



Town of Hilton Head Island **TOWN MANAGER UPDATE**

An Update from Assistant Town Manager Josh Gruber 9/1/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

Happy September everyone. We've made it through the summer months, but we're still battling COVID-19. We encourage everyone to keep hanging in there and do what's necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community and across the Lowcountry.

Here's an update on what's happening around Town:

The More We Count, the More We Get. Complete the Census By September 30!

Wherever you live, we want you in our count – our CENSUS count! Based on census tract data, some of our Island neighborhoods are showing a low self-response rate. If you live in any of these areas and haven't taken the census, be sure to do so today. Contact your friends and relatives who live in these areas and ask them to complete the census if they haven't done so already.

Here are some of our neighborhoods with census participation below their 2010 self-response rates:

- South Forest Beach
- Folly Field, Singleton Beach, Brams Landing
- North Forest Beach
- Sea Pines
- Hilton Head Airport Area and Mitchelville
- Long Cove, Wexford, Point Comfort and Shipyard
- Windmill Harbour
- Squire Pope

Your participation is essential to our state, our county and our Town. Every South Carolinian (not household –person) brings about \$3,000 in federal resources back to our state. If 100 members of the community are left out of the count, that represents about \$3,000,000 over 10 years that will go to other states.

We urge you to help keep the dollars coming to our state and our community. Fill out and mail back the questionnaire sent to your home; complete the census form online www.my2020census.gov; or take the census over the phone by calling 1-844-330-2020 (English) or 1-844-468-2020 (Spanish).



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Capital Improvement Projects Recommendation Headed to Planning Commission

Our Planning Commission meets at 9 a.m. tomorrow, September 2. Scott P. Liggett, our Director of Public Projects & Facilities/Chief Engineer, will discuss a recommendation of proposed capital improvement projects for Fiscal Year 2021. You can learn about the priority projects for Town Council consideration including pathways, road improvements, park development, existing facilities and infrastructure, new facilities and beach maintenance.

This meeting is being conducted virtually in accordance with Town Council Emergency Ordinance 2020-17 and can be viewed live on the Town's Public Meeting Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/townofhiltonheadislandmeetings/>. Following the meeting, the video record will be made available on the Town's website at <https://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/>.

Free COVID-19 Tests Are Available in Our Community

Hilton Head Regional Healthcare, including Hilton Head Hospital and Coastal Carolina Hospital, has partnered with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environment Control (DHEC) and other community organizations to offer COVID-19 drive-thru testing to community members. You can drive up to Hilton Head Hospital from 8 a.m. to noon, Monday thru Friday for a free COVID-19 test. No appointment or physician order is necessary. Typically, test results will be e-mailed within 72 hours. Participants are asked to have a valid e-mail address available.

COVID-19 Cases in Our Community

Inquiring minds still want to know the number of cases of COVID-19 on Hilton Head Island. For the latest figures, please visit DHEC's website at www.scdhec.gov or the Town's COVID-19 hub page at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/COVID19. DHEC maintains the latest data on COVID-19 cases across the state and in our community, and we integrate some of that data on our website.

Town Hall Closed on Labor Day

In observance of Labor Day, the Town Administrative buildings will be closed on Monday, September 7, 2020. We will resume our regular hours of operation on Tuesday, September 8. Additionally, the Hilton Head Island Convenience Center will be closed for Labor Day and reopens on Tuesday.

Palmetto State Lawyers Available to Help with Evictions and Housing-Related Legal Questions

South Carolinians facing evictions and housing-related legal issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to call a legal assistance hotline sponsored by the



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South Carolina Bar and South Carolina Legal Services. People may call 1-833-958-2266 toll-free any time.

When connected to the hotline, callers should leave a message providing brief details about the assistance needed along with contact information and the best time of day to receive a return call. Individuals who qualify will be connected to South Carolina Legal Services for assistance or matched with South Carolina lawyers who have volunteered to provide free legal help. Callers should be aware there are some limitations on the legal services available.

Before the pandemic, South Carolina ranked first in the nation in the number of evictions. Moratoriums preventing eviction matters from proceeding have now expired, and because of increased unemployment in recent months, the number of tenants at risk of eviction is expected to rise.

“Evictions have a cascade effect on our communities, often leading to homelessness, health issues, job loss, marital and family issues, and an increase in crime,” said Betsy Goodale, director of the South Carolina Bar Pro Bono Program. “However, many evictions – and the effects they have on our society – can be avoided simply by having an attorney advocate for a tenant in the eviction process. A majority of tenants who are represented by counsel in eviction matters have a successful outcome compared to very few when unrepresented.”

A successful outcome can include:

- negotiating a payment plan;
- negotiating a holdover period that gives the tenant time to find other housing; or
- negotiating a resolution that prevents an eviction from appearing on the tenant's record so that they are not hindered when trying to rent in the future.

“Oftentimes, tenants do not realize there are a variety of possible outcomes to an eviction or that free legal assistance is available to help them get to these resolutions,” Goodale said. “Our goal with the hotline is to connect South Carolinians in need with available legal services to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes statewide.”

More information about pandemic-related legal help and resources for emergency rental assistance available to South Carolinians can be found at www.scbarsc.org/covidhelp.