

# Potomac ALMANAC

## On the Potomac

AUTUMN BEAUTY, PAGE 4

John Phillips makes great use of the recently installed kayak launch on Seneca Creek by Riley's Lock.

## HOMELIFESTYLE

PAGE 7

## Could MCPS Open In January?

News, page 3

## Town Hall, Farmers Competing for Land?

NEWS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY JILL PHILLIPS REAL ESTATE SALES, 2 ♦ KENNY LOURIE, PAGE 7

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# Potomac REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY DEB STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

## September, 2020 Top Sales

IN SEPTEMBER, 2020, 84 POTOMAC HOMES  
SOLD BETWEEN \$3,600,000-\$555,000.



**1** 11408 Highland Farm Court  
— \$3,600,000



**2** 9900  
Newhall Road  
— \$3,095,000



**5** 10120 Counselman Road — \$2,750,000



**6** 9208 Haeington Drive — \$2,425,000



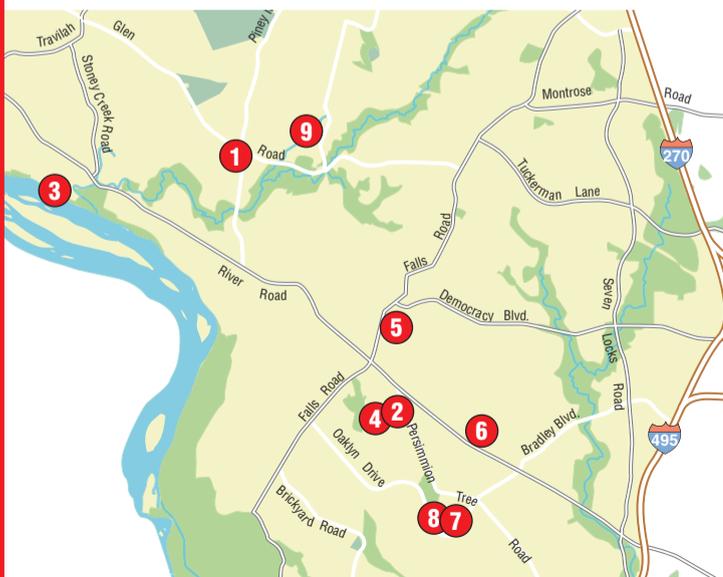
**4** 9908 Newhall Road — \$2,800,000



**8** 8601 York Manor Way  
— \$2,425,000



**7** 8539 Rapley Preserve Circle — \$2,400,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal	City.....	Sold Price...	Type.....	Lot AC.	Postal Code ...	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
<b>1</b> 11408 HIGHLAND FARM CT.	8	11	3	POTOMAC		\$3,600,000	Detached..	2.00	20854	ROUND HILL	09/15/20
<b>2</b> 9900 NEWHALL RD	8	8	3	POTOMAC		\$3,095,000	Detached..	0.94	20854	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	09/01/20
<b>3</b> 12820 RIVER RD	7	8	1	POTOMAC		\$2,950,000	Detached..	2.02	20854	NONE AVAILABLE	09/30/20
<b>4</b> 9908 NEWHALL RD	7	8	1	POTOMAC		\$2,800,000	Detached..	0.86	20854	POTOMAC OUTSIDE	09/25/20
<b>5</b> 10120 COUNSELMAN RD	8	7	2	POTOMAC		\$2,750,000	Detached..	1.03	20854	POTOMAC	09/04/20
<b>6</b> 9208 HARRINGTON DR	6	7	3	POTOMAC		\$2,425,000	Detached..	2.05	20854	BRADLEY FARMS	09/09/20
<b>7</b> 8539 RAPLEY PRESERVE CIR	6	6	3	POTOMAC		\$2,400,000	Detached..	0.50	20854	AVENEL	09/10/20
<b>8</b> 8601 YORK MANOR WAY	5	5	2	POTOMAC		\$2,275,000	Detached..	0.51	20854	AVENEL	09/09/20
<b>9</b> 10817 RED BARN LN	6	5	2	POTOMAC		\$2,150,000	Detached..	2.32	20854	POTOMAC	09/29/20

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## MCPS: Possible In-Person Schooling in Early 2021

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
POTOMAC ALMANAC

The Montgomery County Board of Education met Friday, Nov. 6 to discuss, among other issues, to consider returning students to in-person classes in stages early next year.

In a letter to parents, Dr. Jack R. Smith, MCPS Superintendent wrote:

“As we shared with you on Oct. 27, MCPS has developed a health indicator grid for resuming face-to-face teaching in stages. This grid was developed in consultation with Montgomery County health officials, and it also complies with the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). If these indicators are met, MCPS will resume face-to-face teaching in stages starting from Jan. 12, 2021, with emphasis on specific special education programs; certain vocational and technical education programs that require practical learning to obtain a license; and other special student groups.”

If the health indicators continue to be met, other students will be returned in phases.

