

Fauquier Times

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101 years and 6 days separate them

First baby of 2020 born at Fauquier Hospital

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Veteran mom Sophie Elliot was feeling great less than 20 hours after giving birth to her third child. Smiling and laughing, when someone dropped her new baby's pacifier, she caught it before it hit the floor without missing a beat.

The Bealeton mom dressed in a flowered robe to have her picture taken, with baby Bristol Leigh Thomas swaddled in the same pattern. Her two other girls, Payton, 6, and Cambrie, 16 months, also have matching outfits. She ordered the outfits from Posh Peanut ahead of Bristol's arrival, although Elliot's husband Travis Thomas, a Culpeper County deputy, declined to dress in matching duds.

Clearly, this is not this 27-year-old mom's first rodeo.

Bristol was Fauquier Hospital's first baby of 2020, born on Monday, Jan. 6, at 3:27 p.m., weighing in at 7 pounds, 6 ounces. Elliot said she remembers the time because it's her sister's birthday. Her sister, a student at James Madison University, had another influence on the birth of her niece. Elliot said, "I was induced so that Bristol would be born while my sister was home for break."

The new (again) mom said that this birthing experience was the easiest of the three. "I pushed for about one minute. It might be a record."



Travis Thomas and Sophie Elliot welcomed Fauquier's first baby of the year on Jan. 6.



Bristol arrived in Fauquier Hospital's Family birthing Center Monday afternoon.

Frances Shipe, who turned 101 Thursday, gets some help blowing out her candles from great-grandson Mason.

TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/ROBIN EARL



Warrenton's Frances Shipe enjoying the second year of her second century

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

We could all learn a lot from Frances Shipe. At her 101st birthday celebration Jan. 2 at The Bistro on the Hill, she claimed that the secret to her long life might be that "I enjoy

every day, and I don't worry about the next one ... I don't worry if I can't handle something. What's the good of worrying? I've always been like that."

Celebrating a century and one year with Shipe were her two sons, Steve and Mac, her grandson Mi-

chael and great-grandson Mason. Granddaughters Charlene and Ashleigh could not be present, but the birthday girl was surrounded by her Senior Supper Club friends, who she dines with on Tuesdays and

See **SECOND CENTURY**, page 2

Grassroots effort to slow U.S. 17 drivers making progress

By James Ivancic
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Residents along U.S. 17 – James Madison Highway – see signs that years spent pressing local and state officials to make the stretch between Warrenton to Marshall safer are paying off.

Members of the Virginia General Assembly representing the area – State Sen. Jill Vogel, R-27th, and Del. Michael Webert, R-18th – are introducing legislation to double the fines for speeding on the 8-mile long stretch of road. They're also seeking funds for electronic signs to flash the speed of oncoming traffic. The speed limit along most of U.S. 17 is 55 mph; it drops just outside Marshall and Warrenton.

Scott Filling, who lives on Belvoir Road off U.S. 17, said the electronic signs would alert travelers to their

speed in a bid to get them to slow down if they are above the posted limit. He thinks they should be posted before the U.S. 17 intersections with Blantyre, Old Tavern and Belvoir roads.

Filling moved to Belvoir Road in 2000. He said he started working on the issue of bringing "traffic calming" to U.S. 17 in 2004.

"I noticed between Warrenton and Marshall that speeds were increasing and tractor-trailers tailgating," he recalled.

Filling said he brought his concerns to attention of then-county sheriff Charlie Ray Fox and to the Fauquier County Transportation Committee. He also started going door to door to talk to his neighbors and found that others shared his concern.

See **U.S. 17**, page 4

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EDITORIAL

Resolutions for 2020

Allow us to recommend some resolutions that have nothing to do with weight loss or making a million dollars.



Be kind to yourself: Instead of heading to the gym for the fourth time this week, take a long walk – without either Rush Limbaugh or Rachel Maddow in your ear. Listen to the birds instead. Hug a dog. Smile. Laugh. Do something silly. Find a friend and play Pokémon Go (It's OK, even if you are older than 11.)

Allow yourself time to be blissfully unproductive.

Be kind to others: You will probably never know the effect your smile or simple act of human kindness will have on another person. It may go completely unnoticed, or it could save a life. That's OK. Do it anyway.



