



## The Professionals

For third and fourth grade students in Kimberly Hayden's class at Weems Elementary, it's not just another day of the week, it's Wednesday! An exciting day in their school because it is TAG day. Weems Elementary is a Talents and Gifts (TAG) themed school. Twice a year all Weems students get to choose a multi-grade, interest-based, project driven TAG enrichment cluster.

Over the past year and a half, three groups of third and fourth grade students have chosen the "Playground Planners" enrichment cluster. These students have been working with the City's Community Development team to design their new playground. On their first day of TAG, the students put on their name badges, and became professionals. They worked together as a team to create the best playground plan for their school.

This has been an engaging, hands-on process with over three semesters of students participating as Playground Planners. The first group began last spring, when students heard from City planners about the process of designing a community park. They learned how to listen to their stakeholders and how to use that information in their designs.

From there, Christen Zenich, the City of Manassas Operations and Facilities Supervisor, Culture and Recreation Division, took over. She worked with students on creating a vision, introduced them to playground sales representatives and to the challenges of staying on a budget. "Working with these students has been a labor of love," said Zenich. "They have the most creative ideas and they really have worked as professionals."

The next group of young professionals began in the fall. The students welcomed sales representatives from three different playground

companies. They explained to the representatives the constraints of their projects, their visions and needs, and together they each came up with a plan for the new playground. With Ms. Zenich and Ms. Hayden's help, students evaluated the proposals sent by their playground representatives. After much discussion and compromise, students refined each playground vision to keep it within budget and designed it to meet their specifications.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity to work with the kids at Weems Elementary on their new playground," said Brad Stokely with Playground Specialists, Inc. "It was impressive to see how organized the Playground team I worked with was in developing their wish list of items they wanted to see on their new playground."

In January, the school TAG Share Fair was the students' opportunity to showcase their final designs and receive additional feedback from their stakeholders, the student body. The room lit up that day with excitement as each student had the opportunity to vote for their favorite playground.

"The skills and lessons these kids are walking away with are so valuable and something they can use all their lives," says Ms. Hayden. "They are learning to collaborate and make choices that impact more than themselves. But more importantly, they are learning

that they can make a difference in their community."

The current Playground Planners Cluster is comprised of thirteen students who asked to remain on the project and nine new students for this semester.

"I joined this group because I wanted a chance to make a difference at my school," remarked Weems third grade student Max Davila.

Currently, the group is at work advertising the new playground to the community, creating a timeline for installation, and keeping the student body informed, as well as planning a ribbon cutting for the community. Flyers were created by students and posted around the school to build excitement for the new playground unveiling. On April 26 at 3 p.m., Playground Cluster members will cut a ribbon on "*Champs' Clubhouse*," the playground they designed from the ground up.



# A Message from the City Manager



**City Manager**  
**William Patrick Pate**

Throughout March and April, City Council spends many hours in meetings reviewing and examining a budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. This process requires that a balanced budget be presented by the City Manager; a maximum tax rate be advertised 30 days before a public hearing; and after review and public input, a budget is adopted and a tax rate is set by Council.

The proposed budget that Council is working on is built to maintain the high quality services and programs that you currently receive from the City. It is developed based on the City strategic plan and priorities, and adheres to the sound financial practices and policies that have been adopted by City Council. It is designed to provide a safe and growing community where services and programs

are delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

Priorities for operational areas addressed in the proposed budget include: a 2.625% increase in local funding for the Manassas City Public Schools; funds to replace declining motor fuels taxes to support PRTC and VRE operations; and funding to remain competitive in recruitment and retention of city staff, including fire and rescue positions and police officers. We are also focusing on capital purchases like Fire and Rescue equipment, Parks, Culture and Recreation improvements, additional funds for street maintenance, transportation projects, and utility capital enhancements.

Our increases this year are focused on utility operations, which are supported by the utility rates, and other capital projects, many of which are supported with capital reserves. Taking out these increases to get a better apples-to-apples comparison, the total operating budget would be increasing by less than 1%. This is due to the efforts of departments to find efficiencies in operation and to limit any increases in service costs.

