



# Sharpsburg Town Crier

*William and Melva Ryan Edition*



Volume 31

May 2023

Number 5

## The Spong Family Tragedy: A Remembrance, a Long-Ago Catastrophe, and a Living Memory

*(Editor's Note: Sometimes the path we're on leads to others we didn't perceive. So it was with this feature article. The Editor thought it was a story of a 107 year old tragedy and a remembrance just in time for this year's Memorial Day. Instead, it led to memories still active in our own time. There are people alive today, including the Editor, who remember a major player in these events, Mr. Tommy Spong. Ms. Carolyn Rohrer Shaw, a descendant of the Spong family, recounts her memories here. Tommy was a significant contributor to this community as it is hoped this article will portray. Much of the narrative was taken from the National Park Service [<https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/historyculture/thespongchildren.htm>])*



*The Samuel and Nina Spong family about six months before the catastrophe. Tommy and his wife are at the top.*

To understand this story, you must know that life on a C&O canal boat was a family affair. Families lived aboard. They slept, cooked, tended the tow mules, and all the other matters required to raise a family while hauling heavy loads between Cumberland, Maryland and Georgetown (near Washington, DC) and all places in between. It was a hard life and the whole family was involved.



Captain Sam Spong and three children on Canal Boat 74

In 1916, Samuel D. Spong was Captain of Canal Boat Number 74, a boat hauling tons of coal to the lower Potomac River. He and his wife Nina shared the responsibilities of day-to-day operations aboard. Their children were Mary, Tommy, John W. Spong, Samuel W. Spong, Sarah A. Spong, and Elta ranging in age from about nineteen to four.

On the evening of September 10, 1916, Boat 74 arrived at Rock Creek and was taken out into the Potomac River through a river lock<sup>1</sup> in order to dock beside the Capital Traction Company electrical power plant near Georgetown. The boat was scheduled to off-load the coal at the power plant the next morning.

It was the daily dawn routine at the power plant to blow a short blast of steam out of the boilers to clean out accumulated



Young Tommy Spong and friend aboard Canal boat 74

minerals deposited inside it. This was accomplished through a six-inch pipe exiting through the external plant wall with an elbow and a descending pipe that safely blew off the steam underwater. On the morning of September 11, the steam blast dislodged the elbow and the steam was ejected straight out of the power plant...and right through the window of Boat 74's living quarters.

In that instant, Captain Samuel, wife Nina, and Tommy, were outside the living quarters cooking breakfast and "putting up the hatchets", preparing the boat to offload the coal. John W. Spong (age 13), Samuel W. Spong (age 11), and Sarah A. Spong (age 6) were still asleep in the living quarters when live steam exploded into it. According to family accounts, daughter Mary was at home in Sharpsburg tending to sister Elta.

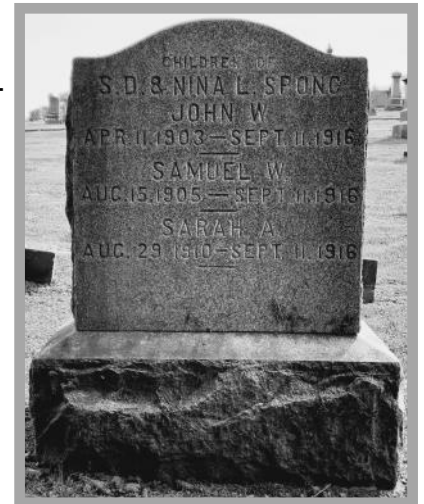
Mother Nina was the first to enter the cabin to save the children; she was scalded but survived.

The September 13, 1916, "The Daily Mail" recorded Captain Spong's testimony at a legal

inquiry, "... 'as my children were asleep, I thought of no danger. I never saw steam turned on there before. My wife and I had just gotten up to prepare breakfast and put some steak on the stove. Then came burning steam and more steam, literally cooking my children to death. I started to go to their assistance when my oldest boy, Tommy, jerked me back and handed them out to me. Tommy had to come out one time himself to avoid suffocation. There was one little fellow we couldn't get. He came running to the window crying bitterly for help.' Spong broke down as he concluded."

The Capitol Traction Company escaped liability.

Next day, "The Daily Mail" recorded, "It was a most pathetic scene when the three little coffins were lowered into the graves. The funeral was exceptionally large. Hundreds of residents of the community witnessing the burial could not control their feeling and were forced to give vent to sorrow. The grief stricken father, Captain Samuel Spong attended the service, but the almost frantic mother was compelled to lie in her bed in a Washington hospital and bear her grief practically alone. The bodies now lie in the Mountain View Cemetery near Sharpsburg."



Children's resting place,  
Mountainview Cemetery

Captain Spong never returned to navigating the canal.

