

TOWN HALL NEWSLETTER



Hello neighbors,

Spring is here and there's a lot happening, as usual. Please read and forward this newsletter to family and friends!

First off, I wanted to share a couple quick items with everyone:



- **May is National Historic Preservation Month:** an excellent opportunity to recognize and celebrate the importance of our impressive historic district and to thank residents and property owners who continue to do so much to care for their historic properties. Please read below for more information on our town's [Historic Landmarks Commission](#), which has the lead responsibility for ensuring the success of our district. We plan to share more about historic preservation in future newsletters.



- **Main Street America:** Erin Barnes, President of Main Street America, will give a presentation at the Shepherd University Byrd Center on Wednesday, May 13, at 7pm. [Main Street America](#) is a leading national organization—focused on helping towns like ours maintain strong, vibrant, and historic downtown districts. Ms. Barnes has deep knowledge and plenty of great ideas, so come out to the Byrd Center on Wednesday night to meet her.



- **Update to Planning Ordinance:** The Town Council will hold the first reading of a revamped Planned Unit Development (PUD) Town ordinance at the May 13 Town Council meeting. The ordinance is designed to provide flexibility in new land development and promotes open space, environmental preservation, mix-use developments, and innovation.

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... Our Town's current PUD ordinance is more than 30 years old—it's past time for an update. Please join us at the Council Meeting on May 13 to learn more about this important topic.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all out and about in the coming weeks. Let's talk if you have ideas and suggestions. Have a great month!

— James Gatz | jgatz@shepherdstown.gov



— Community Conversation —
New Public Plaza in the Heart of Town

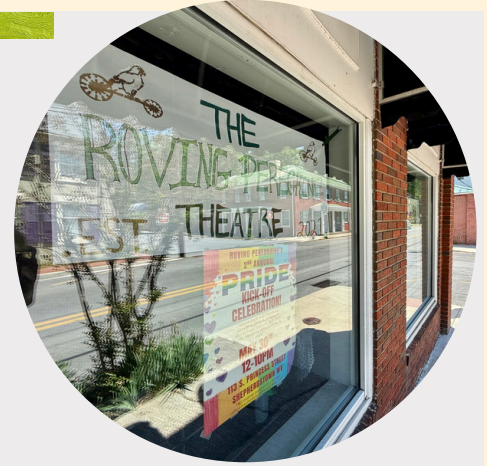
The Town will host a community conversation on Thursday, May 21, at 6:30pm to share ideas and gather input on a potential new public space/plaza downtown near the Market House.

Current goals of this potential project are to enhance the streetscape, add to the vibrancy of the downtown district by drawing more shoppers and tourists to our businesses, and address traffic safety issues in general.

This meeting will provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the concept, share perspectives, and help shape the direction of the project. The session will be structured and facilitated by Jeff Feldman, President at Eagle's View Enterprises, LLC.

Find out [more here](#).

Community Grants Program Continues Supporting Local Initiatives



The Town's Community Grants Program continued to support local, community-driven projects in April, with grant awards approved for both the Shepherdstown Community Club and the Roving Peregrine Theatre Company.

The grants will assist with projects connected to community engagement, arts and culture, and local programming—continuing the broader goal of supporting initiatives that contribute to the quality of life and character of Shepherdstown.

Town Hall also hopes to clarify a few common misconceptions surrounding the Community Grants Program as interest continues to grow.

While nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply, projects are not limited strictly to groups with formal 501(c)(3) status. Organizations, individuals, businesses, and community groups with an established history of contributing to Shepherdstown and proposing projects that clearly benefit the community are also encouraged to explore the program.

Similarly, while many grants are typically awarded in amounts of \$2,500 or less, that figure is not a hard cap. Requests above that amount may still be considered, though they generally require additional review and discussion by Town Council.

Residents, businesses, and organizations interested in learning more about the program are encouraged to [CLICK HERE](#) for additional details and application information.

