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Issue
SEVEN

January – February 2024

City Newsletter

Informing, educating, and engaging residents of Versailles and Woodford County, Kentucky

Versailles Conducts a Walk Audit

Actually, two! On both November 21st and December 2nd, more than a dozen volunteers, elected officials, and city staff gathered to walk downtown streets, take pictures, and fill out checklists that will result in a final report and score from the state's Department of Public Health's Division of Prevention & Quality Improvement on Versailles' walkability. The walk audit training, materials, and guidance and the report were all done at no cost to the City.

The intent of a walk audit is not to quibble about an occasional crack in a sidewalk but to gather input on a community's infrastructure needs and investments. In addition to sidewalks, streets, and crossings, audit participants observed driver behavior, how "pleasant" the walk was, if there were places to sit, route accessibility for people with mobility challenges, etc.

The streets the audit participants walked were:

- North and South Main downtown
- Morgan Street; Rose Hill Avenue; Elm Street; Broadway Street; and Frankfort Street
- Lexington Road from downtown to O'Reilly's
- Laval Heights and Wilson Avenue

The final report will be completed in January, and we are looking forward to reviewing the results, celebrating our successes, and then moving ahead with prioritizing those areas that warrant improvement. Results and recommendations will be available to the public.



Checking out the intersection at Camden and Elm Street near Kentucky Avenue

Identifying possible trip hazards on N Main Street



Those Smart Water Meters Again!



We've written about the smart water meters in previous issues, but here is a final update. Only 300 smart meters remain to be installed out of about 7,000 total. These final 300 should be in place before summer; they will be installed by city employees rather than contractors because they require some extra work, like meter pits that must be dug up and replaced, meter setters that are under concrete, etc.

It's still early days, but already people have been notified of possible leaks so they can get them fixed promptly before they get a big (surprise!) water bill. Unused water is never credited, so leaks that aren't found for weeks can get very expensive.

Recent Issues with Online Water Bill Payments Explained!

The problem is fixed, so that's the good news, but we wanted to explain what happened with our online water bill payment system late last year. We know it inconvenienced more than a few people.

In October, the city completed the switch from Springbrook's "on-premises" software to its software's "cloud" version. The cloud version has a lot of benefits that are not offered with "on-premises" plus Springbrook is phasing out support and maintenance of "on-premises."

With the "on-premises" version, we had a custom file that we exported each month, sent to our mailers (Mail Solutions), and uploaded to our website. When we made the switch to the cloud version, the custom export did not work.

Springbrook's team has had to custom write an export file for the cloud system that will also work for the mailers and website. In November, the website was down and online utility payments couldn't be processed. In December, customers could pay online but the system looked different than normal, and everyone had to enter all their information again.

Now, a new year and a working payment system!



Nonprofit Spotlight: Bluegrass Care Navigators' PACE Program

Bluegrass PACE Care is a Medicare and Medicaid program that provides comprehensive health care services and helps a person live safely in their own home. PACE stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. PACE is available to Medicare or Medicaid recipients aged 55 or older who qualify for a nursing home level of care, who live in the service area of the PACE organization (which includes Woodford County), and who can continue to live independently with the help of PACE services.

Please call 866.4BCN.PACE to see if you or a loved one qualify for the program.



The expert medical care you need
to live safely in
your own home.

As you age, it's no surprise that your healthcare needs will change. But finding the right kind of healthcare is more than just finding the right doctor. It means finding a complete solution to bring you and those close to you the peace of mind you deserve.

Thanks to Bluegrass PACE Care, you can have the comfort of knowing your care is being coordinated by a dedicated doctor, trained nurses and a healthcare team to help you maintain your independence in your own home. Our experts can connect you with whatever specialists you may need, and there are no copayments or deductibles if you qualify (services are 100 percent covered for participants with both Medicare and Medicaid). And Bluegrass PACE Care can even help with everyday tasks, such as transportation, medication delivery, and other needs.



SCAN THIS CODE with your phone's camera to learn more about our services, or reach us at:
866.4BCN.PACE | bgcarenav.org/PACE
TTY: 1.859.687.9410

Did you know that the City of Versailles has 148 employees* -- 111 full-time; 24 part-time and 13 volunteer firefighters?

***This number does not include the Mayor or city council.**

New benches at Rose Crest & the Cemetery Trust Fund!

Benches are hardly the most exciting topic, but a good thing for cities to provide their residents. In this case, they're a way to introduce you to something you might not know about, the Cemetery Trust Fund.

Versailles City Council recently approved the low bid of \$8,478.02 to purchase eight 6-foot armless metal benches (pictured) for the Rose Crest Cemetery Pavilion. These new benches replace shorter wooden ones that were more than 10 years old. These new benches provide more seating for family members and guests at graveside services. City cemetery personnel installed them on December 20th.



What does the Cemetery Trust Fund have to do with the benches?

The benches were paid for with general fund dollars, but it did start a larger conversation that is currently with the city council's Streets, Stormwater and Cemetery Committee.

What is the Cemetery Trust Fund (CTF)? The provision for CTFs was set up by state statute in 1976. The intent of the statute is to allow for the "general care, maintenance, and embellishment" of cemeteries,

both public and private. That way, if a private cemetery – or even a municipality – "goes out of business," the cemetery(ies) would still be maintained.

Where does the money that goes into the CTFs come from? Cemetery owners, whether public or private, pay 20% of their grave sales into their trust funds. To date, Versailles Cemetery has \$388,000 in its trust fund and Rose Crest Cemetery has \$268,000. Remember, the City has been paying in since 1976!

Can cemetery owners use the money in their CTFs to pay for things like benches?

No, the money is restricted for use only if the cemetery owner goes out of business (for future upkeep).

Why does this apply to cities since they rarely, if ever, "go out of business?"

