

TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH • MAY/JUN 2024

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## PAGE 1

*MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
MANAGER*

## PAGE 3

*WHAT'S HAPPENING IN  
HIGHLAND BEACH?*

## PAGE 4

*COMMUNITY  
POLICE DEPARTMENT*

## PAGE 5

*FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT*

## PAGE 6

*BUILDING DEPARTMENT*

## PAGE 8

*PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING AND ZONING*

## PAGE 10

*LIBRARY*

# MESSAGE FROM YOUR MANAGER

## Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, we marked a momentous occasion in the history of our town – the opening of our new Fire Station No. 120 at the start of our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

With hearts full of pride and gratitude, we gathered to celebrate the opening of our new fire station and the official establishment of our very own Fire Rescue Department. This is a significant milestone that has been years in the making, and I was thrilled to stand before the group to welcome them and witness the realization of our vision.

At the event, I extended my sincerest gratitude to the Town Commission for their unwavering support and leadership throughout this journey. Their dedication to the safety and well-being of our community has been instrumental in making our new fire station and department a reality.



Also, I thanked and continue to thank each resident for their support of this effort. Your trust in us and your investment in our future have made all the difference. This new Fire Rescue Department and station is a symbol of our commitment to the safety and well-being of every individual in our community.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to our Fire Chief, our dedicated Town staff, and all the new men and women who will serve as our new firefighters/paramedics, driver engineers, and captains. Their commitment to excellence and service is truly commendable, and we are fortunate to have them as the guardians of our town.

As your Town Manager, I am truly honored to have guided you on this journey, and I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together. Your continued trust in me to hire the best leaders and to make the right decisions along the way has been the driving force behind our success.

As we stand on the threshold of a new era, let us take a moment to reflect on how far we have come and to celebrate the bright future that lies ahead.

Together, we have made it possible. Together, we have built something truly remarkable.

And together, we will continue to strive for excellence and to ensure the safety and prosperity of our beloved Highland Beach – Our Three Miles of Paradise!

## Milani Park

The latest update regarding Milani Park shows that there is still work to do in convincing the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners that development of the park would not be beneficial, but rather a detriment to the Town and County. On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Palm Beach County staff, without apparent direction from the Board of County Commissioners, sent a letter to Town residents reaffirming their plan to fully develop the more expansive Milani Park site plan as outlined in the settlement agreement. While Town leadership is disappointed in this action and that there seems to be a lack of desire for a constructive dialogue, they are up for the challenge and will remain persistent in advocating for our community.

"We've been handed a surprising and disappointing turn of events regarding the future of Milani Park, and it's time for us to stand together as a community to ensure our voices are heard loud and clear...The lack of public review or discussion about these recent actions by the County is deeply concerning. It gives the appearance of decisions being made without proper due process and transparency, which goes against the principles of our "Government-In-The-Sunshine" laws.

This letter and the actions it implies have spurred us into action, and we need your help. I'm issuing a CALL TO ACTION.

Please join us on May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners Meeting as we come together to express our solidarity and share our concerns directly with the Palm Beach County Commissioners. To facilitate attendance, we've arranged for two buses to depart from Town Hall at 12 PM. Please [click here](#) (print edition – visit [www.highlandbeach.us](http://www.highlandbeach.us)) to register and save your seat on the bus or call Town staff at 561-278-4548 for assistance.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community."

-Mayor Natasha Moore

Please [click here](#) to download a copy of the letter from Palm Beach County (print edition – visit [www.highlandbeach.us](http://www.highlandbeach.us)) and [here](#) to download Mayor Moore's full response and community call to action.

## Community Post Office Closure

As you may already know, the Town of Highland Beach will close the Highland Beach Community Post Office, effective May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This decision comes as a result of the United States Postal Service's (USPS) recent determination to discontinue the acceptance of credit cards for payment of services, one that continues their trend of removing available services from our Community Post Office over the past two years, including money order processing, trackable package delivery, and change of address requests.

As credit card payments constitute 90% of all transactions at our post office, the USPS's recent decision to discontinue the acceptance of credit cards has presented significant and

insurmountable challenges. The conditions imposed by the USPS to use our own credit card machine are unmanageable and highly inefficient, and the USPS is not willing to listen to alternatives. As such, the USPS's decision has led to the closure of our Community Post Office.

While we understand that this decision may inconvenience residents, it is necessary to avoid operational difficulties and financial strain. Additionally, this decision will result in significant cost savings of over \$150,000 per year for the Town and will free up much-needed daytime parking spaces.