And if reading the hardcopy of this newsletter, simply visit shepherdstown.gov/towngrantsprogram.



SHEPHERDSTOWN BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Slow Down Barbershop & Lounge



Since opening its Shepherdstown location in September 2025, Slow Down Barbershop & Lounge has quickly established itself as more than simply a place for a haircut.

Located at 118 E. German Street, the shop blends traditional barbering with a community-focused atmosphere centered on conversation, relaxation, and connection.

Owner Aaron Rohrer said the idea of eventually bringing Slow Down to Shepherdstown had been in the back of his mind for years. After opening the original Hagerstown location in 2017, he and his family visited Shepherdstown through trips to the Farmers Market and other downtown events on a regular basis.

“At that time, there was no noticeable barbershop presence, and I thought, ‘this town is way too special not to have a vibrant barbershop,’” Rohrer emphasized. When the opportunity to expand presented itself last summer, he said he “had to jump on it.”

The shop combines both barbering and hair styling techniques while emphasizing an experience that encourages people to pause and unwind from the pace of everyday life.

Rohrer noted that the goal is not simply to provide a service, but to create an atmosphere of belonging and community where clients feel welcomed and cared for beyond the haircut itself.

The response from Shepherdstown, he added, has been a blessing. “I absolutely love Shepherdstown,” Rohrer said. “The experience has exceeded already lofty expectations. I feel as though we are just getting started here.”

He also expressed gratitude for the support the business has received since opening, noting that the shop has already begun to feel woven into the fabric of the community.

‘Bloom’ Coming Soon to German Street

A new restaurant concept will soon bring Mediterranean-inspired cuisine to downtown Shepherdstown, as Bloom prepares to open in the former China Kitchen location on the corner of German and Kings Streets.

The new quick-service restaurant is being developed by Jordan and Melissa Gainer, who most locals will recognize from MJ’s Café. Melissa described the concept as approachable, customizable, and designed for both dine-in and on-the-go dining—with a “build-your-own bowl” style menu offering a variety of fresh options for everyone.

She added that the opportunity to take over the longtime China Kitchen space came together naturally, and the couple quickly realized it was something they could do well.



“We’re lucky to have the table and chairs from China Kitchen for a little nostalgia,” Gainer said, noting that Bloom hopes to pay tribute to the decades of history the former restaurant carried within the community.

She also indicated the expanded kitchen space will allow the team room “to spread our wings” creatively and operationally.

An official opening date has not yet been announced, but Gainer said the launch is expected very soon.



Back Alley Garden Tour & Tea Returns May 16-17

One of Shepherdstown's most beloved spring traditions will return Saturday and Sunday, May 16-17, as the annual Back Alley Garden Tour & Tea once again invites visitors to explore some of the Town's most beautiful and tucked-away private gardens.

The self-guided walking tour offers guests a chance to wander through Shepherdstown's historic alleys and neighborhoods while discovering unique gardens, gathering inspiration, and experiencing the charm and history woven throughout the community.

Following the tour—or whenever visitors are ready for a break—guests are encouraged to return to the War Memorial Building for the event's popular afternoon tea. The gathering features hot and cold teas served in vintage teacups alongside a selection of homemade savorys and sweets prepared by local bakers. Organizers describe the tea as an opportunity to relax, reflect on favorite gardens, and enjoy conversation before continuing the tour or spending time in downtown shops and restaurants.

The event, held annually on the third weekend in May, also continues to feature plein air artists throughout the gardens. Introduced in 2024 through a collaboration with Kathryn Burns of The Bridge Gallery, the live painting component allows artists to create works on-site while capturing the colors and atmosphere of the gardens in real time. Many of the finished pieces will be displayed and available for purchase during the event.

The Back Alley Garden Tour & Tea serves as a major annual fundraiser for the Shepherdstown Community Club, supporting the continued operation of the War Memorial Building and Morgan's Grove Park.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information and tickets.





