

TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH



Manager's Minute – August 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](#) or pick up an application in the Clerk's Office at Town Hall.

Current Vacancies:

Board of Adjustments & Appeals

Upcoming Vacancies:

Financial Advisory Board

Upcoming Events:

September 1, 2020 – Virtual Town Commission Meeting

September 7, 2020 – Town Hall Closed in observation of Labor Day

September 8, 2020 – Virtual Town Commission Special Meeting/1st Public Budget Hearing

September 15, 2020 – Virtual Town Commission Meeting

September 16, 2020 – Virtual Code Enforcement Board Meeting

September 22, 2020 – Virtual Town Commission Special Meeting/2nd Public Budget Hearing

September 23, 2020 – Virtual Natural Resources Preservation Adv. Board Meeting

All meetings will be held virtually in accordance with Governor DeSantis's Executive Orders 20-69, 20-150 and 20-193.

INTRODUCTION

I hope this month's edition of the Manager's Minute finds you and your family safe and healthy. We are six months into Covid-19 pandemic with no immediate end in sight but the number of daily reported cases and the positivity rate are slowly falling. I want to thank all of our residents and staff for remaining vigilant in wearing masks and social distancing as well as putting other safeguards into practice such as washing hands, cleaning surfaces and monitoring individual health. We are continuously evaluating service levels (e.g. hours of operation of the Library and Post Office) during this pandemic with our focus on resident and employee health and safety. We are hopeful that we can move back to full operations soon and we truly appreciate your patience as we work through the challenges of the pandemic.

The financial uncertainties created by Covid-19, especially to local governments, has not deterred the Commission's commitment to keep our millage rate unchanged. That is, no increase in the millage rate (taxes). The Town Commission and Town Management Staff are proud to state that the Town's financial position remains strong and we are focused on keeping it that way.

Regardless of the operational challenges posed by the pandemic, the Managers Office in partnership with the Town Commission have been working very hard (albeit virtually). We have commenced a process to define and rank our strategic priorities; thereby, setting a clear path forward for large projects and initiatives.

The Commission hired a consultant to complete a *Fire Department Feasibility Study* that takes a deeper look into the Fire Rescue services provided by the City of Delray Beach. The consultant will audit the financials associated with the contract as well as provide the Town with alternative delivery options for fire rescue services.

We are nearly complete with the FY 2020-2025 Water and Sewer Rate Study that will be discussed in the coming months and we are fully immersed in the enterprise resource planning system conversion. The latter of which will improve efficiency within financial, building and utility billing operations.

We are proud to state that the Crosswalk Enhancement Project has been approved and construction will start soon. The project will install 16 pedestrian-activated, rapid flashing beacon signs at our existing eight crosswalks. The project will greatly improve the safety of these crossings.

We are pleased that we have settled collective bargaining process with our two employee unions. The process was professional and handled with the spirit of compromise and understanding. I would like to thank the union representatives and the employees they represent for a successful negotiation process.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all of our employees for their commitment to deliver services to our residents and customers during these trying times. The employees have come ready to serve without question. Thank You!

DID YOU KNOW?

Beginning August 24, the SR A1A/Haven Ashe Bridge (W. Camino Real) over the Boca Raton Inlet will close for a maximum of 60 days for painting operations. During the duration of the closure, traffic will be detoured to Federal Highway via East Palmetto Park Road and Hillsboro Boulevard. Marine traffic will be maintained through the navigable waterway. Channel restrictions may occur.

For more information on FDOT District Four construction projects, please visit:

www.d4fdot.com.



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.)*

CENSUS 2020 – BE COUNTED, HIGHLAND BEACH

As of today, only 45 percent of the population in Highland Beach has completed the 2020 Census. This puts the Town at risk of losing federal funding over the next 10 years. Getting a complete and accurate census count is critically important. That's why your response is required by law. If you do not respond, the U.S. Census Bureau will follow up in person to collect your response.

By participating in the 2020 Census you help our community gain funding for emergency services, childcare programs, community grants, elder care initiatives, as well as programs for those with special needs to name a few. **DON'T WAIT!** Please do what you can now to help our community get the funding it needs. Responding to the 2020 Census takes less than 10 minutes, it's safe, important, and easy. Respond online at www.my2020census.gov or call toll-free 844-330-2020.

MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE CHIEF

In the last several months of life during COVID-19, crime has remained low for us, however that is not the case for fraud and identity theft. It is important for everyone to always stay aware and informed about criminals that use clever schemes to defraud millions of people every year. They often combine new technology with old tricks to get people to send money or give out personal information. Here are some practical tips from the **Federal Trade Commission** to help you stay a step ahead.



1. **Spot imposters.** Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like [a government official](#), [a family member](#), [a charity](#), or a company you do business with. Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request — whether it comes as a text, a phone call, or an email.
2. **Do online searches.** Type a company or product name into your favorite search engine with words like “review,” “complaint” or “scam.” Or search for a phrase that describes your situation, like “IRS call.” You can even search for phone numbers to see if other people have reported them as scams.
3. **Don't believe your caller ID.** Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information, so the name and number you see aren't always real. If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up. If you think the caller might be telling the truth, call back to a number you know is genuine.
4. **Don't pay upfront for a promise.** Someone might ask you to pay in advance for things like [debt relief](#), credit and [loan](#) offers, [mortgage assistance](#), or [a job](#). They might even say you've won [a prize](#), but first you have to pay taxes or fees. If you do, they will probably take the money and disappear.
5. **Consider how you pay.** Credit cards have significant fraud protection built in, but some payment methods don't. [Wiring money](#) through services like Western Union or MoneyGram is **risky** because it's nearly impossible to get your money back. That's also true for reloadable cards (like MoneyPak or Reloadit) and gift cards (like iTunes or Google Play). Government offices and honest companies won't require you to use these payment methods.
6. **Talk to someone.** Before you give up your money or personal information, talk to someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. They might even threaten you. Slow down, check out the story, do [an online search](#), consult an expert — or just tell a friend.
7. **Hang up on robocalls.** If you answer the phone and hear [a recorded sales pitch](#), hang up and report it to the FTC. These calls are illegal, and often the products are bogus. Don't press 1 to speak to a person or to be taken off the list. That could lead to more calls.
8. **Be skeptical about free trial offers.** Some companies use [free trials](#) to sign you up for products and bill you every month until you cancel. Before you agree to a free trial, research the company and read the cancellation policy. And always review your monthly statements for charges you don't recognize.
9. **Don't deposit a check and wire money back.** By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering [a fake check](#) can take weeks. If a check you deposit turns out to be a fake, you're responsible for repaying the bank.
10. **Sign up for free scam alerts from the FTC at [ftc.gov/scams](#).** Get the latest tips and advice about scams sent right to your inbox.

If you spot a scam, report it at [ftc.gov/complaint](#). Your reports help the FTC and other law enforcement investigate scams and bring crooks to justice.

Remember, you do not have to wait to be a victim to contact us. Our Police Department is always available to answer any questions or provide information if you are uncertain about some type of scam or suspicious activity.

BEACHED SAILBOAT

As many of you know by now, a 40-foot sailboat came ashore in the south end of the town last week. The boat had lost power to the engine and the strong gulfstream took the boat off course and eventually drifting a shore where the hull became lodged in the sand.

The owner who has lived on the boat for the past 3 years, does not have the funds to have the inoperable vessel of that size and weight to be removed from the shore. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, who has jurisdiction over the matter, has cited the owner and deemed the boat as a “derelict vessel”. The process now is that the owner of the boat has 21 days to request an administrative hearing on the case and has also been charged criminally with s.376.15(2). Once the 21 days expires and, if the owner has not requested an administrative hearing, Fish and Wildlife Commission will be able to issue a Letter of “Removal Authorization” for this vessel.

As you can see, the process for the state will take several weeks, with legal authorizations and approvals before the vessel will be removed from the shoreline. The Town has been in continual contact with authorities of the FW&C to ensure the process moves as expeditiously as possible.

During this time, the owner of the boat who has been extremely cooperative, has removed all fuel and potential environmental toxins, and is remaining with the vessel until it can be removed.

In the meantime, kudos to our residents who have shown an outpouring of sympathy and support for the boat owner. There have been donations, supplies of food, offers of support and resources and, temporary housing if needed. We truly have an amazing community here in Highland Beach!



NEW DIGITAL SERVICE AT THE LIBRARY!

Whether you are here in Highland Beach or away for the summer, chances are you are spending more time at home. A good book will help you make the most of that time, and we are here to help. The Highland Beach Library has added cloudLibrary, a large online collection of eBooks and digital audiobooks.

