



Toms Brook



Photo by: Herb Wilburn, Toms Brook resident.

Your Local Government

Lisa Currie, **mayor**

Council members:

Cena Hubbell, **vice mayor**
Judy Pangle
Dawn Rinker
Lisa Keller Nelson
Mike Triggs
Susie Wilburn

Planning Commission

Scott Rinker, **chair**
Scott Currie
William "Bill" Minton
Matt Platt

Toms Brook Town Planner

Amanda Kerns, NSVRC

Board of Zoning Appeals

Larry Gochenour
Rick Edge
Tasha Fleming
Richard Funkhouser
Misty Sutherly

Representative to Shenandoah County Parks and Rec Board:

Jason Perry

*Toms Brook Town Council meets
the second Thursday of each
month at St. Peter Lutheran
Church in the reception hall at 7
pm.*

*Toms Brook Planning
Commission meets the first
Thursday of each month in the
Fire Department Social Hall at
7:30 pm*

RWB chosen as Toms Brook's Refuse Collector

Starting January 9 - Tuesday is New Collection Day

At the November meeting, the Toms Brook Town Council voted to accept the refuse collection bid from RWB, a company located in Boyce, VA. RWB Disposal, first trash collection day is Wednesday, January 3rd due to a New Year's Day holiday week. After the first week of January, refuse collection is on Tuesday.

Starting January 9th, the new trash collection day will be on Tuesday.

Since this is a new refuse collector, there are new rules to how refuse will be collected. If a resident would like to rent a refuse container from the company, residents can contact Karen Dean at 540-837-5593; please give physical address and the type of can requested. Residents can rent a 96 gallon, a 65 gallon, or a 35 gallon (ideal for senior citizens) for \$20 a year. If these cans are damaged, a new can is provided at no cost. Residents can request cans at any time.

If the resident wants to use personal cans, the resident **is limited to 100 gallons total**, a limit of two large receptacles, a limit not to exceed 50 pounds each. This means no refuse can be left in bags, boxes, loose, or in other containers. Weekly refuse must be inside a can or plastic trash receptacle. If refuse is left in bags, the bags will not be gathered. Please refrain from including rocks, dirt, or any hazardous items.

All trash must be properly contained, and cardboard should be flattened and tied. Loose items will not be collected.

All receptacles should be placed at the curb on Monday evening and removed by Tuesday evening. Do not leave empty receptacles along the road or on the sidewalk.

Additionally, for residents interested in recycling, RWB provides a convenient and affordable recycling service. For \$11.50 per month, billed quarterly, residents will receive a 64-gallon recycle bin that remains property of RWB Disposal. Recycle pick up day will take place on Saturdays. To sign up for recycling please contact RWB Disposal directly: karen@rwbdisposal.com or 540-837-5593

With an effort to maximize time and limit cost, these restrictions go into effect on January 3, 2024, when the new contract with RWB Disposal LLC commences.

Maybe, Rearrange Your Fridge Contents?

In an effort to help residents become more conscious of weekly waste, the newsletters will feature tips on easy methods, so residents can find confident ways in which reducing waste is easy and possible.

One of the recent suggestions from *The Washington Post* for reducing waste is rearranging the refrigerator. Because of the way marketing has suggested refrigerators are arranged, fresh items are not the first thing seen when the door is opened but rather hidden behind the walls of drawers, stuffed into the bottom of the refrigerator.

Take the fresh items out of the drawers and put those items in the front (maybe even the door) and move condiments and those items with longer shelf-lives to the rear of the refrigerator or even in the drawers where the fresh produce is usually buried.

Seeing those fresh items right away might encourage the use of those items and, therefore, remove the waste. Reducing waste saves space in the county landfill and saves money for the consumer.

Facts show that people in the USA throw out at least a third of food purchased. That translates to less money, more methane, and strained landfills.

