

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY



FEBRUARY 2023

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# MESSAGE FROM YOUR MANAGER

At the January 31<sup>st</sup> Town Commission Special Meeting, the Commission evaluated and ranked the Town's strategic priorities. This important process provides me with direction allowing me to maximize the productivity of Town staff by organizing and aligning our efforts with the Commission's goals. The top ten strategic priorities were ranked as follows:

1. Negotiate Collective Bargaining Agreements (PBA & FOP)
2. Fire Rescue Department Implementation
3. State Appropriations
4. SR-A1A Drainage and Flooding Issues & FDOT Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (RRR) Project
5. Charter Review
6. New Solid Waste and Recycling Services Contract
7. Marine Accessory Structures Ordinance
8. Building Recertification Process – Reserves Requirement
9. New Website & Content Management Process
10. Sea Turtle Lighting Standards

It comes as no surprise that implementation of our Fire Rescue Department remains one of our top priorities. As it relates to this project, we remain focused on Fire Station Construction. Construction is to start in early April and be completed by April of 2024 in time to start our Fire Rescue Department. When construction starts, changes will need to be made as to how residents access and park at Town Hall, Police Department, Post Office (including the drive-up mailbox out front), Library and the Building Department. We are finalizing a site access and parking plan which will be communicated to residents next month. Construction is temporary (12 months) and we apologize for any inconvenience you may experience during this time.

Another element of the Fire Rescue Department project involves developing a formal means for resident support of and participation in the new Fire Rescue Department. We are thinking of a foundation similar to that of the Police Foundation that supports the efforts of the department. Another option is potentially expanding and renaming the existing Police Foundation to include fire rescue operation. We are early in the process and welcome suggestions and support from the community. A new or expanded foundation would aid these public safety operations in fundraising activities that are critical implementing new initiatives and procuring specialized, cutting-edge equipment. If you are interested in helping, please contact the Town Manager's Office at 561-278-4548 or via email at [tcuebas@highlandbeach.us](mailto:tcuebas@highlandbeach.us).

We continue to thank you all for your continued support; we could not have gotten this far without the overwhelming backing of our residents and we look forward to providing the level of service you have come to expect in our *Three Miles of Paradise*.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HIGHLAND BEACH?

## Save the Date – FDOT Public Meeting

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be holding a Public Meeting in reference to the SR-A1A Resurfacing Project on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM in the Town Library.

## Board Vacancies

Board of Adjustment & Appeals – Two (2) vacancies for three-year terms and one (1) vacancy for an unexpired term ending September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Financial Advisory Board – One (1) vacancy for unexpired term ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and one (1) vacancy for unexpired term ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board – Three (3) vacancies for unexpired terms ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

For additional information, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at (561) 278-4548 or email [lgaskins@highlandbeach.us](mailto:lgaskins@highlandbeach.us) (Lanelda Gaskins) or [jdehart@highlandbeach.us](mailto:jdehart@highlandbeach.us) (Jaclyn DeHart), Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

## Community Art Program

Mark your calendars for our Community Art Show in March and April 2023. Residents and Town staff are invited to showcase their artistic talents by displaying a painting, photograph, quilt, or other artwork at the library. Email [shayes@highlandbeach.us](mailto:shayes@highlandbeach.us) for details!

## Town Entry Signage Design Contest Key Dates

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Last day to submit designs by dropping off a hard copy at Town Hall or emailing [TownSign@highlandbeach.us](mailto:TownSign@highlandbeach.us).

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – Town Commissioners will review all submitted designs at Town Commission meeting and select design finalists to be considered for public voting.

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – Residents may cast their vote for one of the finalists' designs. The design with the highest number of votes wins!

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – Winning design will be announced at Town Commission meeting!



# COMMUNITY

Highland Beach was recently ranked the #2 (although we would personally say #1) retirement destination in the south, as well as #3 nationally by [www.liherald.com](http://www.liherald.com). It is easy to see how our Town was able to achieve that prestigious ranking by simply taking a step outside – we are greeted by sparkling waters to our east and west, pristinely maintained palm trees and foliage along A1A, tropical weather year-round, and we are the safest town in Florida to top it off! The article makes special mention of the Town's sea turtle conservation efforts – thank you to the Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board, Highland Beach Sea Turtle Volunteers, and all Highland Beach residents who help keep our Three Miles of Paradise a safe haven for our sea turtles!


## TOWN CLERK

### 2023 Election Information

The next Municipal General Election (nonpartisan) is Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The purpose is to vote for a Commissioner for a three-year term ending March 2026, and a Commissioner for an unexpired term ending March 2024. Note: Early voting is not available for municipal elections.