Tommy Spong lived the remainder of his days in Our Small Place, departing this life in 1977. His story here is one of quiet contribu-

tion to Sharpsburg. He made a living repairing shoes and had a shop here in town. He was an important part of our first fire company (1943) and installed an underground water



Tommy Spong, William Bender, Alan Leatherman, and Flavious Latta with Sharpsburg's first fire engine.

tank for firefighting at Sharpsburg Elementary School. To many town residents who grew up here, Tommy was a constant feature out and about among us, as you can see in the photos.

Ms. Carolyn Rohrer Shaw, who was raised here and still lives nearby, descends from the Spong family and kindly offered this remembrance:

"I am most proud to be a Spong family descendant. Sharpsburg was founded in 1763. The Spongs are believed to be among the first settlers with the first Spong property deed recorded in 1766. It is not known for sure how long before the deed recording the Spongs that they resided in Sharpsburg.

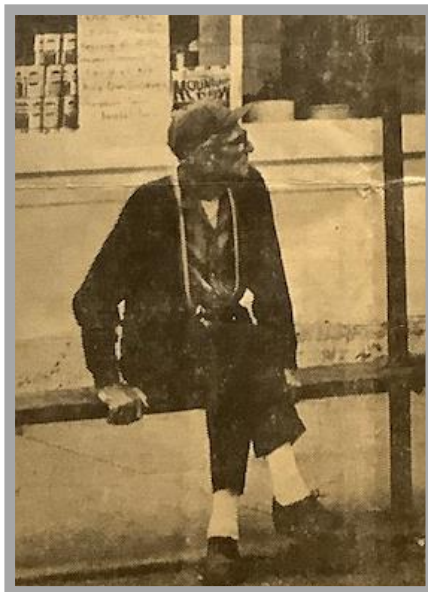
The Spong family tragedy was unknown to me until I was a young adult. There was rarely any family discussion of it. I learned of the tragedy when my grandmother, Mary Spong Rohrer O'Rourke (Sam Spong's oldest child) took me aside one day to show me and give me three very old photographs that were taken some time in 1916. That was only the second time I heard mention of the Spong children and the horrific accident

on the Canal on September 11, 1916. She gave me the photos when she was in her 90s, and she was passing them to me to perpetuate the story and memory of her brothers and sister as they lost their young lives in one of the most tragic accidents in C&O Canal history.

I gave copies of the photos to the C&O Canal historians more than 20 years ago. Much to my disappointment, I believe they have yet to use them in any historical displays. When I inquired, I was always told budgetary issues kept them from yet being used. I have not inquired of them in the last 6 years or so. I also shared copies of them with the Sharpsburg Historical Society and the Sharpsburg Museum of History. The Canal has long published the story of the Spong children of Sharpsburg on its website. As far as I know, they have not yet used the photos. Much information also surfaces after Googling "The Spong Children of Sharpsburg."

My grandmother, Mary, the oldest Spong child was not on the boat the day of the accident but was at home in

Sharpsburg tending her youngest sister, Elta, the day of the accident. Grandma always told me that young Samuel Willard (called Willard by the family) was a sweet, kind boy and she named my father, her



Tommy Spong about the town down by Kretzer's Market

second son Willard in her brother's memory.

My great uncle, Tommy Spong, was the only Spong family child on the boat that tragic day who survived. I remember him and his wife, Aunt Pauline, well. He was a quiet, remote man. As an adult I learned why his was a solemn life (and by then he had died). I remember well often seeing him at family picnics, sitting on the bench in the square, and sitting with him and my father to watch the horse shows in the field off Chapline and Hall Streets. Aunt Pauline operated an antique shop on Main Street in the smaller stone house near the bank on the square. They had no children. Uncle Tommy was a thin, fragile, hard working man who loved Sharpsburg.

The Spong family descendants are dwindling. My grandmother, a direct Sam Spong descendant, and her children have all died. In my generation are my brother, Pete Rohrer, Kendra Rohrer Harmon, Susan Rohrer and me, Carolyn Rohrer Shaw. There are also some cousins who are the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Elta Spong Crampton as well as great grandchildren of my grandmother, Mary Spong Rohrer O'Rourke.

I am pleased to be the keeper of the original family photos of my great grandfather and his children. I am equally pleased to continue to honor their memory by sharing those photos with Sharpsburg's keepers of history."

- Carolyn Shaw

<sup>1</sup> - A "river lock" is a structure that allows canal boats to depart the canal and navigate on the river. An example of a river lock may be seen nearby Sharpsburg on the C&O Canal between the two visitors' parking lots at Shepherdstown Landing. This lock allowed canal boats to cross to the Shepherdstown side of

the river to transfer cargo to and from the northern Shenandoah Valley. Another example may be seen a mile upstream from Dam #4.

- Editor

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## **From the Mayor and Council Flags, Banners, and Such**

The Town of Sharpsburg reports that American Flags will be displayed throughout Main Street on the day of the Memorial Parade, but due to available space limitations the popular hometown Hero Banners will replace the flags after parade day and remain in place until after Veterans Day.