Declutter, your space and your mind:

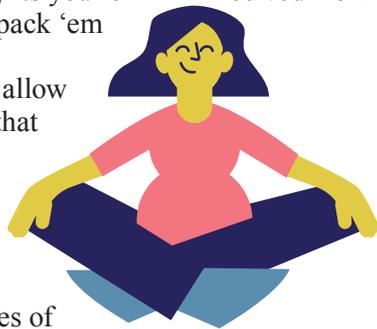
Imagine how good it would feel not to have four jars of pickles in the fridge that are past their "best by" date. That matcha drink powder you bought last August that tastes like mulch? It's taking up space in your brain as well as your pantry. Let it go.

The pants that you told yourself you'd wear when you lost a few pounds ... the board games that take a Ph.D. to figure out ... the gifts you received from people who you thought knew you better ... pack 'em up and ship them out.

It's tough. It might feel like giving up, but allow yourself permission to free yourself of stuff that doesn't serve you.

Pause, just pause.

Take a tech break: Put your phone on "do not disturb" for a few hours a day. You'll be amazed at the conversations you'll have, the expressions you'll notice on the faces of those around you. It may be difficult at first; the lure



of the text message is strong. But you may come to look forward to the weighty absence of dinging and buzzing.

Write a letter, in cursive: If you still remember how.

Learn something new: Fauquier County offers myriad classes and clubs that could allow you to try something you've always wanted to -- quilting, fishing, cooking, playing a musical instrument, learning a new language, painting, meditation, gardening, pickleball.

Be authentic: We are inundated with Facebook images and advertising messages that tell us we are too fat or too thin, too old or too young, too liberal or too conservative ... Give yourself permission to be who you are, in all your imperfect inconsistency.

Take action where you can: 2020 promises to be a chaotic year. In just its first few days, uncertainty, fear, isolation and division anew threaten our country.

Threats from inside and out are real and frightening. It is natural to feel overwhelmed and even helpless.

But there is power in taking action – whether it's the simple act of writing a letter or donating to a cause, or the somewhat more complicated decision to run for office or start a nonprofit.

Use your voice, your talents and your passion to make a difference where you can.

Arguing with your cousin on social media doesn't count.



In late December 1977, what remained of the Belle Meade Distillery near Markham was destroyed in a controlled burn by the Marshall Volunteer Fire Company. Shown standing by while the walls of the building crumbled were volunteer firemen John Kerns and Eddie Payne.

FAUQUIER FLASHBACKS FROM THE FAUQUIER TIMES

75 Years Ago Jan. 11, 1945

The Bronze Star medal has recently been awarded to two Fauquier men, **1st Lt. James Mallory Nash**, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and **Master Sgt. Lyman O. Hudson**, Chemical Warfare Service, U. S. Army, both of Warrenton.

Sears, Roebuck and Company will hold a grand opening of its new Warrenton store, located at 242 Main Street, on Thursday, January 11. **Mrs. Nina Thorpe**, manager, will be on hand to show customers around, and **E. K. Rocks** of Sears' sales promotion department at Philadelphia will also be present.

The marriage of **Miss Eunice Riley** of Amissville and **C. D. Green Jr.** of Warrenton was performed Saturday afternoon, Dec. 30, at the Baptist parsonage in Warrenton. **Rev. Guy C. Heyl** officiated.

Elmwood, near Upperville, a part of a grant to **George Washington** from the crown, has been sold to **Edward Lasker** of New York by **Sen. Thomas B. Glascock** of Upperville. The property includes a brick house and 550 acres in Fauquier County.

50 Years Ago Jan. 8, 1970

Alan L. Day Jr., a third-generation Warrenton banker, and **Alex Yurgitis Jr.**, realtor and builder, have been elected to the board of directors of the Peoples National Bank of Warrenton, President **Peyton N. Brittle** announced after a meeting on Dec. 18.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dobson, an Alexandria couple have

purchased The Meadows, 136-acre estate at Delaplane, from **Mr. and Mrs. John W. Scott**. He is a businessman and his wife is better known as **Gwen Dobson**, women's editor of the Washington Evening Star.