The Town's qualifying period ended on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, at noon, and candidate Douglas Hillman (incumbent) ran unopposed for the office of Mayor-Commissioner. Therefore, Mayor Hillman shall be deemed to have voted for himself per Florida Statutes 101.151(7).

Note: To be eligible to vote on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, you must be a registered voter in Highland Beach and in Precinct 2801. All Highland Beach registered voters should ensure that their correct address is on file with the Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Office. Per Florida Statutes, Section 101.6103, the United States Postal Service cannot forward Vote-by-Mail ballots.

Official Municipal Election Ballot March 14, 2023 Town of Highland Beach Palm Beach County, Florida	Boleta Oficial Elección Municipal 14 de marzo de 2023 Pueblo de Highland Beach Condado de Palm Beach, Florida
PCT. 2801	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructions: To vote, fill in the oval completely ● next to your choice. Use only black ballpoint pen. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot. Do not cross out or your vote may not count.</li><li>Instrucciones: Para votar, llene completamente el óvalo ● junto a su selección. Use sólo bolígrafo negro. Si comete un error, solicite una nueva boleta. No borre o realice otras marcas, o su voto puede no ser contado.</li></ul>	
	
Town of Highland Beach Pueblo de Highland Beach	
Commissioner Three-Year Term (Vote for One) Comisionado Término de tres años (Vote por Uno)	
<input type="radio"/> Don Peters <input type="radio"/> John Shoemaker	
Commissioner One Year Unexpired Term (Vote for One) Comisionado Un año de un término no vencido (Vote por Uno)	
<input type="radio"/> Maggie Chappelle <input type="radio"/> Judith M. Goldberg <input type="radio"/> Peter Kosovsky	

## Vote-By-Mail

Voters who wish to receive a Vote-by-Mail ballot for 2023 through 2024 elections must complete a new Vote-by-Mail ballot request. Any registered voter can Vote-by-Mail. By law, special accommodations are available for military and overseas voters and voters with disabilities. For additional information on Vote-by-Mail or to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot, please contact Wendy Sartory Link, Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections (PBCSOE) at <https://www.pbcelections.org/Voters/Vote-By-Mail>, (561) 656-6200 (Office number), (561) 656-6230 (Fax number), or by visiting the PBCSOE office in person.



## Important Dates and Deadlines

- Deadline to register to vote is on Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Deadline to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot be mailed to you is 5:00 PM on Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Deadline to return a Vote-by-Mail ballot is 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Become a Poll Worker

If you are interested in becoming a Poll Worker and would like to work during Highland Beach Municipal Elections, please contact the Wendy Sartory Link Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections Office at <https://www.pbcelections.org/Poll-Workers/Requirement>, the Poll Worker Department at (561) 656-6200, option 3, or by email at [pollworker@votepalmbeach.gov](mailto:pollworker@votepalmbeach.gov) to review requirements, positions, and to submit an application.

For more information on the 2023 Municipal General Election, please contact Town Clerk Lanelda Gaskins at [lgaskins@highlandbeach.us](mailto:lgaskins@highlandbeach.us) or (561) 278-4548 during normal business hours (8:30 AM – 4:30 PM).



# POLICE DEPARTMENT

From time to time, beached vessels find our shoreline. In most instances these are abandoned migrant boats that have already been dealt with by the Coast Guard. You can tell this by the Coast Guard's green spray paint "OK" markings. Their protocol is to leave the boat abandoned at sea. The vessel may break apart at sea or wash ashore and sometimes wash back out, depending on the tide. If it does not wash back out, the boat is removed from the shore by a salvage company. When you see one of these beached vessels, the chances are no one came ashore on our beach and it most likely drifted in by the tide.



# FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT



The Town of Highland Beach is making great strides in its mission to establish the Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department by May 2024. We have taken ownership of the Pierce Ascendant 107-foot fire truck, which is being stored off-campus in a warehouse due to limited space at Town Hall. This is our second fire suppression unit; Delray Beach Fire Rescue operates our existing 75-foot Pierce Aerial unit, and we now have two rescue medical transport units in our inventory.

Construction of our new fire station is underway, with the architect delivering the construction drawings to the Building Official for approval. We expect to start construction in April and complete it

for the grand opening in May 2024. These two projects demonstrate the Town of Highland Beach's commitment to providing excellent public safety services to the community and its residents. Adding a new fire station and two additional emergency response vehicles will help us do that.

# BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Not storing combustible materials in electrical and mechanical closets is essential due to the increased fire risk. These closets typically contain electrical equipment and wiring, which can easily ignite combustible materials if they come into contact. The combination of heat and sparks from the electrical equipment and the presence of flammable materials can lead to a rapid and intense fire. Another reason why it is important to avoid storing combustibles in electrical and mechanical closets is because these areas are often not equipped with fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers. This means that in the event of a fire, it may spread quickly and uncontrollably, causing extensive damage and putting lives at risk.