The proposed tax rate to fund ongoing operations would result in about a \$4 monthly increase for the typical residential home owner or a 1.25% increase over the current tax rate. The \$1.59 million in new property tax

revenues in this proposal would support \$1.422 million for our schools and a portion of the additional funding needed for corresponding utility revenues. The Capital Improvement Program includes bond funds for a new Public Safety Facility, Dean Park improvements, partial funding for a Downtown Library/Museum facility, and road improvements along South Grant Ave. and West Street. Increasing the tax rate by 3.4% in total would provide funding for these projects, resulting in a total increase for the average homeowner of an additional \$7 per month.

Additional details on the budget can be found on the city website at [www.manassascity.org/budget](http://www.manassascity.org/budget). A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held on May 1, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. All are welcome to attend.



## Special Election April 18

The City of Manassas, Manassas Park and Prince William County are holding a special election on April 18 to fill the Clerk of the Court position. A voting precinct has been added at George C. Round Elementary School due to population growth over the last few years. Please make sure to check your voting precinct before heading to the polls on April 18. In-person Absentee Voting has already begun. Here are a few important dates to remember for this election:

- April 4, 2017: Voter Registration Deadline 5:00 p.m., Online: 11:59 p.m.
- April 11, 2017: Deadline to Apply for an Absentee Ballot by Mail, 5:00 p.m.
- April 15, 2017: Final Day In-Person Absentee Voting, 9 a.m. till 5 p.m.
- April 18, 2017: Absentee Ballot Return Deadline, 7:00 p.m.

The City's new voting machines will be used for this election. If you would like to see the new voting machines in person, stop by one of the Voter Registration Office's open house dates to learn how these wonderful scanners work! For more information on the new machines or the April 18 Special Election, visit [www.manassascity.org/vote](http://www.manassascity.org/vote).



# Culture, Parks & Recreation

One-stop shopping always makes things easier, and the new division of Culture, Parks and Recreation aims to be a one-stop shop for your leisure time. The assets of the Manassas Museum and the former Neighborhood Services division have combined to assist citizens and visitors with access to recreational and cultural opportunities in our community. The new division was formed with existing staff and without a change in the budget.

Culture, Parks & Rec. was formed in response to the recent citizen surveys that identified the importance of parks and recreational facilities. Those surveyed expressed a desire to know more about

the cultural and recreational assets in our community. Culture, Parks and Recreation's new web pages make it easier to find more information about our parks, historic sites, and community partners, like the Freedom Center. To ensure our facilities look their best, staff members have developed an easy to understand parks maintenance plan that puts each park on a regular repair and improvement schedule.

Residents may now make park, field, and museum program reservations or buy pool passes online at <http://manassaschoes.com> or in person at the Manassas Museum. The division is also joining forces to offer volunteer

opportunities at the Manassas Museum, City parks and historic sites, and at special events.

Join the effort to help improve our recreational facilities. First, enjoy a shady stroll on a walking trail, take your children to a neighborhood playground, go for a swim at Stonewall Park Pool, or discover a new historic site. Second, take pride in your parks and help keep them clean. And third, make a difference in your community by sponsoring a park improvement through the new Perks for Parks program. For more information, visit [www.manassascity.org/leisure](http://www.manassascity.org/leisure) or call 703-368-1873.

## A Few Notes About Water

### Hydrant Flushing

The City of Manassas will be cleaning water mains beginning on April 10, 2017 and will take four to six weeks to complete. Our crews will be flushing fire hydrants weekdays from 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. This program helps to clean sediment from our mains and serves as an opportunity to inspect and maintain all of our fire hydrants.