### **Emergency Representatives at Town Council Meeting**

The Town also wishes you to know that the June 2023 Town Council Meeting will host local emergency organization representatives who will brief the Council and attendees about their operations.

### **Public Hearing Notices**

Mr. Tim Lung, County Zoning Administrator, calls your attention to a Public Hearing Notice regarding Zoning Ordinance Amendment and Notice of Public Hearing (see Pages 13-17).

### **Ed Beeler Receives 2023 John Frye Historic Preservation Award**

Congratulations to Councilman Ed Beeler, 2023 recipient of the prestigious John Frye Historic Preservation Award for his tireless dedication and efforts in helping to preserve Sharpsburg's unique history with the establishment of our town's museum. Under his leadership, the Sharpsburgh Museum of History continues on a successful trajectory with a bright future ahead, and many new and exciting exhibits to come. We are very proud of

all that Councilman Beeler has been able to accomplish and look forward to the museum's next chapter!

The awards, offered by the Washington



County Historical Trust and named for local historian John Frye, are given to people or organizations that have made extraordinary efforts to preserve and protect the history of Washington County through historic rehabilitation, restoration, and advocacy.

- Town of Sharpsburg

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## About the Town

### Welcome New Eagle Scout, Ms. Morgan Schuckman

The Scouts of America, Scout Leaders, and Advancement Committee Members of Scouts BSA Troop 2119 takes great pleasure in announcing that Ms. Morgan Ashley Carlee Schuckman has earned the rank of Eagle Scout on January 16, 2023, the highest honor in the Scouts of America.

Since 2019, when Boy Scouts of America allowed young women into their program, Morgan has been pursuing the Eagle. In the history of Scouting since 1911, only five percent have earned Eagle Scout Rank. It requires hard work, dedication, and service to others. The multi-year journey to the Eagle Scout Award is one of the most involved and transformative experiences a young person can have. Today, only 2.5 percent of Eagle Scouts

are young women and Morgan is honored to contribute to that percentage.

Eagle candidates are exposed to new things through the merit badge program, are given the opportunity to develop confidence in the outdoors, practice leadership tactics, and plan, develop and give leadership to a service project that benefits their community.

For Morgan's Eagle Scout service project, she built a 309 square foot Gaga Pit for her church, Brownsville Church of the Brethren in Knoxville, MD. (A gaga pit is an octagon shaped enclosure for playing gaga, a form of dodgeball.) The project was inspired by her early memories in scouting and her desire to share her experiences with the youth at Brownsville and the surrounding community.

The Scouting experience goes far deeper than one big project for Morgan. She

also earned the distinction of being the one the first female Eagle Scout in Washington County Maryland. She is a founding member of her troop and has served in nearly every leadership position offered within the program.

The Town of Sharpsburg, Scouting Sponsor St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and the Town Crier congratulate Ms. Schuckman on her ac-



Ms. Morgan Ashley Carlee Schuckman, Eagle Scout

complishment and are proud to have her in our community.

From a text submitted by:

- Ms. Tammie Schaller, Advancement Chair, Troop 2119

### **Community Action Council Assistance**

Mr. Matty Ryan, Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Company (SVFC), calls your attention to the Community Action Council monthly visits to the SVFC property. The Council provides help for those in need of food, housing, utility, and transportation assistance. (See poster on Page 19 and Community Calendar, Recurring Events)

### **American Legion Auxiliary Begins Poppy Campaign**

Miss Poppy Adeline Wagner, 6 year old daughter of Donald and Sarah Wagner, presented Sharpsburg Mayor Russell Weaver with a poppy before the May 1 town council meeting.

The presentation was planned to coincide with the upcoming Memorial Day holiday and officially opened the annual poppy campaign



Miss Poppy Adeline Wagner and Mr. Russ Weaver, Mayor

of Antietam Unit 236 American Legion Auxiliary.

Darlene Eichelberger, chairperson, said that help is needed to increase awareness about the

memorial poppy and what it represents: It is handmade by veterans and is a symbol

of the price of war and the sacrifice of millions. For a donation, a poppy is received and worn to honor those who have willingly served and who are currently serving our nation.