To prevent these hazards, it is crucial to ensure that combustible materials are not stored in electrical and mechanical closets. This includes paper, cardboard, cleaning supplies, and other flammable liquids. Instead, these materials should be stored in a separate, designated area away from electrical and mechanical equipment.

To further reduce the risk of fire, it is also essential to regularly inspect electrical and mechanical equipment for signs of wear or damage. This includes checking for frayed wires, loose connections, and other potential hazards. Any issues should be addressed immediately to prevent the risk of fire.

In summary, storing combustibles in electrical and mechanical closets can lead to a significant increase in the risk of fire, as well as other hazards. To ensure the safety of building occupants and prevent damage to the building, it is essential to avoid storing combustible materials in these areas and to inspect electrical and mechanical equipment regularly.

## CODE TIP OF THE MONTH: BULK TRASH

The Town of Highland Beach contracts Waste Management to pick up bulk trash every Monday for the residents of the community. Bulk trash pickup is intended to allow residents to dispose of household items such as appliances, furniture, mattresses, and other large items that are too large for regular garbage bin pickup. The amount of bulk trash placed out for pickup should be limited to approximately 4 cubic yards (size of a small car) and any individual item should be no more than eight feet in length by four feet in width.

Bulk trash pickup is not intended for disposal of hazardous materials (oil, paint, etc.) or any type of construction debris. Additionally, it is not intended to be used by "for hire" landscapers to dispose of tree and lawn clippings. Landscapers are required by Town Ordinance Section 24-8 to remove all trash, fronds, or other landscaping debris the same day and must be taken to a private or public dumping ground beyond the limits of the Town.

Bulk trash, as well as regular trash bins, may not be placed out before noon on the day preceding the morning pickup per Town Ordinance Section 24-3b and bins must be brought back in by 8:00 PM on the day of pickup. When bulk trash is placed earlier than prescribed, it increases the likelihood of debris being scattered about the roads and adjacent properties during wind or rain events.

If you have questions regarding what is permitted for bulk trash pickup or need other options for disposing of items that are prohibited, please contact the Code Compliance Department at 561-278-4540 and we can provide you with the help and information you need.

# LIBRARY

Whether you want to spend the night in with a great book or binge watching a DVD series, or you prefer an evening out, the library has something for you. Start the week off with a Dancercise class, enjoy a movie or concert, or come share your views at a discussion group.

Upcoming cultural events (all begin at 5:30 pm unless noted):

- Feb 21 movie: Where the Crawdads Sing
- Feb 23 concert: Roberta Rust (classical pianist) (sponsored by the family of former resident and Friend of the Library Mike Stein)

## *Library Hours:*

*Monday – Thursday* 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM

*Friday* 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

*Saturday* 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Get a full list of our discussion groups and other programs on our website or call us at (561) 278-5455.

# NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board will be sponsoring an educational outreach night on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Town Library at 6:00pm. The topic will be on Dune Management and Restoration and the event is open to all Highland Beach residents.

The guest speaker for this special evening will be Robert (Rob) Baron. Rob has worked on Florida and Caribbean coastlines since 1973 and has planned and carried out some 2,000 private and public dune restoration projects. The scope of his work has ranged from large scale hurricane repair projects along miles of shoreline to complex and experimental beach dune and strand zone habitat restorations. During his informational presentation, Rob will discuss and outline the following:

- Causes and management solutions to coastal erosion
- Basic elements of dune restoration
- Provide illustrations from project work done throughout Florida, specifically in Highland Beach, and showcase illustrations of plant species commonly used in beachfront landscaping.



For more information, contact Ingrid Allen, Town Planner, at (561) 278-4540 (ext. 3) and visit the Board's webpage at <https://highlandbeach.us/nrpab/>.

# “HERO DUO: TOP GUN MEETS TOP NURSE”

Written by Commissioner Shoemaker

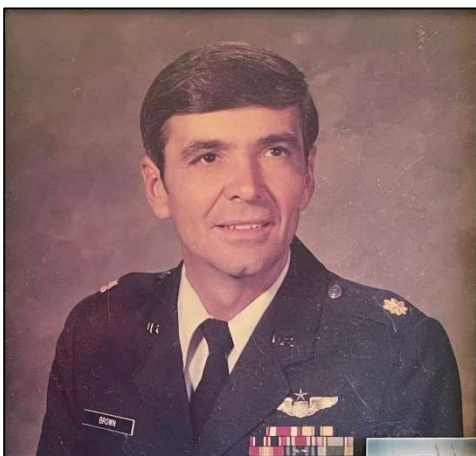
Here is a simply marvelous story. In our effort to capture the stories of military veterans during and after their service to our country, we learned of two heroes who stood side-by-side for decades.

