

August 2022

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Welcome to August

WELCOME to the **AUGUST 2022** edition of **THE CURRENT**.

According to the internet (*so you know it's trustworthy*), the month of August was named for the first Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar, in 8 BCE. Originally the sixth month in the early Roman calendar, we now know it as the eighth month in the Gregorian Calendar.

Actually ... *that's not true*. That's ... not true at all. Not the part about it being in "Greg's Calendar" or something like that, but the part on **how we know** the month of August. You see, this is the **Town of Oak Island**, and all academic pursuits aside, WE KNOW the month of August in an entirely different way!

It's hot, it's humid, and unless you take off the Monday of **National Relaxation Day** (August 15) there's no major 3-day weekend to anchor your travel plans around. In short, August is pure unbridled, un-fancified **SUMMER**. It's as "summer" as Summer can get; and here in Oak Island that's the way we like it! August isn't out here with fireworks and festivals ... leave

that for June or July! No, this month is for the hardcore humidity fans, who only need sun, sand, and the occasional splash of sea spray! But if you are the type who needs *a little more* to finish your summer strong, that's okay too! Because while Oak Island may be made for summer, it's also made for fun; and there's no shortage of that in this Town. So grab your sunscreen and towel too, because it's time to take a dip in the AUGUST edition of THE CURRENT.



MONTHLY REVIEW

REMINDER: Information on all news items can be found on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS.

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Council Recap

The Town Council's regular meeting on **July 12, 2022** began with a public hearing, to receive citizens' comments on a

proposed Text Amendment to Section 6.5 Table of Uses and Activities, and Article 7 Supplemental Regulations to permit Airport Hangars (Accessory) and Airport Terminals in the C-LD zoning district subject to supplemental regulations. Council approved these amendments.

PRESENTATIONS & PROCLAMATIONS: (1) Mayor White read a Proclamation on National Recreation and Parks Month. **(2)** The Recreation Advisory Board provided a presentation on Pickleball Courts. The presentation and discussion will be summarized in the Meeting Minutes, available on the Town Website.

COUNCIL REPORTS: Mayor Pro Tem John Bach reported that he is actively working on the subjects of Paid Parking Discussion, and public safety on the beaches. Councilmember Sheila Mansfield Bell thanked the Police Department for their increased enforcement efforts on low speed vehicles.

Councilmember Bill Craft reported that local group "Marsh Mellows" had received the **Prestigious Pelican Award** from the North Carolina Federation for their Davis Canal Cleanup efforts. Councilmember Mark Martin reported that he had met with the Cape Fear RPO director on the subject of funding for future Greenway projects.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Town Manager David Kelly formally introduced the new Planning Director, Matt Kirkland who provided a brief update on the audit of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Police Chief Charlie Morris provided a report on Department activity throughout the Beach Day and July 4th weekend, in which over 10,000 vehicles were recorded entering the island from just the Barbee Bridge entrance. Communications Manager Mike Emory provided updates on recent public information campaigns and response to the new **OKInformation** system.

NOTE: Monthly Department Reports are available to view any time on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/DEPT.

OLD BUSINESS: (1) Police Chief Charlie Morris presented an After Incident Report from on the Emergency Response on the Beach. The report and additional discussion on beach issues will be included and summarized in the Meeting Minutes

NEW BUSINESS: (1) Council adopted a resolution to request the NCDOT assume ownership and responsibility for a portion of Airport Road: **(2)** Discussion of Paid Parking: No action was taken; the discussion will be summarized in the

Minutes. **(3)** Consideration of Prohibiting Low-speed Vehicles on Oak Island Drive: Council discussed several possible solutions; staff will review and present options to Council at the August meeting. **(4)** Council approved an amendment to Council's Rules of Procedure regarding agenda preparation. **(5)** Consideration of Directing the Planning Board to Develop Recommendations for Large Scale Houses: This item was removed. **(6)** Consideration of Potential Action to Prohibit Shark Fishing Tournaments: No action was taken; the Mayor reported that the tournament had been postponed until October. **(7)** Consideration of Adding Beach Safety Signage: Staff will provide more information for the August meeting. **(8)** Consideration of Budget Ordinance Amendment: The Budget Ordinance was approved as amended. **(9)** Consideration of Amendments to Sec. 14-128 Exemptions: The amendments were approved.

The Council then entered into Closed Session, after which they returned to open session and adjourned the meeting. To view the video, agenda, and minutes from this or any other Town Council meeting, just visit the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS, or click the link below.

