

TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH



Manager's Minute – July 2020

BOARD VACANCIES

The Town Commission welcomes and encourages residents to get involved by attending meetings and participating in Town Boards. All interested residents can download a Talent Bank Application from the Town's website at www.highlandbeach.us or pick up an application in the Clerk's Office at Town Hall.

Current Vacancies:

Board of Adjustments & Appeals

Upcoming Events:

July 21, 2020 – Town Commission Special Meeting

August 4, 2020 – Town Commission Special Meeting

August 6, 2020 – Town Commission Budget Workshop Meeting

August 13, 2020 – Town Commission Budget Workshop Meeting

August 13, 2020 – Planning Board Meeting

August 20, 2020 – Financial Advisory Board Meeting

August 20, 2020 – Town Commission Budget Meeting (Tentative)

All meetings will be held virtually in accordance with Governor DeSantis's Executive Orders 20-69 and 20-150.

INTRODUCTION

This year has been an interesting one to say the least and we hope this Manager's Minute finds you and your family safe and healthy. As we have all heard and read, COVID-19 cases in Palm Beach County continue to rise at an unnerving rate. It is extremely important that we as residents remain vigilant in wearing masks in public places, strictly adhering to social distancing guidelines and continuously practicing personal protection measures such as hand washing, avoid touching eyes and mouth, and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces. We all need to abide by the orders imposed to protect individual and community public health. Now, more than ever, we as a community must do what we can to mitigate the spread of this virus.

We strongly urge all residents to adhere to CDC guidelines and take the necessary precautions such as:

- Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions should stay home and/or only go out for necessities.
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds.
- When soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes and immediately wash your hands.
- Avoid close contact and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other people.
- If you cannot maintain social distancing, wear a face covering.
- Wear a face covering when out in public places such as grocery stores.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, daily.
- Be alert for symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- If you are feeling sick, stay home except to get medical care.

For more information, visit our website at

www.highlandbeach.us.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Town of Highland Beach Building Department (June 2020):

- Issued 88 permits; and,
- Conducted 201 inspections at 96 sites; and,
- Received 9 new code enforcement complaints/requests; and,
- Opened 9 new code enforcement cases & closed 21 cases (currently there are 29 open code enforcement cases).

STAY INFORMED

In order to stay up to date on Town business, updates and what may be happening in the Town, please provide your email address to Terisha Cuebas at tcuebas@highlandbeach.us. (*It is important to note that all records of the Town are public including the emails list.*)

THANK YOU – MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE CHIEF

Much of 2020 has been an extremely stressful time for law enforcement employees and their families. For months, police officers have been worried about catching the coronavirus and spreading it to their loved ones. Then, demonstrations about police use of force, and in many cases, looting and vandalism, placed new strains on officers. The economic security of police agencies is in doubt because of concern of a national recession along with calls to “defund the police.” Assaults on police officers are up and the FBI has released statistics for the first six months of 2020 showing 28 Law Enforcement Officers have been killed in the line of duty, up from 24 during the same period for 2019. These combinations of situations have placed an unprecedented amount of stress on all of law enforcement professionals.

In these challenging times, we have been so encouraged by the outpouring of support from our community. Our department has received food deliveries, donations, and letters of appreciation, some from the community that we have not had prior contact or interaction with. Residents have made it a point to express to us how they value their police officers and they are reassuring us that we have their support and appreciation. The most overwhelming example of support we received was from a resident who was concerned about the national discourse and anti-police sentiment and inquired as to any way to support his police department and see what we need. Concerned about the civil disorder around the country, this resident without any interest in seeking recognition, generously donated \$30,000 that day to our police department for us to acquire equipment and supplies to keep our officers, and this community safe.

As we work through these very trying times for law enforcement, we will rise to the occasion and accomplish our core mission of ensuring public safety. We do this with confidence and comfort in knowing how fortunate we are to serve in a community that recognizes and appreciates the commitment of their police officers. Thank You!

Chief Craig Hartmann

LIBRARY BROWSING BY APPOINTMENT AND CURBSIDE PICKUP

The library welcomes cardholding patrons for scheduled visits 10:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday and 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. Please call at least one hour ahead to schedule your 30-minute visit since the number of patrons at one time will be limited. The visits will be spaced out to allow for time to sanitize the space in between each patron. All patrons must wear a mask and safe distancing will be in effect. Restrooms are not available at this time. Please note, pickup at the door continues to be available.

LOCK YOUR CAR!