May 15<sup>th</sup> also marks the retirement of our beloved Postal Clerk, Valerie Jacoby Jones, after 24 years of dedicated service to the Town. We will deeply miss her presence and wish her the very best in all her future endeavors.

Despite the closure of our local post office, the town will continue to provide a USPS blue drop box for mail drop-off. We understand the inconvenience this closure may cause and want to assure you that several nearby post offices are available for resident use. You can find the list of local post offices at <https://tools.usps.com/find-location.htm>.

While we wish we didn't have to take this step, we feel that the USPS's decisions have left us with no alternative. We appreciate your understanding and support during this transition period.

#### Farewell to Our Seasonal Residents

Let me close this opening by wishing a fond farewell and a "See you soon!" to our seasonal residents. The return of your added vibrance and warmth to our community will be eagerly awaited, and we will strive to continue to be the Three Miles of Paradise you have come to know and love.

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HIGHLAND BEACH?**

#### Upcoming Agenda Items (Subject to Change and Additional Items may be Added)

- Strategic Priorities – FY2024 Updates
- Continued discussion of Milani Park
- Continued discussion of marine facilities ordinance amendments
- Review of updated beach feasibility study
- Discussion of code violation process
- Discussion of old fire station project

## **Board Vacancies**

Board of Adjustment & Appeals - One (1) vacancy for an unexpired term ending September 2024.

Financial Advisory Board - One (1) vacancy for a three-year term.

Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board - Two (2) vacancies for three-year terms.

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**



### Board Member Spotlight – Myles Schlam

Myles B. Schlam is an Attorney in the State of Florida practicing in criminal defense, family, and civil law. He graduated from Florida Atlantic University in 1995 where he earned a degree in criminal justice/psychology. He then worked in the medical field as a business administrator for a few years before attending law school in Miami, FL, graduating in 2002. Myles has been living in Highland Beach for 13 years now and loves it here. He has been involved with the Town since serving on multiple boards. He is presently the Chair of the Code Enforcement Board where he is serving his second three-year term.

Prior to that he was the Vice-Chair. Myles is also a Certified Addictions Professional in the state of Florida and ran a substance abuse program in the courts for almost a decade. In 2016, he was appointed to the 15<sup>th</sup> Circuit Sober Homes Task Force which was the force behind new legislation and crack downs in the substance recovery treatment industry. When he is not working, Myles loves music events, snow ski trips, and traveling.

# **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

### National Safe Boating Week

The Highland Beach Police Department wants to take May 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024's National Safe Boating Week, to recognize and reinforce the importance of safe and responsible operation of boats and other watercraft. The Police Department's Marine Unit will be consistently patrolling our waters to ensure boaters are operating in a responsible manner, but it takes the



effort and cooperation of everyone involved to create as safe an environment as possible. There are many steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of marine accidents, including taking boating safety courses, wearing Coast Guard approved life jackets, and NEVER operating a vessel while impaired by alcohol or drugs. For more tips on boating safety, please visit [www.myfwc.com/boating](http://www.myfwc.com/boating) and [www.safeboatingcampaign.com](http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com).



# WEAR IT

A program of the National Safe Boating Council

## FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

It's official—the Highland Beach Fire Rescue Department is a reality! After years of planning and preparation, our community now has its very own fire rescue department to serve and protect us. This is a huge milestone for our small town, and we couldn't be more proud.

The Florida State Fire Marshal's Office visited our site last week to assess our ability to protect the residents and firefighters. During the inspection, they checked our fire suppression equipment, training records, and occupational health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that they met or exceeded national standards.

The Fire Rescue Department has successfully met all the state and federal standards, and the State Fire Marshal's Office has approved it. As a result, the department will be issued a unique identification number known as FDID, which is used by the US Fire Administration to identify registered fire departments around the country. This number officially recognizes this department as a legitimate entity.

The Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Medical Services recently conducted a site visit and inspection of our medical equipment, personnel records, and protocols. I am pleased to inform you that we passed all elements of the inspection with flying colors. Our team was recognized for our organization and preparedness.

We are immensely thankful for the steadfast support we have received from the community, our Mayor, and the board of Town Commissioners. The achievement of this milestone would not have been possible without the exceptional vision and leadership of our Town Manager and his team. This is not solely a success for the Fire Rescue Department because every employee in the Town



played a crucial role in the success of this project. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved!