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All Hands! Man Your (Water Safety) Stations!

On Friday, July 22, 2022, the Town of Oak Island received a letter from the [Jack Helbig Memorial Foundation](#) (JHMF) proposing a new partnership with the Town to increase overall beach safety and help prevent drownings.

The partnership combines \$10,000 from JHMF and \$6,500 from the Town to establish “Water Safety Stations” at each of the 65 public Beach Access Locations in Oak Island. Over the following two weeks, the Town has worked closely with JHMF to finalize the details of this agreement and is excited to officially announce the new partners

The Water Safety Stations would consist of a numbered post on the beach side of all Access Locations and include:

- A **Rescue Tube** flotation aid, purchased from the Rescue Tube Foundation.
- A new Beach Safety Information sign, displaying a QR code that links to the most current Beach Warning Flag condition and explanations, along with graphics showing instructions on how to use the Rescue Tube.

This joint effort provides an affordable and sustainable solution to help residents and visitors ensure their own personal safety. Both the Rescue Tubes and Beach Safety Signs have been ordered and are anticipated to arrive by the end of August, with installation by the Labor Day holiday. The new Beach Safety Information signs feature familiar design elements found in the recently installed Emergency Vehicle Access signage. These will replace the previously

installed Beach Warning Flag signs, which were also provided by JHMF. [Oak Island Water Rescue](#) will oversee their redistribution to businesses and organizations within the community, to further assist in awareness efforts.

PICTURED (L to R): *JHMF members Gene Helbig, Kathy Arthur, Kelly Helbig, with Oak Island Mayor, Elizabeth White*

The Jack Helbig Memorial Foundation (JHMF) is a 501c3 nonprofit based in Brunswick County since 2012. Their mission is to *prevent drowning through education and awareness*, which they achieve by establishing timely and needed partnerships with municipalities and response agencies. To learn more about the Foundation, their mission and community support, visit www.jackhelbig.org, or click the link below.

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Beach Services Unit = Beach Signs Underway

On Thursday, August 4, 2022, the Beach Service Unit (BSU) of the Oak Island Police Department began displaying 3-foot

wide Beach Warning Flag signage, which accompanies the Beach Warning Flags currently flying on the utility vehicles (UTVs) during their regular patrols. The signs provide the current Beach Warning Flag condition, along with an explanation of what that condition means.

The new signage is an addition to the flags themselves, which have been in use since Thursday, July 7. The added service to the BSU program came from discussions that began in early June between members of the community, Police Department administrative staff, and Town Councilmembers. During the June regular Council meeting, Police Chief Charlie Morris reported that the decision had been made to fly the flags during BSU patrols, and that flags had been ordered.

The move to fly the flags was extremely well received by residents and visitors alike. However, BSU staff quickly started receiving questions on the meaning of each flag

condition. In response to this, the Police Department worked to design the signs, which are attached to the sides of the UTVs on custom mounts constructed and donated by Tucker & Denise Pacula of Pacula Builders.

The flags and new signage serve as a way to further enhance the information already provided through the flag description signs posted at all Beach Access Locations.

Beginning immediately, both the Warning Flags and Flag Signage will be displayed during all BSU patrols.

To learn more about the Beach Services Unit, along with the ordinance enforcement and public safety services they provide, just visit the special BSU page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/BSU, or click the link below.

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A Friday Morning Farewell

In general, Fridays are great. For most people, Fridays kickoff their weekend with that last walk out form work for the week. So if you're going to retire, it just makes sense to do it on a Friday.

Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, Ted Stocum thought that as well, as he was joined by the rest of Public Works staff to celebrate his retirement on the morning of Friday, July 29. After 15 years with the Town of Oak Island, Stocum has helped to facilitate almost every aspect of maintenance and support.

From 4 years in Automotive Maintenance to several more spent between the Streets Division, Grounds Maintenance and then Facilities, Ted has served the Town through a wide array of skills. Just as much as he's enjoyed working **for** the people of Oak Island though, it's working **with** the people of Oak Island that will be the most missed.

"I'm going to miss people who work for the Town. It's a great job." Stocum said during the Friday morning retirement breakfast in his honor. *"Thankful for David Kelly the Town Manager, and {Public Works Director} Scott Thornall. They've been great to*

work for, and it's a great group of people to work with."

While he may have started all those years ago in the Town's garage, Ted's priorities will now shift to spending his time in his own garage, where his personal hotrod projects have been patiently waiting.