Towns and cities everywhere deal with the plague of thefts from vehicles. This crime has become an epidemic because of the ease of which criminals are able to commit them, which is simply opening the unlocked door of a car. Unfortunately, on the rare instance we do have a vehicle stolen - the keys were left in the car.



These crimes are predominately committed during the overnight hours in the cover of darkness, in parking lots, garages and driveways. Intermittently, we experience these same crimes and solving them after the fact is very difficult. The best way to stop these types of crimes is by simply locking your car doors when it is unattended. Remember, this is a crime of opportunity, and they are preventable. Always report suspicious activity and if you need further information about this or any other public safety issue, please feel free to contact us. Help us to eliminate these opportunities – **LOCK YOUR CAR!**

OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

New Website: If you have not already seen the Town's new and improved website, we encourage all residents to visit www.highlandbeach.us. The website is mobile friendly and allows for easier navigation while improving the visual aesthetics. Other features include enhanced imagery, improved user interface, an alert center, and better organization of content.



New Town Logo: The Town Commission recently upgraded and enhanced the Town logo. The old logo will be slowly phased out to limit implementation costs. The elevated water storage tank was due to be repainted so the new logo comes at a perfect time as it will be displayed on the water tank.

Cookies for Cops: During these trying times, we want to acknowledge our amazing and dedicated Highland Beach Police Department. Cookies for Cops is an organization started by two Boynton Beach residents who have made it their mission to ensure law enforcement officers' hard work and dedication doesn't go without being noticed. Michele Farkas and Miriam Benkoe decided to follow in the footsteps of some communities in New York by putting together the "Cookies for Cops" initiative. The women began their campaign by delivering cookies and other treats to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office West Boynton District 6 substation. They are hoping that others follow suit and show appreciation for their jurisdictions to give back to Law Enforcement. On July 9th, Cookies for Cops showed their appreciation to Police Department's in Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, Boca Raton and Highland Beach. Providing the officers with treats and drinks as a small token for the service they provide to our communities.



Employee Spotlight: Welcome Officer George Reid, who recently joined the Highland Beach Police Department. Officer Reid served 9 years of active duty with the US Marines with two deployments to Iraq and two deployments to Afghanistan, prior to joining us here in Highland Beach. He was officially sworn in on July 2, 2020 with a small ceremony in the Commission Chambers in the presence of Town staff, fellow officers and his beautiful family. We are pleased to have Officer Reid join our first-class community police department!!! When you see him around Town, please make sure to introduce yourself.



Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Process: The budget process is moving along according to schedule despite the current challenges of COVID-19. The Town is glad to report we are in a strong financial position and the recent events will not require an increase in millage rates to Town residents. Town Manger Labadie and Finance Director Lalla have been working around the clock assessing the revenues and expenditures of the Town. They provided an overview presentation to the Town Commission and Financial Advisory Board, earlier this month. You may access a copy of the presentation by clicking [here](#) or you may view the meeting's on the [Town's YouTube page](#). Additionally, the Town's auditing firm has completed the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Fiscal Year 2018-2019. To download a copy of the CAFR click [here](#).

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Software Update: The Town has officially commenced the implementation process with BS&A Software. Currently, the Town uses a 25-year-old financial software which is extremely antiquated and is cumbersome on the Finance Department staff. The new software will allow Town staff and management to have real time insight into their operating budgets and will also allow the ability to produce financial reports quickly.

State Appropriation Update: A message and update from Representative Michael Caruso:
"I appreciate the Governor taking a responsible approach to addressing Florida's Covid-19 based budget shortfall by cutting \$1Billion of budget line items. Education, healthcare, and the environment remain top priorities, and this proactive approach will help us get Florida's economy back on the move. Unfortunately, HB 2185 titled Highland Beach Crosswalks, which I was honored to sponsor and support, did not make the Governor's cut, despite my continued efforts with his office following session. Please note that I will continue to fight for the safety

of all Highland Beach residents and look forward to championing the appropriation next year, when life returns to normal.”

