

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY, MARYLAND

A TOWN "UNITED IN DIVERSITY"



It is my pleasure to present the 2019 Town of Cottage City Annual Report, our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual report, designed to inform our citizens, elected officials and other interested individuals of our town' s activities, progress, challenges and accomplishments last year.

In 2019, the town continued to operate in a fiscally-challenged economy, and our Commission and employees continued to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate rising costs of running a town, while maintaining quality services for our citizens. Even so, the town continued to have one of the lowest tax rates among its peers in the area.

Throughout 2019, our Commission and town employees continued to provide top-notch municipal government, public works, public safety, and quality-of-life services to our citizens and visitors through our customer-centered departments. I invite you to take the time to view the department pages to read their accomplishments.

The town fully utilized all its resources to provide more transparency and accessibility to local government through modern technology. A strategic effort was made to communicate more effectively with the community via our website, social media tools, cable channel, timely publications and Constant Contact blasts, and events. Furthermore, the town's "United in Diversity" continues to be a great place for individuals and families from all walks of life, and we look forward to positive economic and community development that will continue to move us forward.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report. I would also like to thank the dedicated town employees for the tremendous service each provides to the citizens of Cottage City, to our elected officials who provide us with leadership and direction, and to the citizens of the community to whom we are privileged to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Consuella Barbour  
Town Manager

# *Town COMMISSION*

The Cottage City Town Commission consists of four Ward Commissioners and the At-Large Commissioner, all of whom are elected for two-year terms, by the entire electorate on a non-partisan basis for staggered two-year terms. Commissioner elections are held in May. The Commission elects its own Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. This year the officers have been: Ann Marshall Young, Chair; Demetrius Givens, Vice-Chair and Artis Amarché, Secretary.

The Town of Cottage City operates under a modified council-manager form of government. The Town Commissioners set policy, oversee Town business and activities, and hire the Town Manager, who acts as the chief administrative officer of the Town government.

The Town Commission meets in the Town Hall Chamber on the first Tuesday at 6:30 for its work session and second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are broadcast on the Town's local government access cable channel (Verizon channel 28 and Comcast channel 71).

Residents are welcome - and encouraged - to attend meetings. At the beginning of each regular meeting, there is a section during which members of the public may speak to the Commission on any topic.

Significant Events In 2019, the department is proud of the following:

- Passage of \$1.6 million 2020 Budget
- Publishing the Town Code and Charter online
- Grand Opening of Public Works Building
- New Digital LED Information Sign
- Passage of Cell Phone Tower legislation
- Re-Election of Ann Marshall Young as Ward 1 Commissioner
- Election of new At-Large Commissioner Danielle Urey

- Funding 19 Special Events
- Funding 10 Community Enhancement programs
- New Website and Trashcan funding
- Authorization of several new traffic signs to regulate the flow vehicles through the town.

## *Public Works DEPARTMENT*

The Public Works Department is responsible for the daily operation of services and repair and maintenance of town vehicles, property and equipment. The department is primarily responsible for:

- Assisting with special projects
- Street and sidewalk maintenance
- Picking up trash, leaves and other debris from streets
- Watering plants throughout the spring and summer months
- Helping with special events

Significant Events In 2019, the department is proud of the following:

- Completion of the Public Works Building
- Installation of LED Sign
- Completion of the paving wall on Cottage Terrace
- Installation of new Big Belly trashcan at 38<sup>th</sup> and Parkwood Street
- Holding two (2) dumpster days
- Installation of acoustic panels in town hall chambers
- Supporting the Garden and Green team with several projects
- Installation of slope maintenance Liriope project
- Installation of new furniture in town hall
- Town-wide curb painting
- Installation of three (3) new stop signs

- New part-time employee – Mike Reid to assist with the problem of trash and debris that was accumulating throughout the town. This has helped to greatly enhance the beautification of the town.

The Public Works Department is also responsible for general maintenance, contracts management, project management, and custodial services for town owned buildings. These services include but are not limited to: plumbing, HVAC, electrical, landscape, renovation, and repairs. Upcoming projects in 2020 include the installation of new sidewalks and handicapped transitions throughout the town, construction of gazebos at the town hall, possible installation of more Big Belly Trashcans, placement of newly purchased trashcans throughout the town, possible installation of electric vehicle chargers at town hall and possible tree installations.

# *Police DEPARTMENT*

The Cottage City Police Department (CCPD) consists of 4 sworn personnel, 1 sworn part-time personnel, and 1 non-sworn support personnel. The principle responsibility of the Police Department is the protection of people and property through enforcement of criminal laws and traffic regulations. The department also enforces certain local by-laws and provides public education. Code Enforcement services are provided through this department. The department is responsible for responding to calls for service throughout the Town, Code Enforcement, Records Management and red-light camera ticketing services.