“I want to emphasize that we can only implement this plan when these health indicators are met,” he continued. “We have heard from many people in the community that they hope that we will start to provide face-to-face learning in December. Perhaps you have seen or heard from the news that the number of cases in Montgomery and Maryland are on the rise, and the current figures do not support the resumption of face-to-face teaching for students at this moment.”

“We will continue to work closely with Montgomery County health officials and other county leaders. They understand and agree with the urgency of getting students back to school as quickly and safely as possible.”

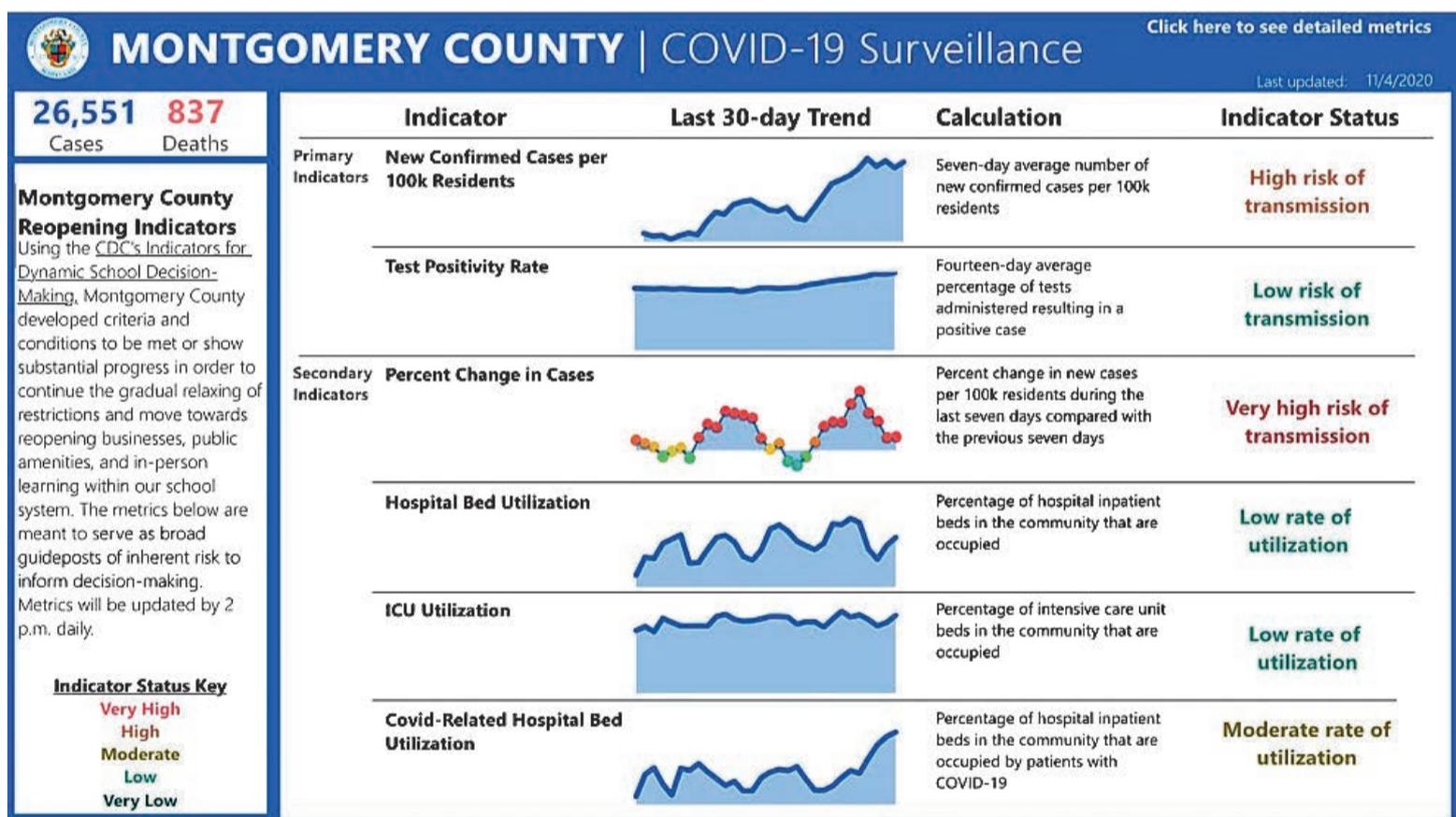
When students and faculty do return to school, building operations will look different, Dr. Smith wrote.

“Students and faculty must wear face masks; keep physical distance; and wash hands frequently. MCPS also invested a lot of resources as needed to improve the air quality in the school buildings and update the system.”

