



- Sidewalks. The mayor noted the Waverly project is being broken into two separate parts (triangle to Montrose, and Montrose to Penn Place).
- Archives. Due to councilmember Grande’s absence, there was no update.
- Stormwater management on Rokeby. This was not on the agenda, but it was noted that there are still some bits and pieces of the second phase of the project to be completed.
- Strathmore redevelopment at St. Angela Hall. Councilmember Bennett provided the scheduled dates for the upcoming county hearings on the redevelopment plans, December 16 and 27. But note that later in December the county government postponed the second hearing.

At this point, the meeting was about to conclude with the monthly town manager’s report. However, three additional items that would normally have come up under either presentations by residents or new business popped up. The first of these was the timing of the work session to discuss the budget for the next fiscal year. Late January appeared to be the preference of the councilmembers in attendance.

The second was a dialogue with a developer who attended the meeting to get clarification on a construction project he has in town. He is a resident of DC, and is demolishing most of a (long abandoned) house on Strathmore Avenue preparatory to constructing a new house. He had begun the demolition, but was served with a stop work order from the town because he had not obtained a permit from either the town or Montgomery County. The mayor and councilmembers instructed him on the proper procedures.

The third unscheduled item was the mayor’s announcement that she had been told by the postmistress that her part-time staff was removed by postal authorities and she is running the post office by herself in this busy holiday season. Councilmember Schulp noted that when a somewhat similar situation arose several years ago, the solution was to contact Senator Chris Van Hollen’s office. Your reporter adds that this contact then happened shortly after the council meeting, and the situation was at least partially resolved.

Finally, the meeting got to the town managers’ monthly report, the first for interim manager Matthews. There were no surprises in the report, and the meeting came to its conclusion.

Ed Lincoln  
Bugle Reporter

## Town Manager’s Notes

As your Interim Town Manager for the next few months, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Barb Matthews, and I have worked in local government for 35 years. I chose to work in local government management as it’s the level of government where I felt I could best contribute and make the most impact. When I get asked what I do for living, I often say that I’m in the “quality of life” business, as that’s the mission of local government at its very heart.

I spent the first half of my career working in various municipalities in the State of Missouri. In 2004, my husband and I, who are both natives of Virginia, decided it was time to move back east to be closer to our families. I was fortunate to be selected as the City Manager for Takoma Park, Maryland and to serve that community from 2004 - 2012. I subsequently worked for the cities of Rockville and Westminster, the county seat of Carroll County, Maryland.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Interim Town Manager. My pledge to all of you is to do my very best to uphold the high standards of customer service for which the Town of Garrett Park is known, and to carry out the vision of the Mayor and Town Council during my tenure. One of my top priorities will be to support the Mayor and Town Council in crafting the Town’s fiscal year 2023 budget.

**Holiday Gifts.** Thanks to all who’ve already contributed to the holiday gift for the crew members who take away our trash, recycling, and yard waste. If you’d like to contribute, please mail your check to the Town of Garrett Park, PO Box 84, or drop it off at the Town Office. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Garrett Park with “Holiday Fund” written as the memo. The Town will send each contributor an acknowledgement and will see that the funds are properly distributed to the four crew members. The Town Office will collect contributions through mid-January.

### Important Dates

- December 31 – Town Office closed for New Year’s Day
- January 8 – Large Item pick-up
- January 10 – Town Council Meeting
- January 17 – Town Office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### Regular Reminders:

**Communication.** Please sign up for the resident’s portal, as it provides the Town Office with one more way to reach you. Register at [www.garrettparkmd.gov/residents-portal](http://www.garrettparkmd.gov/residents-portal) New to town? Contact the Town Office at (301) 933-7488. We’ll get you up to speed with what you need to know about living in Garrett Park.

**Permits.** A Garrett Park building permit is required when a new structure is to be built, including houses, additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. The Town permit is in addition to the required Montgomery County permit. Complete your Garrett Park permit application and submit along with your plat and drawings to the Town Office before requesting a County permit. Permit applications and payment can be completed online at [www.garrettparkmd.gov/government/operations/permits](http://www.garrettparkmd.gov/government/operations/permits).

**Yard Waste & Leaves.** Yard waste is collected on the first Monday of each month now through February. Leaves are collected weekly, as early in the week as possible. Place leaves in rows streetside of the curb, and remove sticks, rocks, trash, and other



debris that can damage the machinery. Shredded leaves or grass clippings should be bagged and put out for the regular yard waste collection on Mondays. Rain or inclement weather will delay leaf collection. Parents, please discourage your children from playing in leaves along the curb.

As always, please reach out to the Town Office with any questions or concerns. You can reach me at (301) 933-7488 or at [managerbarb@garrettparkmd.gov](mailto:managerbarb@garrettparkmd.gov).

Wishing all of you a wonderful 2022!

Barb Matthews,  
Interim Town Manager

The *Garrett Bugle* is a newsletter publication by the Citizens Association of Garrett Park and published 10 times a year. Publication is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$25 per family or \$15 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896. Articles, ads and other content for the *Garrett Bugle* can be emailed to [garrettbugle@gmail.com](mailto:garrettbugle@gmail.com)\*

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\*Editor and staff reserve the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned Letters to the Editor will not be printed.



