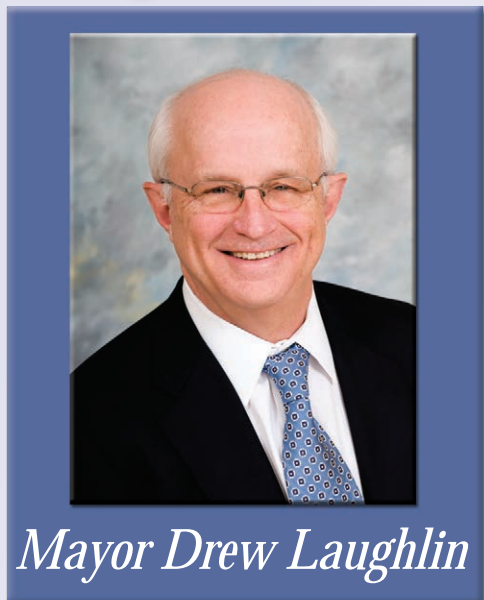


Our Town

A Newsletter of the Town of Hilton Head Island
 Brought to you by the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
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Mayor's Note



Mayor Drew Laughlin

To TIF or Not to TIF

You may have read in the local paper or town hall newsletter about Coligny area revitalization. You may also have read about Tax Increment Financing or its acronym "TIF." Before your eyes glaze over at the mere mention of a term, let me have a shot at making TIF understandable and real.

TIF isn't a term to describe a quarrel with your spouse or significant other. (That would be a tiff, with two f's.) A TIF is an area designated by the town that needs revitalization. We established three Island TIF areas years ago. These three areas are taxing districts for Beaufort County, a Public Service District, and the Beaufort County School District. About 15 years ago, these districts, at the town's request, chose to give up revenue that would have accrued to them so that the town could use that

money to build projects/ infrastructure that would then stimulate quality development. Once we improve conditions in these districts, property values rise; and once the TIF period ends, these three taxing districts begin to collect their share of revenue once again. Our current TIF has dramatically increased property values.

So, you're saying "good for the tax districts but what's in it for me?" That is a fair question deserving an answer. A TIF is not a tax increase. The town recently sought a TIF extension from the three districts because we have not completed all the improvements we need to accomplish. All districts, thankfully, agreed, meaning that soon, you will see the continuation of the Hilton Head Island Renaissance!

In the Coligny area, we are considering, among other things, more road and pedestrian movement improvements, a destination community park and playground, surface parking, children's museum, and streetscape improvements. We are also working on the re-establishment of a USCB campus with Osher Lifelong Learning near Office Park Road. TIF funds will be used in Coligny.

In the area of the new Shelter Cove Towne Centre, we have plans for the Chaplin Linear Park which will provide a unique opportunity for recreation, environmental

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observation, and environmental and historical education for island residents and visitors. The linear park would connect the property Shelter Cove Community Park and the existing Veterans Memorial Park on Broad Creek to the existing Chaplin Park on the Atlantic Ocean. Through an integrated system of boardwalks, observation piers and platforms, pedestrian bridges, waterfront promenades, and multi-purpose trails, users will experience the natural environment including the creek, marsh, maritime forest, folly, beach, and the ocean. This entire project is under consideration and TIF funds could be used. Council will make decisions regarding the linear park in the near future.

We're not using TIF money to build new town halls. We are spending these dollars to make life here the absolute best, highest quality we can for residents and visitors. Many of these improvements will provide meaningful experiences, will help our business community, and make our award-winning community an even more special place.

You see, TIF means a better place for us all.

Town Manager's Note

In late April, the Town broke ground on the Rowing and Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park. This project has been discussed for a long time, and we are very excited that it will soon be open to the public. This project originated from a citizen's group of sailing and rowing enthusiasts who approached Town Council in 2005 and from the Town's desire to provide safe public water access for non-motorized water craft and develop a waterfront community park. This project includes a fixed pier and floating dock on Skull Creek which may be used to launch kayaks, small sailboats, crew shells, etc. as well as for fishing and crabbing. In the upland area, there will be a picnic pavilion, restrooms, parking, recreation area, and an oyster pit. The Town has assembled



Steve Riley

almost 7.5 acres of waterfront property lined with beautiful live oaks for this new park. The site is also known by some as the old Seafood Co-op.

The dock, pier, and park are being

built in separate phases. The entire park should be completed and ready to open this fall. The Town has contracted with Nix Construction to construct the dock and pier and with Brunson Construction to construct the upland park. This project is being funded solely by the Town using Tax Increment Financing.

In addition to being vetted by the Parks and Recreation and Planning Commissions, staff has worked extensively with the Squire Pope/ Stoney neighborhood and rowing and sailing groups to incorporate the appropriate design elements and park features. The Island Recreation Center will operate water sport activities and group lessons from the new park. We hope our residents will utilize the park and get out on the water to enjoy Skull Creek.