- Ms. Ava Gift, American Legion Auxiliary

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## **Community Calendar**

June 5 at 6PM: **Town Council Meeting**  
Sharpsburg Town Hall  
106 E Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782  
301-432-4428

June 7 at 7PM: **Alex Rossino and Gene Thorp, "The Tale Untwisted"**  
Jacob Rohrbach Inn  
<https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn>

June 8 at 3:30PM: **A "Musical" Summer Reading Club Kick Off Story Time**  
Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

June 10: **Women of Sharpsburg, Exhibit**  
Sharpsburg Museum of History  
Sharpsburg Town Hall  
301-800-6877 / [Loveshistory.1866@gmail.com](mailto:Loveshistory.1866@gmail.com)

June 14 at 3PM: **Science Guys - All Together Now: An Electromagnetic Adventure**  
Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

June 14 at 7PM: **Richard D'Ambrisi, "Interpretive Themes For Experiencing Antietam National Battlefield"**  
Jacob Rohrbach Inn  
<https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn>

June 21 at 7PM: **Joe Stahl and Matt Borders, "Civil War CDV's: Clues in the Cartes de Visite"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

June 27 at 7PM: **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**

Sharpsburg Town Hall

301-800-6877

June 29 at 3:30PM **Authentic Community Theatre**

(Four heroes from various super groups attempt to defeat an Evil Villain. Realizing they can't do it alone; they must work together in order to save the day...thus becoming the Unlikely Heroes, we didn't know we needed.

Sharpsburg Park Pavilion

301-432-8825

July 5 at 7PM: **Jim Smith, "The Chambersburg Raid: Jeb Stuart's October 1862 Ride Around the Army of the Potomac"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

July 8: Sharpsburg's **260th Anniversary Open House Event**

Sharpsburg Museum of History

Sharpsburg Town Hall

301-800-6877 / Loveshistory.1866@gmail.com

ry.1866@gmail.com

July 12 at 7PM: **Steve Stotemyer, "Sugar Loaf Mountain: The Overlooked Confederate Intelligence Failure of the Maryland Campaign"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

July 19 at 7PM: **Darin Wipperman, "His Example Will Not be Lost': The 30-day Civil War of Robert Hale Ives, Jr."**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

July 26 at 7PM: **Laura Marfut, "The Battle for Maryland Heights in the Siege of Harpers Ferry"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

August 2 at 7AM: **Kevin Pawlak and Jon -Erik Gilot, "John Brown's Raid: Harpers Ferry and the Coming of the American Civil War, October 16-18, 1859"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

August 9 at 7PM: **Brad Gottfried, "The Antietam Paintings of James Hope"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

August 12: **Antique Exhibit**

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 209 W. Main Street

Sharpsburg Museum of History

301-800-6877 / Loveshistory.1866@gmail.com

ry.1866@gmail.com

August 16 at 7PM: **Sarah Kay Bierle, "John Pelham: Trained at West Point but Aiming Artillery for the Confederacy"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

August 23 at 7PM: **"A Perfect Purgatory': Two Generals' Journeys from Antietam Creek to the Trans-Mississippi"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

August 30 at 7PM: **John Schildt, "The Life Henry Kyd Douglas"**

Jacob Rohrbach Inn

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JacobRohrbachInn)

JacobRohrbachInn

September 15-16: **Antietam Anniversary Weekend, Exhibits**, Sharpsburg Rifle Reunion, and Sharpsburg Citizens During and After the Battle of Antietam Sharpsburg Museum of History

Sharpsburg Town Hall  
301-800-6877 / Loveshisto-  
ry.1866@gmail.com

October 7 Starting at 9AM: **Sharpsburg Days**

Various Venues, Stay Tuned  
Town of Sharpsburg  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg>  
<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>  
301-432-4428

October 14: **Museum's Sixth Anniversary – Exhibit/Public**

Celebration for Volunteers  
Sharpsburg Museum of History  
Sharpsburg Town Hall  
301-800-6877 / Loveshisto-  
ry.1866@gmail.com

October 21 at 12Noon: **Crab Feed**

Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Company  
Cochran's Auction Complex  
433-398-4510 / sharps-  
burgvfc@gmail.com

November 11 at the Eleventh Hour: **Vet-  
erans Day Wreath Laying**

Town Square  
Town of Sharpsburg  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg>  
<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>  
301-432-4428

November 18 from 10AM to 2PM: **Native  
American Artifacts**

Sharpsburg Museum of History  
Sharpsburg Town Hall  
301-800-6877 / Loveshisto-  
ry.1866@gmail.com

November 18 – **Sharpsburg Rifle Reun-  
ion**

Sharpsburg Museum of History  
Sharpsburg Town Hall  
301-800-6877 / Loveshisto-  
ry.1866@gmail.com

December 1 at 7PM: **Sharpsburg Christ-  
mas Tree Lighting**

Town Square  
Town of Sharpsburg

<https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg>  
<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>  
301-432-4428

December (date to be determined):

**Wreaths Across Antietam  
National Cemetery**

Town of Sharpsburg  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg>  
<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>  
301-432-4428

## Recurring Events

Anytime the Library's Open: **Sign up for  
the Summer Reading Club.** Birth to

Adult. Earn prizes for reading!  
Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

April through October, First Saturdays,  
Noon to 4PM: **Tolson's Chapel and  
School Open House**

