



## **MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL AND CITIZENS OF GREENCASTLE May 5, 2025**

**MAYOR'S COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:** On April 10, Chief Batistig and I attended the G-A Lion's Club dinner meeting. Attended the Lion's Club pancake breakfast on April 12 and visited the new Franklin Veterinary Clinic on Buchanan Trail West where six doctors serve the greater community. Authored Mayor's Report articles for the Echo Pilot. Attended various Council committee meetings and hearings regarding police personnel. Met with FCADC Executive Director Mike Ross regarding regional development matters. Received near daily briefings from the Greencastle Police Chief / Administrator. Visited Greencastle's bulk day operations on April 25 and 26. Attended the Shady Grove Ruritan celebration dinner regarding the organization's efforts in helping Hurricane Helene victims in N. Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky being the nucleus of \$750,000 worth of supplies and services to assist the hurricane victims. Attended and spoke at the National Day of Prayer on May 1 at the Greencastle Presbyterian Church. Attended the new ELM Shoes Active, ribbon cutting and grand opening on May 2. Attended the G-A Chamber of Commerce Greencastle Spring Clean Up day on Saturday, May 3.

**CARL'S DRUG STORE PROCLAMATION:** WOW! This month, our own Carl's Drug Store is celebrating their 200<sup>th</sup> year in business. Carl's has been at three locations over the centuries following its founding April 27, 1825, and is the oldest continually operated drug store in the United States. A Mayoral Citation will be initiated around Old Home Week, and I will ask Council President Larry Faight to co-sign this citation. CONGRATULATIONS, Dr. Wayne Myers, Carl's Drug Store owner, and past owner Frank Ervin and your staff members.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY STORM DAMAGE, EMA SERVICES:** I assisted Greencastle and Franklin County Emergency Management with damage assessment following the recent Saturday night high windstorm that visited the region. A special thanks to Greencastle public works, Greencastle Police, and Rescue Hose Company for getting virtually all Greencastle and PennDOT streets open in short order.

**NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN IDLING:** Citizen Larry Pittman advises there was limited known train activity near the Jerome R. King Playground in April with four notable idling or air-drying brake noises. Trains stopped further to the north along the Jerome R. King playground.

**AMERICAN LEGION SWM PLANS:** With tonight's invoices approved for payment, an additional \$2,966.70 in engineering and legal fees will not be the responsibility of this

veteran's organization. In my over 34 years of management and planning, I've never observed such a small plan for 31 parking spaces and a 322 s/f SWM infiltration area to be so scrutinized. I've been advised that the A/L's costs is nearly \$40,000. Council, you should receive full disclosure regarding this plan's journey. Why did our Planning Commission defer it to Council? The design PE did not believe a waiver (modification) was needed. These legal questions were raised at the March 10, P/C meeting without an attorney for the PC present. Would the SWM plan design better protect surrounding properties with one PC member stating the plan may not meet the existing ordinance, however it will not make existing conditions any worse, but would make it better than it is now. I attended this P/C meeting.

Our ordinance permits "modifications" when a minimum modification is necessary because of peculiar conditions (§ 180-6, A. & B.). My experience observed modification requests to be fairly common for stormwater and embankment grades that were typically approved following professional engineering reviews.

At a future committee meeting, I will request other lands around our borough with stone / gravel parking areas be reviewed. Our ordinance states that any areas designed to initially be gravel or crushed stone shall be assumed to be impervious for the purposes of comparison. This is stated in the exemption criteria for submission of a drainage plan.

Greencastle needs to find a compromise to support the integrity of our SWM ordinance while supporting our non-profits, businesses, and industries with their planning, improvements, and support of our tax base.

SW CORNER OF CENTER SQUARE PEDESTRIAN VISIBILITY: As a walker, I observe that the subject tree that partially blocks pedestrian visibility and I understand it will be removed. When this happens, I encourage Council to revisit the east bound parking restrictions for two of the three spaces to be consistent with the other corners / intersection of Center Square.



*Ben Thomas, Jr. - Mayor*