“We are delayed for another year on the funding but we are not defeated. We were 99 percent sure of the state funding appropriation until Covid-19 disrupted the state budget and reconfigured life as we know it. Be assured that crosswalks are not in fact off the table or delayed entirely for a year. We need a new plan for them which we were not ready to address at the meeting. We have new plans forthcoming. We at the Commission will review them and determine together how to move forward. It will be a plan, step by step, I am expecting. We will go back for the State Appropriations next year and have a better chance next fiscal year after losing it this year.” – Commissioner Gossett-Seidman

Coastal Resiliency Partnership Update: The Town and its partner coastal communities of the SE Palm Beach County Coastal Resiliency Partnership are feverishly working to analyze and provide data and solutions that coastal communities can use in the future to combat climate threats. Step 1 of the Vulnerability Assessment has been completed which included a project kick off and identified the climate threats, as described by all participating communities. As the partnership progresses into Step 2, the group will begin the process of assembling data on community assets. During this process, the partnership will engage elected officials, staff and the public. There will be a presentation with more information to the Town Commission in late August or early September.

Political Signs Reminder: The election season is upon us and we must be reminded that temporary political signs (Town Code of Ordinances Section 23-9) are not allowed within public road rights-of-way and public property. Signs placed in the rights-of-way will be collected and stored at Town Hall for collection by the candidate during normal business hours. Please contact Code Enforcement Officer, Jason Manko at 561-278-4540 with any questions.

Code Enforcement Tip of the Month: Irrigation

Here in South Florida, we enjoy the lush landscaping and gorgeous green lawns that our year-round sunny climate provides. Keeping these lawns healthy requires patience, sunlight, good fertilization and most importantly...water!

As you may know, the Town of Highland Beach has its own water treatment plant which takes high salinity water from the Floridian Aquifer, about 1200 feet deep, and converts it to pristine, crystal clear water for our residents to use in their households. This water is also used to provide properties with irrigation for plants, trees and lawns. While there is currently no shortage of water supply in the state of Florida (occasionally the area experiences drought) it is still wise to use our water in the most efficient manner possible. This includes watering our lawns at the appropriate time and the appropriate amount.

The Town of Highland Beach’s Code of Ordinances states in Chapter 28-10 that irrigation systems “should be operated between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.”. Watering lawns should ideally be done early in the morning, just before the sun comes up and only performed 1 to 2 times per week. When grass is watered mid-day, the strong sun and heat causes the water to evaporate too quickly and can also cause the grass to burn or wilt. If watered too much, or too late in the evening, it can promote fungus growth, insect infestations and can kill your grass.

The amount of time you water your lawn can impact your green spaces as well. It is better to water your lawn less often, but for a longer duration (at least 30 minutes per zone) than to water your lawn more frequently at shorter durations. This allows your root system to grow deep into the soil as opposed to

shallow surface roots which will make the turf more susceptible to damage when conditions may be less than ideal. Also, make sure to check your irrigation system regularly for broken sprinkler heads and to assure that the “overflow” of water stays on the lawn and avoids non-pervious areas such as parking areas and roads. The use of rain sensors is advisable as this will reduce the consumption of water when the natural rainfall is sufficient to keep your lawn healthy. In addition, keeping your lawn regularly mowed, also promotes deep root growth and less water usage.

Following these tips will help to keep your landscape looking beautiful, minimize the impact of water usage on the environment and help the Water Plant keep a predictable eye on the water demands of the Town.

For questions regarding irrigation ordinances or other concerns, please contact the Code Compliance Department at 561-278-4540 or email at jmanko@highlandbeach.us.

BUILDING/PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Properties Under Construction

- 4205 Intracoastal Drive – New single-family construction
- 2352 South Ocean Blvd – New single-family construction, pool, deck, dock and seawall
- 4015 South Ocean Blvd – Demolition and new single-family construction
- 4215 South Ocean Blvd – Seawall construction
- 4513 South Ocean Blvd – New construction, two units
- 4403 Intracoastal Drive – New single-family construction
- 4410 Tranquility Drive – New single-family construction
- 4005 South Ocean Blvd – New single-family construction
- 2475 South Ocean Blvd – New Single-family construction
- 4200 South Ocean Blvd – Reconstruct 4 units to 3 units
- 1016 Bel Air Drive – Boat lift (slip number 7)
- 1004 Bel Air Drive – Boat lift (slip number 3)

Properties Soon to be Constructed

- 1100 B Highland Beach Drive – New seawall, seawall cap and concrete dock
- 2727 South Ocean Blvd – Boat lift (slip number 5A and 5B), extension of slip number 5.
- 4206 Intracoastal Drive – New single-family construction
- 11 Ocean Place – New roof terrace on existing rear covered patio

If you have any questions, concerns or issues, you may contact Terisha Cuebas, Assistant to Town Manager to schedule an appointment with Town Manager Labadie/

TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH COMMISSION



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