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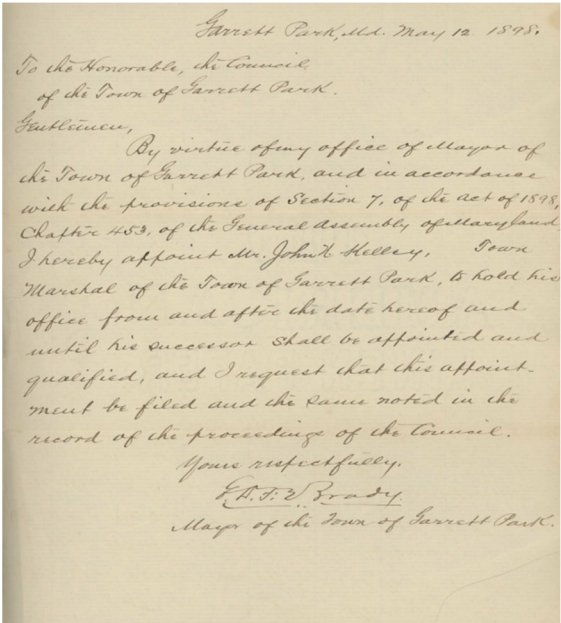
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From the Town Archives



1898 Appointment Letter - from the Trankovich Collection, Town Archives

Whenever I go through old documents in the Archives, certain names always pop up—Defendorf, Brady, Putnam, and Kelley. The last one, John N. Kelley is especially common, but this makes sense given the prominent role Kelley played in the town’s early history.

Kelley first purchased property in Garrett Park in 1890. Like other early investors, he didn’t stop there, though; over several years, he bought property and sometimes built homes, which he then sold. When Garrett Park incorporated in 1898, Mayor Eugene Brady appointed Kelley as Town Marshal—one of three first official appointments. As Marshal, Kelley’s primary responsibility was to enforce town ordinances, in particular Ordinance 14, which required the removal of “nuisances,” such as weeds and underbrush, that were considered health hazards.

In the 1900 census, Kelley was identified as Superintendent of Garrett Park, and he continued to serve as Town Marshal. Town financial records and miscellaneous receipts show that Kelley (and/or his son, also John N. Kelley) also provided various services to the town, such as hauling stone, lighting gas lamps, and selling dry goods.

Despite his apparent success, Kelley did not have an easy life in Garrett Park. In December 1906, his brother, Thomas A. Kelley, an engineer, died in the horrific Terra Cotta train wreck on the Metropolitan



Branch of the B&O Railroad. Five years later, just a month after he was elected to the Town Council, Kelley lost his wife to pneumonia and, a few short months later, his 22-year-old daughter to suspected heart disease. Kelley remarried in 1913 and remained in Garrett Park where he continued to serve the community until his sudden death at age 57 in January 1919.

Claire McDonald, MLIS  
Town Archivist  
Garrett Park, MD  
Archives@GarrettParkMD.gov  
<https://garrettparkarchives.omeka.net/>

## G.I.V.E.S.

Happy New Year from [G.I.V.E.S.](#)! Reflecting on the past year brings a word to mind...**gratitude**. Despite the continued pandemic, G.I.V.E.S. had a remarkably productive 2021 setting an all-time **annual collection record** fueled in part by several large year-end donations and the Soup Supper fundraiser in November. Of course, your donations throughout the year are the foundation of our success and the organizations we support, [Stepping Stones Shelter](#) and [Thrive DC](#), are enormously appreciative. On their behalf, **THANK YOU!**

In addition to monetary collections, the G.I.V.E.S. coat drive yielded two very large bags of more than 75 warm coats that we delivered to Thrive DC. Again, a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all who donated.

Wondering what to give a friend who has everything? **G.I.V.E.S. Gift Donation Cards** are available by mail any time of year. Send us your donation and we'll mail one back to you.

In-person collections at the Post Office will continue on January 8<sup>th</sup> and on the first Saturday of each month. If you miss us then, please consider using the G.I.V.E.S. can on the table in the post office when you stop by to pick up your mail. Or you can send donations to G.I.V.E.S. at PO Box 331, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

If you've volunteered to join [G.I.V.E.S.](#) and host Saturday morning collections, you should have received an email last month with a link to a Sign-Up Genius. Please choose the date/time that works best for you in 2022. And if you haven't joined G.I.V.E.S. but are looking for a way to become involved in your local community, help others less fortunate, and can spare **JUST 2 HOURS PER YEAR**, please contact us at [garrettparkgives@gmail.com](mailto:garrettparkgives@gmail.com).

Wishing you all a healthy and happy 2022!

Molly Shuck and Natalie Grande (Co-Presidents) and  
Therese Keating (Treasurer)

## Garrett Park Women's Club

Congratulations to everyone from the Garrett Park Women's Club. Garrett Park is more beautiful than ever this year.