Congratulations, Ted Stocum on your retirement, and thank you for your service to the Town of Oak Island!



CONTRIBUTIONS

Each month, between the *MONTHLY REVIEW* and upcoming

NEWS & NOTICES sections, you'll find **CONTRIBUTIONS**. This section features content contributed from various Town Departments and staff, as well as the Town's municipal and non-profit partner organizations. Regular contributing partner organizations include the [Oak Island Fire Department](#), the [Beach Preservation Society](#), the [Friends of Parks Foundation](#), the [Sea Turtle Protection Program](#), the [Friends of the Library](#), and [Oak Island Water Rescue](#), among others. For more information on the content presented in this section, please reach out to the contributing department or organization directly.

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Fire Department Safety Brief: High Flying Flags

While public safety is always our primary focus here at the Fire Department, one specific aspect of public safety has been on the forefront in recent weeks and months ... **FLAGS**. Specifically, *Beach Warning Flags*. With the recent efforts of the [Beach Services Unit](#), and this month's announcement of Oak Island's new [Water Safety Stations](#), the Town is diving deep into making great strides for improving public safety.

Always wanting to help where we can, the Oak Island Fire Department is joining these efforts with awareness of our own. Beginning in August, the Fire Department will also start flying the current Beach Warning Flags at Stations #1 & #2, which are located at each end of E Oak Island Drive. In addition to the flags themselves, we have also printed 3ft. tall signage (*pictured*) which provide descriptions on the meaning of each flag condition. This signage will be mounted outside of each station, near the flags and should be readily visible from the street. As with all signage recently designed by the Town, this will also include the new QR code, which links to the [Beach Safety Information](#) page of the Town Website.

While this may just be one small part in a much larger effort to enhance public safety, it is our part; and as always, we're happy to provide it in service to our friends, neighbors, and



Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce: Inaugural "Sunset Run"

(Contributed by ***Karen Sphar***) The Inaugural Oak Island Sunset Run/Walk will be held on **August 25** beginning with registration/pre-registration packet pickup at **3:30 PM** at **Middleton Park**, with the 10k starting at 5:30 PM, 5k at 5:45 PM and 1 mile at 5:50 PM. Parlay will play live music from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM and food trucks will be onsite for the public to enjoy at Middleton Park, Oak Island.

The event of the Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce is sponsored by Doshier Memorial Hospital and offers fitness activities on the beautiful coast for all levels with a 10k, 5k, and One Mile Fun Run.

The Oak Island Sunset Run is one of two events the Chamber is organizing at Middleton Park on Thursday, August 25th. The Coastal Home & Lifestyle Showcase will be Thursday, August 25 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Middleton Park, 4610 E. Dolphin Drive, Oak Island. This outdoor show was originally scheduled for May 14 but weather postponed the event to August 25. The event will highlight businesses that specialize in home maintenance and repair, outdoor living and supporting a healthy and active lifestyle. The showcase will also feature a live performance by the Dave's Not Home Band and various business demonstrations. Food vendors will also be onsite. Admission is free and open to the public. The Coastal Home & Lifestyle Showcase is an event of the Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce and is sponsored by Lynda Haraway Group, Salt Air Heating & Cooling, Southport Magazine and The State Port Pilot. Registration for the Oak Island Sunset Run is now open online. Race packet pickup & registration – Thursday, August 25th from 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM at Middleton Park (4610 E Dolphin Dr.).

Plan on bringing the little ones for the One Mile Fun Run! Our goal is to bring fun to the whole family. The One Mile Fun Run

is a free event sponsored by Oak Island Accommodations and is a great introduction into the world of fitness for the whole family.

Entry fees in the Oak Island Sunset 5k & 10k Run/Walk will receive a beach blanket, timed race bib, water, Gatorade and fruit. Print awards by local photographer, Jeffrey Stites, Oak Island Photo Works. will be given to the top three finishers male and female Overall, Masters, and 13 Age group divisions. Finisher medals will be given to all those who complete the distance of the 5k, 10k and 1 Mile races.

For more information about the showcase please call 910-457-6964 or email events@southport-oakisland.com or visit the websites at www.oakislandsunsetrun.com or coastalhomeandlifestyleshow.com



Environmental Advisory Committee: “Smart Yard” Environmental Award Cited

(Contributed by EAC Member, **David Merkle**) After Mr. and Mrs. Harkey moved into their home a few years ago, they

realized that rain water would run from neighboring properties onto theirs and then flow across their yard to the street Right-of-Way or pool on portions of their lot.