111 E. High St., Sharpsburg  
Friends of Tolson's Chapel  
Contact: [tolsons.chapel@gmail.com](mailto:tolsons.chapel@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.tolsonschapel.org](http://www.tolsonschapel.org)

Fourth Wednesday of the Month from  
11AM to 1PM: **Community Action Coun-  
cil Assistance**

Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Company An-  
nex  
301-791-4161

First and Third Sundays, April through Oc-  
tober from 10AM to 2PM: **Farmer's Mar-  
ket**

Battleview Market Property  
Twilight Homestead LLC  
[twilighthomesteadllc@gmail.com](mailto:twilighthomesteadllc@gmail.com)

Third Wednesdays of the Month from  
10AM to 11:30AM: **Sharpsburg Writers  
Club**

(For details and location, please contact  
Ms. Heidi Vertrees by personal message)

Any Time the Library's Open: **Art of the Month**

(Each month a different art form will be displayed along with books pertaining to that art.)

Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

First Wednesdays of the month at 1PM

**Adults: Book Share**

Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

**Kid's Zone:** Ages Eight and Up

Sharpsburg Library anytime we are open  
Make a Mini Zen Garden! For tweens and teens!

301-432-8825

Thursdays at 3:30PM: **Storytime**

Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

Second Thursdays every month, **Lion's Club** 7PM, St. Paul's Episcopal Church,  
209 W. Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782

First Saturdays at 10AM: **Lego Club**

Sharpsburg Library  
301-432-8825

## Area Churches

**Christ Reformed Church**

117 West Main Street  
Sharpsburg  
301-432-6182  
Sundays: 9AM

**United Christian Fellowship**

18823 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville,  
MD 21756  
301-432-0110  
Sundays: 8:45AM Fellowship, 9AM Sunday School, 10AM Worship & Children's Church

**Sharpsburg Church of the Brethren**

123 E Main St, Sharpsburg  
Sundays at AM, Sunday School at 10:30AM  
301-432-4944

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

209 West Main Street  
Sharpsburg

301-432-7098

Sundays: 10AM, Sunday School (Second and Fourth Sundays starting September 25)

**Burnside First Church of God**

3904 Mills Rd, Sharpsburg

**Sharpsburg Bible Church**

5134 General Stuart Court, Sharpsburg  
301-432-5309

Sunday School 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM,  
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

## Mayor & Councilpersons

Russ Weaver – Mayor

Jacob Martz – Vice Mayor

Mia Parsons – Council

John Hammond – Council

Ed Beeler-Council

Robbie Waters – Council

Joe Kudla – Council

(Carrie Estell – Town Clerk)

106 East Main Street

PO Box 368

Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782

Phone: 301-432-4428

Fax: 301-432-8990

<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>

[townofsharpsburg@comcast.net](mailto:townofsharpsburg@comcast.net)

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg)

TheTownOfSharpsburg

Zoning Administrator-Tim Lung

[Sharpsburg.md.zoning@gmail.com](mailto:Sharpsburg.md.zoning@gmail.com)

msa 5/29/23 Ver1.0 ATTACHMENTS:



## Mayor & Council of Sharpsburg Meeting Agenda Monday, April 3, 2023

Mayor & Council of Sharpsburg

Meeting Minutes DRAFTED

Monday, May 1, 2023 6 PM

Call meeting to order and pledge-Adeline Wagner, Miss Poppy 2023 led the group in pledge

Minutes from April meeting and April expenses approval-Russ explained the security expense, (camera install in park), Ed motioned, Jake seconded all in favor of April finances. Ed motioned and Joe seconded for April meeting minutes that were emailed for review.

In attendance: Russ Weaver, Jacob Martz, Mia Parsons, John Hammond, Ed Beeler, Tim Lung (via Zoom), Adeline Wagner, Sarah Wagner, Donald Wagner, Darlene Eichelberger, Ginny Wagner, Perry Jamieson, Ava Gift, Chris Vincent, and Carrie Estell

Public Comments-none

Miss Poppy Adeline Wagner gave poppy lapel flowers to all council member and pinned a poppy on the mayor. Ms. D. Eichelberger spoke of the importance of the program.

Zoning-Tim Lung (critical items)

Owner of property at 204 E. Main Street has filed for a Special Exception to establish an owner-occupied short-term rental. Property is Zoned TR. Need to contact BZA members to schedule a public hearing. Also, will need Planning Commission review prior to hearing

Proposed Zoning ordinance text amendments first reading on storage containers, fences/walls and the definition of a block as it pertains to the number of short-term rental places. A few months ago, mayor and council put a temporary moratorium on storage containers; this will expire in July. We are on schedule as the first reading is tonight. The Planning Commission met and approved of the amendments that were provided to council. The second reading will take place at June's meeting. Mid-May we will publish, (Facebook, Town Crier and Post Office flyer), to get residents the information. John asked about a survey of property before putting up a fence. The price to research this would make town building permits not very financially friendly. The town building permit is 35\$ and Tim discusses where a fence can go and could make site visits if necessary. There is a disclaimer on our permit application. The council should thoroughly read through the amendments and get back to Tim by May 15th so these can be published for public review.

