

Tacks in the Road

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numbers of vaccinations vs. new cases closely. We are hopeful that vaccinations and so-called herd immunity will begin to have an impact sooner rather than later, but we have no intention of throwing caution to the wind. Mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing are still the order of the day. As a result, while we are hoping for a positive outcome later in the year, many of the town's signature events, like the Easter Egg Hunt, Kayak for the Warriors events, and Fourth of July parade are still up in the air at this point. We have to wait and see how things unfold.

Former Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill is often given credit for the notion that "all politics is local" he even wrote a book called *All Politics Is Local and Other Rules of the Game*. At our level here on Bogue Banks in Carteret County, the idea has taken on new meaning in a way that heightens and illuminates several perennial dilemmas that are an undercurrent of most local government actions. North Carolina is one of the 10 most populous states, and preliminary results from the 2020 Census show that NC was among the states with the highest rates of population growth between 2010 and 2020. It is clear that we are seeing an explosion in the growth of the number of visitors and in new permanent residents, many with children. This will clearly have an impact on the demographics of our towns, but I'm afraid that it will take some time to confirm the actual trends at the local level and to figure out what it means for us. The 2020 Census took place during a time of major upheaval, in the middle of the year, and the numbers it will eventually produce may not accurately capture the trends that are emerging as a result of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, town governments will want to engage with the new residents sooner rather than later to see what they are looking for in their new community and to understand what they expect from their local governments. This gives rise to several age-old questions and dilemmas that permeate local government deliberations. For example, to what extent should new residents try to conform to a town's existing rules and, conversely, to what extent should existing residents adapt to the wishes of the newcomers? As more people move in, work from home, attend school from home, exercise at home and cook and entertain themselves from home, they may want larger houses. What demands will this place on a town's ordinances, building codes and infrastructure, and what impacts will these trends have on a town's social characteristics and physical environment? Water usage, trash collections, vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and demands on internet capacity are all likely to rise.

Underlying it all is the question of how these changes may affect the town's definition and general understanding of just what is the common good for all citizens. Where do you draw the line between personal freedoms and the desires of the community as a whole? Finally, how active should local governments be in promoting change? These issues are always with us. We had a front-row view of what it's like to deal with these questions last fall when Pine Knoll Association tried to change a number of its HOA rules. These are the kinds of issues that are behind the notion that "all politics is local." Nevertheless, true as that may be, it's hard to ignore what's going on at the national level. Thank God for non-partisan municipal government.

We have several major projects underway in town this winter, and I encourage all of you to read the Town Manager's report, "Kramer's Korner," on page 10 in this issue for an update. We will be holding our annual retreat, virtually via webinar, on February 11-12. We will follow a pattern similar to previous years, with a review of our Mission and Vision statements and our accomplishments

(and failures) from the previous year. We will also be meeting with the chairs of our volunteer committees and town department heads to review their accomplishments and plans for the coming year. The commissioners will get a chance to present and discuss their ideas about the direction of the town and their preferred priorities for the upcoming budget cycle. Part of the second day will be devoted to the business normally conducted by the board at their regular monthly meetings. A full agenda and schedule is being developed, and it will be made available to anyone who may want to tune in to specific parts of the agenda.

As a final note, I want to remind everyone about how great it is to live on the Crystal Coast in the winter. Sure, it can be cold, but our winters are relatively short. In February we can enjoy Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day and Presidents Day with an extra one and one-half hours of daylight, and average temperatures nearly 10 degrees warmer compared with December, and it only gets better from here. The first signs of spring are in the air, and the occasional 70 degree day and shirt-sleeve weather is just around the corner. Soon it will be time to break out the beach chairs, umbrellas, and Shibumis.

Enjoy our quiet months. Stay safe and respect the virus.

PIKSCO Happenings

By Erica Reed

There is an opportunity to give back to the community by joining the PIKSCO board. Director Mark Bupp has stepped down from his position on the board—and we extend thanks to Mark for his support and wish him the best in his future endeavors. We are in need of someone to fill out his term, which runs through June 30, 2022. Anyone interested should email their resume indicating a willingness to serve to piksco@gmail.com.

Board meetings are the third Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. We are currently meeting at McNeill Park, but those wishing to attend should check the calendar at piksco.com (Member Information/Local Events Calendar) for updates prior to the meeting.

Did you know that members in good standing with PIKSCO can reserve the pavilions at McNeill and Garner parks for their events? There is no cost to reserve the parks, but arrangements must be made ahead of time. Check the calendar at piksco.com as shown above to be sure your date is available, and contact Erica Reed at piksco@gmail.com to make a reservation and fill out a use permit form.

We are always looking for residents who would like to serve and are willing to volunteer a few hours of their time and expertise. We need your help to keep PIKSCO parks looking good and to suggest changes that we can make to improve our life here in paradise.

PIKSCO contact. For questions, concerns, to express a willingness to volunteer or to provide feedback, contact Erica Reed by voice or text at 252-247-4818, email at piksco@gmail.com, through our website at piksco.com or by mail at P.O. Box 366, Atlantic Beach NC 28512.