In anticipation of reopening schools in early 2021, MCPS will email parents a short survey on Nov. 11 to determine whether their children will continue to participate fully in virtual learning, or

### County Health Metrics (By Zip Code)

Place Name	Zip Code	Cumulative cases	Cumulative cases per 100k residents	Number of cases in the last 14 days	Average daily cases per 100k residents (last 14 days)	Notable change in average daily cases per 100k residents*	Population	Percent Black or African American alone Population	Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	Percent Non-Hispanic Non-White Population
Ashton	20861	32	0.9K	6	25.7	↑	1,665	16%	4%	31%
Aspen Hill/Layhill	20906	2902	4.0K	247	25.1	↑	70,174	24%	33%	74%
Wheaton	20902	2203	3.9K	152	20.7	↑	52,484	17%	36%	66%
Damascus	20872	258	1.8K	35	19.3	↑	12,940	10%	12%	35%
Hillandale	20903	1421	5.3K	70	19.1	↑	26,206	28%	48%	89%
Montgomery Village/Airpark	20879	817	3.0K	73	18.7	↑	27,871	24%	29%	72%
Poolesville	20837	71	0.9K	16	18.4	↑	6,225	8%	10%	23%
Laytonsville	20882	251	1.8K	34	18.1	↑	13,450	7%	12%	29%
Montgomery Village	20886	1189	3.3K	85	17.8	↑	34,100	21%	33%	70%
Colesville	20904	1992	3.2K	122	15.3	↑	57,035	45%	15%	77%
Cloverly/Stonegate	20905	415	2.1K	38	15.0	↑	18,123	26%	13%	60%
Four Corners/White Oak	20901	1077	2.7K	75	14.8	↑	36,154	25%	22%	57%
Brookeville	20833	112	1.3K	16	14.7	↑	7,750	9%	12%	33%
Gaithersburg	20877	1563	3.9K	80	14.7	↑	38,885	18%	42%	77%
Rockville/Norbeck	20853	892	2.7K	64	14.7	↑	31,178	12%	25%	51%
North Bethesda	20852	791	1.6K	87	13.2	↑	46,904	10%	14%	48%
Clarksburg	20871	310	1.4K	36	12.9	↑	20,008	19%	11%	66%
Sandy Spring	20860	104	3.3K	5	12.7	↑	2,805	28%	13%	52%
Burtansville	20866	394	2.4K	26	11.5	↑	16,171	48%	11%	79%
Silver Spring	20910	919	2.0K	66	11.0	↑	42,868	31%	14%	55%
Rockville/Twinbrook	20851	457	2.9K	23	10.9	↓	15,106	9%	38%	67%
Cabin John	20818	20	0.2K	3	10.6	↑	2,019	2%	3%	23%
Germantown	20876	613	2.1K	41	10.1	↑	28,919	21%	23%	71%
Derwood/Redland	20855	296	1.9K	20	10.0	↑	14,302	6%	10%	42%
Takoma Park	20912	766	2.8K	35	9.5	↑	26,239	37%	20%	64%
Kensington	20895	403	1.9K	26	9.5	↑	19,637	5%	13%	30%
Darnestown	20874	1313	2.0K	73	8.5	↓	61,045	22%	25%	64%
Chevy Chase/Somerset	20815	405	1.2K	36	8.4	↑	30,512	5%	7%	21%



whether they will participate in a blend of face-to-face and virtual teaching. Both options would allow students to participate in face-to-face sports and extracurricular activities. The survey also asks parents to clarify whether their children need school bus services provided by MCPS. Parents are asked to return surveys by Dec. 3.

After the surveys are complete and analyzed, MCPS will use the information to design teaching and location modes and provide scheduling information for parents who choose face-to-face teaching.

The notification process will begin in January after school staff have planned for the needs of face-to-face instruction.

“It must be pointed out that given the ... restrictions and rationing of faculty and staff related to COVID, the teaching methods that students receive after returning to school may vary,” Smith wrote. “MCPS is striving to recruit more teachers and support staff that we need to provide effective and consistent face-to-face learning. Face-to-face learning will be combined with direct support, learning in

a mixed virtual and face-to-face classroom, or learning entirely in a pure face-to-face classroom.

“Depending on the results of the parent’s willingness survey, the following situations may occur: students may have different teachers; alternate between face-to-face and virtual teaching every week; or they are not arranged at their home school. These results will be determined by

the parents’ willingness to learn face-to-face and the allocation of faculty and staff. Face-to-face learning will include direct

support, participation.”

“We will open Special Education Evaluation Centers in Hallie Wells [Middle School, Clarksburg], Sligo [Middle School, Silver Spring] and Julius West [Middle School, Rockville] on Dec. 3, and families can make appointments to receive support from Monday to Friday. These evaluation centers will provide student families with the opportunity to participate in face-to-face educational and psychological evaluations to determine initial and continuing special education qualifications.”