# BUILDING DEPARTMENT

## Explained: Building, Planning & Zoning, Code Compliance

As the Building Official for the Building Department, my role involves overseeing our town's adherence to local, state, and adopted national standards, including FEMA rules and regulations under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Our department covers key areas such as Planning, Zoning, and Code Compliance, each critical to Highland Beach's well-being. This guide aims to illuminate the roles within our department, demonstrating our collaborative efforts to advance Highland Beach.

## Building Department: Ensuring Safety and Compliance

Our department is central to the town's development process, from the initial planning stages to the final approval of construction projects:

### Permitting

Obtaining permits is a critical first step for any construction project, ensuring all plans meet our strict safety and building code requirements.

### Plan Review

Our detailed review process evaluates each project for compliance with safety, structural integrity, and environmental sustainability, among other factors.

## Inspections

We conduct thorough inspections at various stages of construction to ensure ongoing adherence to the approved plans and building codes.

## Certificate of Occupancy / Certificate of Completion

Issuing a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion marks the completion of our oversight, signifying a building's safety and readiness for occupancy.

## Planning and Zoning: Guiding Highland Beach's Future

As our Town Planner, Ingrid Allen is instrumental in shaping Highland Beach's future. Her role extends beyond reviewing development plans, as she actively works with the Planning Board and Natural Resources Advisory Board. This collaboration ensures our growth strategies are sustainable and in harmony with our natural resources.

## Zoning Laws and Land Use

Ingrid oversees the application of zoning laws, guiding land use and building projects to align with our community's vision and regulations.

## Environmental Preservation

Her collaboration with the Natural Resources Advisory Board is key to integrating environmental preservation with our town's development plans, ensuring a sustainable future for Highland Beach.

## Code Compliance: Maintaining High Standards

Adam Osowsky, our Code Compliance Officer, leads our efforts to ensure properties across Highland Beach adhere to local ordinances, maintaining the quality and safety of our community.



## Ensuring Property Standards

Through inspections and enforcement actions, Adam addresses issues related to property maintenance, safety violations, and unpermitted work, ensuring compliance with our high standards.

## Vacation Rental Oversight

A particular focus is on maintaining the standards of vacation rental properties, safeguarding the experience for visitors and residents alike.

## In Summary

As the Building Official, I'm proud of our collective efforts to ensure Highland Beach remains a beautiful, safe, and well-planned community. Through our collaborative work, including Ingrid's involvement with the Planning Board and Natural Resources Advisory Board and Adam's diligence to ensure a beautiful community, we are committed to a sustainable and prosperous future for Highland Beach.

Jeff Remas, Building Official & Floodplain Administrator

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

## Solid Waste Rate Increase

Please be advised that on June 1<sup>st</sup> a 7% rate increase will go into effect for all commercial and residential recyclable, solid waste, and yard trash services in accordance with the Town's agreement with Waste Management for Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Services.



# PLANNING AND ZONING



DID YOU KNOW that Highland Beach has more annual sea turtle nests than Boca Raton and Delray Beach? In anticipation of the upcoming sea turtle nesting season (March 1<sup>st</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup>), it is important to keep your distance from sea turtles and their nests on the beach. Sea turtles are protected, so you

should allow hatchlings to crawl toward the ocean on their own. Any interference or disturbance, including getting too close, can cause hatchlings to become confused and lose their way. Their trek to the water from their nest is part of the process that helps them orient themselves to their surroundings and for females to remember their home beach.

Bright lights from buildings, cellphones, or cameras can cause them to become disoriented, leading the hatchlings to stray away from the shoreline where they need to swim and start their

life. If they are unable to reach the ocean quickly, they can become dehydrated and exhausted, making them an easy meal for predators.

You can make a difference! Follow these tips and share them with your community:

- Keep beaches dark. From dusk to dawn, turn off any lights not necessary for human safety. [Use long wavelength amber LED lamps for lights that must stay lit and shield lights](#), so they are not visible from the beach. Remember to close shades or curtains at night.
- No flash photos. If you are on the beach at night, don't take flash photos or use bright cellphones or flashlights. This can cause turtles to become disoriented and crawl away from the ocean, putting them at risk.
- Remember, sea turtles are protected by law. Keep your distance and give sea turtles space if you see one on the beach. Never touch a nesting turtle because it might leave the beach without nesting if disturbed.
- Clear the way at the end of the day. Beach furniture, boats, toys, and trash left behind on the sand can become obstacles that block crawling sea turtles. Fill in any holes dug in the sand. Holes can trap turtles and they also pose a safety risk to humans.