Annual Fire Hydrant Flushing Continues Into May

The Town of Shepherdstown will conduct its annual fire hydrant flushing through May 21, 2026.

During this period, residents may experience low water pressure or cloudy water. If this occurs, please flush your water until it runs clear.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Water Plant at 304-876-2394.

Final Call for Artists: Welcome Banner Contest

Help shape the look of our downtown through the “Welcome to Shepherdstown” Banner Contest.

Selected designs will be featured on banners to be hung on street light poles throughout Historic Shepherdstown beginning later this year.

Contest Opened: April 1, 2026
Deadline to enter: May 10, 2026, at 5pm.

For full details, [CLICK HERE](#).

First Friday Community Music Series Returns June 5 with Tony M Music

Shepherdstown’s First Friday series will continue Friday, June 5, at 7pm, with a free outdoor performance by [Tony M. Music](#) on the lawn of McMurrin Hall.

Held monthly from May through October, First Friday events invite residents and visitors to gather in downtown Shepherdstown for live music, local shopping, dining, and community connection.

Guests are encouraged to bring a chair or blanket and enjoy an evening outdoors before exploring the Town’s shops, restaurants, and businesses, many of which remain open late during the event.

Tony M. is a former elementary school teacher who transitioned to full-time music in 2014 and now performs more than 175 shows annually at schools, libraries, and family events. Known for blending music, storytelling, and literature into interactive performances, Tony’s programs focus on creativity, positive mental health, and growth mindset themes.

His connection to Shepherdstown stretches back more than two decades, with some of his earliest performances taking place on the steps of Knutti Hall and at The Meck Open Mic.

Shepherdstown LIVE is co-sponsored by the Town of Shepherdstown, Jefferson Security Bank, Stoney’s Pub, Nikki Visions Vol. 1, and Wind Gap Music, and is presented by [Experience Shepherdstown](#).





Shepherdstown Pride Parade Returns June 1

The 2nd-Annual Shepherdstown Pride Parade will take place Monday, June 1, at 6pm, in downtown Shepherdstown, serving as the centerpiece of a weekend filled with Pride-themed events and community programming throughout town.

Local businesses, artists, and community leaders have come together once again to support the celebration through special events, performances, decorations, exhibits, and activities reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of the Shepherdstown community.



For generations, Shepherdstown has stood at the crossroads of American history—from the Beeline March of 1775 to the progressive values the community continues to uphold today. Organizers note that the parade represents another chapter in that living history: a moment of visibility, joy, and belonging for LGBTQ residents, families, friends, and allies.

The event is intended not only as a celebration, but also as a recognition of the LGBTQ individuals who have long been part of the fabric of the town and the broader community. Organizers describe the parade as an opportunity to affirm the importance of gathering openly, expressing identity freely, and continuing to build a more inclusive future.

Additional Pride-related activities will take place throughout the weekend, including the Shepherdstown Gay Pride Parade Information Center at Eclectic, located downtown at 106 German Street.

The information center will be open Saturday, May 30, through Monday, June 1, from 12–7pm, offering event information, literature from organizations including Fairness West Virginia and the ACLU of West Virginia, and a calendar of regional Pride events.

Visitors will also have an opportunity to experience the Flag in the Map exhibit, presented through The Gilbert Baker Foundation and ReportOUT.

The exhibit explores rainbow flag stories from around the world and will be on display throughout the weekend.

For more information and/or to volunteer, [CLICK HERE](#).





Two New Green Infrastructure Storm Water Control Projects

The Town of Shepherdstown is initiating an engineering review and preliminary study process for two proposed small-scale green infrastructure stormwater management projects aimed at improving drainage, reducing

runoff, and expanding environmentally focused public spaces within Town-owned areas.