## NEWS

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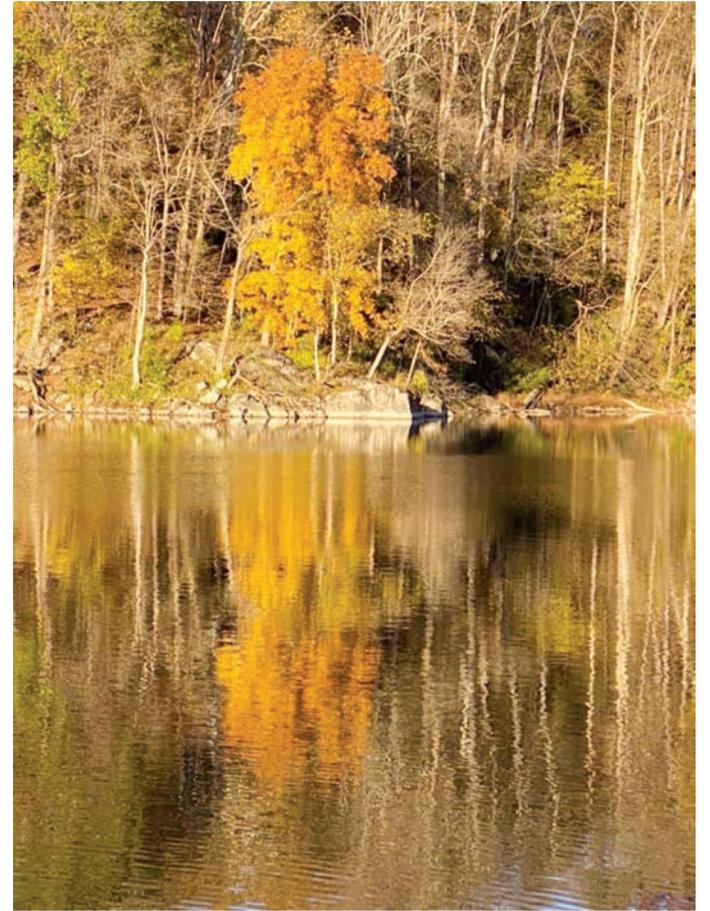
Rebecca Roberts, journalist and curator of Programming for the new Planet Word Museum, opening soon in Wash DC, talks about the new museum and discusses how language is what makes us human. Join in to be inspired and to renew your love of words and language.

Wed, November 18, 1:00pm –2:00pm  
Register at [20854HelpDesk@gmail.com](mailto:20854HelpDesk@gmail.com)