Please report sea turtles that are sick, injured, dead, entangled, or are in danger to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at [888-404-3922](#) so trained responders can help. For information on the Town's new Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance, please contact Town Planner Ingrid Allen at 561-637-2012 or [iallen@highlandbeach.us](mailto:iallen@highlandbeach.us).



## Code Tip of the Month: Turtle Nesting Season

As many of you know, March 1<sup>st</sup> marked the beginning of turtle nesting season. This is the time of year when the mature sea turtles make their way to the beach and lay their eggs into a nest under the sand for an incubation period of several months. The eggs will eventually hatch, and the young baby turtles find their way back to the sea. This process is tough and presents many challenges from nature, but many from mankind as well.

Some of the greatest impacts humans can have on these nests and young turtles are trampling of the buried nests and artificial light from homes and buildings, which the newborn turtles are attracted to, thinking it is the moonlight leading them back to sea. These difficulties, along with habitat loss, poaching, and climate change have caused most sea turtles to be placed on the endangered species list. To mitigate these issues, the State of Florida and the Town of Highland Beach have implemented laws and ordinances to protect the sea turtles and help regrow their population.

One prevention step is to limit the amount and type of artificial light exposed to the beach at night. All condominiums, single family homes, and commercial properties in the Town of Highland Beach are required to have "Turtle Safe" lighting installed at all points visible from the beach. This will minimize confusion for the young hatchlings so they can safely make their way out to the sea. Please be aware it is illegal to harass, harm, or kill any turtle or its eggs or nest. If you are aware of a turtle nest which has not been identified, barriers that have been compromised, or if you have found a sick or injured turtle, you should call the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at 1-888-404-FWCC or Barbara James, Town of Highland Beach Sea Turtle Permit Holder, at 561-289-1109.

These laws, in addition to other environmental protection efforts, have proven very effective in rejuvenating the turtle population that visits our beaches every year. If you have questions about turtle lighting, nest protection, or any other concern about our beaches, please call the Town of Highland Beach Code Compliance Department at 561-278-4540.

# LIBRARY

Things may be a little quieter around town now that the snowbirds have left, but we have plenty of activities at the library to keep you entertained this summer. Plus, no more long waiting lists for popular books and DVDs!

### Summer Movies at the Library

Movie nights are back! Join us on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 5:30 PM to enjoy a movie on the big screen.

#### 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

- May 7<sup>th</sup>: 80 for Brady
- May 21<sup>st</sup>: Priscilla
- June 4<sup>th</sup>: Big George Foreman
- June 18<sup>th</sup>: About My Father

#### Upcoming Concerts (all at 5:30 PM):

- May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Steve Mento (classical piano)
- June 6<sup>th</sup>: Midnight Sun (fifties and sixties pop)
- July 11<sup>th</sup>: Heart & Soul Duo (piano and vocal)

#### Paintings by "Mizou"

Meet the artist, Michelle Chassaing Milstein, at the opening of our next art exhibit on Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Light refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.

#### Other Activities:

- Learn to download eBooks: call for appointment.
- Current Events Discussion Group: Saturdays at 10:30 AM
- Small Fry Story Time plus Crafts on Wednesdays at 4:30 PM, ages 4 and up
- Toddler Time: Stories and Rhymes on Saturdays at 10:30 AM, ages 2 and 3

Call us at 561-278-5455 for more information.





## MEDICATION DISPOSAL

The **Highland Beach Police Department** is committed to providing a safe, secure and environmentally friendly way to help our community dispose of unwanted or expired household medication, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs and unused pharmaceuticals, and is pleased to announce that we now have a Med Return Box for our residents.

The MedReturn is located in the **Highland Beach Police Department** Lobby and is open during normal Town business hours, Monday thru Friday.

### **YES - Accepted**

- **Prescriptions**
- **Prescription Patches**
- **Prescription Medications**
- **Prescription Ointments**
- **Over-the-counter medications**
- **Vitamins**
- **Samples**
- **Medications for pets**

**PLACE ALL PILL BOTTLES  
IN A "ZIPPER STYLE"  
PLASTIC BAG**

### **NOT - Accepted**

- **SHARPS- (Needles, etc.)**  
The Fire Department will accept the SHARPS
- **Hydrogen peroxide**
- **Inhalers**
- **Aerosol Can**
- **Ointments/Lotions or Liquids**
- **Medicines from Business or Clinics**





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