



Happy almost summer. If you haven't signed up for the June 5 Kayak for the Warriors Kayak/Paddleboard Race, please see the article on page 1 in this issue for details.

**What's next for sidewalks in town?** As discussed here last month, the board formed a committee to discuss this. Pedestrian Planning Group IV met for the first time on April 9 to review the existing Pedestrian Plan and discuss sidewalks, safety, nature trails, connectivity,

funding and public input. If you are interested in this topic, keep an eye out for a town-wide email from Town Clerk Charlie Rocci with the date of the next meeting.

**Town staff returns to town hall.** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, as positive case spikes dictated, employees of town hall worked in every variation from fully remote to everyone in the office daily donning masks and keeping distant. By the time you read this, all town hall employees will have returned to their workspaces. All town hall employees have been fully vaccinated; however, town hall remains a by-appointment-only facility. The only gatherings inside town hall and the public safety building are of official town boards or committees. Our buildings remain closed to walk-in traffic for the safety of our citizens and employees. This is sometimes difficult to enforce at the public safety building where the fire bays are open most of the time, but I urge you to respect the safety and privacy of that building and the police officers, firefighters/EMTs and staff who work inside. Please call ahead for your business needs and staff will arrange the safest way of accomplishing it. If you have a medical or law enforcement emergency, please call 911. The governing body and I continue to monitor the vaccination numbers in our area and the updates from the CDC. We will open our buildings to full traffic when we feel it is safest to do so.

**FY 2021-2022 budget.** The town board is in the middle of budget planning, as is normal for this time of year. Though the budget ordinance has not yet been approved, all indications are that the following items of interest will likely be part of the final plan:

- There will be no tax increase, either for the regular property tax or the sand tax.
- There will be a modest increase to our annual solid waste fee to account for the CPI increase that is part of our contract with our solid waste.
- There are no rate increases for our water service.

**Beach safety initiatives.** Here are a few things we'll be doing to promote beach safety this season:

- Beach safety classes for kids on designated weekends. The Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department will have some classes on the sand targeted toward our younger beachgoers. Keep an eye open for these, which will take place later this summer.
- Free parking for surfers. We will continue to have free parking for surfers at the Iron Steamer and Memorial Park public beach accesses.
- Efforts to keep emergency accesses clear for rescue vehicles. We are doubling up on signage to keep the emergency vehicle accesses from being blocked by beach patrons, which can severely slow down a rescue operation.

- Beach patrols. The police department will increase their beach presence to four to five patrols per day.
- Life jackets (PFDs). Partnering with SeaTow, we will install life jacket poles at the Iron Steamer and Memorial Park public beach accesses. PFDs for various ages will be provided for use during your beach visit.
- Boogie boards and koozies will be available at the Iron Steamer and Memorial Park public beach accesses. The boards provide a means of flotation, and the koozies help us get the word out on rip current escape strategies.
- The police department will distribute beach safety literature to area hotels/motels and businesses. If you want this material for a home in Pine Knoll Shores that will have multiple guests over the summer, contact Shelia Bupp at psbadmin@townofpks.com.
- We will put out daily surf condition/flag warnings on Facebook. Please make a habit of checking this before heading down to the beach.
- Life rings and ropes. We have expanded this and will have rings and ropes at 10 locations throughout the town.
- New beach mile marker signs. We will have new mile markers on the beach that will be programmed in the Active 911 system to improve response times onto the beach strand.
- Electric sign usage. We will continue the use of the electric sign for surf condition warnings. The sign will be positioned on the north side of Highway 58 as you enter Pine Knoll Shores from the east.

**East end stormwater project.** We should be wrapped up with the Phase II project by the time you are reading this. We are now taking a look at another project to move water along the public rights of way on Laurel and Myrtle courts to the collection vault on Myrtle Court. These are two of our most flood-prone areas of town. We have programmed design costs in the FY 2022 budget for this and hope to get the Coastal Federation to help us with construction funding in the future.

**Sand fencing planned for the upcoming winter.** The commissioners directed sand fencing to be installed along all 4.5 miles of the town this coming fall/winter. If you live on the ocean, you should have received a letter from Town Clerk Charlie Rocci regarding this project. We want to get the word out now so folks do not start projects on their own. Contact Charlie at clerk@townofpks.com if you have questions.

**Solid waste contract.** We are preparing a Request for Proposal to send out later this summer for our solid waste (trash) services. We have been with Waste Industries/GFL for decades, but we are going to see what the market will bear with some competition.

**Town hall steps/Beach Access A (eastern most access).** We are preparing to replace the stairs and walkways around town hall as well as the beach access across from the former Hampton Inn. We will address town hall this summer and the public access later this fall after the summer season.

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