They set about correcting this in several ways: 1-they created a “Rain Garden” whereby surface water would be collected into a slightly dished out area that was landscaped and mulched allowing water to soak or percolate into the soil, 2-they created a buffer for water to stop it from running from a neighboring property, and 3-they excavated a trenched out area to facilitate a “French Drain” system that diverted water to an area on their lot where rain run-off could percolate into the soil layers.

These efforts-generally simple and inexpensive-solved several problems at the same time: 1-they minimized stormwater run-off emptying into the street “Right-of-Way” (crucial to avoiding pollution in our local waterways), 2-it gave the

property owners more control over their own land; and 3-it created an opportunity to add attractive landscaped beds. For these efforts, a “Smart Yard” designation was awarded. This environmental initiative called “Smart Yard” by the Town of Oak Island furthers the State of North Carolina’s goal of reducing pollution in waterways in collaboration with the NC Coastal Federation. For information on how you can participate, contact Kennette Tower, Oak Island Public Works Department at 910-201-8083 or through the contact form at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PW.

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NEWS & NOTICES of the MONTH

Council & Board Meetings

REMINDER: All televised public meetings listed below will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8 / 122), as well as livestreamed on the Town Website. Meeting agendas, minutes, and any livestreamed or recorded videos are available at www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS.

TOWN COUNCIL (*televised*) will hold a regular meeting (*schedule adjusted*) on **Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (*non-televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 8:30 AM** in the Police Department Training Room, located on the second floor of the Police Department adjoining Town Hall at 4621 E Oak Island Drive.

PLANNING BOARD (*televised*) will hold a special meeting on **Thursday, August 11, 2022 at 10:00 AM** in the Council Chambers. The purpose of the meeting is for the Cape Fear Council of Governments to meet with the Planning Board as part of the Unified Development Ordinance audit.

PLANNING BOARD (*televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

CLOSURES & HOLIDAYS

LABOR DAY: Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Monday, September 5, 2022** in observance of **Labor Day**.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be **NO** interruption of Garbage & Recycling Collection services, however services may be delayed due to higher than normal volume. Police, fire, and other emergency services are not affected during any holiday closure, and are always available by calling **9-1-1**. The **Oak Island Pier** will be open during their seasonal hours. All currently available parks and public Beach & Water Access locations and facilities will be open as well. For all 2022 closure dates available, the *Holiday Calendar* can be found on the Town Website at:

Date Change for Council Meeting in August

As noted in the Council & Board Meetings section above, there are two distinct updates to the regular meeting schedules of both the Oak Island Town Council, and the Planning Board.

COUNCIL: The regular Town Council meeting date for August has been changed. The Town Council meeting will now be held on **August 16, 2022**, still at 6:00 PM. **NOTE:** This change is only for the month of August 2022.

PLANNING: The Planning Board will hold a Special Meeting on Thursday, August 11, at 10:00 AM. The purpose of the meeting is for the Cape Fear Council of Governments to meet with the Planning Board, as part of the Unified Development Ordinance audit.

Please note, ALL meetings will still be held in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of the Town Hall at 4601 E. Oak Island Drive. For more information on these or any other meetings, contact the Town Clerk at 910-278-5011, or via the contact form at www.OakIslandNC.gov/CLERK.

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Irrigation System Backflow Testing Underway

Throughout the month of August, property owners who have irrigation meters installed within the Town of Oak Island (nearly 1,000 homes total) will receive written notices in the mail, reminding property owners that it is time to have their Backflow Prevention Devices tested. This test is important, as it helps to ensure the safety of the Town's water, by

preventing harmful "back-flow" into the system. In addition to

preventing harmful “backflow” into the system. In addition to safety, the test is also required by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Backflow Prevention Devices are installed either on the water service connection or within the homes plumbing system.

There are TWO options for getting Backflow Prevention Devices tested:

Use a Certified Backflow Tester and have the results returned to the Town's Backflow Technician (ORC) within 30 days of receiving the letter.

[CLICK HERE fore a list of Certified Backflow Testers.](#)

Have the Town's Public Utilities Division provide testing (NOTE: this will be done automatically if no test certification is received within 30 days). If tested by the Town, property owners will be charged a fee of \$35.00 on their subsequent water bill.

REMINDER: Please ensure that the device is accessible and has not been disconnected!