## Significant Events In 2019:

- Commencement of the following programs:
  - Business Checks
  - Walk with the Chief
  - Chat with the Chief
- Procurement of new furniture for police and administration offices
- Five (5) Movie Nights
- Cupcake with a Cop
- Holiday Family Night
- National Night Out
- Cottage City Day
- Youth Explorers Program
- Responding to over 665 calls for service

Embracing programs such as Community Policing, Youth Explorers program, Business Checks and other programs allow the CCPD to provide resources and opportunities for citizens. Staff also volunteer their time to participate in numerous programs and charities within the community, as well as Back to School patrols for the school bus routes. The department participates with Port Towns Day, Cottage City Easter Event, Cottage City Block Party, 4th of July Waterfront, Shop with a Cop Program, and delivering food boxes during the holiday season.

## *Administration DEPARTMENT*

The Administration Department consists of the Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Town Attorney and Office Manager. The department is responsible for the day to day administration of the town, human resources, payroll, records management of legislation and codes, paying bills, responding to citizen complaints and concerns, preparation for town meetings, public information, provide timely, accurate and complete administrative support to the Commissioners and financial management.

The Town Treasurer and Town Attorney are contracted positions and work in conjunction with the Town Manager and Commission to address finances and legal issues related to the Town. The Town Treasurer, Mike Lightfield, provided support in getting monthly financial documents prepared, maintenance of accounts, accounting for receipt of revenues, financial reporting and investing funds. The Treasurer maintains the complete official financial records of the Town and prepares other financial records and reports as needed. The Treasurer provides information for the annual audit. Additionally, the Treasurer participates in the preparation of the annual budget. Town counsel is provided by Kevin Best. Frequent and ongoing attention was given to reviewing and or drafting resolutions and ordinances, compliance with Open Meeting laws, various town rules and regulations and a variety of matters including procurement and competitive bid procedures, real estate transactions, code enforcement and litigation claims.

Each year, Maryland requires an audit of the books of accounts, financial records and transactions of all funds of the town by independent certified public accountants selected by the Commissioners. The Department is pleased to report that it has once again successfully completed a financial audit for the fiscal year with outstanding remarks. The town has no bonded general fund debt, a remarkable accomplishment achieved by sound financial management and through the work of the dedicated Commissioners.



Significant Events In 2019, the department is proud of the following:

- Passage of 2020 Budget
- New Computers
- Finishing marketing brochure
- Worked on Updating Personnel Manual
- Hosted Port Towns Dinner
- Published 12 Newsletters and 1 special insert
- Applied for the following grants:
  - Technical Assistance Grant for Strategic Planning (not funded)
  - Keep Maryland Beautiful (awaiting response)
  - CDBG 2019 – Sidewalk Improvements (Awarded \$163,000)
  - CDBG 2020 -- (awaiting response)
  - Maryland Smart Energy Communities – Electric Vehicle (awaiting response)
  - Kaboom! Playground equipment – (not funded)
  - State Aid for Police Protection (awaiting response)
  - Chesapeake Bay Trust – Community Clean up (awaiting response)
- In 2019, the Administration Office: prepared 24 agendas, 24 sets of minutes and 12 meeting action items; published 5 legal advertisements; drafted 7 ordinances and 11 resolutions.
- Staff attended election board training
- Staff maintained the community calendar & website

## *Finances and Community Services*

In 2019, the department continued its tradition of excellence in properly managing the town's funds, while providing the highest level of customer service to citizens. The Town maintains a surplus of funds while keeping tax rates low.

The majority of General Government Revenues is generated by the collection of Property Taxes. These revenue sources tend to be relatively stable; however, projections of revenue for the upcoming year are extremely conservative. The general outlook for Cottage City has improved steadily over the past several years and it is anticipated that growth in real estate, industry, and development will continue to rebound as Cottage City emerges from the negative effects of the economy.

The General Government Expenditures group is broken down into the following five areas:

- Capital Outlay Costs associated with new infrastructure and long-lived equipment.
- Economic Development Costs associated with the administration of building rehabilitation, ordinance enforcement, grants and public information.
- General Government Costs associated with the administration, legislative and financial aspects of town business.
- Public Safety Police protection.
- Public Works Costs associated with street and road maintenance.

The Town continues to believe that community is important and shows this by sponsoring a number of events throughout the year. Successful events this year included:

- Black History Month Celebration
- Women's History Month Trip
- African American Museum Trip
- Earth Day Cleanup

- Cottage City Day
- Dueling Creek Cleanup
- Port Towns Youth Council support
- Breakfast with Santa
- Jingle and Minge
- Paint and Sip
- Ward 4 Block Party
- National Night Out
- Port Towns Day support
- Senior Harvest Dinner
- Halloween Party
- American Indian Festival Trip
- Hispanic Heritage Trip
- July 4<sup>th</sup> support
- Seniors Camp

In closing, the staff and Commissioners want to thank all the members of our community for the trust that they have placed in us to allow us to be stewards of your resources and for the valuable support and input you have provided in helping to make the Town of Cottage City the best place to live. The future looks bright and we know that because of all of you, Cottage City will be ready to address all future challenges and opportunities.