

News aRound the Hill

A Community Newsletter for Round Hill, Virginia

September 2023

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Regional Drought Leads to Voluntary Water Restrictions

Round Hill is experiencing a regional drought, and I want to express my gratitude to those customers who have reduced their water use the last month in response. Voluntary reductions in consumption have made a noticeable difference in helping our system sustain itself.

The late September rains have been very welcome and have improved the recovery times for our wells. We will continue to monitor the health of the aquifers and let residents know if further steps are required.

The Town knew the system would struggle in a stressful situation like a drought, and multiple projects are planned to provide more capacity and resilience.

Construction has just begun on a major new well that has been in the planning process for more than six years, and we are going through final approvals to construct a new elevated water tank for the main zone that will go to bid this winter. Until we

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR SCOTT RAMSEY

complete more of these projects though, we may be back in a similar situation next summer.

The Town continues to pursue outside funding opportunities for our utility system. While we prepare next year's budget this winter we will revisit the utility rate model again with any updated financials (both the latest costs and any new funding sources).

We will also continue to be as transparent as possible about the challenges of our system and our plans to address them, and to that end I can be reached anytime at mayor@roundhillva.org. I will try to answer any questions you may have, whether about our utility system or any other topic affecting Round Hill.

We have also begun direct mailing this newsletter to all customers, instead of just those who receive paper bills.

I want to close by thanking all of you for everything you have done to make Round Hill a great place to live for all of us, whether it's by volunteering or just helping your neighbor.



PHOTO FOR NEWS AROUND THE HILL

Drought conditions have exposed rocks at the Shenandoah River boating access under the Route 7 bridge.

Residents Asked to Conserve Water to Ease Stress on Aquifers

While recent rain and efforts by residents to conserve water have resulted in some slowdown in well run times, Round Hill's aquifer is still struggling under these drought conditions to keep up with demand.

As a result, the Town Council declared Voluntary Water Restrictions on Sept. 7 to further encourage water conservation.

Under voluntary restrictions, the Town asks all customers to conserve water by not watering lawns, washing cars or filling pools for at least the next 30 days.

Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality has issued a drought watch advisory for Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Arlington, and Fairfax counties. Groundwater levels are below the 10th percentile in the Northern Virginia area – which means they reached emergency levels.

Stream flows and precipitation, as well as groundwater and reservoir levels, are factored into the warning about increased drought risk. Round Hill depends on a system of 12 wells that pull from groundwater to provide water to 1,826 households (about 4,500 people).

For ideas on how to reduce water consumption, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/start-saving. For example, fixing a dripping faucet or running toilet can save up to 10 to 200 gallons per day, respectively. Incorporating measures like these will help conserve water and lower water bills.

LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORY SURVEY

In order to comply with new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines to further prevent exposure to lead in drinking water, the Town of Round Hill is currently completing an initial inventory of lead service-line pipes within its water service area. The initial inventory is due in the fall of 2024.

By verifying the material of both Town-owned and customer-owned service lines (both sides of the meter) the Town will be able to determine future service line replacement needs.

Most of the 1,826 homes in the Round Hill service area were built after the 1986 ban on the residential use of lead piping. Using accessible land records and permit history, the Town has confirmed 80 homes built prior to 1986 have already replaced their lead service lines on the customer-owned portion.

This leaves 220 homes in the utility area for which the material of the service line cannot be verified based on the information available to the Town. This does not mean that the service lines to these homes contain lead; it simply means the Town has been unable to conclusively verify that they do not.

Residents of these homes should have received a letter from the Town

TOWN ELECTIONS: TUESDAY, NOV. 7

Voting for the Town of Round Hill will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 7. On the ballot are the seats for Mayor (two-year term) and three Council Members (four-year terms), and a Special Election to fill an unexpired Council Member vacancy (two-year term).

For more information on the elections and early voting, go to the Loudoun County Office of Elections: www.loudoun.gov/182/Upcoming-Elections.



outlining necessary steps to help in the verification process.

The Town has created a dashboard that includes an interactive map identifying the homes where material of the service line is unknown. The dashboard also contains a link to a customer survey that will be used to verify the service line material entering a home.

Instructions on the survey will help customers identify any service line entering the home. Customers with unknown service lines are also encouraged to attach a picture of the line (if applicable) to the survey. Survey results will be sent directly to the Town of Round Hill Staff and used to update the Town's Lead Service Line Inventory.