If the Backflow Prevention Device passes the test, no further action is needed from the property owner. If the device fails the test, property owners will be provided with the results, so they can get the device repaired or replaced. Once any necessary repairs have been made, the device must be retested and a Repair Report returned to the Public Utilities Department.

If property owners feel they are due for testing, but have not received a letter notifying them, they can contact the Backflow Technician within the Public Utilities Department at:

Scott Haas / Backflow Technician (ORC)

shaas@oakislandnc.gov

Phone: 910-523-0437

Fax: 910-278-7438

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Recreation Notification: Now Shifted to OKInformation

On July 1, 2022 the Town of Oak Island officially launched its

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new public notification system: **OKInformation** ("OKI + information"). The new system provides a streamlined way of receiving emails and emergency text notifications for general Town issues; but it also has many more benefits as well. The Recreation Department will be utilizing those benefits, by transitioning the current email notification list for Community Events, Recreation Updates, and Program Cancellations to *OKInformation*.

If you regularly receive email updates directly from the Recreation Department, not much should change, although the emails should look more updated with refreshed visuals. NO ACTION WAS REQUIRED from recipients currently on the list, as their emails were carried over into the new system. Beginning in July, email addresses were seamlessly transitioned and NOT shared with any outside organizations. Also, new email topics were NOT added to current notification preferences.

Recipients will notice the following changes:

- Notices will now come from the email address:
"info@subscriptions.oakislandnc.gov"
- Emails will look slightly different, but have an easier to read layout
- Users can now unsubscribe at any time, by selecting the "Unsubscribe All" option at the bottom of each email
- Changes can be made to subscription settings directly at www.OakIslandNC.gov/INFO.

If you are a recipient of Recreation department notices and would like to change your preference, OR if you are currently signed up for OKInformation and would like to add the new Recreation Department categories, simply visit the OKInformation login page at www.OakIslandNC.gov/INFO or click the link below.

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COMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

REMINDER: Information on all special events, recreation programs, and educational activities can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS.

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Summer Concert Series

Although it's well into August, there's still plenty of weeks in Summer left - and that means plenty more musical motivation from the ***Summer Concert Series!***

WHEN: Fridays • 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

WHERE: Middleton Park • 4610 E Dolphin Dr.

COST: Free to attend

ABOUT: The sun is out, the fun is back, and the “Bands by the Beach” are once again ready to rock, groove, swing, and swoon their way through the soundtrack of your perfect summer! For 15 weeks, from May to September, we turn the amps up to “11” and come together for the annual Town of Oak Island Summer Concert Series.

To view the remaining Concert Schedule, visit www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT or click the link below.

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Story Time By The Sea

WHEN: Tuesday, August 16 • 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

WHERE: Oak Island Cabana • SE 46th St. & E. Beach Dr.

COST: Free to attend with Pre-Registration Required

REGISTRATION: www.OakIslandNC.gov/RecDesk

AGES: 12 Years & Under

ABOUT: Come and stop by the Oak Island Cabana for a series and crafts arranged by the Oak Island Recreation Department.

Held monthly beginning in May, this program is free with pre-registration required. For questions or more information reach out to Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon, at rgordon@oakislandnc.gov or by calling 910-278-4747

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Youth Fishing Derby

WHEN: September 8 • 5:30 PM-7:00 PM

WHERE: Oak Island Pier • 705 Ocean Dr.

COST: Free with Pre-Registration Required

COST: Free with Pre-Registration Required

AGES: 15 Years & Under

ABOUT: The Recreation Department and Oak Island Pier have partnered together say farewell to summer with a fantastic youth fishing derby this September! The upcoming Youth Fishing Derby is FREE and open to all youth ages 15 years and under; with many prize categories such as: Most Fish Caught, Largest Fish, Scariest Fish, and Ugliest Fish.

Participants will need to bring their own fishing pole and bait. To learn more, reach out to Program Supervisor Ryan Gordon at rgordon@OakIslandNC.gov or by calling 910-278-4747.

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Live & Local: Market + Music

WHEN: September – October • Saturdays • 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (Market) • 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (Concert)

WHERE: Middleton Park • 4610 E Dolphin Dr.

COST: Free to Attend

AGES: All Ages

ABOUT: Already dreading the end of summer's Farmer's Market and Summer Concert Series? Fall in love with the

Town of Oak Island this autumn as OKI Recreation Department Island continues the best of summer living all season long. Connect with your coastal community in Middleton Park each week Department for an evening of live music, local food and craft vendors as residents and visitors embrace active island living. For questions simply reach out to Recreation Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon at rgordon@oakislandnc.gov.