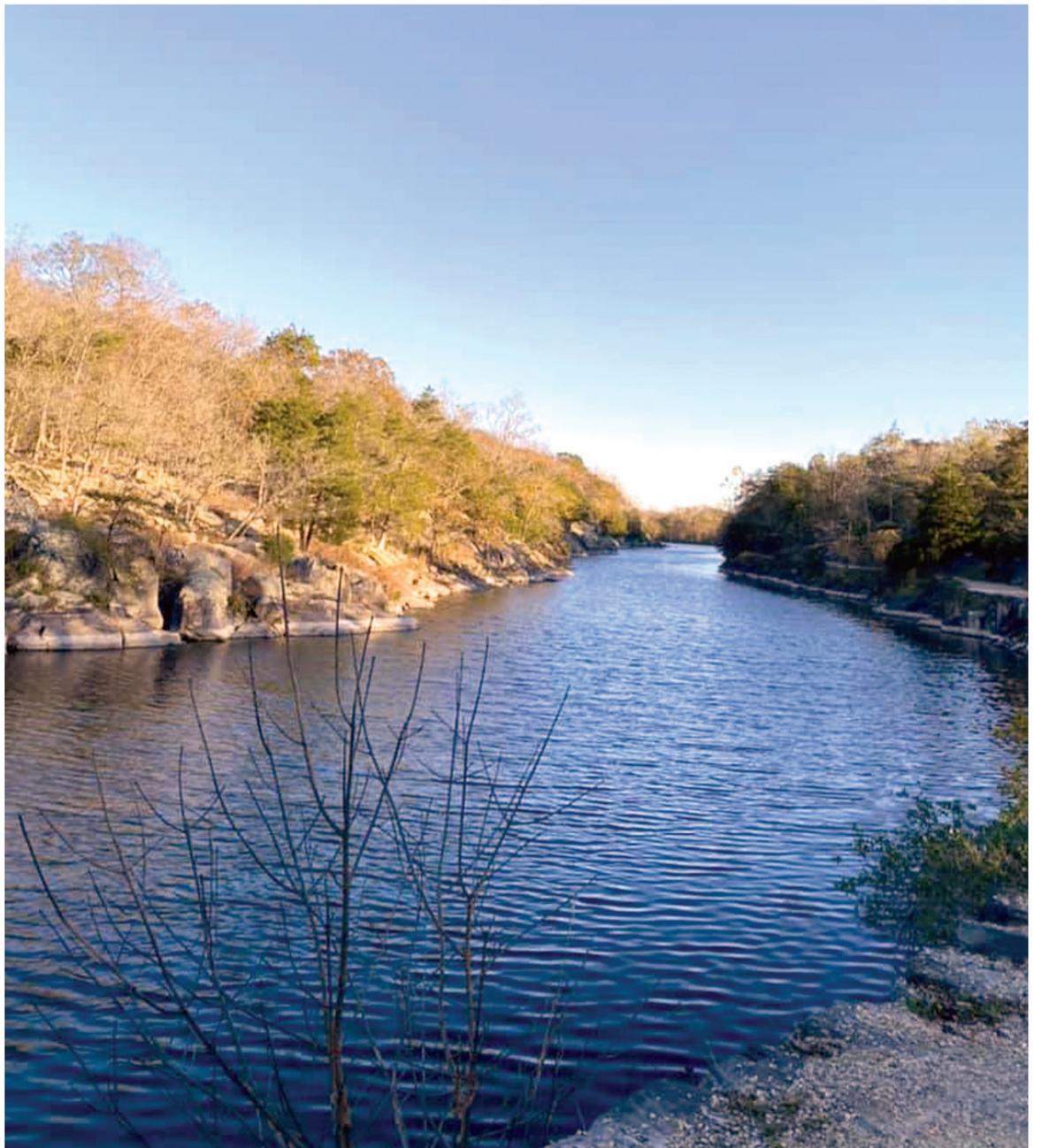


At Riley's Lock/Seneca Creek in Potomac, John and Jill Phillips head out to the Potomac River on Nov. 7. "It was a perfect day to kayak on the Potomac River with John. And the new kayak launcher at Riley's lock is awesome."

PHOTOS BY JILL PHILLIPS



Autumn reflection in the Potomac River.



Walkers and hikers, not just kayakers, can enjoy the beauty of the Potomac River.



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14th Annual



# Alexandria Film Festival

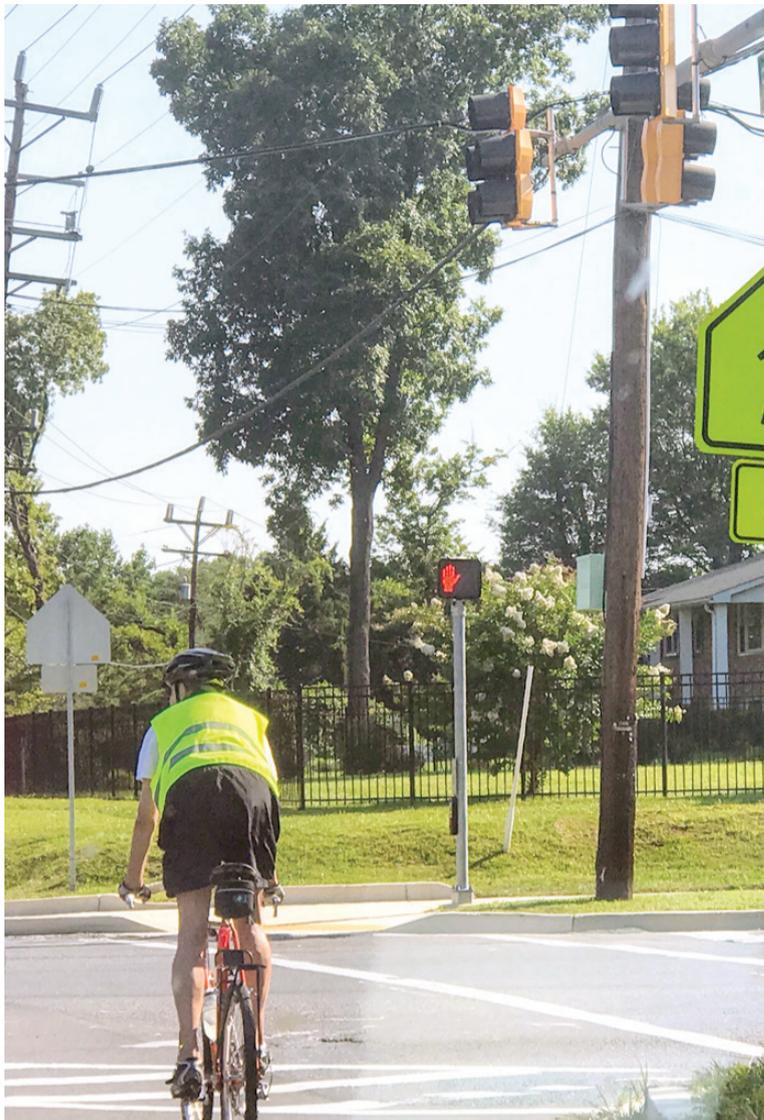
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ALMANAC FILE PHOTO

A bicyclist at Falls Road and Tuckerman Lane. A virtual hearing on Nov. 12, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. will focus on planning a future bike lane on Tuckerman Lane from Falls Road to Snakeden Branch.