Since rank has its privileges, I will start with Colonel Peggy Brown. Graduating from the School of Nursing at Boston University in 1973 was an eventful time with the Vietnam War still raging. No matter, while working at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, she decided to enlist in the Air Force and headed to George AFB, CA, in the Mojave Desert.

Now to include the other member of this “Duo”, Lieutenant Colonel Ron Brown, who decided to enlist in the Air Force in 1965. During his four years as an enlisted man, his goal was to become a pilot, but not just any pilot, but a fighter pilot flying F-4s and F-16s. To do that he finished his time in the Air Force and went to college. After graduating from Indiana University at Fort Wayne, he enlisted again in the Air Force and began two years of pilot training at Laughlin AFB, TX, and George AFB in Victorville, CA.

Ron would spend years on assignments in Kunsan AB, Korea, for the 80<sup>th</sup> TFS and then at Valdosta, GA, flying F-4s, before attending the Air Force version of the Navy’s “Top Gun School” or what they call, “Fighter Weapons School” in the Air Force. It is located at Nellis AFB, CA, and is the famous “Home of the Fighter Pilot”.

As he progressed in his career and training, he was not only a ‘Top Gun’ fighter pilot but was then assigned to be an Instructor of the Instructors at the 31st Tactical Training Wing, Homestead AFB in a “train the trainer role”. That is an incredible honor and speaks to Ron’s skill as one of the best of the best!



Now, while all this was happening for both Ron and Peggy, the nexus was at George AFB in CA. That is where Ron met Peggy. Then Ron headed to Korea and Peggy to Germany. Two years later Peggy flew to Valdosta, GA, on leave, and married Ron on her lunch break at the Town Clerks' office, so Peggy could join Ron at Moody AFB, GA. That would be the official start of a marriage made in 1977 lasting more than 45 years.

Soon after, Peggy was off to Moody AFB. Then they went to Homestead AFB, Nellis AFB, back to Wiesbaden, back to Homestead, Tyndall AFB, and Lackland AFB, San Antonio where Peggy was the 59th Support Group Commander at the AF “Flagship Hospital” Wilford Hall, where she had over 500 Airmen in five diverse Squadrons under her command.

It was to be her last assignment and retired after 26 years. As she said, she joined expecting to stay for two years and stayed for twenty-six!

They both have incredible stories over that time. Ron with all his experiences with aggressive, brave, brash fighter pilots flying the best fighter planes in the world. And then he was part of the 422 Test Squadron to push their limits, be creative, but always vigilant to protect each other. It takes a special kind of man to define his perceived limits in flight combat maneuvers and then push them beyond their comfort envelope.

For Peggy, as everyone knows, the nursing profession is grueling with long hours and extremely difficult situations dealing with all kinds of severe emotional and physical trauma and not just treating Americans. At Wiesbaden, her Aeromedical Staging Facility supported the transport of Freedom Fighters (the Mujahedeen) from Afghanistan. America was supporting those who were severely wounded fighting the Russians, they were sent to the American hospital in Germany for treatment and some were sent to Western Europe and North America.

For Ron, he was stationed at Homestead AFB flying F-16s and wound up a Squadron Commander, go figure. His last assignment was at Tyndall AFB in Panama City, FL, which completed his career of 26 years. Between them, they served in the United States Air Force for 52 years. There is simply not enough space in this article to list all their experiences, schools, training, and success that fills the walls of their home with such evidence.

After their military careers, Ron became a pilot for United Airlines for ten years and later was the Vice Mayor of Highland Beach (2012-2015). Peggy did volunteer work at Pope John Paul II High School, St Lucy Catholic Church, and the Boca Hospital. In addition, she did Home Health Nursing and enjoyed time with their son. They are both involved in the local neighborhood "POA" or Bel Lido Property Owners Association where Ron is the President and Peggy is the Treasurer.

Peggy has a brother and sister-in-law living in Boynton Beach and so they looked for a home in the area. Ron found the perfect setting in 2000 to be close to the beach, without the noise and crowds of commercialism, and in a new, emerging neighborhood of Bel Lido. They simply love the culture and community feel of Highland Beach. Their son, Zachary, a musician, lives in North Carolina and visits when not on the road performing.

Their home has walls full of plaques, pictures, ribbons, commendations, and impressive memorabilia. As Ron said, they are just lucky to have found their home in "a little piece of Paradise" in Highland Beach.

Noting words that apply to both LTC Ron Brown and COL Peggy Brown at their retirement from the Air Force, it is evident that "their work was proudly done, they climbed the heights and reached the horizons with goals they set, sought and won."

We salute this "Dynamic Duo" as Highland Beach Heroes and thank them for their service to our country and continuing service to Highland Beach and their neighborhood.





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