Books can be read or listened to on most iOS and Android mobile devices, Kindle Fire tablets, and PCs/Macs. To get started, download the cloudLibrary app from your app store and log in with your library card. To find books, click "Search" at the bottom of the screen to see recommended titles on the Features tab, choose your preferred genres and subject areas on the Favorites tab, or browse the entire collection.

For detailed instructions or if you need assistance, contact the library at 561-278-5455 and staff will be happy to help you. If your preferred reading device is a Kindle ereader, such as a Paperwhite, use the Overdrive service to get books as cloudLibrary is currently not compatible with Kindle ereaders. You can find links to all of our digital services on the library web site at <https://highlandbeach.us/departments/library/>.

TAKE-HOME CRAFTS FOR KIDS

Hey parents! Do you need to keep the little ones busy? Our children's library assistant Miss Leah has put together some fun, easy craft kits for kids to make at home. Email her at lladner@highlandbeach.us or call 561-278-5455 to pick up a kit.

OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

Employee Spotlight: Welcome Officer Austin DeBruyne! He was officially sworn in on August 10, 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 DeBruyne join our first-class community police department!!! When you see him around Town, please make sure to introduce yourself.

Austin DeBruyne is 22 years of age and grew up in Plantation, Florida. Becoming a police officer is something he has always wanted to do ever since he was a small child. Growing up he participated in a police explorer program where he was able to do countless number of ride-alongs. He received his associate's degree in Criminal Justice at Ferris State University. While attending Ferris State he also competed on the NCAA Men's Tennis team. Shortly after college, Austin graduated from the 323rd police academy class at Broward College. During his days off he still enjoys playing tennis and going fishing.





Employee Retirement Announcement: Sergeant Dave Scherer has officially retired after more than 19 years of service as a Highland Beach Police Officer.

Sgt. Scherer has professionally and honorably served our community for almost two decades and has been an excellent representative for the Highland Beach Police Department. Sgt. Scherer was our most senior Officer and has provided leadership as a Sergeant and as a Union Representative, and that leadership has helped make the police department better, and for that we thank him.

Wishing Sgt. Scherer all the best in his retirement!

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Process: The budget process has moved along smoothly and according to schedule. The Town is glad to report we are in a strong financial position and the recent pandemic will not require an increase in millage rates to Town residents. Town Manager Labadie and Finance Director Lalla have been working around the clock assessing the revenues and expenditures of the Town. The Town Commission and Financial Advisory Board, both reviewed the proposed budget, in its entirety, and made a few changes that did not affect the overall net position. You may view the meeting's on the [Town's YouTube page](#).

Public Works Updates: The Town is currently televising the sanitary sewer system to identify potential problems with the sewer system. Within the next few weeks, the Town should receive a report as to the conditions of the sanitary sewer system. You may have noticed new street signs on A1A for Bel Lido and Bel Air Drive. The street sign replacement project will continue for the next few weeks and all street signs on Town owned roads will be replaced. The Town Hall roof is in need of being replaced and the Town is currently in the competitive solicitation process for the replacement. Some other projects that have taken place within the department are listed below.

- Replaced east and west chillers;
- Elevated and ground storage tank repairs have been completed, and;
- Fire Department building lights have been upgraded to LED.

As a friendly reminder to all property owners: Please make sure when cutting trees, hedges, etc. on your property, that you remove vegetation from the storm drains. Additionally, if trees or hedges are trimmed using a company, that company is responsible for hauling away the vegetation.

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.

BUILDING/PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Just a friendly reminder to all condominium managers that under the Florida Building Code: 105.2.1 Emergency repairs, where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted within the next working business day to the building official.

We continue to have issues in which restoration companies are called in to repair water damage and fail to notify the building department and, in many cases, never apply for a permit. We encourage all managers to be proactive and let the building department know whenever you have damage in your building. Many walls are fire-rated assemblies and require specific methods of repair or replacement. Fire-rated assemblies are strictly regulated as they can be the difference between life and death in an emergency.

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

- Issued 57 permits; and,
- Conducted 255 inspections at 101 sites; and,
- Received 20 new code enforcement complaints/requests; and,
- Opened 18 new code enforcement cases & closed 22 cases (currently there are 23 open code enforcement cases).
- 7 cases are scheduled for hearing.

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, dock, seawall cap, two seawall returns
- 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
- 4318 South Ocean Blvd – Boat lift

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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