## Get Involved: Tuckerman Bikeway Project

**P**edestrian and cyclist safety will be improved on the 3.8 miles of Tuckerman Lane between Falls Road and Old Georgetown. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation MCDOT is currently evaluating the plan, which includes sidewalks, a shared-use path and bicycle lanes, and asks for public input.

A virtual hearing on Nov. 12, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. to focus on the planning Segment 1 from Falls Road to Snakeden Branch stream; this portion of the project passes Hoover Middle School, Churchill's sports fields, just past Potomac Electric Power company right of way fields to Snakeden Branch which is before Seven Locks Road.

The \$14.3 million project according to Council documents provides continuous conventional bike lanes, a sidepath on the other side of the road and a continuous sidepath except at Cabin John Regional Park.

A different alternative that wasn't chosen but would have created separated pedestrian paths and bike paths on both sides of

the road would have cost \$51 million, according to testimony at a October 2018 Transportation and Environmental Committee meeting, still available on the County's website.

The first segment could remove some on street parking.

The transportation department requests feedback on the project schedule, proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements, project costs and potential impacts.

See project documents and maps at [montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/tuckermanlane](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/tuckermanlane).

Online pre-registration is required to receive meeting instructions.

Give feedback by MCDOT by commenting online at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/tuckermanlane>, emailing the project manager at [angel.cheng@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:angel.cheng@montgomerycountymd.gov); or mailing written comments to Angel Cheng, P.E., Project Manager, MCDOT Division of Transportation, 100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor, SE, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878.

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# Stopping the Combine: Farmers Can't Compete for Land

**Making room for enough solar to make a difference.**

BY KEN MOORE  
THE ALMANAC

**R**andy Stabler stopped his combine in the middle of a field in the Agricultural Reserve to join Montgomery County Council's virtual Town Hall meeting. Council held the meeting Thursday, Nov. 5 to continue public discussion on a zoning text amendment that would permit solar on land the 1980 Council permanently set aside for agricultural use.

"At this point in time, this is very troubling to the agricultural community, the very viability of agriculture competing for a resource we need, that being the land," said Stabler.

"It's important that all of the information is put on the table and discussed," he said.

Montgomery County Council was set to vote on the zoning text amendment that would permit industrial solar on 1,800 acres in the Agricultural Reserve on Oct. 20.

Instead, they sent the zoning text amendment back to commit-

tee worksessions for more discussion. And, a few days later, Council President Sidney Katz and at-large councilmember Hans Riemer announced a town hall meeting for Nov. 5 to hear more people, especially advocates for the Agricultural Reserve.

Jeremy Criss didn't stop a combine but thanked the council for slowing down the process to allow more input from farmers in the Agricultural Reserve to voice their opinions.

"The Agriculture community remains unanimously opposed to the Zoning Text Amendment," said Criss, director of Agricultural Services for Montgomery County. But he suggested a compromise.

"Is there a way that we can look at the total 1,800 acres and to con-

Solar advocates say using 1,800 acres of the Agricultural Reserve for solar will be essential to generate the needed clean energy for the county.

"We're running out of time on climate change," said Mike Tidwell, who said he was frustrated that the council has not already taken action on the zoning text amendment.

"I think the bill that was passed out of committee is a great compromise bill, ready to be voted on by the Council," said Tidwell. He reminded the Council of their vote in 2017 declaring that climate change is an emergency.

"This is concrete, this is real, it's ready to go now," said Tidwell, founder of Chesapeake Climate Action Network.

Alfred Bartlett, of Sierra Club, said, "Solar has got to be a key part of our future. We keep coming back to the basic question: If we don't build solar on agricultural land, how do we meet the clean energy needs that we have going forward?"

Joyce Breiner, of Poolesville Green, said of farms and solar, "Why not marry those two? We're out of time, when dealing with the issue of climate change."

Corey Ramsden, vice president of Go Solar Programs, thinks solar should be advocated for all over

the county, including the Agricultural Reserve. "We think this is a great opportunity for the county to lead in the state and design a regulation that successfully supports the surrounding agricultural community."

**FINAL VOTE** by the Council is expected in January 2021.

**"This is concrete, this is real, it's ready to go now."**  
— Mike Tidwell, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Before then, the Council will hold a series of Town Hall and working group meetings, although details have not been established.

Councilmembers recognized that they needed an additional step in the process, said Katz. "Everybody has the same goal to get more solar, the question is how do we get it, how is it going to be effective, and what are we affecting while we're doing it."

He hopes that a working group can help brainstorm solutions that help the county meet solar goals but not at the peril of land that may be needed now and in the future to feed local residents.

"We want you to talk to each other," said Katz.

Several speakers pointed out that the reason solar advocates want use of agricultural land is to maximize profit.

About seven people in the solar industry expressed the importance of solar, the benefits including cost savings for the public in community solar projects, and the need to find space quickly as climate change progresses. They claimed that the Agricultural Reserve is essential for solar.

