go visit them and learn about the history of the area. During October is the Downtown Wytheville Mayhem on Main Street Virtual Zombie 5K Run. There are some great ways to participate in this event, so check out DowntownWytheville.org to find out all the details.



On stage at the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre is “How Sweet the Sound.” A show that includes beautiful gospel songs we all know. In early November, their annual holiday show begins.

Our Farmers Market will have many fall items and activities on Saturdays. Local farms, such as Williams Orchard and Richdale Farm, will feature corn mazes, pumpkin patches, tractor rides, and other activities to enjoy while maintaining social distancing. Big Walker Lookout features local musicians and artist demonstrations each weekend through the end of October with the beautiful fall views. It’s harvest time at West Wind Farm Vineyard & Winery, you can volunteer to help the crew there with the actual harvesting of the grapes on this family farm.

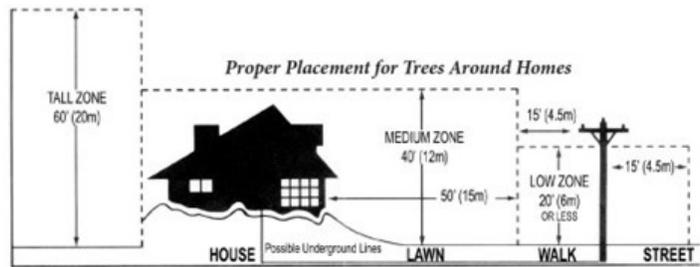
It’s a beautiful time to take a ride or hike at Crystal Springs Recreation Area and don’t forget that Beagle Ridge Herb Farm is right next door with the opportunity to tour or take a class like wreath or pesto making. Our furry friends at Fort Chiswell Animal Park would love for you to take a safari ride to get up close and personal with them. And, don’t forget that things are getting spooky. Don’t be scared! Helheim Haunted Attraction will get you in the Halloween spirit.

These are just a few of the things that you can enjoy this fall. For more information, go to our tourism website at VisitWytheville.com or stop by our Visitors Center at 975 Tazewell Street.

Did You Know?

- ◆ We have the best drinking water. The Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (ODW) has awarded the Town of Wytheville Water Treatment Plant the 2019 Excellence in Waterworks Operation Gold Award. The Gold Award recipients exceed prescribed standards for clarification, filtration, and backwashing processes set forth by the ODW. The Wytheville Water Treatment Plant is one of only 41 surface water conventional filtration plants out of 126 eligible plants in the state of Virginia, to receive a Gold Award in 2019. Of the 41 Gold Award recipients, the Town of Wytheville is one of only 27 to receive a perfect score. To meet the requirements for the Gold level, the Wytheville Water Treatment Plant must consistently produce water that is 300% clearer than the standards set forth by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Wytheville has consistently achieved this award since the program was initiated, and at the Gold Level since 2008. Our staff test and monitor many parameters, both biological and inorganic, to help protect the citizens and provide the best drinking water possible. The Wytheville Water Treatment Plant has a Virginia State certified and inspected Drinking Water Laboratory. For any questions or concerns, please contact Trevor Hackler at 276-223-3342.
- ◆ Fall is a good time to plant trees. Wythe Morris, chairperson for the Town of Wytheville Tree Committee, sends this message. As we move into the fall and winter seasons, may I remind you that this is the perfect time to prepare for planting or transplanting trees on your property. A great practice for tree planting is “if you remove it, plant another back.” This is probably the most important practice that we can do to aid in easing the temperature extremes that we see in the summer months. Trees are a renewable resource—they are not expected to live forever, but they can be managed to assure that our home and property remain comfortable in

all seasons. Our Town has been actively replacing unsafe, dying or damaged older trees with new trees selected for size and characteristics that fit their intended location and use. The goal is to increase the overall canopy of trees to aid in cooling while aesthetically pleasing to our Downtown and Town in general. The most



successful time for planting is fall and winter. Any time trees are dormant, and the ground is not frozen is a great time for planting. Planning before planting can help ensure “that the right tree is planted in the right place.” Proper tree selection and placement enhances your property value and prevents costly maintenance trimming and damage to your home. If you have any questions, please contact Tony Duncan our Town ISA Certified Arborist or the Wytheville Tree Advisory Committee at 276-223-3354. As a part of our local tree ordinance, our tree committee has developed a tree list of recommendations to fit your tree needs.

- ◆ What “WBAWL” stands for? Or what they do? Wythe-Bland Animal Welfare League got its start in 2006. They began working in the community with the low cost Spay/Neuter program, the “cold nose warm heart” therapy dog program and have continued to add more programs. Presently, they also offer the “Tales with Tails” reading program in the schools and library and the “Friends of Wythe K9’s & Felines” shelter and volunteer program. WBAWL has been volunteering at the Wythe County Dog Shelter since 2012. Through their volunteerism, they have decreased the euthanasia rate from 66 percent to one percent. For the past two years, WBAWL has also been helping at the Wytheville Cat Shelter and hoping to make a difference there as well by saving lives. None of this can be done without more volunteers from our community. WBAWL is looking for more help with volunteers, donations, fosters and supplies to help the shelters. Contact them through their Facebook page (Wythe-Bland Animal Welfare League), via email wbawl123@gmail.com, or call 276-613-3695. Please contact them for drop off or pick-up of supplies or you can drop off at the carport of the shelter located at 600 Atkins Mill Road in Wytheville. Thank you to Tonia Johnson.
- ◆ What the proper way is for 911 addresses to be displayed? New and existing buildings should have the approved 911 address legibly placed in a position from the street or road fronting the property (reflective address signs are best for visibility at night). Addresses should be visible from the street side. For example, if a building has an address on Main street then the numbers need to be on Main Street. Where access is by means of a private road and the building address cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other approved sign or means should be used to identify the structure. Address identification must be maintained.
- ◆ The November 3, 2020 General Election is coming up soon. There are three offices on the ballot. President, Senate and House of Representatives, along with two constitutional questions. Lennon Counts, our General Registrar and Director of Elections, states that all of Wythe County’s polling locations will be open on November 3, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. (this includes those in the Towns of Rural Retreat and Wytheville). Early voting has begun and will run through October 31, the hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and the last two Saturdays in October. This is taking place inside the old Courthouse building at 245 South 4th Street in Wytheville. Look for directional and handicap accessibility signs. Absentee voting by mail has also begun. In order to request an absentee ballot, you must first complete an application that can be provided by the Registrar’s office. The last day to turn in an absentee application is October 23. The last day to be eligible to vote for the November 3, 2020 General Election is October 13, 2020.

Council Actions

- Established the State’s reimbursement rate for personal property at 53.10%.
- Tabled Ordinance No. 1388, which addressed towing, inoperative vehicles and zoning issues. After concerns were raised, Council thought it best to send it back to the planning commission for further review.
- Adopted a resolution, along with other pertinent documents, approving funding not to exceed \$800,000 from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for the Small Business Recovery Assistance Program.
- Appointed Town Clerk Sherry Corvin and Police Chief Joel Hash as Freedom of Information Officers.

Clarification: In my last column, in reference to the Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department, there was a sentence that read “Over 75% of the department has less than one year of experience.” The sentence should have been, “Over 75% of our department has less than one year experience answering calls for service in the Town.” Meaning that many of the members of the department have plenty of experience in various communities, however not in the Town specifically. We apologize for the confusion.

I welcome the opportunity to talk to you regarding your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by phone at (276) 223-3356 or via email at beth.taylor@wytheville.org.