All houses were winners, some deserved special recognition:

January 2022

- Best House: Hicks 10700 Montrose
- Best Yard: Maloney 11118 Kenilworth
- Best Door/Window: Harris 10909 Kenilworth
- Best Porch: Caposino 4401 Oxford
- Kids Award: Fogarty 10701 Kenilworth
- Most Creative: Welker 10705 Weymouth
- Most Charming: Whiteside/Rodriguez 4700 Waverly
- Best Trees: McClintock 4405 Oxford
- Mayor's Award: Wright/Vrana 10937 Montrose
- Elves Award: Brocato 10918 Montrose

Thank you all for bringing bright cheer to our lives!

Signs will be retrieved after 1/6/22. Please let me know if you take your display down before this time, I will come retrieve sign and any lights, extension cords from GPWC. If you were not home when we popped by to place award and you would like a spot light, I would be happy to drop one off for you.

CHEERS!

Lillian Del Priore  
**Lillian Del Priore**  
President | GP Women's Club

## Pictures from the GP Tree Walk

Over fifty neighbors, including some of our youngest turned out October 24 to listen to Town consulting arborist Phil Normandy discuss the origins, benefits, and maintenance responsibilities for the Town's arboretum.



Pictures taken by Gerilee Bennett

# Bugle Town Governance Series

This is the third installment of the *Bugle* Town Governance Series. These essays, written by experienced citizens of Garrett Park, are designed to answer fundamental questions about the role of your local government, how it fits within the larger county, state and national governmental functions, and how you, as citizens of Garrett Park, can get involved. If you are interested in reading about a topic (or if you want to author a topic), or if you have a comment about what you read, please do not hesitate to email the Bugle.

We continue with the third of a three-part series on the Garrett Park budget by Chris Keller and Ken Schwartz. Chris (Clermont) is a former mayor and councilmember, having served as mayor from 2008 to 2012 and councilmember from 1995 to 2005. Ken (Clermont) has also served as councilmember and has worked his entire career within the Office of Management and Budget.

## The Garrett Park Budget Moving Forward

This is the last of a three-part series on the Garrett Park budget. Previously, we outlined the budget-development process and how the Town’s income and outlays develop over the fiscal year. After year’s end, an independent auditor examines the Town’s business records; these audits regularly confirm that the Town’s bookkeeping is accurate and the Town is generally in good financial shape. Auditors do not, however, opine on budgeting policies – such as how the Town estimates its income or spends its money.

Last month we noted that the Town has applied unduly conservative (pessimistic) policies in preparing its annual budgets. In the past five years alone, unbudgeted surpluses have totaled \$1.5 million. The significant drawback of this practice is that the Town lacks a full understanding of whether it has the financial capacity to carry out expensive projects such as the renovation of Town Hall.

Assuming the Town continues to run sizable, unplanned budget surpluses, what options can be considered for the funds? Although cutting taxes is a possibility, we believe a more responsible course is to enhance the capital budget. The current balance of funds in the Town’s capital budget is healthy but would be rapidly depleted if the Town undertakes expensive projects concurrently – e.g., road improvements and Town Hall renovation. Recent practice has been to simply “park” surplus funds in the capital budget without a clear plan of how and when they will be spent.

We have not mentioned increasing the operating budget because it has already risen 53% in the last 5 years; the FY2022 budget provides another 11% increase. Thus, while modest increases might be appropriate, large additions to the operating budget seem unwarranted.

Finally, we should mention the \$1 million in funding that the Town is receiving from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act. Unless those funds are obligated (that is, both budgeted and contractually

committed) by the end of calendar year 2024, they will expire. Although the Town has been slow to advance its efforts in anticipation of the use of the funds, a citizens’ advisory task force is being formed to assist the Town Council in determining the uses of available funds.

The Treasury Department has issued draft guidance regarding the use of ARPA funding. Based on our quick reading of the guidance, it will be difficult for the Town to find a wide array of projects/activities that can be funded. One clearly eligible activity is stormwater improvements, so it appears that the Town can fund much of its necessary stormwater work from ARPA funds. Can other pending capital projects be funded? Perhaps, but it will be a stretch. Among the Treasury guidance is the following sentence: “A general infrastructure project...typically would not be included unless the project responded to a specific pandemic public health need ...”

In conclusion, we recommend the following budgetary courses of action for the Town:

- The Council should make greater efforts to ensure accuracy of the budget estimates. We suggest that a suitable "threshold" is a surplus that does not exceed \$200,000. In the past two years, the estimates were erroneous by \$400 thousand or more each year on an operating budget base of about \$1.3 million.
- In preparing the budget estimates for review by the Council, the Town Manager should resume providing short written explanations of cost and revenue estimates. That will help the Council and residents better understand the underlying data and rationale for the estimates.
- Building on prior Capital Improvement Plans, the Town should articulate an expanded, comprehensive multi-year capital improvement plan backed up with capital budget allotments, as well as a rudimentary five-year operating budget forecast.

We hope that our observations on the Garrett Park budget have been useful!

Don't just take my word for it

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