Others, including Denisse Guittarra of Audubon Naturalist Society, suggested siting solar on landfills, mall parking lots and other parking lots, Pepco power line right-of-way, brownfields, as well as rooftops and buildings that proponents of solar say are too costly or problematic.

But right now, putting solar in the agricultural reserve would be cheaper and more profitable for the solar industry.

"The county made a decision to make an Ag Reserve and the value of the land is artificially depressed" because it can't be developed, said Alfred Wurglitz. "Speaking as a business person, I would simply say that means there's more profit to be made."

Wurglitz said the county should think about the land in the Agricul-

tural Reserve and its affordability as a public good. "Do we want to give that public good to the solar industry?" he asked.

**CAROLINE TAYLOR**, executive director of Montgomery Countryside Alliance, a group formed to protect the Agriculture Reserve, said she has 40 new and expanding farmers looking for acreage to "grow the food that goes directly on our table and the fiber that ends up in clothing," including wool. In its Land Link program, Montgomery Countryside Alliance pairs farmers with landowners in the Reserve.

Some of the farmers looking for land to farm are new immigrants, Taylor said, including some from Africa.

With the ZTA under consideration, already some local landowners are receiving lease offers far higher — sometimes 10 to 20 times higher — than the going rate of agricultural land leases, according to the Montgomery Countryside Alliance. This upward pressure will make it much harder for the organization to find land for farmers who want to begin or expand.

Robert Cissell, from Montgomery Agricultural Producers, wanted to ensure that farmers whose livelihood depends on the land have a voice.

After hearing a series of speakers from the solar industry, Lauren Greenberger, of Sugarloaf Citizens Association, challenged the assumptions voiced during the meeting. "This is supposed to be a town hall meeting," said Greenberger. "Most of the people that we've heard from are from the solar industry [not from the community]. This should be the community having a chance to talk, and I don't see that, I see people with an agenda of their own."

She recommended incentivizing owners -- that could be property owners, parking lot owners, building owners, shopping center owners, owners throughout the county -- to help find locations for solar, a goal stewards of the land want to see as well.

"We don't need to take up our farmland that we'll need in a couple of decades. This is one of the few places in the country that will continue to be productive [for growing food] and will continue to have water when other land dries up," said Greenberger.

She voiced a premise the 1980 prescient Council already knew.

"That farmland we have, we're going to need for agriculture," she said.

**"This is very troubling to the agricultural community; the very viability of agriculture, competing for a resource we need, that being the land."**

— Randy Stabler, farmer

sider phasing that in over a period of time, to evaluate how it is working or the unintended consequences?"

**THE COUNTY'S GOAL** is 100 percent elimination of carbon emissions by 2035; 80 percent by 2027.



## Happy Birthday, Owen

Neighbors cheered for Owen Gottlieb on his seventh birthday this past Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020. Lawn signs are the new birthday celebration. Owen is pictured here with his sister Harper Gottlieb, 8. Happy Birthday and happy year, Owen.

# Thanksgiving Decor In the Era of Covid-19

## Creating dining elegance at a distance.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE ALMANAC

**N**aomi Patterson's Thanksgiving table is usually set with linen dinner napkins, cleaned and starched, and her wedding china, ecru with a platinum border. The guests include her 88-year old mother and a host of cousins. This year, she's debating a change.

"My mother is healthy, but because of her age, I'm nervous about having her around other people, especially my cousins who are in college," said Patterson who lives in Bethesda. "I still want it to be nice and I want to maintain our traditions."

Like many families, Covid-19 and the resulting safety precautions have changed the way they will celebrate Thanksgiving. Elaborate feasts might be scaled down, moved outdoors or held virtually. Though the structure is different, style needn't be

## "Shouldn't your dinner al fresco be just as lovely as the one you host in your formal dining room?"

— Anne Walker, interior designer and owner of Farm and Feast

sacrificed.

"Outdoor entertaining has been on the rise for a decade, but now more than ever outside is the place to be," said Potomac based designer Anne Walker of outdoor home accessories and design company Farm & Feast. "Whether you have a formal outdoor living room complete with stone fireplace and patio, or a balcony outside your apartment, or something in between, your Thanksgiving holiday will be most successful this year if you gather outside."

If the temperature is mild this year, a turkey dinner outdoors can allow one to achieve both elegance and safety.

"Shouldn't your dinner al fresco be just as lovely as the one you host in your formal dining room?" asks Walker. "What could be better than enjoying a cocktail and some wine and cheese en plein air?"

Durable and shatterproof serve wear is a must when dining outdoors, suggests Walker. "Enjoying hors d'oeuvres from a marble and wood rustic cheese board and wine from a silicone-wrapped outdoor wine glass will lift your spirits, as will wrapping yourself in an organic cotton throw to stave off the chill in the fall air," she said.