On New Year's Day at 2:45 a.m. at Fauquier Hospital, **Mrs. Herman Hoppe** of Gainesville gave birth to a baby girl, **Nanette Paula**. The second baby born New Year's Day was **Melissa Anne Smith**, daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Smith** of Marshall.

25 Years Ago Jan. 11, 1995

Former delegate **Jerry M. Wood** has decided that he does not want to be known as the "former" delegate anymore. The 57-year-old Democrat, who was bumped from office in 1993 by Republican challenger **Jay Katzen** (R-31st) announced this weekend that he will try to recapture his seat in 1995.

Deputy County Administrator **Robert L. Steele** has announced plans to retire this summer. He may, perhaps, be the last person ever to hold the job. Steele, 64, informed County Administrator **G. Robert Lee** last week that he will step down Aug. 31. The Board of Supervisors will consider whether to replace Steele or abolish his position, which has a salary of \$75,699.

Three candidates for the Fauquier County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court judgeship are up for endorsement by local bar associations – **H. Dudley Payne**, **John Wine** and **Robert Klima**.

–Compiled by John T. Toler

Town elections will be May 19

Voters encouraged to vote absentee

Candidates for Warrenton Town Council

ALI ZARABI

WARD 1
Profession: Business owner
Years living in Warrenton: 24



What is the number one issue specific to your ward and where do you stand on it?

What's most important to folks in Ward 1 is accessibility to goods and services in their own community while preserving that which keeps our town charming and unique. As a planning commissioner for over 20 years, I have voted to ensure that our land use and zoning regulations create opportunities to attract commercial and light industries to Warrenton. I believe the label "Warrenton is not business friendly," is false. The overwhelming majority of applications for development have been approved during my tenure. I support thoughtful and respectful applicants and applications that bring quality services and opportunities to our town.

How do you feel about the level of growth called for in the town's developing comprehensive plan?

Growth and development are natural; where, when and how it happens is to be debated among rational leaders and the community in a respectful and transparent process. Because of our existing regulations, infill development and growth are already taking shape. We should be patient and thoughtful about the rate of acceleration. I equate dismissing our capacity limits and thresholds with the plaque in the elevator: "maximum capacity, 10 persons or 2000 lbs." It is designed to inform the user that beyond that limit, the elevator will not function safely.

How should the town support business owners?

During last week's budget work session, there was a comment about the town/government getting out of the way to allow businesses to be innovative and creative. It's my belief that most businesses know and take responsibility for their success and failures. As a small business owner on Main Street, I appreciate the services that I receive from public works and utilities, from town Hall and parks and rec. The town of Warrenton possesses outstanding and dedicated personnel to support and aid our businesses and residents. Ultimately, our business community wants to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability in how our taxes are spent.

How should the town cope with disappearing revenue caused by the COVID-19 crisis?

I've seen an unprecedented response from the town and town manager as it applies to the current proposed budget. While there's a lot of uncertainty over how and when some or all of business community gets to normal levels of operations and revenue generation, the town must freeze any expenditure that is not critical to maintaining safety and well being of the community. I appreciate the recommendations to delay and postpone the collection of BPOL and meal and lodging taxes while the businesses wait to re-open and build their cash flow.

What unique talents or qualities do you bring to the town council?

I am and will be the only council person with over 20 years of land use and zoning regulation experience. I am and will be the only council person who is a small-business owner on Main Street for over 25 years. I can read and understand a balance sheet and financial report, and I am the only candidate who has said, "We don't need to be bigger to be better."

HEATHER SUTPHIN

WARD 1
Profession: Marketing and management professional
Years living in Warrenton: 52



I feel the number one issue for me right now is getting our town and county back on track during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our town has suffered immensely during the past two months. With businesses closed, people out of work and students homeschooling, the town has been shut down physically and emotionally. Getting everyone back to normal is going to take time.

The number one thing on the Town Council's goals is to "Maintain Old Town Historic Character" This too is one of my main goals. They refer to this goal many times throughout the comprehensive plan. And this is just what it is ... a plan to work on. The Town of Warrenton needs to change, but at the same time maintain the historic character. We need to first fill the empty spaces we have and create a more bountiful environment for us and visitors to our town.

