

Intro ([00:00](#)):

Intro music

Barry Lee ([00:03](#)):

Hi Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM excited to host our second season of the City of Winchester's podcast, the Rouss Review. We do this twice each month on the second and fourth Thursday exploring city services, programs and events and discussing the information you need to know. So let's get started. Up first is the Council BLUF or Bottom Line Up Front recap of the April 28, 2020 Council meetings. During the Mayor's Report at the Regular Meeting, Mayor Smith announced that the City has established a partnership with Sysco to provide a popup grocery store in the City of Winchester. The purpose of the popup store is to temporarily alleviate the stress on existing grocery stores and provide additional temporary options for household supplies. More information about the popup stores will be announced soon. Mayor Smith also asked local residents to continue social distancing and practicing good hygiene as it is helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 but the fight is not over yet. Council adopted an ordinance to maintain the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2020 at 93 cents. Council also adopted a resolution of sorrow for the recent passing of Wendell Seldon. Mr Seldon served the City of Winchester as either Assistant City Manager or City Manager for nearly 40 years between 1947 and 1986. Also at the Regular Meeting, Council continued FY21 budget discussions and held the first reading for the budget ordinance. Due to the pandemic and the subsequent decline in revenues, many projects are expected to be postponed or canceled for the upcoming fiscal year. The FY21 General Fund proposed budget totals \$90,672,000 with over \$30 million allocated to Winchester Public Schools. The City's total City and schools FY21 proposed budget, inclusive of state, federal, and local funds, totals over \$300 million. The second reading and public hearing will take place at the May 12, 2020 Regular Meeting. Public comments for the public hearing can be submitted via the online form or by emailing the Deputy Clerk of Council, Kerri Mellott at kerri.mellott@winchesterva.gov. You can visit the Council agenda portal for a link to the online form. At the work session, Council received an overview of the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department Master Plan Study report conducted by the consultant Emergency Services Consulting International or ESCI. The purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive review of the Winchester Fire and Rescue Department, identify future needs and provide recommendations for moving the department forward. ESCI provided 36 recommendations for short, mid and long term to improve the department service delivery, communication, trust, morale and future. Council will review the comprehensive report in more detail and would like to continue discussions with staff at future meetings. In 2017, City Council approved a series of five rate increases over a five-year period that started on July 1st of 2018. These rate increases were needed to pay for the significant amount of capital improvements that are in progress. The next rate increase is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2020. Due to the economic hardships that had been created by the COVID-19 pandemic, City staff recommended that Council consider delaying the final three rate increases one year each, which means the next rate increase would occur on July 1st of 2021. Council forwarded the ordinance to the May 12, 2020 regular meeting for first reading. Council discussed a publicly sponsored zoning ordinance text amendment to amend the Planned Unit Development provisions to include density bonuses if projects meet certain desired development criteria. The amendment would allow for a developer, when requesting a rezoning for Planned Unit Development overlay, to include a request for the density bonuses. Zoning staff believes that the bonus density amendment would help the City attract desirable development that includes sought after amenities. The bonuses from the proposal reflect qualities of development that are desirable from the new urbanism design perspective and qualities mentioned in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Council forwarded the ordinance to the May 12, 2020 Council meeting for first reading. Finally, Council discussed in ordinance to rezone 7.5 acres at 520 Meadow Branch

Avenue which was forwarded with an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission. The current zoning permits approximately 5.4 units per acre and the proposed rezoning would permit up to 18 units per acre. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the area as a redevelopment site. After discussions, Council forwarded the ordinance to the May 12, 2020 Regular Council Meeting for first reading. For more information on these topics and to view the agenda packet, visit the City of Winchester website and click "Council Meeting Agendas" under the "Government" tab.

Barry Lee ([05:18](#)):

April 24th was Arbor Day, which is a time to celebrate all the benefits that trees provide and to learn about how we can protect our community's beautiful tree canopy. With us today is City Arborist Jen Jenkins. Welcome to the show, Jen.

Jen Jenkins ([05:32](#)):

Thank you, Barry.

Barry Lee ([05:34](#)):

Jen, I want to start today's segment with Arbor Day, but then let's talk about that pesky spotted lanternfly (SLF). They're going to be hatching soon and possibly destroying trees and crops again, right?

Jen Jenkins ([05:44](#)):

You are correct. SLF are going to be an issue for us again this year as they continue to expand throughout the area. There are some changes to the current treatment program and new publications are out to help property owners with control efforts on their property.