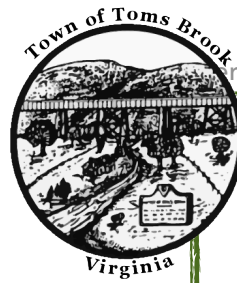
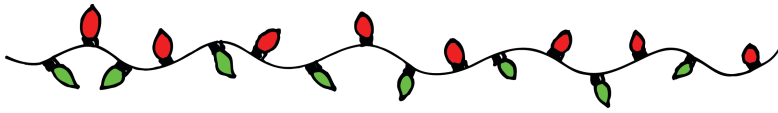
Consider this tip going into the holidays, and you will eat healthier and have less waste for the trash can. In the long run, the wallet is a little happier too.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/11/21/food-waste-fridge-feng-shui/?_pml=1

Consider the following tips for reducing some of your household and food waste:

- *Use reusable shopping bags instead of the plastic ones at the store. Keep the reusable bags in your car so that you know the bags are handy every time you shop.
- *Purchase produce bags to reuse as well so there is less plastic coming home with you.
- *Save your bread bags and produce bags. These bags can be returned to the store.
- *Use the bags inside cereal boxes and other products instead of buying plastic bags and wash these recycled bags and reuse them as well.
- *Create a compost system. If you have animals that come out at night, consider a worm bin under the kitchen sink or bury your compost in your flower beds. This way the animals won't get into the food byproducts. Compost gives your flower beds nutritional supplements. **Don't** compost meat or dairy products. **Do** compost vegetable peels, coffee grounds and tea bags and egg shells.
- *Consider what you are buying and look for packaging that can be recycled or at least not produce a lot of trash
- *Use a vinegar and water substitute instead of lots of cleaning products which come in plastic containers. Reuse or recycle these plastic containers
- *Cook your meals from scratch. Cooking from scratch is healthier and will prevent families from producing excess trash that comes from and with prepared packaging.
- *Plan your meals. Don't buy more than needed.
- *Use cardboard to line a flower bed if you are planning a new bed. Recycle cardboard and other paper products at the recycling center in Maurertown.





November-December 2023

Town's Best Dressed Recognized In Annual Decorating Contest

It's time to start thinking of holiday lights and trim. Yes, Christmas is just around the corner, and keeping with the age-old town tradition, the council sponsors the annual Christmas decorating contest. The contest – all town residents can participate – is judged by the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce.

This year, the chamber will judge on one of these days – 18th, 19th, or the 20th. We really do not know which day the judges pick, so if residents want to participate, residents should leave their holiday lights/decorations on between 6 pm and 9:30 pm on all three days. Judges will peruse the town and pick three winners.

Get your glitter on and participate in the holiday decorating contest. Winners are awarded gift certificates for \$50, first place; \$30, second place; and \$20 for third place. There is no entry form. Just have your holiday decorations visible from the road.

TOWN OFFICE HOURS

Mondays and Fridays
1:00-4:00

ADDRESS

Town Office
PO Box 90
3342 South Main Street
Toms Brook, Virginia
22660

CONTACT

LISA CURRIE

Toms Brook Mayor
mayor@tomsbrookva.net
ljpgcurrie@yahoo.com

AMANDA KERNS

Town Planner/Zoning
Administrator
akerns@nsvregion.org
540-636-8800
ext. 202

MAKE-YOUR-OWN-CRAFT REPLACES HOLIDAY PARADE

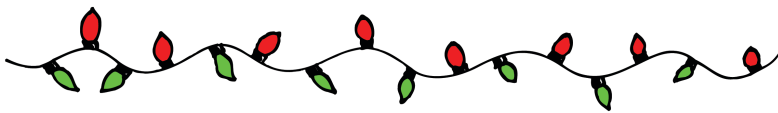
This year the town is celebrating the season with a craft-MAKING bazaar for the entire family. Over the past couple of years, parade attendance has dwindled. Toms Brook's parade is the last of a very busy weekend, and residents are tired of parades by the time the

Toms Brook parade rolls around.

So, Toms Brook is going to do something totally new. The council will host a holiday craft-making bazaar on **December 10th from 4 to 5:30 pm in the gym** at the Toms Brook School Apartments. Children, youth, and/or adults can come at their leisure to make cards, ornaments, holiday centerpieces, or various other items. Most of the items will use recycled materials, as we make every effort to reduce waste and make new. There is NO cost and no need to bring supplies. All supplies will be provided by the town.

In addition, Santa and Ms. Claus will appear to listen to children's holiday wishes. The event includes photos with Santa, cookies and hot chocolate, and music.

Please come and join the fun as the town celebrates the season.





