November 2026

Shepherdstown WEST VIRGINIA

TOWN HALL NEWSLETTER



Hello neighbors,

Well, that was a fabulous BooFest event last weekend. Honestly, it brought out the largest and spookiest crowd I've seen around Town.

Thanks to everyone who made it happen, including Experience Shepherdstown, the Town Public Works, and of course, our stellar Police Department—and all others. I hope everyone had a great time!

I'd also like to extend a warm Shepherdstown welcome to Dr. Cameron Wesson, Shepherd University's new President. I was recently honored to give Dr. Wesson an official welcome as part of the traditional investiture ceremony. We're so fortunate that Dr. Wesson has come to Town, and I look forward to working closely with him and his team.

On another note, we're recruiting volunteers to participate on a Resident Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety and Enforcement over the coming few months.

I'm asking the Committee to review the Town's current traffic/pedestrian safety issues and enforcement strategies—and then make recommendations for improvements.

Please see the article on pg. 3, and let me know by November 10 if you're interested in volunteering for this important committee.

I hope everyone is enjoying this splendid fall weather. Our town is especially beautiful this time of the year. Now is the perfect time to get outside and enjoy this amazing place!

— James Gatz, Shepherdstown Mayor

Honoring Police Chief King



The Town of Shepherdstown extends its sincere appreciation to Police Chief Mike King, who retired on October 31 following 17 years of service to the community.

In recognition of his dedication and contributions, the Town has prepared a special resolution honoring his career.

"Seventeen years of service to a community represents a tremendous commitment, and Chief King has given Shepherdstown much to be grateful for," said Mayor Gatz. "His dedication to the Town and its residents has been an important part of our community for nearly two decades. On behalf of Shepherdstown, I want to thank him for his years of service and wish him the very best in retirement."

The Town resolution will be presented during Chief King's retirement celebration on November 14 at the War Memorial Building.

Please join us in thanking Chief King for his service to Shepherdstown and wishing him all the best in this next chapter.



Town Addresses Communication Issues Following Water Leak and Boil-Water Advisory

The Town of Shepherdstown recognizes that communications surrounding the October 14–15 water leak and subsequent boil-water advisory were not as clear, timely, or comprehensive as residents should expect.

The Town is reviewing its emergency communication procedures, including how information is gathered and verified, how notices are prepared and approved, and how they are distributed across all available channels.

We appreciate the community's patience, and the concerns residents have shared. Those concerns are being taken seriously, and we're committed to improving how we communicate during water emergencies and other service disruptions.

Thank you!

Accessory Dwelling Units: Proposed Ordinance



The Shepherdstown Town Council is considering an ordinance that would allow property owners to establish accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on properties occupied by single-family homes.

Sometimes referred to as “mother-in-law suites,” ADUs are smaller, independent living spaces located within, attached to, or separate from a primary residence.

The ordinance also supports Shepherdstown's Comprehensive Plan, which identifies ADUs as a way to help residents accommodate family members, expand housing options, and create opportunities for more affordable housing within the community.

The proposed ordinance follows the passage of West Virginia Senate Bill 659 (2026), codified under W. Va. Code §§ 8-42-1 et seq., which requires municipalities to allow one ADU by right on each qualifying residential lot or parcel, subject to applicable requirements.

The Town Council will hold the second reading hearing at the **November 10** Special Town Council meeting.



Traffic Enforcement & Safety Improvements

The Town of Shepherdstown is taking several steps to improve traffic enforcement, encourage safer driving, and address speeding concerns throughout the community, with a specific emphasis on German Street and related areas.

As part of these efforts, the Town has purchased and installed new traffic monitoring and enforcement equipment on German, Duke, and Princess Streets.

The equipment includes a laser-based speed detector for law enforcement, electronic speed limit signs that display motorists' speeds and remind them to slow down, and traffic monitoring devices that count vehicles and calculate average speeds.

The information collected will help the Town identify problem areas and plan future enforcement efforts. None of the new equipment photographs vehicles.

The Town is also reviewing existing speed limit signage and considering recommendations for additional 15mph and 20mph signs. Because some roads within Town limits are maintained by the state, the Mayor will present a draft ordinance for review and approval by Town Council clarifying the Town’s authority to manage traffic on those roadways.

Additionally, Mayor Gatz is establishing a Resident Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety & Enforcement to recommend practical actions the town should take to make Shepherdstown's street safer for pedestrians, especially in the downtown core area. The committee is being formed now and is expected to submit its recommendations by late January 2027.

Individuals interested in participating on the committee should send a brief email with a statement of their interest and qualifications to Mayor Gatz at **jgatz@shepherdstown.gov** by November 10.

UPDATE



Work on Sidewalk ("Path") to Morgan's Grove Park to Begin in November

After more than a decade of planning and preparation, initial construction on the long-awaited sidewalk, or "Path," is scheduled to begin in November marking an important milestone in a project first initiated in 2014.

The project will establish a five-foot-wide sidewalk along the east side of Duke Street/Kearneysville Pike (Route 480), extending from Minden Street near Shepherdstown Middle School south toward Morgan's Grove Park.

All aspects of the project are being managed by the West Virginia Division of Highways (DOH) and its contractor SQP Construction Group, Inc.

As of October 30, SQP representatives have informed the Town that it will begin work near the intersection of Kearneysville Pike and Morgan Grove Road—at the traffic light next to the park—as soon as November 9.

What Residents Can Expect

SQP is coordinating all aspects of the project. The contractor is coordinating arrangements to address traffic issues on the roadway with the State Highway Department—including the possible use of temporary traffic signals when needed.

– Sidewalk to Morgan's Grove cont ...