### Switch: Chloramines to Free Chlorine

Each year, the City of Manassas switches from chloramines to free chlorine for about six weeks. Free chlorine is a more aggressive disinfectant,

and this temporary change in the water treatment process prevents bacteria from developing resistances to the usual disinfection treatment process. Some customers may notice a slight chemical smell in their drinking water. This may be similar to that of water in a swimming pool. Each individual has his or her own sensitivity level to the taste and/or odor of free chlorine. Many detect no difference.

Occasionally during the cleaning of water mains and hydrants in your area, some discoloration of water may be noticed. This condition is not harmful and should clear up quickly by running your cold water for a short period of time. It is recommended that you limit your clothes washing during the flushing

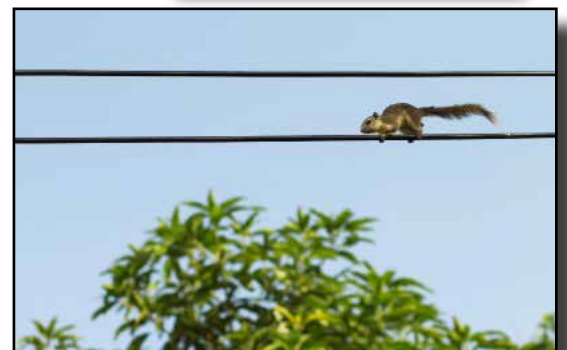
hours. We appreciate your cooperation as we work to maintain water quality while minimizing any inconveniences.

For more information on either of these processes, visit [www.manassascity.org/water](http://www.manassascity.org/water).



### We need your help!

Power outages do happen, whether it's caused by stormy weather, an accident involving a car-pole collision, or a squirrel being too curious and picking the wrong place to perform a high-wire act. Whatever the cause, the City of Manassas Utilities will respond as quickly as possible and you can help. We are equipped with an automated phone system that allows us to track incoming reports of power outages. For this system to work we need your updated phone information in our system to be able to locate the address of the outage. Many homes no longer have landline phones, so entering your cellphone number is more important than ever. Updating your phone number is easy. Visit [www.manassascity.org/outage](http://www.manassascity.org/outage), email [cs@manassasva.gov](mailto:cs@manassasva.gov), or call our customer service office at 703-257-8245. To report an outage, call the Outage Hotline at 703-257-8353.



# The City of Manassas Happenings

Here's what's happening in the City of Manassas.

**Farmer's Market** - Every Saturday in Parking Lot B, and every Thursday in the Harris Pavilion - check out the Farmers Market from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

Now-April 16 - **New Exhibit: Illusions**  
Now in its fourth year, this annual exhibit features the art of students from Osbourn High School.

[www.manassasmuseum.org](http://www.manassasmuseum.org)

April 1 at 2 p.m. - **Architectural Tour** of Historic Downtown - first of the season

[www.manassasmuseum.org](http://www.manassasmuseum.org)

April 1, 9 a.m. to noon - **Civil War Trust Park Day** at Cannon Branch Fort Park (10611 Gateway Road)

[www.civilwar.org/parkday](http://www.civilwar.org/parkday)

April 2, 1:30 p.m. Free Book Talk - **Confederate Waterloo** with Author Michael J. McCarthy

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 6, 10 a.m. - **Spring Farmers Market** ribbon cutting at the Harris Pavilion

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 7, 6 - 9 p.m. - **First Friday** - Poker Run in Historic Downtown Manassas

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 9 at 7 a.m. - **Manassas Runway 5k/10k**  
<http://rev3tri.com/manassas-runway/>

April 9-15 - **Hop Around Downtown** - Shop downtown for a chance to win free gifts!

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 9, 1:30 p.m. - **Free Book Talk** with authors Charlene Giannetti & Jai Williams at the Manassas Museum

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 10, 5:30 p.m. - MCPD Employee recognition at City Council meeting

April 18 - **Special Election** for the Clerk of the Court

[www.manassascity.org/vote](http://www.manassascity.org/vote)

April 22, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. - **Live Well Festival** at the Harris Pavilion. Health and wellness activities, Shred-It Truck, Farm to Table brunch and more!