New location for Town Council Meetings

At the November Town Council meeting, the council voted to move the council meetings – at 7 pm the second Thursday of each month – to the Toms Brook School Apartments gymnasium. This large space provides more than adequate seating space for visitors and guests. The room provides adequate room for social distancing if necessary. Please join the council any month at a regular monthly meeting. The town's planning commission will meet at the Toms Brook Volunteer Fire Department the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Holiday Office Hours

The Toms Brook town office will be closed November 24th, December 25th, December 29th, and January 1, 2024.

In the case of inclement weather, the office will follow county and school closings. During the winter season and during inclement weather, emergency closings may be necessary.

Regular town office hours resume January 2nd. Regular hours are Monday and Friday from 1 to 4 pm.

If you have an emergency or town concern, please contact the mayor at 540-436-3035.

Don't Let Your Dog Poo on the Sidewalks

Toms Brook has one sidewalk, a sidewalk used by many pedestrians as they move through town. Mothers walk with their toddlers. School children use the walk to access school buses or rides. Residents use the walk to access stores. The sidewalk is for pedestrians.

Do not leave your trashcans, your children's toys, or dog feces on the sidewalks. Recently, dog feces were found on several parts of the sidewalk. This is unacceptable. Clean up after your pet.

Pick up your belongings and move them off the sidewalk because the sidewalk is for pedestrians. Thank you for being courteous to residents in town.



Pay Your Taxes

Taxes for personal property (vehicles) and real estate (purchased homes) are due December 15th to avoid a late penalty. Residents should pay their taxes on time. Your personal property and real estate taxes help the town to pay for refuse collection, streetlights, town office supplies, and various other town financial responsibilities. Not paying your taxes hurts the town as much as it hurts the resident. Please pay your taxes on time.

Mayor's Message:

Happy Holidays Toms Brook



You know, when I was a little girl, I used to think that if I could live until the year 2000, I would be a very old woman. Well, my friends, I have seen the year 2000 – come and go – and now look forward to 2024, a new year and a new time for opportunities, growth, and travel. Time marches onward, and we are only as old as we may feel. It's been a long year, but I feel as young as I did in 2020.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas season with all your wishes coming true in 2024. We hope you will join us for the Christmas bazaar – come make a little ornament from toilet paper rolls or paint a Christmas card. Sing a song with us or share a cookie. Let's celebrate our little town as neighbors. And because we know our neighbors – both near and far – are in need this holiday season, the town will host a non-perishable food collection during the December 10th event. All NON-PERISHABLE food items collected will be given to the food pantry. If you are able, please bring an item to donate.

This is the perfect season to show how thankful we are for the people in our community. And I am thankful to work with the council who work diligently to keep Toms Brook as a safe community. The council reviewed every line item in the budget this spring to retain our financial support for our town deputy, Officer Parker, who keeps busy with the daily patrolling. There is never a dull day. When the conversation came to awarding the contract for snow removal, the same careful consideration was given. Let me explain: I have been in public meetings since early 1984 – council meetings, school board meetings, supervisor meetings, and various other kinds of meetings. I served on the town council between 1992 and 2001. I served on the county school board for eight years. In all my time, I have not witnessed a group of people like those on Toms Brook Town Council, six people who work conscientiously for their community – not for any personal gain and definitely not for monetary gain.

When the discussion for snow removal came to the table in October, this council weighed the differences between paying the \$5,500 cost for snow removal of two cul-de-sacs (Miller and Hillcrest Drives) and not paying this amount, allowing these

November-December 2023

two roads to go unplowed. Each member shared his/her opinion in full confidence of being heard. Members listened and agreed and agreed to disagree. The council members discussed the cost – a cost that is set by supplies and labor – not the town, and the fact last year's payment far outweighed the service provided because the town experienced little to no inclement weather. This exchange was a fine example of government officials, elected officials, showing professional courtesy and leadership skills. Council members walked away as colleagues, friends, and partners working toward the best for their community.

For the first time in my history of serving a public official or witnessing a public meeting, the vote was tied – three members supported the cost and three did not. I broke the tie – the first time I have voted in my tenure as mayor – to pay the \$5,500 as budgeted in the 2023-2024 budget. This money was previously set aside for this service, but members had a solid and real concern about the cost. The cost is high for two small parts of town, but we are all members of the town, and the town has provided this service for many years, longer than I have lived in this town. Leaving these residents stranded was not an option. Thus, my vote to approve the funding.

