



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN MANAGER UPDATE

An Update from Town Manager Steve Riley 10/21/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

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

Our Town Council met on yesterday. Here a few highlights from that meeting:

Budget Amendments: Town Council amended the fiscal year 2021 budgets for the general, capital project and stormwater funds. Some of the big ticket items the amendments will cover include \$140,000 to offset the cut in Beaufort County funding for the Island Recreation Association; \$350,000 for park clean up and restoration of open space at the Port Royal tract; \$175,000 for implementation of new park maintenance contracts at Lowcountry Celebration Park, and \$722,960 for parks responsibilities we are taking over from Beaufort County. It will also cover some grants to Island organizations, specifically \$150,000 to Concours d' Elegance and \$200,000 to the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina.

Community Development Block Grant Funding: The Town has received an additional allocation of \$391,875 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for COVID-19 relief. With this allocation, Town Council approved an amendment to our Five-Year Consolidated Plan to reflect receipt of these funds. This round of money brings our total amount of HUD funds for COVID-19 relief to more than \$770,000. We are working with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to distribute these funds to nonprofit groups in our community.

2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan Approved: Town Council adopted *Our Plan*, 2020-2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hilton Head Island. Additionally, the Council voted to dissolve the Our Plan Development Team, which was essential in guiding our community engagement process and the participation of hundreds of volunteer citizens in developing our comprehensive plan. We thank all of these volunteers, as well as our staff, for their work on this plan.

On-Street Parking on Burkes Beach Road: Town Council has shut down on-street parking on Burkes Beach Road permanently until we come up with viable resolution for this issue.

Interim Town Manager: Town Council authorized the Mayor to negotiate a contract with Deputy Town Manager Josh Gruber to serve as Interim Town Manager. The council and the consulting firm it was working with have mutually agreed to end the search at this time



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after the firm withdrew from being further involved in the process. Council members plan to take up the matter of a new search when they convene for their annual retreat in January.

Tree Removal Work Scheduled for Town of Hilton Head Island's Mid-Island Tract

Beginning Thursday, October 22nd, Jones Brothers Tree Surgeons, a contractor for the Town of Hilton Head Island, will begin removing over 190 standing dead and fallen trees from the Town's Mid-Island tract. The 103-acre tract bordered by William Hilton Parkway and Union Cemetery Road is the site of the former Planters Row golf course, which the Town purchased in 2013. It has been idle since then.

At its meeting on Tuesday, The Hilton Head Island Town Council approved some budget amendments that would permit staff to spend \$350,000 to clean up the tract and restore it as open space. In addition to removing trees, the contractors will trim trees along the existing cart paths. Ongoing maintenance activities including bush hogging overgrown vegetation will continue around the drainage ponds and expand to the rest of the property. Split rail fencing will be placed around the property in the more opened areas and connect to the existing cart path system so it is safe for users. Work will take place over two to four weeks. During the time of work, public access to the property is prohibited. Town staff is working on guidelines for public use of the property.

Park Your Thoughts Here

We need to hear from you about the parks and recreation recommendations and action items presented in Our Plan. From 10 to 11 a.m. this Friday, October 23, we'll host our second virtual Town Hall where you can learn all about what's going on and have the opportunity to participate in live polling. A link to register for this meeting is on the Town's website. It's accessible on the Parks and Recreation landing page under Major Initiatives.

Registration Link: <https://primetime.bluejeans.com/a2m/register/hjtrkhcp>

Landing page Link: hiltonheadislandsc.gov/projects/parksrecreation/

If you can't make the meeting, take the survey. It is available now through November 11 on Open Town Hall at <https://www.opentownhall.com/9830>

Shine Some Light on this Topic for Us: Overhead Street Lights

The Town of Hilton Head Island recently installed overhead street lights along William Hilton Parkway (US 278 Bus.) at the crosswalk near Yacht Cove Drive and the Circle K convenience store. This was done as a pilot project to enhance pedestrian safety. The lights were permitted through the South Carolina Department of Transportation to meet their lighting and roadside standards, the Town's Land Management Ordinance, and the Design Review Board. We would like your opinion about this project to help guide



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decision-making on future similar projects or programs. A survey on this topic is available in our Open Town Hall portal on our website. We would love to know your thoughts.

Where We Stand With COVID-19

Dr. Jane Kelly, an assistant epidemiologist for S.C. DHEC, shared some good news today about the state of COVID-19 in South Carolina. South Carolina is 1 of only 5 states in a downward trajectory with COVID-19. Beaufort County is 1 of 2 in South Carolina in a downward trend for 3 weeks. However, she pointed out that we need to be cautiously optimistic and continue with the behaviors that have gotten us to this point: wash your hands, stay home if you are sick, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, avoid contact with sick people, cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and wear a mask.

She also announced a year-long project that DHEC and the University of South Carolina are undertaking. This project will evaluate COVID-19 infection and immunity in our state. They will be soliciting a random sample of 32,000 South Carolinians to complete a private online survey and take free COVID-19 tests. They will send out letters in a large blue envelope so if you receive one in the mail, you may have been chosen for this sample. You can respond if you are interested in participating.

Free COVID-19 Tests

Testing for COVID-19 is essential because it helps identify people who are infected with the virus, whether they have symptoms or not. If you are out and about in the community, around others, or not able to socially distance or wear a mask, SCDHEC recommends that you get tested at least once a month. Hilton Head Hospital and its sister facility, Coastal Carolina Hospital in Hardeeville, continues to provide free COVID-19 drive-thru testing from 8 a.m. to noon, Monday thru Friday. You do not need an appointment or a physician's order.

COVID-19 Cases in our Community

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control releases daily updates to keep the community apprised of the number of coronavirus cases learning of after testing and the number deaths resulting from COVID-19 symptoms. For the latest figures related to COVID-19 on Hilton Head Island, our County and our state, please visit www.scdhec.gov or the Town's COVID-19 hub page at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/COVID19.