

Town Council public meeting regarding the Black Eyed Susan Today at 4

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 08/25/2020

LEONARDTOWN, Md. - Today September 14, 2020, at 4:00 p.m., at Town Hall is the Town Council meeting regarding the Black Eyed Susan. There will be a presentation on the boat from the Committee, followed by discussion and then the voting.

The public is encouraged to come, but please remember your mask. You can also watch live on the [Town's YouTube page](#). It will be opened up for public comment, so if you have questions or concerns, please be sure to let us know.

22670 Washington Street, Leonardtown

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/91340224098?pwd=MXRXb3M3Z1hDdUJhQbGtYTYXZ3UEZPd09> Meeting ID: 913 4022 4098 Passcode: 467535

You can find information on Town Council meetings and supporting documents on BoardDocs at <https://www.boarddocs.com/md/tolmd/Board.nsf/> and this month's meeting once the meeting has been featured.

The link to BoardDocs can also be found on the Town's website at on the left side panel of the front page under Quick Links. www.leonardtown.somd.com

LEONARDTOWN, Md. - August 25, 2020 - The Town of Leonardtown was awarded a \$100,000 grant (the maximum ever given) by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority to use for the purchase of the Black-Eyed Susan, an authentic paddlewheel riverboat (one of only 6 remaining in the country) to help bring more activity and spur smart development of Leonardtown's waterfront. This grant is tantamount to a big "nod of approval" from the state, as they see the significance and economic vitality it will bring to our charming town – something that will surely become an icon for years to come.

With a wide variety of affordable events as well as excellent dining and a truly unique experience and relaxing atmosphere, the riverboat will help draw folks into town, where they will also patronize all of our other wonderful businesses – many of which are struggling right now. Many times over, residents have mentioned that there are few things for kids and families to do – this would give a fun and educational venue for just these types of activities. It hearkens back to an age in the 19th and early 20th century, when paddleboats of all types plied the waters of the Potomac and Breton Bay, stopping in Leonardtown and bringing fun and excitement with them!

Leonardtown has formed a committee of local experts from many related disciplines to investigate all aspects of this opportunity, including condition of the boat, past operations, financials, and prospective uses and partnerships. Though the Town would purchase the vessel, it would work with another organization who would actually be responsible for its operation and other expenses. Thorough inspections, surveys and other "due-diligence" are being done to make sure this purchase would be sound and not a drain on the Town in the future. If this is approved, we will seek tireless public input to make this truly "the community's boat".

WHAT CAN YOU DO? WE NEED YOUR INPUT.

The Town Council will vote on whether to approve this project based on what they hear from the citizens of Leonardtown. The more input, the better, so please take a few minutes to email, write, call or stop in to the Town Council and give them your thoughts! The contact email is Leonardtown.commissioners@leonardtownmd.gov

This summer has been most challenging, and we likely have months to go to get back to a semblance of "normal". We don't believe, though, that COVID should shut down consideration of an initiative that won't be available to us next year, and that could be a positive, long term force for our town.

Some say this is not the time to pursue a venture like this – we don't agree! This is EXACTLY the time to make a bold move which will absolutely help propel Leonardtown to new economic heights, which will position the town ahead of similar locations once the shutdown has subsided.

It will benefit the community in immense ways – we thank you for your support and hope to bring this amazing asset to our community soon!

Aside: The Port of Leonardtown Winery was created under the extremely similar circumstances about a decade ago as a partnership to increase the economic vitality of the town and has been a wildly successful venture since then. This would be a very similar effort.

Leonardtown has formed a committee of experts to investigate all aspects of this opportunity, including condition of the boat, past operations, financials, and prospective uses and partnerships. We hope to share all this beauty has to offer to our community soon!

The authentic, paddle-driven riverboat would be moored at the Leonardtown Wharf and would be a unique and affordable venue available to individuals and organizations for daily cruises and events such as:

- Large variety of Public cruises
- Historical and environmental cruises
- Variety of dinner cruises like Murder Mysteries, Fall Foliage and more
- Private events like Parties, Weddings, Banquets, Reunions, Seminars, Corporate functions and conferences
- Public Educational events and tours

- Bus, school and other tour groups
- Theatrical and historical productions
- Variety of Music or other themed entertainment
- Wine/beer/craft beverage tasting cruises
- Crab, oyster and other seafood cruises
- MUCH more! The sky is the limit.

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