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PLEASE NOTE: There are **MANY** fun, educational, and exciting events and programs planned for the month ahead (way too many to list here)! For a complete list of upcoming activities, contact the Recreation Department at **910-278-**

5518, or visit the **EVENTS & PROGRAMS** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/EVENTS, or just click the link below.

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DEPARTMENT FEATURE: PLANNING DEPARTMENT

It has been said before (in this very publication) that "*if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.*" While very true for the individual, this

principle becomes greatly magnified when scaled up to apply to an entire town. That is why the Planning Department is one of the key components to making Oak Island, or any Town a "livable space" for everyone.

If the title "Planning Department" doesn't sound familiar to you, that's because until a couple months ago it didn't exist.

Originally a division of the Development Services

Department, it was divided into its own standalone

department, working alongside the also newly formed

[Building Department](#). The Town Council approved this move

in order to help meet the demands of the Town's growing

population and anticipated future development. Both the

Planning Department and Building Department are distinct

and separate, yet they still partner in providing the services

offered under the previous ***Development Services***.

The new Planning Department works to regulate and

administer the Town's zoning, development, and land use. The

Building Department oversees the implementation of building

codes, inspections, and standards for constructed objects.

More specifically, the Planning Department works to develop

and implement land use plans and programs that promote

sustainable and responsible growth. This is done through

multiple responsibilities, including code enforcement, site plan

development and review, and acting as direct liaison to

various boards and committees. Additionally, through

comprehensive zoning the department regulates the use of

land, including the placement, size of buildings, and yard

requirements. Zoning laws are an important part of urban and

community planning, as those laws help to create a

community that is a safe, logical, and a comfortable place for

all to live and work.

PROFILE: Planning Director, Matt Kirkland joined the Town of Oak Island recently, being brought on to head up the newly formed Planning Department. Kirkland has been working in local government for 11 years, with a specific focus in planning for about 8 of those years.

Just prior to Joining Oak Island, Matt worked for the nearby

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Town of Leland, which is currently the fastest growing town in North Carolina. With such a rapid pace of growth, Matt was constantly able to see firsthand the vision of the citizens come to life through the Town’s actions.

"Any time I get to go out and do field work is always a good day for me" Matt said in reflecting upon his decision to join the Oak Island team. *"The North Carolina coast has always been important to me, so the opportunity to work with so many unique challenges in a place that I enjoy being is great."*

But it's not all field work and fun, Matt has some serious challenges he's hoping to tackle head-on. As if overseeing the launch of an entirely new department isn't enough, he'll also be working to address several key issues, such as the audit and review of the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), establishing more "green spaces" and new Greenway paths, and further review of zoning ordinances to provided more consistent language.

As any good planner knows, they are only as good as the tools they work with. According to Matt Kirkland, the two most important tools in his kit are the ***people in his department***, and the ***adopted plans of the Town***.

The adopted plans help him to know what the long-term vision for the future of Oak Island is, and the department staff help to provide the services that makes those long-term plans work on a daily basis. In addition to overseeing the department staff, the Planning Director also serves the various boards and committees that oversee or advise in development matters. This includes the Planning Board, the Board of Adjustment, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Town Council, among others as needed.



The department contains employees who serve in the roles of Zoning Technician, Zoning Enforcement, permitting, and special Coastal Area Management act (CAMA) permitting. Zoning enforces many restrictions like height limitations, space requirement, building size, and other development. However, doing this helps to protect existing property values by preventing incompatible uses of a property, or keeping buildings from being built too close to each other. Whether addressing right-of-way concerns, or responding to ordinance violations, staff work hard each day to help maintain the balance of municipal growth, with preserving natural aesthetic appeal. A full listing of Planning Department responsibilities and services, along with zoning district maps, town ordinances, and other zoning related information can be found in the new Department-specific pages of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PL, or by clicking the link below. To contact the Department directly, just call 910-201-5024, or use the Department Contact form at www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONTACT.

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PHOTO REVIEW

PLEASE NOTE: The *Photo Review* section contains reader-submitted photos, and allows for greater exposure of the artistic contributions made by members of the Oak Island community. Submissions are donated and not compensated by any means other than the courtesy credit below. Please view the captions for information on this month's contributors. To contribute a submission, please email the photo along with a description of the date, location, and photographer or business name to: photos@oakislandnc.gov.





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