One proposed project involves the Town-owned Church Street Extension property near the intersection of High Street and Church Street. Building on initial drainage improvements completed in Summer 2025, the concept would further redirect storm water runoff into a reforested green space featuring native trees, pollinator plantings, and other landscaping improvements.

The area is considered a “paper street,” meaning it exists as a platted right-of-way without an actual roadway, creating opportunities for conversion into functional green infrastructure space.

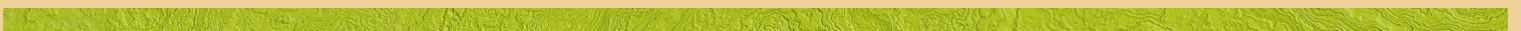
Early Stages

The second proposed project focuses on runoff management along Old Queen Alley through the creation of a small bioretention or rain garden feature near the Town Hall parking lot.

The concept would redesign a portion of the parking area to help capture and manage storm water flowing downhill through the alley corridor. The project would also likely coordinate with future paving and grading improvements to Old Queen Alley to improve drainage efficiency and overall storm water control.

Both projects remain in the study and evaluation phase, with engineering review and feasibility analysis currently underway. A potential construction timeline is expected to become clearer later this summer.

— Questions or comments regarding the projects may be directed to Karl Musser at kmusser@shepherdstown.us or 304-702-2305.



Preserving the Character of Shepherdstown

The Historic Landmarks Commission



Few things define Shepherdstown more clearly than its historic character. From the architecture lining German Street to the quiet residential blocks woven throughout town, Shepherdstown's built environment remains one of its greatest assets—shaping not only the community's identity, but also its economy, walkability, and overall quality of life.

Helping steward and preserve that character is the Shepherdstown [Historic Landmarks Commission](#) (HLC), a five-member body appointed by the Town to help ensure the ongoing success of our nationally designated historic district. The Board is made up of residents with deep appreciation of the Town's architectural and cultural heritage.

As members of the community themselves, commissioners bring both professional insight and personal investment to the ongoing preservation of historic Shepherdstown. The HLC reviews exterior architectural changes to buildings located within the historic district and helps ensure projects remain consistent with Town ordinances and preservation guidelines.

Public meetings are held monthly and are open to residents and property owners interested in learning more about the process. In addition to project reviews, the HLC helps support beautification initiatives throughout Town, assists with preservation-related grant opportunities, and offers free workshops designed to help residents and applicants better understand the review process and design guidelines before beginning exterior work.

Due to our town's careful protection of its historic district, Shepherdstown has been designated a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the State of West Virginia Historic Preservation Office. The designation enables the Town to access technical assistance, preservation expertise, and building assessment resources from the State that help support rehabilitation and long-term planning efforts.

Historic preservation is not simply about maintaining old buildings—it is also about protecting property values, supporting heritage tourism, encouraging sustainable development, and preserving the unique sense of place that continues to draw residents, visitors, and businesses to Shepherdstown.

Residents, business owners, and real estate professionals all play an important role in that effort. Whether restoring a historic home, improving a storefront, or helping prospective buyers understand the value of living within a historic district, community participation remains central to preserving Shepherdstown's architectural legacy for future generations.

To learn more about the Town's Historic Landmarks Commission, upcoming projects, workshops, and preservation resources, [CLICK HERE](#).

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:

- Town Council: Wednesday, May 13, 6:30pm.
- Age-Friendly Shepherdstown: Wednesday, May 20, 1:30pm.
- Board of Appeals: Friday May 22, 6pm.
- Planning Committee: Monday May 18, 6pm.
- Public Works Committee Monday, May 25, 6:30pm.
- Parks & Rec Committee Tuesday, May 26, 6pm.
- Public Input on Vision for Market House Plaza Thursday, May 21, 6:30pm.
- Tree Commission: Thursday, May 14, 6pm.
- Water/Sanitary Board: Thursday, May 28, 6pm.



Mayor's Office Hours:

Fourth Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm, Town Hall.
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.