The town council can create different ways to protect our historic heritage and help businesses become more profitable, possibly by helping to market our town. They are currently starting to rebrand Warrenton, helping to fill the empty spaces and creating programs for new business owners. They currently work with different nonprofits to help finance new business.

The budget itself was created before the COVID-19 came along. Now we will need to be very careful with spending. They have already started working on adapting changes to the current budget.

I have a vast background with marketing and management to bring to the table. I currently work at Peak Roofing Contractors as their marketing/events specialist.

ALEC BURNETT

WARD 2
INCUMBENT
Profession: Director, Hilton Hotels Corp.
Years living in Warrenton: 30



What is important to Ward 2 is planning for sustainable economic prosperity. Planning begins with focus on smart growth supported with long-term strategies. Organic growth helps drive our core economic competencies; however, we can't rely on this alone. Encouraging outside business development is a sensible and pragmatic approach and my plan centers on three core principles: Support existing business with a competitive tax base and invest in future opportunities. Grow the workforce by investigating rezoning opportunities for housing that's affordable. Invest in our quality of life by taking actions that align with live/work community that benefits both residents and businesses.

Our community establishes the future vision. Therefore, the town facilitated workshops in March 2019 where participants were asked to vote on a number of issues. Regarding growth, they were asked to select their preference, from a list of scaled options from .35% (status quo) to a high of 2% annual growth. The majority voted for the highest growth with no votes cast for the status quo. Respondents recognized that the fiscal benefits of that growth option would equal the services necessary and that the "don't change" scenario would have adverse economic impact.

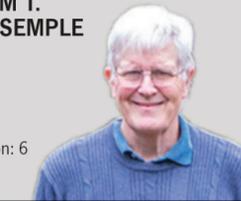
Businesses should be provided economic incentives and a robust marketing program. We also need a collaborative strategy with surrounding counties. Prosperous businesses are the best means of attracting new business ventures. We also need to further explore urban development opportunities for infill and mixed use in Old Town without sacrificing our historical character, rezone for workforce housing and safety services at Frost and Broadview, revitalize commercial shopping on Lee Highway and advocate for education, civic services and industrial uses along East Shirley. Smart growth is the best support for current and future business.

The town responded quickly with plans that drive tax revenue and minimize expenses without disrupting services and safety for the community. These are not all-inclusive, and we need to remain flexible to adjust to ever-changing conditions. We recently reviewed the proposed budget for additional cuts to the CIP and other operating expenses. However, we need to remain aware of the fiscal impact of unfunded mandates released from Richmond. Diligence, awareness, flexibility and implementation of sensible short-term actions and long-term planning is the best strategic approach to weather these difficult times.

I am proud to be a member of this council and more so its accomplishments over the last four years. This is a direct result of collaboration among a diverse group of decision makers whose policies are implemented by a dedicated and superbly managed town staff and openly communicated to the community using current technologies. It will remain my responsibility to serve the town with objective and sensible planning while remaining engaged with the residents and businesses, continuing to work collaboratively with staff and council and most importantly, staying true to my love for and belief in Warrenton

WILLIAM T. "BILL" SEMPLE

WARD 2
Profession: Retired
Years living in Warrenton: 6



Increased traffic, noise and light intrusion from future large-scale developments threaten the sanctity of Ward 2 neighborhoods. The I-PUD on Walker Drive, the Urban Development Area west of Old Meetze Road, the 135-home Warrenton Crossing development between Falmouth Street and Oliver City, and the conversion of dead-end streets into thru streets will forever change the nature of these neighborhoods as well as Monroe Estates, Madisontown, Old Alexandria Pike, Boundary Lane, the Villas, the Ridges of Warrenton, Colony Court and Highland Commons. The increased cost of infrastructure, services and school seats will eventually affect everyone in Warrenton.

The comprehensive plan takes the small out of our small town. The zoning necessary to implement UDAs, while promoting walkability, will bring an astonishing increase in density and traffic. To realize the vision contemplated in the plan, the town is counting on the town's population increasing by 50%, not the modest 2% annual increase it claims. I support "live/work," but since much of the industrial land will be converted to residential, where is the work? The plan would blast collector roads through neighborhoods, along Rady Park, turn neighborhoods into cut-throughs, and replace quiet four-way intersections with traffic circles large and small.