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 23, 3 to 5 p.m. - **Tea with Belle** by Pied Piper Theatre

[www.center-for-the-arts.org](http://www.center-for-the-arts.org)

April 26, 6:30 - 8 p.m. - **Stonewall Park Master Plan Community Meeting** at Weems Elementary School.

April 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - **Prescription Drug Takeback** - at Novant Health UVA Health System Prince William Medical Center

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 29, 7-10 p.m. - **International Jazz Celebration** at the Center for the Arts

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

April 29/30 - Pied Piper's production of **Beauty and the Beast**

[www.hyltoncenter.org](http://www.hyltoncenter.org)

April 30, 1:30 p.m. Free Book Talk - **Arlington: A Color Guide to America's Most Famous Cemetery** with Author James Ginglesperger

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 5-7 - **Much Ado About Art** - Gallery Walk with multi-day art festival in Historic Downtown

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 6, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. - **Manassas Reads**, free books to all readers

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 6, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - **Manassas Airshow 2017** - Displays, aerial show and family fun  
[www.manassasairshow.com](http://www.manassasairshow.com)

May 6, 8 a.m. to noon - **Household Hazardous** and eWaste drop off  
[www.manassascity.org/trash](http://www.manassascity.org/trash)

May 7, 1:30 p.m. - Free Book Talk - **The Civil War Wedding** with Author Charles A. Mills  
[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 12 - Sept. 24 - New Exhibit - **Tailor-Made: Vintage Fashions from the Museum's Collection Unveiled**

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 13 - 7:30 p.m. - **Manassas Symphony Orchestra**

[www.hyltoncenter.org](http://www.hyltoncenter.org)

May 19 - 21 - **Manassas Ballet: Romeo and Juliet**

[www.hyltoncenter.org](http://www.hyltoncenter.org)

May 20, 2 p.m. - **Historic Downtown Walking Tour**

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 20, 7 p.m. - **Remember the Ladies** - a walking tour in honor of Mother's Day

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 21, 1:30 p.m. - Free Book Talk - **Diamond Duty** with Author Dan Verner

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

May 27 - **Stonewall Park Pool Opens**

June 2, 6 - 9 p.m. - **First Friday** in Historic Downtown

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

June 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - **23rd Annual Heritage Railway Festival**

[www.visitmanassas.org](http://www.visitmanassas.org)

June 5 - **2nd half of 2017 Real Estate Taxes Due**

[www.manassascity.org/tax](http://www.manassascity.org/tax)

June 13 - **Primary Election** for Governor, Lt. Governor, VA House of Delegates 50th District, and Attorney General

[www.manassascity.org/vote](http://www.manassascity.org/vote)

## City of Manassas and Manassas Public Schools

### City of Manassas Council

Mayor Harry J. Parrish II	703-257-8213
Vice Mayor Marc T. Aveni	703-795-9651
Sheryl L. Bass	703-314-4278
Ken D. Elston	571-377-8817
Ian T. Lovejoy	703-828-7592
Pamela J. Sebesky	571-358-9454
Mark D. Wolfe	703-257-1702

### City of Manassas School Board

Chairman Tim Demeria	703-895-4856
Vice Chair Scott M. Albrecht	571-606-1129
Kristen Kiefer	571-606-1129
Peter O'Hanlon	571-535-0652
Suzanne W. Seaberg	571-606-0499
Robyn Williams	571-535-7510
Sanford S. Williams	571-535-6364

## Get Social!

Visit the City at [www.manassascity.org](http://www.manassascity.org).



[www.facebook.com/cityofmanassas](http://www.facebook.com/cityofmanassas)



[www.twitter.com/cityofmanassas](http://www.twitter.com/cityofmanassas)



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Put your own photos up at  
[www.flickr.com/groups/mycityofmanassas](http://www.flickr.com/groups/mycityofmanassas).

To contact the City of Manassas Connection newsletter, email [prince@manassasva.gov](mailto:prince@manassasva.gov)