Prepared draft Zoning Ordinance text amendments for regulation of portable storage containers as requested by the Mayor & Council. Also drafted text amendments to re-insert language regarding fences and walls, and established a definition of a "block" for use in the Short-Term rental section of the Ordinance. Planning Commission met and has forwarded a recommendation of approval with minor grammatical corrections. First reading of the amendments tonight with final hearing at the June Council meeting.

Received a Zoning certificate and sign permit application for a soap and candle business at 100 E. Main Street. Holding application for verification of change of use from the County and payment of the 35\$ permit fee.

Received a response from Wash Co Public Schools regarding the drainage issues affecting adjoining property in the Town: "Our solution for this includes constructing a rain garden and planting trees in the affected area. The selected trees will be of varieties that do well in wet conditions and/or soak up as much water as possible - river birch, willow oak specifically. I have other work onsite that I'm going to package with this as it's similar in nature. I am aiming to have this out for a quote by the first week of May and awarded shortly after. We may have to wait until the fall to plant trees, depending on the weather." Washington County school board took the issue seriously and are trying to fix it in a timely fashion.

Have been in contact with State and County agencies regarding any permitting requirements for the Big Spring wall restoration project. Will be scheduling a pre-application field meeting with an MDE representative to discuss the project and any applicable permits.

Received a building permit application from T-Mobile for a cell antenna on the County Water Tanks. Also received an inquiry regarding the process for removing an existing antenna from the water tank.

Received and reviewed building permit applications for an above ground pool at W. Chapline St. and rooftop solar panels at W. Main St.

Have been following up on several tall grass/weed complaints. Suggest placing a reminder in the Crier, the Town Website and FB page about keeping property maintained.

Issued a notice to trim trees to correct an intersection sight distance problem on property at 120 Church St. 30 days to comply or trees will be trimmed by the Town and charged to the Property owner.

The Planning Commission should meet to discuss and approve the annual report required by the Md. Dept of Planning.

#### Mayor's Message

Quote of the day: President Reagan: Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out.

Active communities are healthy communities – Community Development Commission Strong communities, the two programs that the town sponsored in April were well received and well attended, (Story Walk ribbon cutting and Fishing Rodeo).

Hydrant testing and homeowner's insurance-there was testing of all town's fire hydrants and some were inoperable and will be fixed. If your house is close to a hydrant, your homeowner's insurance could be discounted.

#### Mayor's Report

Wells-received County response to our submission. After council approval we will sign agreement and well bids may start as soon as this week.

Town Hall-Still having serious plumbing issues. Flowers planted today. John suggested reaching out to a different plumbing company and will setup a meeting with Willard Plumbing.

Community Park- Great book walk session Saturday April 22. Still have not heard from POS about \$ awards.

Historic Park-waiting for word from POS on funding. FSA is on hold for engineering work and the Wayside exhibit workshop is pending as well. Develop a "Wayside Exhibit Proposal" which identifies for each wayside display the topic, theme, location, base style, direction of view, and preliminary list of proposed graphics, images, artwork, or maps.

Big Spring-Signed contract for stone work. Waiting funding announcement. Have approach for rerouting water.

Boyer House-Hosting May 3 meeting with key county executives, SHAF and State historic preservation representatives.

Streets & General Maintenance-List of projects for rest of FY2022 provided by Joe to be worked off and looking at asphalt options

Planning-Time to kick off comprehensive. Looking for a resource to help. Be actively integrated into and critiquing the County comprehensive plan

Council reports (written reports, need for: financial approval, council input or for council to know)

John Hammond-nothing to report, would like to discuss well agreement

Mia Parsons-Trees ordered from Sunny Meadows, planting will be this month

Jacob Martz-

Reviewed security incident, identified culprit

Portable Restroom moved to be viewed by security cameras

Memorial Day ceremony and parade-82 units in parade, presold 39 parade books, received permission from FAA for flyover of military aircraft, requesting a flight of C17s from Martinsburg, received permit from MDOT for road closures, assembled and prepared new flags and flag poles for Main Street, new barricades ordered and received. This year committee will create a remembrance table. Next committee meeting will be tomorrow night @ 6 p.m.

Jake discussed a small sign noting public parking lot. He also brought up bike racks and signage for; Mia and Russ do not want more signs. Suggestion of Facebook post and website bike rack information was suggested. Russ suggested Jake to get an idea together for the next meeting.