In addition, SQP has indicated that any work near Shepherdstown Middle School will be coordinated with school operations to help minimize disruptions during busy arrival and departure periods.

Timeline and Updates

Based on initial plans the WV DOH shared with the Town in September, construction is expected to be completed later next spring, but in any case, no later than July 2027.

Weather conditions, particularly during winter, and unforeseen construction challenges, could affect that schedule.

The Town plans to provide regular project updates through its website and this newsletter as it receives information from the State DOH and SQP Construction, including information about significant traffic impacts or schedule changes.

The Town appreciates the community's patience as this long-anticipated project moves forward!



REMEMBER



Doing Business in Shepherdstown? Make Sure You're Licensed!

Businesses and service providers operating within Shepherdstown—including contractors, food vendors, and personal service professionals—are reminded that a Town business license is required.

Obtaining a license is a simple, low-cost process that helps the Town maintain appropriate records of businesses operating in the community and provides an added measure of accountability and consumer protection.

Information about licensing requirements and how to apply is available on the Town's Information for Businesses page.

Residents hiring contractors or other service providers are also encouraged to verify that a business is properly licensed to operate in Shepherdstown. If you're unsure, contact Town Hall at 304-876-2312 for assistance.

A little due diligence helps support a responsible, trustworthy local business community!



New Bench Unveilings Celebrate Community Art

Shepherdstown's ongoing public bench dedication initiative continued on Saturday, October 24, with a special unveiling at The Wall, in front of historic McMurran Hall in downtown Shepherdstown.

The ceremony celebrated the work of Elliana Blevins (pictured), an illustrative artist from West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle known for her vibrant colors, imaginative lighting, and touches of fantasy. Blevins also serves as an art instructor at the Delaplaine Arts Center in Frederick, Maryland.

The Town's bench dedication initiative recognizes individuals and their connections to the Shepherdstown community while showcasing local creativity and bringing public art into shared spaces. Each unveiling offers an opportunity for residents, families, and visitors to come together and celebrate the people and artistic contributions that make Shepherdstown unique.

October's ceremony followed a recent bench unveiling at Cullison Park, with two additional dedications planned for November—with details to come!

Stay Connected with Town Hall



Sign up to receive important alerts, announcements, and community updates directly from the Town of Shepherdstown.

From water main breaks and boil-water advisories to service interruptions, road closures, and community announcements, staying informed about what's happening around town is important.

And while the Town **always shares this information** through its website and Facebook page, residents can also sign up to receive notifications directly by email, text message, and automated phone call.

The process is simple, free, and takes just a few minutes.

How to Sign Up

Visit the Town's Alerts and Notifications page and click the “Sign Up” button.

You'll be directed to **Message911**, the notification service the Town uses to collect contact information and maintain its alert-distribution list.

Once there, simply follow the instructions and enter your contact information, including your email address and phone number. Your information will be added to the Town's notification database, allowing Town Hall to send important alerts, updates, and announcements directly to you.

Additionally: more than one person in your household can sign up!

Already Signed Up?

If you've previously registered, you're already on the Town's notification list. However, if your email address or phone number has changed, it's important to make sure your contact information is current. Contact Town Hall at 304-876-2312 or clerk@shepherdstown.gov to confirm.

We encourage all residents to sign up and help spread the word to neighbors, friends, and family members who may not yet be receiving Town notifications!

Have a Question, Concern, or Idea about Town? Let Us Know!



Whether it's a neighborhood concern, a suggestion for improving Town services, or an idea that could benefit the community, Shepherdstown residents have several ways to make their voices heard and bring matters to the Town's attention.

In addition to speaking during public comment at Town Council meetings, residents can contact Town Hall (304-876-2312), reach out to the Mayor or Town Council members, or request that an issue be considered for an upcoming Town Council agenda.

The Town's online forms page provides a convenient starting point for submitting requests, including matters residents would like brought before the Council.

Residents are also welcome to attend Mayor's Office Hours, held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm at Town Hall (104 N. King St.). These informal sessions provide an opportunity to speak directly with the Mayor, ask questions, share concerns, or discuss ideas.

Please note that office hours are canceled when a special Town Council meeting is scheduled for the same time.

Town government works best when residents stay engaged, ask questions, and participate in shaping their community. Whatever the issue, we encourage you to reach out and start the conversation!

Upcoming Dates/Times for Town Council and Committee Meetings (Town Hall)

All meetings are typically convened in-person at Town Hall and broadcast via Zoom, with the exception of Age-Friendly Shepherdstown—which is held only via **Zoom here**.

For all meetings, if a Zoom link is available for that meeting, it can be found on this page by clicking on the respective meeting and "2026"—and then the Video link within the "Resources" column that coincides with that date/time.



Meetings:

— Finance Committee: Wednesday, November 4, 6:30pm

— Special Personnel Committee Wednesday, November 4, 8:30pm

— Special Town Council Meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 6:30pm

— Tree Commission: Thursday, November 12, 6:30pm

— Planning Commission: Monday, November 16, 6pm.

— Age-Friendly Shepherdstown: Wednesday, November 18, 1:30pm.

— Public Works Committee: Monday, November 23, 6:30pm.

— Parks & Rec Committee: Tuesday, November 24, 1pm

— Special Town Council (tentative): Tuesday, November 24, 6:30pm.

Mayor's Office Hours:

Fourth Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm, Town Hall. The office hours will be cancelled in cases where the Town Council schedules a special meeting at that time.

Email jgatz@shepherdstown.gov with any questions.

Municipal Court hours: Third Wednesday of every month starting at 5:30pm, Town Hall. **Click here** for more information.