Another important takeaway is that the council takes the cost of every item into consideration before agreeing to spend the taxpayers' dollars. This is how it should be. In conclusion, this conversation was shared with Valley View Landscape, the snow removal provider, who will consider the cost and work with the council in future contracts. Overall, this demonstrates how seriously the town's leadership is working for the best of all town residents.

In other news, Valley View Landscape LLC will begin sidewalk renovations the last week in November. Yes, the council thought the work would begin in September, but the rain came and kept the company busy with fall responsibilities. The plan – if nights remain within the current temperature range – is to start on Hillcrest and move south. Heating blankets will be used to encourage concrete curing processes. Please be respectful of the space as Valley View Landscape works toward sidewalk repairs through December. The work may stall in January and February but return by early March.

Lisa Currie, mayor



Special Use Proposal for Development Withdrawn from County

Thanks to the council and the planning commission's carefully crafted letter of opposition and residents' responses in opposition to both Shenandoah County Planning Commission and the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors, the proposed plan to purchase and repurpose the fourteen-acres property adjacent to the town has been withdrawn. This property is accessed by US. Rt. 11, Old Valley Pike, or South Main Street, only. Most of the acreage is located east of the town with access in the town limits.

As most residents are aware, there was a proposal before the county to place two three-story apartment buildings at the edge of Toms Brook; this would have been phase one of a multi-phase project. Such a development would have been disastrous for the town and even worse for the county for a myriad of reasons including water/sewer, schools, traffic control, police safety, rescue services, and various other reasons.

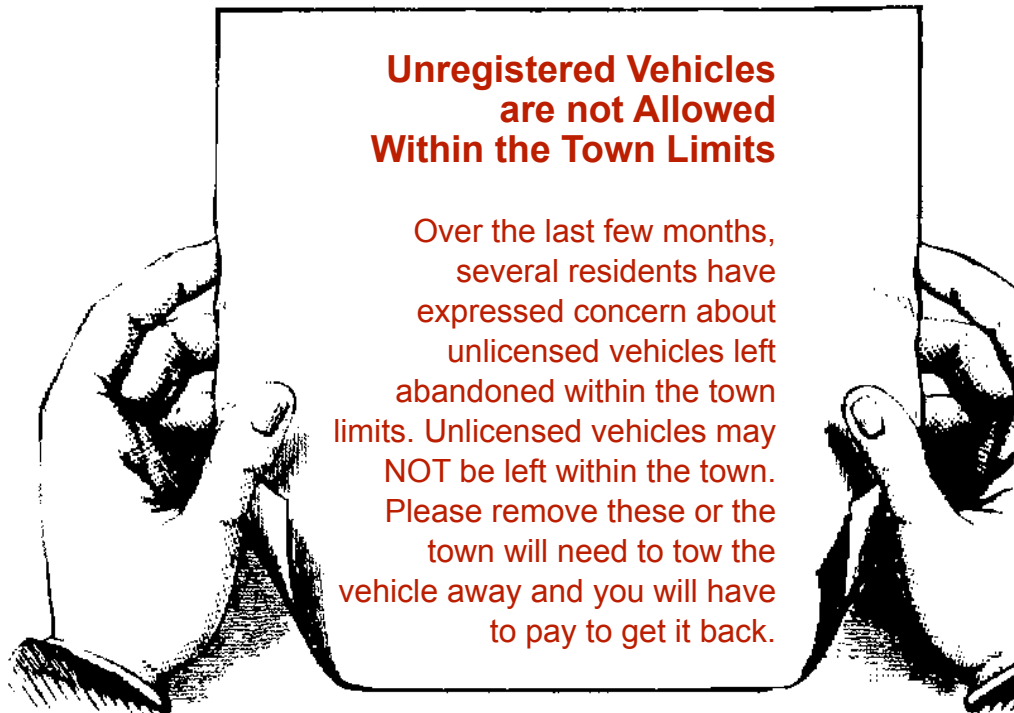
The Toms Brook Town Council, town residents, town planning commission, and various people and groups from Shenandoah County who opposed such a plan applaud the developers for withdrawing this proposal from county leadership.