Exactly. This is why the state statute was recently changed to reflect that unlikelihood. Cities – but not private cemetery owners – may now petition the court to leave the trust and put their money into a traditional investment account.

Is this what Versailles is looking at doing?

Yes, the discussion will happen in committee and then brought to the larger council. While it seems like a good idea so the city can have access to non-general fund dollars for cemetery improvements, decisions need to be made on how to continue funding the account; what the dollars can be used (or not used for) specifically; and what percentage or set dollar amount of each fund can be used annually.



Look What's New in Town!

The following "brick and mortar" business recently registered with the City of Versailles...

Joli's Boutique

Retail

467D Wilson Avenue

Upcoming City of Versailles Meetings and Events >>>

Regular City Council Meetings (Everyone welcome)

1st and 3rd Tuesdays (except the first meeting in January!) at 5:30 pm
in council chambers at the Versailles Municipal Building (city hall)

- Wednesday, January 3rd
- January 16th
- February 6th
- February 20th



Regular City Council Work Sessions (Everyone welcome)

2nd Tuesday at 5:30 pm at the Versailles Municipal Building

- January 9th
- February 13th

Holidays (City Offices Closed)

- Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 15th

Community Events (that are supported at least in part by the city)

- Martin Luther King Day Breakfast, First Christian Church, January 15th, 8:30 am

City meetings, work sessions and committee meetings are open to the public. We welcome and encourage you to attend them. You do not have to sign in, say your name, or speak, though if you wish to speak, you may do so during public comment. Public comment is an agenda item at council meetings only.

Downtown Revitalization Project Update!

Lots of changes happening in the Rose Hill parking lot! The most obvious example is the pavilion, which is now under roof. The large openings you see on the sides of the building will be fitted with glass “garage” doors that can be opened and closed. This assures that the pavilion can be at least a three-season venue – spring, summer and fall. The pavilion should be completed by late spring. Work has begun as well on the entertainment stage with the hillside that goes down to the old pool / former police evidence building recently shored up with a special material to support the stage.



If you have specific questions about the project, please contact Downtown Revitalization Committee Chair Ken Kerkhoff at k.kerkhoff@live.com.

No blowing smoke here!

Your Versailles Fire Department is on fire with good news!

The Versailles Fire Department (VFD) was recently awarded a \$286,000 Kentucky Office of Homeland Security grant to aid in the purchase of a “special missions” trailer. (The total projected budget for the trailer is \$358,000.) This trailer will be equipped with tools and materials to aid in search-and-rescue missions in our community and throughout the state in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. Its components are specifically designed to aid in events of structural collapse, heavy equipment rescue, trench rescue, and confined space rescue environments. Another provision of the grant is extensive training for VFD personnel!

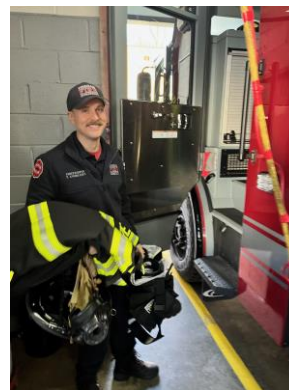


Special Missions Trailer

The VFD is proud to announce that two new career recruits have completed a 16-week in-house recruit academy! Firefighter James Taylor and Firefighter Trenton Andreasen began their shift assignments in November 2023. The department is now fully staffed on its career side. Welcome, James and Trenton!



James Taylor



Trenton Andreasen
(putting on his gear for his 1st shift)

Fire Inspections to begin in 2024!

The VFD will begin implementing commercial property fire inspections in 2024. The goal is to ensure life safety for staff and customers/clients and to ascertain that fire prevention measures are in place in our existing local commercial properties. Property owners / occupants will be sent an informational packet prior to their scheduled inspection date. Packets will contain details about what to expect during the inspection.





**2023-2024 Versailles
City Council >>>**

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From the Mayor

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The beginning of January sometimes seems like a bit of a letdown after the hustle and bustle of the holidays, which I and many others – based at least by the number of people attending the events downtown – really enjoyed. Still, the new year gives us time to reflect on the upcoming 365 days: positive choices we need to turn into habits, negative habits we need to shed, or just getting out of our comfort zones to try new things.

Even if you're not a New Year's resolution maker, I have a simple suggestion for all of us that can improve the safety and quality of life for our community in 2024.

As more people walk downtown and in other parts of the city – to shop or attend an event, to get some exercise, or to get from Point A to Point B – please be mindful of pedestrians (and bicyclists) if you are driving.

For example, pedestrians in the crosswalk always have the right-of-way. If you are turning right, you must allow a person to get across the street (the one you want to turn on to) before making your turn. It's a simple thing that would make a huge difference for walkers and cyclists, sometimes called "vulnerable road users."

Pedestrians, you can help, too, by only crossing at crosswalks and paying attention to your surroundings. If you walk at night, please wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight.

The Versailles Police Department recently put an ad in the *Woodford Sun* reminding people to follow traffic laws. The ad also reported that between July and September 2022, there were 206 collisions, 0 fatalities and 29 injuries. Then, between July and September 2023, the numbers went in the wrong direction to 242 collisions, 4 fatalities and 40 injuries.

No one wants to hurt anyone, and no one wants to get hurt! Together – and only together – we can make 2024 our safest traffic year on record.

Our Best Wishes for a Happy New Year!

Want to get the city e-newsletter directly in your inbox?

Simply click the "Subscribe" button below or email City Clerk Elizabeth Reynolds at ereynolds@versaillesky.com with "Newsletter" in the subject line. The newsletter is completed around the first of every other month, so the next one will arrive on or about March 1, 2024. If you'd rather not get an email, the newsletter will be available on the city's Facebook page and on the city's website. Past issues are archived on the website also.



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