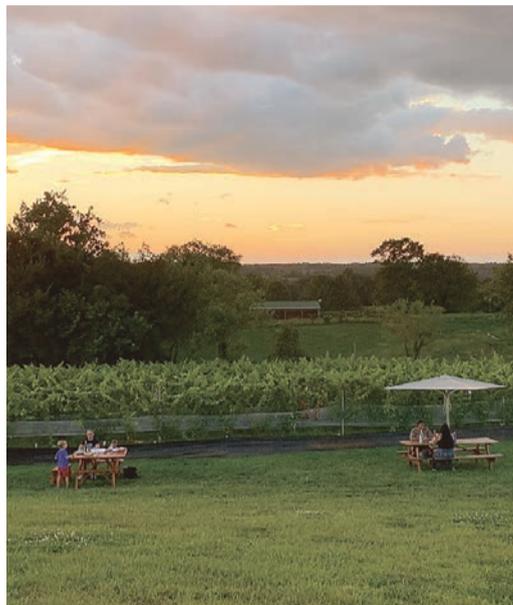


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNE WALKER

**An al fresco Thanksgiving dinner can maintain safety without sacrificing elegance.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA QUEEN DESIGN

**A traditional table setting can add warmth to virtual Thanksgiving celebration.**

When setting an outdoor table, consider rustic accessories so that the design flows with the natural surroundings.

"Spray paint a fallen tree branch or tumbleweed in gold or a similar warm autumn tone and use it as a centerpiece, suggested Lisa Queen of Lisa Queen Design. "Nest it with candles, small pumpkins, and other soft decor to bring it to life."

Add warmth to a virtual celebration by using traditional table accessories. "We brought some additional character to our table by mixing antique brass napkin rings," said Queen. "Not everything needs to match, and this is one way to make a tablescape feel unique and curated."

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

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## As Second Opinions Go ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... it was first rate. A confirmation - of sorts that I have (and have had in all likelihood) thyroid cancer and not non small cell lung cancer. And I say 'sorts' because the medical records transferred did not include the original pathologist's report on the tissue sample taken in 2009 and not all the scans from the nearly 12 years of treatment either. Nevertheless, this second oncologist summarized my cancer as being thyroid; partially because I'm still alive. Generally speaking, lung cancer patients don't survive years beyond their prognosis. Addition by subtraction you might say. Unfortunately, lung cancer does what it does: grows, and when it doesn't, it's reason to consider another diagnosis. My primary oncologist had often said that the tumors in my lungs never acted as he had anticipated.

Good news then. Great news. I don't have the "terminal" cancer with which I was originally diagnosed. I guess that explains why I have lived so many years past the "13 month to two year" prognosis that I was initially given in late Feb., 2009. Rather than having an incurable disease: non small cell lung cancer stage IV, I now have papillary thyroid cancer stage IV. Hopefully, I will be able to live with it much as I had lived with the apparent lung cancer" day by day, scan to scan. However, the day to day stress may be less because the worst case is not necessarily a scenario that I have to anticipate. Granted, it's still cancer, and from what I was told, still incurable, but for the moment, very treatable. Surgery is likewise not an option and there is still medication - with side effects, that will remain part of my life, but there is life that remains. Moreover, there also remains regularly scheduled CT scans and lab work that will monitor my condition. And it is not until I receive the results from these diagnostic procedures that I can truly appreciate the change in my diagnosis.

It's not that I don't trust this second opinion, it's more that I've spent the last nearly 12 years thinking one way and changing how I think now after one 45-minute appointment is not quite how I can roll.

Besides, my thyroid cancer has metastasized to the lung. And though it has been slow moving, it has moved. And it is rare. At present, it is responding to the medication but there are no guarantees in the cancer business, and I will continue to live from one scan to the next. I am grateful to be out from underneath, apparently, this terrible weight of fear and inevitability. However, as a long-time cancer patient, I can't simply presume that life resumes as per usual, with per-usual being a pre-cancer-type life. Regardless of now being a thyroid cancer patient and not a non small cell lung cancer patient, I still am a cancer patient. As such, I still retain all the feelings and anxieties. I will still attend all the meetings, if you know what I mean? I can't simply disconnect or forget all that I've endured these past 11-plus years

And lo and behold, I have a CT scan this Wednesday. By the end of the week, I will likely learn if my newly diagnosed thyroid cancer is still responding to treatment or whether there is something rotten in Denmark (me being Denmark). Even though I have a new working diagnosis - thyroid cancer, which on the face of it, is much less serious, I can't approach my life any differently than I did before. Cancer is in charge, and until it tells me, so to speak, via scans and lab work, that it's OKAY to breath normally, I won't be able to. Now more than ever, almost, even with this new information, I can't forget where I've been and what I've been told. It was lung cancer once. Perhaps, it can be again. For the moment, I'm going to try and enjoy my new-found status. But with the incomplete medical records painting a less-than-definitive picture, I will go along with the second oncologist's assessment, but only from a distance. Unfortunately, having been told one thing before, and now being told another very different thing, doesn't change the facts on my ground. I still have cancer.

And it's still incurable. That problem remains.

*Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for  
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