Barry Lee ([06:02](#)):

Okay. We'll talk about that later on in the show. Back to Arbor Day. Now, each year the City celebrates Arbor Day with tree plantings and events. Will the City be celebrating Arbor Day this year?

Jen Jenkins ([06:13](#)):

No, unfortunately due to current COVID-19 social distancing and group size limitations, the Arbor Day Foundation made the decision not to require an Arbor Day observance this year.

Barry Lee ([06:26](#)):

Now there may be some people who want to still celebrate or work it into their child's school activities from home. Any suggestions on how people can celebrate this year while they're social distancing?

Jen Jenkins ([06:37](#)):

There are actually many ways that citizens can celebrate Arbor Day this year despite the fact that they are probably feeling like they're stuck at home. The simple act of just planting a tree is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to recognize the role that trees play in our everyday lives. With so many families staying home and looking for activities to do together, planting a tree is a great way to keep everybody busy and provide a learning opportunity as well. If you do not have space for a tree in your yard, you can celebrate Arbor Day by simply taking a walk around the City or through a park. Tree ID guides can be a great learning tool to use when you do that and there are so many options available as apps that you can just download onto your phone. The Arbor Day Foundation website has also posted

many resources to use and has recently added some really great materials at www.celebratearborday.com. And, these are going to help provide some information and ideas on how to celebrate Arbor Day at home. You can post a favorite tree photo to social media using the hashtag #arbordayathome and tag the Arbor Day Foundation and they will plant a tree on your behalf in one of our nation's forests.

Barry Lee (08:01):

Winchester has been a Tree City USA for many years. Is that still the case?

Jen Jenkins (08:06):

Yes, we certainly are. This year we will celebrate 38 years as a Tree City USA. We are actually tied for second as the oldest Tree City USA in Virginia.

Barry Lee (08:18):

Wow. That is awesome. So what does it mean to be a Tree City

Jen Jenkins (08:23):

Tree City USA is a program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation that recognizes communities across the country that meet their core standards for urban tree care. Those are having a tree board or a tree department, having a community tree ordinance in place, spending at least \$2 per capita each year on tree care and maintenance, and hosting an Arbor Day Celebration. Of course, as I mentioned, that requirement is being waived this year due to the current circumstances.

Barry Lee (08:54):

So, now talk about the spotted lanternfly. What do we need to look out for in the coming months?

Jen Jenkins (09:00):

We are actually expecting the first hatches to be occurring now. So now would be a really good time to check any outdoor furniture, play equipment, vehicles, etc. for egg masses. Any that you can find and scrape before they hatch would be very helpful in your attempts to control them in your landscape. As spring and summer progresses, they're going to move through their nymphal stages and into the adult phase and they're highly mobile during all of these periods. Scouting for SLF and monitoring them on your property is very important and knowing what treatments to do and when.

Barry Lee (09:39):

And to remind everyone, why do we need to be concerned about spotted lanternfly (SLF) populations in Winchester or in the U S for that matter.

Jen Jenkins (09:48):

SLF is an exotic invasive species. It feeds over on over 70 host plants right now. There are no natural predators to help us control their numbers. The entire City of Winchester is considered to be generally infested and as we saw last fall, SLF are on the move into new counties and also into West Virginia. spotted lanternfly will be a major concern for the agricultural industry in the state, especially fruit and grape producers. For homeowners, this pest will pose a bigger threat to our quality of life as their

feeding and production of honeydew creates unsightly messes on outdoor surfaces and items. Not to mention their heavy feeding and high numbers definitely has a high gross out factor.

Barry Lee ([10:38](#)):

So Jen, what do you recommend residents do to protect their property from the damage that can be caused by the spotted lanternfly?

Jen Jenkins ([10:46](#)):

We're recommending that citizens follow the guidelines that are being put forth by Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech. There are several new publications that detail the best management practices for homeowners, including one that's titled "Residential Control for Spotted Lanternfly in Virginia." Those publications can be found by going to the City's Hub site for the spotted lanternfly (<https://slf-winchestercity.hub.arcgis.com/>). And if you do a general search for "SLF Winchester city", you should be able to find that and that's going to give you that information. Of course, you can simply go to the City's website to find the link to that Hub site. A new publications can be found under the latest updates tab at the top of the Hub's page.

Barry Lee ([11:31](#)):

Do we still need to report sightings of the insect when we find them on our property? And is there anything else that we should do?

Jen Jenkins ([11:38](#)):

Yes. Even though the entire city is in the infested area of reporting sightings help to identify population movement and any hotspots. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation has greatly curtailed the USDA and VDACS (VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) treatment program and their focus this year is going to be on conducting limited treatments in the highest infestation population, so homeowners should consider treating their own properties by following the residential control for spotted lanternfly publication that I mentioned.

