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March – April 2024

City Matters

Informing and engaging residents of Versailles and Woodford County, Kentucky

Meet Nola Serber, the City of Versailles' new Special Projects Coordinator!

My name is Nola Boggs Serber, and I am excited to be stepping into a new role as Special Projects Coordinator for the City of Versailles. I have worked within Woodford County Government for 20 years; the past eight have been with the Woodford County Sheriff's office. What an honor it was to be part of a department that does so much for its community. Before that, I worked for the recycling center.

I am thrilled to see our downtown grow even more and am very humbled that I get to be a part of it.

My husband Jeff and I have three children: Ashley, Eliza, and Preston. Preston, the youngest, is in the Air Force and stationed in Hawaii. Eliza resides in Frankfort. Ashley, the oldest, moved back to Woodford County and purchased a home last year after 16 years in St. Augustine after graduating from the University of Florida. ("She also chose Versailles!") We raised our children here, and it's gratifying that we have a city all generations desire to be a part of.

I have hit the ground running overseeing and planning projects and events. Some will be familiar to you – 4th of July festivities, the Boo Bash, and the Christmas tree lighting and Parade. Others are so new, I don't even know about them yet! With the downtown pavilion project nearing completion, there will be many opportunities to gather and enjoy everything Versailles has to offer.



Nola Serber

good things happening in the community >>>

Need Some Bedtime Reading? We have **REPORTS** for you!



Traffic Study: This study, done by Palmer Engineering, looked at the area at Troy Pike, Falling Springs Boulevard and Old Dry Ridge Road. The final report with recommendations to improve traffic flow as this area develops has been presented to city council and is available to the public.

Walk Audit: In the last newsletter, we told you about a walk audit conducted in late 2023 in the downtown Versailles area. The final report – put together by the state’s Department of Public Health’s Division of Prevention & Quality Improvement (at no charge to the city) – is available to the public.

To view or download these reports, you can visit the city’s website at versailles.klc.org.

Versailles Municipal Building’s (City Hall) **NEW Business Hours!**

These new hours were effective Monday, February 26. The change does not affect the city’s financial “bottom line,” either negatively or positively.

Monday – Thursday
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Friday
8:00 am – 12:00 pm

For your convenience, you can pay your utility bill or business taxes on our website at versailles.ky.org. You can also use the website to sign up for, or discontinue, utility service.

Questions?

Please call 859-873-5436, option 2, during normal business hours.



Nonprofit Spotlight: Blue Grass Community Action Partnership



Located at 200 Park Street in the same building as Woodford County Head Start, our local Blue Grass Community Action Partnership office serves Woodford Countians who qualify with a variety of services, including:

Utility Assistance – Provides help with electric, gas, kerosene, wood, & propane bills

Education Assistance – Provides the financial support necessary to attend a certification program or obtain a diploma. Also provides school supplies.

Employment Assistance – Assists individuals with finding and retaining a job.

Transportation Assistance – Helps individual with scheduling transportation through BGCAP Transit and assists with cost for low-income people on a short-term basis.

Financial Coaching / Income Asset Building – Provide Financial Empowerment classes (budgeting; establishing credit; credit repair; grocery shopping on a budget; how to save for one month’s rent).

House Counseling – Assists individuals with housing applications and connects them with housing programs.

Weatherization – Enables low-income individuals and families to lower their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient through weatherization.

Substance Abuse and Housing Case Management – Assists individuals who are in recovery and/or are homeless.

Goodwill Voucher Program – Assists individuals and families in need of clothing, shoes, household supplies, and furniture.

To see if you or someone you know qualifies, please call the Woodford County BGCAP office at 859-873-8182.

Local Government 101!

Whether you're new to Versailles or Kentucky or have been here your whole life, the makeup of local government can be confusing. While Lexington and Louisville have merged (city and county) governments, the rest of Kentucky have separate city and county governmental entities. Most cities, including Versailles, have a mayor-council structure; other cities have city commissions or a city manager form of government.

Below are some commonly asked questions about our local government.



Who makes up Versailles city government? The city government is made up of six city council members and a mayor. Each council member has one vote. The mayor does not vote except to break a tie. The city of Midway also has a mayor and a six-member council.

Isn't there a county government structure, too? Yes, the county is run by an elected judge-executive (James Kay) and eight magistrates. The magistrates make up a body called the Fiscal Court.

Are there areas where Versailles, Midway and the county work together? Yes. These areas of cooperation, called interlocal agreements, include police services, the Human Rights Commission, 911 service, and the administration and upkeep of Falling Spring Recreation Center.

What are the mayor's responsibilities? Versailles' mayor Brian Traugott is the city's chief executive and oversees the day-to-day running of the city. He hires, disciplines, and dismisses city employees, reports on the condition and needs of the city, and prepares, presents, and administers the annual budget. He also presides at council meetings, among many other duties.

What are the city council's responsibilities? In a nutshell, the council makes laws (called ordinances) for the public's health, safety and welfare and provides sufficient revenue to operate city government by adopting an annual budget and collecting taxes and establishing fees for city services. Obviously, city council members don't personally collect taxes; they set tax rates and authorize certain departments to add a tax to the fees they charge.