Ed Beeler-Attendance: 131 for April. Donation: one wooden box belonging to M.E. Snively, Sharpsburg Livery and also had Antietam Station on the box given by Don Cable. The town's collection is being cataloged, accessioned with numbers assigned. Youth Day, April 22nd 9 youth and 9 volunteers. In May the museum will have a float in the town's parade and June will be Women of Sharpsburg with exhibits, demos, talks throughout the day

Robbie Waters-not present submitted electronically-fishing rodeo was a great town event, about 160 folks came out and 78 kids registered, an increase from last year. Mowing season off to a good start. Story Walk is fully installed and operating. RW Properties will be donating mulch for left side of the walk. Planted flowers in front of Town Hall.

Joe Kudla-

Signage for tractor trailers-signage will reflect HB 1194 so the no parking can be enforceable

30 minutes at June's meeting for disaster preparedness discussion, will invite Fire Chief & representatives from the county and MEA

FSA will have drafted proposal for Antietam & Church roadway fix by the end of the week.

Spoke with MDOT, their research yielded: five accidents at the corner of 65 & Main r in 4 years, (three-rear ends for car turning into town from S or N Church, one a car swinging to wide from 34 (Sharpsburg side) to 65 and hitting the curb & one car rear ending another at the South side of Church at the stop sign). MDOT feels this is significant and indicated that we have enough signage and the presence of the fire hydrant to have 70 feet of visibility. On the 200 E Main Street side we have a no parking sign at 25 feet up. Ms. Bea Gregg has her drain spout attached to it with a hydrant just above. On the Lutheran Church side, we have 70 feet visibility now; one issue in that there is a handicap parking sign on the church. MDOT will research to get this changed to rescind the right as it is not used as a church. Once we get this letter, we can attach it to a town letter-head letter to the owner to have the sign removed. This will ensure that we have 70 feet of visibility. In the near future, painting the curbs. I am willing to knock on the doors within the no parking area and explain why there can be no parking there.

#### Community Partners

Officer Tracey Peyton (submitted electronically) Checks-Antietam Station-10, Park-11, Ballfield-4, School-10. Four hours of foot patrol, two hours of traffic-issued 2 warnings, lost 2.5 hrs. for court, assisted units with calls outside of town for a firearms assault and hostile driver

Chris Vincent-Antietam Advisory board-next meeting is June 14th and the Visitor Center should open late July.

#### Old Business/ACTIONS:

Well agreement-the county well agreement was discussed among council members. Verbiage on the termination phase/clause was discussed in detail. Limiting water was also discussed in detail. Based on discussion, the following additions will be included and sent back to the county:

Because the Town has no resources to procure and manage this type of contract, we would like the county to lead the process of finding a well drilling company.

We would like the agreement to remain in place for 20 years.

After 20 years, the parties, by mutual agreement, may terminate or extend the agreement for an agreed to period of time. Should no agreement be reached, the agreement automatically extends for 10 years.

The town reserves the right to limit sales outside the Sharpsburg Water System.

#### New Business

2024 Budget submittal-Russ discussed budget packet that was sent out electronically to all council members. He highlighted areas and suggested all council members to read over. Carrie stated that if anyone had any questions, she would answer when she's in the office. Russ will send out excel sheets to everyone, one report was saved in landscape and would be better viewed in portrait. Council will meet to draft a FY 24 budget on May 18th and dinner will be ordered.

Mia motioned for adjournment, Joe seconded all were in favor, meeting adjourned at 8:12

Next meeting will be Monday, June 5th



**Town of Sharpsburg**

106 East Main Street  
Sharpsburg, MD 21782  
Phone: 301-432-4428  
<http://sharpsburgmd.com/>

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

### TOWN OF SHARPSBURG, ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Pursuit to Article 11, section 1102 of the Town of Sharpsburg Zoning Ordinance notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Sharpsburg will hold a Public Hearing regarding proposed text amendments to the Town of Sharpsburg Zoning Ordinance. Parties of interest and citizens shall have the opportunity to be heard on **June 5, 2023 at 6pm, Town Hall, 206 E. Main Street, Sharpsburg, MD 21782**

Text of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment is as follows: *see attached sheets*

## Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

ADDITIONS SHOWN AS **BOLD UNDERLINED**. Deletions as ~~strike through~~.

### 201 DEFINITION OF TERMS

*Add new:*

**Temporary Portable Storage Container.** A self-supporting container usually metal-framed, designed and used predominantly for but not limited to storage including any type of prefabricated container which is or resembles a modified tractor-trailer, truck chassis box, or intermodal container including containers know as a storage box, POD, "C" container, or sea container being used for the purposes of storage or other accessory uses. Such containers shall not be considered a permanent accessory building or structure.