UTILITY FUND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

The Town is in the final stages of one FY2024 Utility Fund Capital

Improvement Plan project and is about to begin construction of a second, with a combined budget of nearly \$1.7 million.

A \$900,000 wastewater treatment plant project has replaced the tertiary filters with two new stainless-steel tanks and upgraded the piping, lighting and electrical system. These filters provide the final line of treatment with the removal of additional suspended solids and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) before the water is sent through the ultraviolet disinfection process for discharge.

A critical plant component, the existing filters were over 20 years old and needed to be replaced due to the internal deterioration and metal breakdown. The Town also installed a new garage door to improve access to the filter building. These filters will ensure that the Town meets all required permit levels and contin-

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

Donna Jones

Finance Support Specialist/Deputy Town Clerk

Donna Jones started working for the Town in August 2022 as the finance support specialist and deputy town clerk. Prior to joining the Town, she was a stay-at-home mom, which allowed her time to volunteer in the classroom and her community, including serving on the Lovettsville Oktoberfest Planning Committee for seven years.

Jones' role with the Town includes receiving and processing utility payments and invoices, assisting the treasurer in daily financial operations, and supporting the town clerk as needed.

"No two days are the same and I learn something new every day," Jones said. "I enjoy being part of a great team of people who care about the Town and strive to do their best to serve the community."

When she is not working, Jones enjoys spending time in her garden and with her family.



PHOTO COURTESY DONNA JONES

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ues to be a dedicated environmental steward.

After years of planning, property acquisition and regulatory development, the Town is ready to begin the development of a new well that will be critical to meeting customer needs and ensuring future safety and stability of the Round Hill water system.

With a \$794,000 budget, Well D will serve as an emergency well for times of low production until the new Evening Star Treatment Plant comes online and adds treatment capacity.

Well D will be capable of producing up to 165 gallons per minute – almost twice the capacity of the Town’s next largest operating well – and comes at a critical time when other wells in the system are seeing a reduction in production capacity.

Construction on Well D began on Sept. 18, with completion scheduled before the end of the year. The contractor, Lantz Construction of Winchester, has been mobilizing, securing permits, and surveying the construction area to identify the limits of disturbance.

The Town has worked closely with the Round Hill Owners Association and adjacent neighbors on Kedleston Court to minimize the impact of this well facility.

WESTERN BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT SMALL AREA PLAN (CPAM 2023-01)

The Round Hill Planning Commission is studying the 17 parcels that were brought into Town Limits in January of 2023 to create a plan for the area that will ultimately become an amendment known as CPAM 2023-01 to the 2017 Round Hill Comprehensive Plan.

The Western BLA Area Plan will
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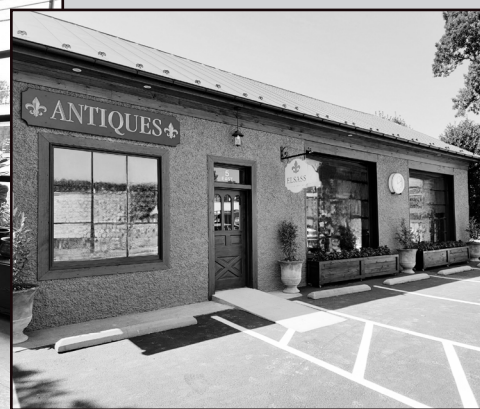


PHOTO COURTESY PAMELA GRAFF

Elsass Furnishings opened this summer in the former Round Hill Auto Service building on East Loudoun Street next to the Town Park.

WELCOME NEW BUSINESS:

Elsass Furnishings

The Town of Round Hill welcomed its newest business on July 14 with the grand opening of Elsass Furnishings at 5 East Loudoun Street.

The building, which was built in 1920, was largely used as part of a Chevrolet dealership in the 1930s, then a gas station and a service station before Pamela Graff purchased it in 2022.

Graff lived and studied in France for many years and has always loved French décor. After selling her healthcare company, she thought opening a French antique store would be an interesting new venture.

After looking at other possible locations, Graff knew the building, with its huge glass windows and tall ceilings, would be perfect.

As a resident of Round Hill, Graff is fond of the Town’s small-town feel and wanted to invest in the Town by restoring this historic building.