In 2020, the Toms Brook Town Council signed a letter of resolution in support of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, a letter designed to demonstrate the town's willingness to work cooperatively with the battlefield as the battlefield foundation moved forward with the purchase of the same property, a means to conserve for perpetuity core battlefield acreage. At that time, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation agreed to a friendly boundary line adjustment, an adjustment that would bring the property into the town, giving the town more than fourteen acres of park within the town's boundaries, an economic engine for the town, not an economic burden to both the town and the county. In turn, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation would have access to their property from US. Rt. 11.

The council and the planning commission encourage residents to continue to contact their county elected and appointed leaders to encourage the preservation of this property, not the destruction of core battlefield area.

Unregistered Vehicles are not Allowed Within the Town Limits

Over the last few months, several residents have expressed concern about unlicensed vehicles left abandoned within the town limits. Unlicensed vehicles may NOT be left within the town. Please remove these or the town will need to tow the vehicle away and you will have to pay to get it back.



❄️ CHRISTMAS ❄️

countdown calendar



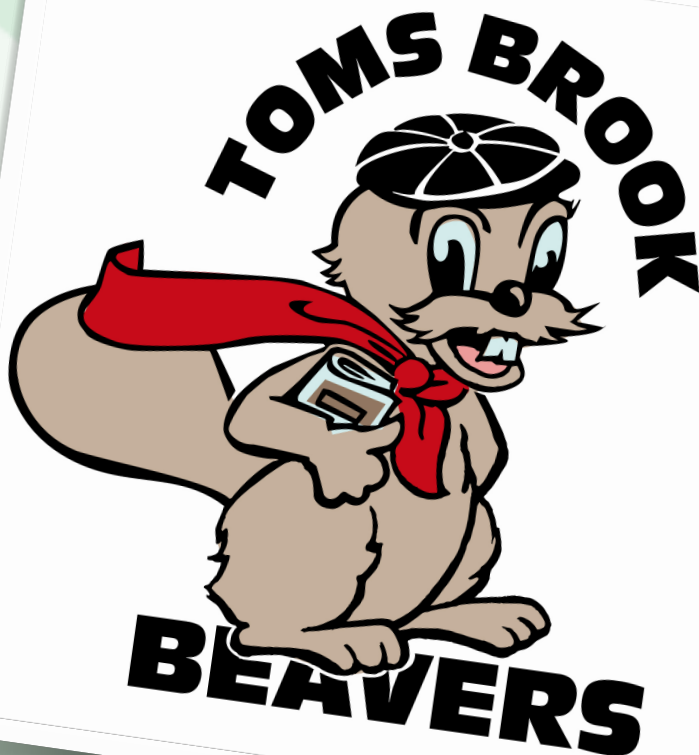
Hi Neighbors!
Paul Zdepski here from down by the brook.



I was researching some local history and was introduced to the terrific <https://shenandoahstories.org/> from the Shenandoah County Library System. I found the page with the Toms Brook High School, and hidden there was a very fuzzy photo of a Beaver on an old school pennant with the words “Toms Brook” fading off into the point of the flag. I zoomed in with my computer and thought “That’s a cute little guy! Toms Brook should still use this as the Mascot!” I have been on the “What’s Happening Toms Brook” Facebook Page asking questions about the mascot’s name and the old (pre-1961) color schemes. No photos I’ve seen have been in color and I was only born in 1962, a year after the High School became a Grade School. I’ve heard “Maroon and White”, “Blue and White”, and “Green and White”, as the

school colors. I’d love to hear the definitive answer, if not seeing this pennant in real life! That said, I’ve recreated the mascot as a drawing in good old Sharpie, then scanned it into Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to clean up the lines and add some color. If there’s enough interest, I’m going to see what it takes to make some Toms Brook Beavers T-Shirts!

“Gimme a B!!! Gimme an E!!!!....
you know the rest!





Children: Let Santa Know What's On Your Christmas List

This holiday season, the Toms Brook Post Office is helping children communicate with Santa. Children can write a letter to Santa and leave the letter in the red post box on the counter at the post office.

Letters should be in an envelope with a return address, so Santa can respond to the sender.

These letters to Santa do not need a stamp. Do not post the letter in regular mail, but place the letter in the red mailbox on the counter.



All letters should be posted by December 22 at 5 pm, so Santa has time to respond before Christmas. Children, write your Christmas List letters to Santa and post the letter in the red box.



with love,

Dear Santa,



Christmas 2023

☐ naughty
☒ nice