### 404 TEMPORARY USES AND STRUCTURES

*Add new:*

#### **D. Temporary Portable Storage Containers**

##### **1. Permit Required**

**The Zoning Administrator may grant a temporary zoning permit for temporary portable storage containers, in any district, for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days, provided the premises shall be entirely cleared of such use within five (5) days after such permit expires.**

##### **2. Permit Extensions**

**One extension of the temporary zoning permit may be granted by the Zoning Administrator for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days, up to a maximum of one hundred eighty (180) days for an individual premises per calendar year. The extension may be approved upon written request if there are no modifications for the use and that no complaints regarding the use have been received. Requests for extension of a permit that involves any use modification or that has been subject of a complaint shall be forwarded by the Zoning Administrator to the Planning Commission for approval.**

##### **3. Site Requirements**

**A temporary portable storage container (container) may be approved subject to the following requirements.**

- a. The use and location are of a nature that it will not adversely affect adjacent properties.
- b. The container may be placed in driveways, prepared surfaces, side yards, or rear yards. Containers shall not occupy the front yard unless approved via hardship.
- c. The container does not require significant or permanent changes to existing topography, vegetation, structures or other site features. The site shall be returned to the same or better condition upon the expiration of the permit.
- d. The container may be placed only on a property occupied by an existing principle building or have an active building permit.

#### 4. Hardship

- a. In the event of an emergency, including but not limited to, fire, or flood, the container may be established prior to the issuance of a zoning permit.
- b. The Zoning Administrator may waive the permit fee based on hardship.
- c. The Zoning Administrator may grant additional time extensions based on hardship upon written request and the approval of the Planning Commission.

### 406 "TR" TOWN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

#### C. Accessory Uses and Structures:

#### 8. Temporary Portable Storage Containers subject to the requirements of Section 404 D.

### 407 "TC" TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

#### C. Accessory Uses and Structures:

#### 9. Temporary Portable Storage Containers subject to the requirements of Section 404 D.

## PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS

Additions shown as **Bold and underlined**. Deletions as ~~strike through~~.

*ADD NEW:*

### **SECTION 522 FENCES AND WALLS**

**No fence or wall shall be constructed in front of the front lot line or any public sidewalk or right of way. No fence or wall on or parallel to a side lot line or rear lot line shall exceed six (6) feet in height above the natural grade; and no fence or wall on or parallel to a front lot line shall exceed four (4) feet in height above the natural grade. Any fence or wall shall be constructed of conventional fencing materials.**

*AMEND:*

SECTION 406 C. 3.

3. Fences, wall and landscaping subject to traffic visibility requirements and provisions of section 504.  
**Fences and walls subject to provisions of Section 522.**

*AMEND:*

SECTION 407 C. 3.

3. Fences, wall and landscaping subject to traffic visibility requirements and provisions of section 504.  
**Fences and walls subject to provisions of Section 522.**

*AMEND:*

### SECTION 520 SHORT TERM RENTALS

- A. 15) Bed and Breakfast and Short Term Rental Caps: The number of Bed and Breakfasts and Short Term Rentals is limited to a total of eight (8) in the town of Sharpsburg and two (2) or less **fewer** per block. **For the purpose of this Section, a block shall be defined as; an area containing that property fronting on both sides of a section of street that lies between two intersecting or cross streets.**



**Town of Sharpsburg**

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**

**June 27, 2023**

**Town Hall, 106 East Main Street, Sharpsburg, MD at 7:00 p.m.**

**DOCKET NO. BZA-23-001:** An appeal was made by Virginia Scrivener for a Special Exception to establish a short-term residential rental (STR) use in an existing owner occupied single family dwelling and, owned by the applicant and located at 201 West Main Street, zoned TR-Town Residential.

\*\*\*\*\*

Pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Law, notice is hereby given that the deliberations of the Board of Zoning Appeals are open to the public. Furthermore, the Board, at its discretion, may render a decision as to some or all of the cases at the hearing described above or at a subsequent hearing, the date and time of which will be announced prior to the conclusion of the public hearing. Individuals requiring special accommodations are requested to contact Carrie Estell, Town Clerk at 301 432 4428 no later than June 20, 2023. Any person desiring a stenographic transcript shall be responsible for supplying a competent stenographer.

Applicants shall have ten (10) minutes in which to present their request and may, upon request to and permission of the Board, receive an additional twenty (20) minutes for their presentation. Following the Applicant's case in chief, other individuals may receive three (3) minutes to testify, except in the circumstance where an individual is representing a group, in which case said individual shall be given eight (8) minutes to testify.

For extraordinary cause, the Board may extend any time period set forth herein, or otherwise modify or suspend these Rules, to uphold the spirit of the Ordinance and to do substantial justice.

Timothy Lung  
Zoning Administrator

*Community Action Council (CAC) comes  
to the Sharpsburg Vol. Fire Co.*



## ***Assistance Available***

***Food-Housing-Utilities-Transportation***



***Fourth Wednesday of Every Month***

***11AM-1PM (Walk-in)***

***At the Sharpsburg Vol. Fire Co. Annex  
at 110 West Chapline St. in Sharpsburg, MD***

***For Details Call 301-791-4161***

***Together helping those in our community in need.***