Besides attending council meetings, how else can I participate in my city government? You can participate in many ways: vote during elections; attend committee meetings (also open to the public); contact any – or all – city council members if you have a city-related concern or suggestion; or get involved in the work of an ad-hoc committee. (Contact the mayor to find out what these are.) Some of you might be interested in running for office yourself.



Look What's New in Town!

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

La Bodeguita Colombiana
PL High Street, LLC

Grocery
Property Mgmt

197 Frankfort Street Ste A
128 S Locust Street

Upcoming City of Versailles Meetings and Events >>>

Regular City Council Meetings (Everyone welcome)

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30 pm in council chambers at the Versailles Municipal Building (city hall), 196 S Main Street

- March 5th
- March 19th
- April 2nd
- April 16th

Regular City Council Work Sessions (Everyone welcome)

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

- March 12th
- April 9th

Holidays (City Offices Closed)

- Good Friday, Friday, March 29th

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

- None scheduled at this time in March or April

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 have a specific reason to be there, and 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.) You may also submit comments in writing to the city clerk.

Not everything at council meetings will be of great interest, but it's good to see how things are done!



Downtown Revitalization Project Update!

We know it's not pretty yet, but the end is in sight for the downtown pavilion project in the Rose Hill parking lot! Brick and stone are being placed on the farmers market pavilion, and the connected entertainment stage and storage building are under roof (see photos). The caissons (which are like footers) have been constructed for the ADA-compliant walkway, and the steel for the walkway's support beams should be delivered in late March. You'll also be glad to know that the entire parking lot will be resurfaced and restriped, possibly as soon as the end of March or beginning of April.

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



Your Versailles Police Department's Recruiting Efforts are Paying Off!

The Versailles Police Department (VPD) is pleased to welcome two new officers to its staff and two recruits once they complete their 20 weeks (800+ hours) of training at the Department of Criminal Justice Training "Law Enforcement Basic Training Academy" in Richmond! The group includes **Officer Joseph Warth**, a Certified Police Officer who previously worked at the Fayette County Sheriff's Department, and is in field training. **Officer Zachary Traugott** (the mayor's nephew) completed his academy work on February 8th and is also in field training. (Field training with a rotation of three Field Training Officers is 16 weeks and is for all new officers.)

Graduating from the police academy on April 18th are **Recruits Tracy Gates and Ben Dawson**, who will be sworn in as VPD officers and begin their field training.

At the academy, police recruits learn about and apply:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1. Patrol Procedures | 4. Defensive Tactics | 7. Firearms |
| 2. Physical Training | 5. Criminal Law | 8. Criminal Investigations |
| 3. Vehicle Operations | 6. Traffic & DUI | 9. Tactical Responses to Crisis Situations |

The VPD has very high recruiting standards to make sure it hires and retains only the very best officers.



(l-r): Police Chief Mike Murray, Recruit Tracy Gates, Recruit Ben Dawson, Officer Zachary Traugott, and Assistant Police Chief Rob Young.



Judge Sarah Hays Spedding, Officer Joseph Warth, and Chief Murray.

How We're Addressing Homelessness in the Community

During the cold snap in January, there was much attention on social media given to the plight of people in our community without access to adequate shelter. We don't talk about it a lot, but the VPD is aware of most of the people in Woodford County who are regularly unhoused. VPD officers maintain communication with these people and offer assistance in finding food, a warm place to sleep, and other needed services. If they want it (and not everyone does), the VPD can connect them with resources to find a permanent place to live.

In addition, the city and the county earmarked funds to pay for hotel rooms for people without access to shelter during the recent cold weather. The people who were helped included single adults with children who were between places to live as well as persons experiencing chronic homelessness. If you are aware of someone without access to shelter, contact Asst Police Chief Rob Young or Victim Advocate Ellie Castle at 859-873-3126.

From the Mayor

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

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Recently, Versailles made the big screen again with the release of *Hometown Remedy* to the streaming platform Tubi. While this isn't the first movie filmed primarily in Woodford County, what makes this movie unique is that the fictional town in the movie retained the name "Versailles," and kept the name of local businesses where filming took place, including Callie's and the Amsden Coffee Shop.

We are always happy to try to accommodate requests to film movies and commercials in Versailles. It's extremely flattering that producers and directors want to incorporate our city as a backdrop and our citizens as extras. I look forward to working with even more production teams as Versailles and Woodford County become better known within the film industry as a place that welcomes their presence.

In the meantime, if you haven't yet watched *Hometown Remedy*, I would encourage you to do so. Downloading Tubi onto my smart TV was simple, and it was well worth it to watch this fun movie! The citizens of Versailles deserve a pat on the back for making this place an idyllic location to film.

Stopping by city hall soon? Say hello to Nola Serber, our new Special Projects Coordinator! We are thrilled to have her join us. With spring right around the corner and the new pavilion area almost completed, there will soon be even more to do in downtown Versailles!

HAPPY SPRING!

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 May 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.



City of Versailles
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