Barry Lee ([12:10](#)):

Thank you, Jen. Anything else you'd like to add?

Jen Jenkins ([12:13](#)):

I would just encourage citizens to visit the City's SLF Hub site (<https://slf-winchestercity.hub.arcgis.com/>). Click on "Follow This Initiative" to create an account to stay informed and updated whenever changes are happening in the community in regards to SLF. All the latest news and updates that we have to share are posted there.

Barry Lee ([12:31](#)):

Thanks again, Jen. Great to have you on the show. Up next is the Winchester 101 segment with Tim Y. The History Guy? Take it away, Tim.

Tim Youmans ([12:41](#)):

Hey, this is Tim Y the History Guy, bringing you another episode of Winchester 101. This time we look at the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival (or "The Bloom" as it is often called by locals). But instead of

looking at the years when Winchester did hold this annual rite of spring, we thought it might be timely, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic to look at years when the festival wasn't held. This year will go into the history books as the first time in 75 years that Apple Blossom Festival was not held. A decision was made back on March 17th 2020 to call it off due to the uncertainty over the spread of COVID-19 and various state and federal social distancing and stay-at-home rules or recommendations. Obviously, an event that encourages bringing the community together such as dinners, dances, a 10K race, a wine festival, carnival midways, and parades, are contrary to social distancing. We know that the festival began in 1924 as a single-day event. This was nearly a decade after WWI began and a half a dozen years after WWI ended in November of 1918. It was also subsequent to the terrible "Spanish Flu" that took place while the peace treaties at the end of the "War to End All Wars" were being hammered out in 1919. Ironically, the apple industry that is celebrated at the core of Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival is what likely brought the deadly Spanish flu to Winchester. This was reported in an April 11, 2020 Winchester Star newspaper article. According to the article, it is very possible that U.S. Army soldiers brought to Winchester from Ft Lee to pick apples may have brought the flu to Winchester. There was a very high rate of death from the flu among those transferred soldiers here in Winchester. So, while Apple Blossom was not hampered by the first world war or the deadly flu epidemic that spread during it, the same can not be said about the festival two decades later when WWII kicked into action, particularly following December 1941 when the United States was pulled into the conflict following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. After 18 annual festivals, including the 1930-1933 Apple Blossom Festivals following the 1929 Stock Market crash, the event was suspended between 1942 and 1945 as war again consumed the world. Until 2020, the four-year gap during WWII was the only reason why the anniversary year of the festival did not match the number of calendar years since 1924. Simple math would reveal that we should be celebrating the 97th annual festival rather than the 93rd festival. So, in 2020, when we would have been celebrating the 93rd annual Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival, we will instead observe the broadcast of a "tribute parade" with a historical look back at prior parades. As one who enjoys looking back in history, that sounds like a safe and appealing option to me given COVID-19. We will have to wait another year for the 93rd annual event. Well that's it for me, Tim Y the History Guy until the next episode of Winchester 101.

Barry Lee ([16:30](#)):

Next up is the Now U Know segment where we talk about interesting City of Winchester facts that you may not be aware of or important information that you need to know. So, in honor of Arbor Day and our special guest, this segment is all about trees, such as what should be planted in Winchester and the City's Adopt-A-Tree program. The City Arborist has compiled an approved list of trees that are species widely accepted as suitable for the growing conditions found in most urban areas. These urban areas include along streets, residential properties, parks, golf courses and other developed areas. However, some tree species are included on the list but are only suited for open areas. While not all inclusive, the approved tree list is focused on species that are readily available and known to perform well in the Winchester area. The City of Winchester's approved trees list can be found on the City's website in the public works section (<https://www.winchesterva.gov/public-works/trees>) and is a great resource to help residents find the right tree for their location and situation. In addition to the recommended trees list, the City also offers an Adopt-A-Tree program. Now this tax-deductible program allows community members, in partnership with the City Arborist, the opportunity to plant trees along city streets, on public property and in city parks. Trees can also be donated in honor or memory of individuals and special moments. The City Arborist will work with donors to make sure that the right tree is planted in the chosen area. Information about the Adopt-A-Tree program can be found on the City's website in the

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public works section (<https://www.winchesterva.gov/public-works/trees>). Well, if you didn't know before, now you know.

Barry Lee ([18:07](#)):

Well, that's it for this week's Rouss Review podcast. Thanks for joining us. I'm Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM. We'll be back on the second Thursday in May at 5:00 pm. Bye for now. Stay safe.