Home-grown businesses and venues hold the key to Warrenton's economic vitality. The recent publicity regarding the Farmers Market is precisely what Warrenton needs. Make the PATH Foundation's "Linger Longer" ideas reality and allow merchants and restaurants to expand their footprint outdoors. Sometimes the best government can do for local entrepreneurs is to get out of the way while they experiment with new ideas. Financially, the town needs to waive or postpone BPOL and meal taxes as long as necessary to keep our local businesses alive: for once they go under, we may never see them again.

The town should freeze discretionary spending and cut any expense not absolutely necessary until it has better visibility into the long-term economic impact of COVID-19. Timely reports on actual revenue are essential. The revised proposed budget asks for a general fund increase of almost \$1 million over last year and total appropriations of \$24.7 million, up from \$16.2 million only five years ago. This is not acceptable. Finally, the pain should be shared. Members of the town council should waive their stipends as a symbolic gesture.

With decades of experience as a successful businessman, chief financial officer, management consultant and entrepreneur, I have learned to ask tough questions and think outside the box. I have served such organizations as Citizens Against Government Waste, the Institute for Educational Leadership, the United Way/United Black Fund, The Kennedy Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. I am a student of land use law in Virginia. Recently retired, no one will work harder for Ward 2. I will attend all meetings and work sessions. I will continue to walk Ward 2 to hear from my neighbors. Together, we will navigate this crisis and prepare for the future.

KEVIN CARTER

WARD 5
INCUMBENT
Profession: Hotelier
Years living in Warrenton: 20



The most immediate and pressing issue is the prospect of additional traffic on Winchester Street and surrounding neighborhoods resulting from the Warrenton Knoll project. This project has been the subject of much disagreement and legal challenges and the solution is pretty straightforward. It is important that this development have more than one source of ingress and egress. The development plan calls for a connection to North Rock during the second phase, which will be critical to the distribution of traffic from the new neighborhood. Other issues would be walkability, traffic calming, pedestrian safety and VDOT's plans for Broadview Avenue.

I believe growth should be intentional, not reactionary. The growth in the comp plan is projected by the state, but market dynamics will predict the level of interest. Unlike previous councils, we acknowledge some growth has to happen. The 2002 comp plan called for anticipating a growth rate between 1.5% (low) and 3% (high). In this comp plan update the community's preferred land use scenario is a live/work vision and a 2% growth rate. The comprehensive plan calls for minimal growth and says where it should be (service districts) and how it should be done. The plan update has sought extensive public engagement and will continue to do so throughout the adoption.

The most important measure any government can take to help businesses is to "step out of the way" and not impede their progress. Support of business starts with a recognition that businesses need a streamlined process, but more importantly a predictable process for doing business in the town. An environment where the rules don't change mid-stream and where businesses are welcomed, not frowned upon. Predictability and reasonableness matter. Finding a way to say YES that also serves the community's best interest should be our mandate.

We have taken drastic measures to cut back in order to cope with the COVID-19 crisis. The council and town manager have made major cuts in the budget and it is clear that we will need to operate differently. Spending will need to be monitored dynamically and adjustments made based on the incoming revenue amounts. If revenues are behind plan, town staff will be asked to reduce spending in relationship to the revenue decreases. Efficiency and creativity will reign supreme. The town has a long history of being fiscally careful and a full measure of conservative financial discipline is essential.

I am a collaborator and work hard to find creative solutions to problems. Listening to others' point of view is an essential ingredient to achieving workable solutions. As a businessperson I bring to the table business logic and perspective; knowing your audience is helpful when dealing with local businesses and trying to bring good jobs to our community. As a parent, I cherish the safety of our community and value the importance of creating an environment where our future leaders have a place. This needs to be established early on, with ample recreational, sports and cultural activities to keep our youth interested in Warrenton.

MICHELE FERRI

WARD 2
Profession: Architect
Years living in Warrenton: 26



Growth and its impacts. Currently, the town is considering a plan that could dramatically change all neighborhoods and is specifically impactful to the traffic corridors within Ward 5. With growth, Warrenton faces real challenges, including financial, public safety, traffic and zoning issues. While growth is inevitable, it should be managed in a "smart" way that preserves the small-town feel of Warrenton, promotes healthy business, positively affects town revenues and does not diminish public safety at a time when we are already seeing increased crime.

