



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

An Update from Assistant Town Manager Josh Gruber 6/5/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

As our nation continues to grieve over the death of George Floyd, our Town stands in solidarity behind initiatives to bring about change in how law enforcement handles situations that may lead to the arrest of African Americans. At our Town Council meeting earlier this week, Councilman Marc Grant expressed his concern on how such matters are handled in our community and suggested that we take steps to ensure we have no incidents where any of our African American citizens become a casualty of injustice at the hands of law enforcement. Over the last two days, we been in discussions with local leaders and law enforcement officials as a first step to dissect racial issues underlying the fabric of our community. We will join the local Martin Luther King Jr. Committee and other organizers at 5 p.m. this Sunday at Chaplin Community Park as they speak against injustices, stand up in memory of George Floyd and other victims across the country, calling for law enforcement and others individuals to be equipped with the knowledge and understanding needed to protect our citizens and enforce our laws. Let's come together, embrace each other with love, move forward with a purpose of changing the narrative of racism and make our community a much better place than it is now.

Beach Parking Guidance for Islanders Beach Park

Islanders Beach Park is for Beach Pass Holders only for the time being. However, there are still only a limited number of spaces in the parking lot, which is available on a first come, first served basis. Security will close the park when it becomes full and will not reopen until after several spaces become available. Staff cannot do one car out one car in because this creates a safety issue on Folly Field Road. If you are told the lot is full, please return at a later time.

The 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season

Start preparations now for the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Visit the S.C. Emergency Management Division's website at scemd.org and download the South Carolina Hurricane Guide, which contains a wealth of information on planning and preparation. Printed editions of the Guide will be in all Walgreens stores statewide, at coastal DMV offices and in newspapers from Columbia to the coast beginning June 7. With the coronavirus pandemic still looming, it is extremely important to know how you will evacuate and have your plans in order. Also, stay abreast of local hurricane information by signing up to receive emergency alerts from the Town of Hilton Head Island.



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Voter Information for June 9 Primary

With the June 9 primaries next week, the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County wants to remind voters that mail-in absentee ballots must be received by the voter registration office no later than 7 p.m. on June 9 or they will be disqualified. If you are voting on Election Day, election officials have taken steps to protect the health of voters and poll managers. Poll managers have received special COVID-19 training and supplies to apply social distancing and clean common surfaces in the polling place.

Also, you are advised to:

- [Check your polling place at scVOTES.org](https://www.scvotes.org) before going to the polls. Some polling places have been relocated or consolidated due to the pandemic.
- Bring your Photo ID (or voter registration card if you do not have a Photo ID).
- Wear a face mask if you have one, although masks are NOT required.
- Bring your own pen for signing the poll list.
- Practice social distancing by spacing yourself at least six feet apart from others.
- Show your Photo ID by holding it up for poll managers instead of handing it to them.
- Use the provided cotton swab for making selections on the touchscreen.
- Be patient and understanding with poll managers on Election Day.
- Please contact Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County at <http://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/vote> or call 843-255-6900 if you have questions.

Your COVID-19 Experiences for the Record

Our Records Department, which houses all of our historical information, and our Office of Cultural Affairs have partnered on a project to capture the Hilton Head Island community's experiences during the historic COVID-19 pandemic. Your answers will be preserved in the Town's archives as part of our COVID-19 collection. You can complete our survey at <https://hiltonheadislandsc.gov/opentownhall/>. We also encourage you to share artwork, photographs, poetry, writing samples, or other creative work you've done during the pandemic. Please visit <https://culturehhi.org/portfolio/covid-19-survey/> and complete the form to submit your information. You can answer the survey, submit creative samples there, or do both!

Keep Up With COVID-19 Precautions

As restrictions are reduced by reopenings and South Carolinians return to their workplaces and participate in recreational activities that might involve crowds, DHEC continues to urge everyone to be vigilant in practicing social distancing and wearing masks to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. This reminder comes amid public health experts' concerns over the recent rise in COVID-19 data trends in South Carolina.



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As expected, part of the increase in COVID-19 cases is likely a result of increased testing efforts across the state. But other factors, including gatherings at which people fail to practice safety measures, could be in play as well. There is still a significant risk of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus in a public setting in any community. To reduce the spread, everyone should take following precautions:

- Maintain social distancing by staying at least 6 feet away from others
- Wear a cloth mask that covers your nose and mouth while in public
- Avoid touching frequently touched items
- Regularly wash your hands
- Monitor for symptoms and stay home when sick

The more that South Carolinians take these necessary steps every day to reduce exposures, the more we can expect to see data trends begin to decrease, telling us that COVID-19 transmission is slowing across the state. For the latest update on COVID-19 cases in South Carolina and in Beaufort County, and mobile testing locations, visit [SCDHEC.gov](https://www.scdhec.gov).

Town Completes Review of Alligator Removal

The Town has completed its review of the circumstances surrounding the removal of an alligator from the Legendary Golf property that occurred on May 26, 2020. Based on this review, the following summary of actions have been implemented:

- The Town has previously, and continues to, vehemently condemn the treatment of this alligator after it had been secured by Critter Management. This unprofessional and disrespectful behavior did not meet the expectations of the Town or of the Hilton Head Island community and cannot be allowed to be repeated in the future.
- As a result of the actions that occurred, the Town has immediately severed all contractual and business relationships with Critter Management and will not seek to utilize their services for any matters occurring on Town property.
- At no point in the future will the Town permit one of its nuisance alligator removal tags issued to it by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to be utilized on behalf of a private property owner. These permits will be reserved for the exclusive use of Town in addressing situations occurring on Town property and will be carried out in strict compliance with SCDNR requirements and guidance. Any private property owner needing to address a nuisance alligator situation will need to contact SCDNR directly to obtain a removal permit. This can be accomplished by contacting SCDNR at either 803-625-3569 or 800-922-5431.



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- Should the Town need to address a nuisance alligator situation arising on Town property, it will select an authorized removal agent as identified by SCDNR. Additionally, the Town will incorporate mandatory provisions within its contractual arrangements that will ensure that members of the general public are strictly prohibited from interacting in any way with the animal during the removal process and that the animal will be handled in a respectful manner.
- Matters arising under state law concerning potential animal abuse will need to be reviewed and handled by SCDNR as the State's law enforcement arm overseeing wildlife management and more specifically, the nuisance alligator removal program. There is no role for the Town in this regard as it does not possess the necessary jurisdiction to criminally investigate or subsequently prosecute matters arising under these statutory provisions.
- The Town's business license regulations do provide manners in which a particular license may be suspended or revoked. Particularly in response to activities that have been deemed to be a public nuisance. However, in order for such situation to exist there must first be a violation of an underlying law that would give rise to the need to abate the illegal behavior. If no such determination ultimately occurs, then there would not be sufficient grounds to suspend or remove the license. Additionally, due process considerations typically require a business license holder to be given an opportunity to correct the nuisance situation prior to the license being suspended or revoked.
- Given these considerations, it is not possible for the Town to take further actions at this time beyond severing all of its business relationships with Critter Management and continuing to publicly admonish them for the situation that was allowed to occur under their oversight and management.