The name of the shop, “Elsass” is derived from the Alsace region of France where Graff has strong family ties and the source of most of the store’s inventory. She also buys pieces domestically to round out the selection of items.

Graff said the venture has been going well since its opening two months ago.

“We have been welcomed by the residents of Round Hill and are gaining a solid following throughout the DMV,” she said.

“We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has come to visit the shop and to the mayor, the town council, and the town staff for supporting this effort and helping us along the way!”

The store is currently open on Fridays from noon to 6 p.m. and Saturdays/Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Graff is looking at expanding hours in the future and will be hosting special events.

For more information, email elsassfurnishings@gmail.com or call (571)919-0070. Elsass is also active on Instagram and Facebook, and the website, with an online marketplace, will be launched soon at www.elsassfurnishings.com.

Sleeter Lake Park

Gate Closing Schedule 2023

Date	Closing Time
September 25 th	7:00 PM
October 16 th	6:30 PM
November 5 th (Daylights Savings)	5:00 PM
November 28 th	Park Closed



SAVE THE DATE:

The Round Hill Tree Lighting will be held in the Town Park on Saturday, Dec. 2, starting at 4:30 p.m.

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describe the unique characteristics, opportunities, and challenges of the area, while considering its current state and future development potential.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment is to adopt policies, goals, and strategies that will guide future land use decisions and advise the Town Council on future community projects; it will not rezone any property.

A public input meeting was held on Sept. 12 to provide feedback to the Planning Commission on the current draft plan. The Planning Commission will continue to refine the draft plan in the coming months before it is forwarded to the Town Council for a public hearing later this year.

Copies of this draft plan can be found on the Planning and Zoning page of the Town's website (www.roundhillva.org). All documents related to CPAM 2023-01 are also available for review at the Town Office during the normal business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or by calling (540) 338-7878. For more information, contact Town Planner Bobby Lohr at blohr@roundhillva.org.

UTILITY BILLING REMINDERS & INVOICE CLOUD PAYMENT PLATFORM

Water bills were mailed the week of Sept. 4 and are due by Oct. 5. Below are important reminders about late fees

and disconnections:

- Oct. 6 – 6% Late Fees Applied
- Oct. 19 – Disconnections (\$125 reconnection fee for shut offs)

Don't forget to use the Town's online payment platform, Invoice Cloud, which gives utility customers enhanced, easy-to-use options to securely pay bills electronically. Payment options include Apple Pay, Google Pay, PayPal, Venmo, and Pay by Text.

Customers will continue to have the option to pay bills via phone, check, or credit card on the Invoice Cloud platform. The Town absorbs all fees associated with credit card and e-check transactions, so there are no costs to customers.

For more information, go to www.roundhillva.org/water-sewer-billing/pages/bill-payment-options. For information about financial assistance or to set up a payment plan, please call the Utility Billing Administrator at 540-338-4772 ext. 2.

WHERE TO FIND MEETING INFORMATION

Information for Town Council and Planning Commission meetings is posted on the Town Information Sign at the Loudoun Street Park, on the Town's Facebook page and website, and at the Town Office.

Information for attending a meeting remotely is provided on the agenda for each meeting, www.roundhillva.org/minutes-and-agendas.

The agenda and related documents for each meeting are posted on the Town's website (see Minutes & Agenda button on the home page). Recordings of the meetings are uploaded and published to the website following the meeting. Minutes are posted to the site after they are approved by the Town Council.

Upcoming Meetings

► TOWN COUNCIL 7:30 p.m.

The Town Council meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month and may schedule additional Special Meetings as needed. Regular Meetings scheduled through the end of 2023 include:

- Oct. 4 & 18
- Nov. 1 & 15
- Dec. 6 & 20

► PLANNING COMMISSION 7:00 p.m.

The Planning Commission meets on the first Tuesday of the month and may schedule additional Special Meetings as needed. Regular Meetings scheduled through the end of 2023 include:

- Oct. 3
- Nov. 7
- Dec. 5

ON THE AGENDA

Issues the Town Council and Planning Commission will address in the coming months:

- Utility projects - Well D, Airmont water tank, and Evening Star treatment plant
- Round Hill Fire Station site plan approval
- 12-acre commercial property on the corner of Evening Star Drive and E. Loudoun Street
- Fiscal Year 2025 Town Council priorities and budget