The developing comprehensive plan promotes substantial growth – too much – in population, housing and commercial buildings. Warrenton needs to grow, but that growth should be measured and not diminish the special quality of life that we now enjoy. We're the first real small-town community west of D.C. – and I'd like to see a plan that prioritizes our unique qualities. People from neighboring communities pour into Warrenton for GumDrop Square and First Fridays because we have that community feel. Rapid, artificial growth could destroy that.

It's a complicated question, and one that requires bringing people together; and listening to and working with the business community as well other stakeholders. There are many diverse interests in Warrenton, from small business owners to larger commercial concerns with varying needs. The town can help in a variety of ways, with marketing, historic preservation guidance for businesses within the Historic District, assistance with cutting red tape, utility operations, parking fees, etc. The town should be ready to engage in multiple ways where a supportive environment can be fostered to sustain our local business economies.

A first unfortunate triage has taken place, with payroll reductions. We don't want to see people out of work. Yet so many more of our neighbors also have no incomes or reduced incomes. Priorities must be established. We all want to preserve services without an increase in taxes. No one wants cuts in sanitation services, or water, or street repairs. It is critical to think hard now about every increase in general operating expenses; to scrutinize all new employee hires; and to look for substantial efficiencies. The present proposed budget does not appear to go far enough in these respects.

I'm an architect, currently specializing in commercial architecture, particularly public safety. I understand zoning and growth issues – as well as the minutiae of building codes. I served nearly eight years on the Town of Warrenton Architectural Review Board, helping people meet the guidelines while accomplishing their planned work. I've spent 26 wonderful years in the same house in Ward 5, walking the neighborhood, raising my children and getting to know Warrenton. I also have a strong work ethic and have the energy and drive to commit to the hours required to serve on the Warrenton Town Council.

Polls will be open May 19

337 residents have already cast absentee ballots

Gov. Ralph Northam announced Friday, April 24, that he was moving the date of municipal elections to May 19; the elections were originally scheduled for May 5. The order from the governor affects the elections in three Fauquier County towns: Warrenton, Remington and The Plains.

Voters must live within the municipal boundaries of the town and have been registered by April 13 to vote in a town election. Any eligible voter can request an absentee ballot under current guidelines from the

Virginia Department of Elections due to the public health crisis.

More information about casting an absentee ballot can be found on the VDE website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/absentee-voting>.

In the Remington Town Council election, six candidates are on the ballot for six seats on the council. Incumbent Mayor Gerald Billingsley is running unopposed for reelection. Terms for both mayor and town council are two years.

Voters in The Plains will also elect a mayor and fill three council seats whose terms are expiring. There are

four candidates on the ballot to fill four seats; terms for mayor and town council last four years, with half the terms of the six-member council expiring every two years.

In Warrenton, voters will choose representatives for the five ward council seats.

Candidates for Remington Town Council

Gerald Billingsley (mayor)
Van Loving
Evan “Skeet” Ashby III
Stan Heaney Sr.
Susan Tiffany
Devada Allison
Kimberly Henry

Candidates for The Plains Town Council

Lori Sisson (mayor)
Bruce LeLacheur
John Deering
Blake Gallagher
Melissa Washer

Candidates for Warrenton Town Council

Ward 1:
Heather Sutphin
Ali Zarabi
Ward 2
Alec Burnett
William T. Semple
Ward 3
Brett A. Hamby
Ward 4
James Hartman
Ward 5
Kevin T. Carter
Michele Ferri

Unopposed candidates for Warrenton Town Council

BRETT HAMBY

WARD 3
INCUMBENT
Profession:
Battalion Chief, Prince William County Fire and Rescue.
Years living in Warrenton: 27



JAMES HARTMAN

WARD 4
Profession:
Sergeant, Fauquier County Sheriff's Office
Years living in Warrenton: 48



What is the number one issue specific to your ward and where do you stand on it?

Providing a safe community for our citizen continues to be my number one priority. I've helped ensure this by supporting proper staffing, training and equipment for our police department and the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company. I've also supported the strong working relationships with the Fauquier County Sherriff's Office and Fauquier County Fire and Rescue. These are paying real dividends as we fight the COVID-19 pandemic. I am currently on the front lines of this emergency and am well equipped to help the town navigate this situation.

Public safety is my overall concern but my number one issue specifically for Ward 4 is what I call "quality of life." Recent talk of booming growth in northern Culpeper County and the Timber Fence Parkway or a "connector road" cannot be ignored. The impending construction on Broadview Avenue has the potential to turn narrow neighborhood roads into a major thoroughfare with cars avoiding the traffic delays caused by road construction. Ward 4 needs a strong voice to work with council, town staff and others to mitigate the damage high volumes of traffic will inflict. These are safety and quality of life issues. These neighborhoods need to be protected.

How do you feel about the level of growth called for in the town's developing comprehensive plan?

The comprehensive plan update has been a very public process that has allowed residents numerous opportunities to let the council know what our town should strive for. Staff has taken this input and been drafting a plan that the residents and council will be able to review and refine before it is ultimately adopted. The ability for residents to live and work in Warrenton has been a desire during this process as well. Approximately 65% of our workforce commutes. The 2002 Comp Plan called for a growth rate of 1.5 to 3%, while the proposed update calls for a growth rate of no more than 2%. This is a balanced approach that will keep our economy healthy and provide the quality of life we expect in Warrenton.

The UDA, Urban Development Areas, concern me in that it looks like a lot of high density, both commercial and residential. I don't want my hometown to look like Northern Virginia – a lot of high-rent vacant store fronts and now we look just like everyone else. I'm not quite ready to be an authority on it, I'm still studying it and learning about how we got to where we are. Presently we have vacant store fronts, empty restaurant buildings and vacant lots on the Lee Highway, Broadview and Shirley Avenue corridor. We need to work with property owners on revitalization of what we already have, first and fast.

How should the town support business owners?

I have been and will continue to listen to what our business owners are looking for as we navigate the current emergency and the coming recovery. The town council has passed a 90-day pause in the collection of BPOL as well as Meals and Lodging tax collection. This pandemic is uncharted territory, I believe everyone on town council is committed to do all we can to help the business owners through this emergency. This will be a long-term recovery and we will need to continue to evaluate the situation for the remainder of 2020.

Whether the issue is permits, taxes, or signage, the common theme is local government is not business friendly and doesn't care or listen. That is unfortunate because we have a great staff in town government, and I think we can work on this issue and perception. Businesses along Broadview Avenue are very concerned about the impending construction tentatively slated to begin in spring 2022. They may be on the road to recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, then will suffer the consequences of the years of construction. It's a concern I think the incoming council needs to be aware of and work on.

How should the town cope with disappearing revenue caused by the COVID-19 crisis?

I know firsthand that we have many members of our community who are struggling financially due to COVID-19. I have spent countless hours drilling down into the budget and presenting ideas for savings across many divisions to council and staff. At my urging, the Capital Improvement Plan has been reduced in the area of fleet replacement and other major expenditures. The town will continue to proceed with caution as this pandemic remains a fluid event.

The town manager, mayor and council have reacted quickly to the current COVID-19 budget crisis and that will help tremendously in the long-term. I commend them for being aggressively on top of the issues and not waiting to see what will happen. This budget has been trimmed and things are going to be tight for a while. Let's keep the water and sewer system working and the lights on and cut back on unnecessary projects until we weather this storm.

What unique talents or qualities do you bring to the town council?

I grew up working in my family's small businesses. I've also spent over two decades working public safety in the government sector. This gives me broad insight into what it takes to run a business, as well as having first-hand knowledge of what works well and not so well in the public sector. I've used this skill set for the past four years on council to find efficiencies that have had direct benefits to our residents.

I just want to continue to serve my community and look out for Ward 4. I have a calm, methodical and commonsense approach to things. I've served in law enforcement for over 31 years, volunteered at the Warrenton Fire Department 14 years, treasurer of Fauquier Cops For Children, a 501(c)(3), served on the board of directors at the Boys and Girls Club of Fauquier. This is my hometown. I know my community and I know local government; I have witnessed what has worked and more importantly what has not, and I would like the chance to serve and do the right thing!