

December 2022

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Welcome to December

WELCOME to the DECEMBER 2022 edition of **THE CURRENT**. Legendary crooner Andy Williams said it best with his 1963 standard "*It's the most wonderful time of the year.*"

Whether it's observing a moment of reflection at the end of a long year, honoring the holy days of one's faith, or spending time with family and loved ones, there's just something about the last few weeks of the calendar that can make anyone stop and take notice of the world around them. While only the "Scrooge-iest" among us may disagree on just how wonderful the **time** of year is, it's an entirely different matter on **where is the most wonderful place**.

Fast forwarding the mix tape a couple of decades (but still keeping it old school) when Country music legends Alabama pined about all the different locations (*other than Dixie*) for

Christmas. From snow in New York City and "sunshine falling down" in California, to being windy in Chicago or a Memphis with "Graceland all in lights" - there's a lot of interesting places one **could** be to close out their calendar. But you, dear reader, are here. Whether in physical form, or in the warm comforts of your own mind, Oak Island is where you are or want to be; and that's no accident.

You see of all the places you could describe as "wonderful" none compare to the comfort of **HOME**. The beauty of home however, is that it's not the place you grew up, nor is it the place you've lived most of your life. It's not even the place you pay a monthly mortgage payment for. No, as the tried but true saying goes, **home is where your heart is**. And for many readers just like you, their heart is right here in Oak Island ... *the most wonderful place to spend the most wonderful time of the year.*

So let's come home for the holidays, and don we now our nautical apparel, as we fa-la-la, fa-la-la, fa-la-follow on down into the DECEMBER 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 **November 8, 2022** began with a public hearing on a proposed text amendment to Articles 1 and 2 the Unified Development Ordinance, which Council approved as presented.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor White read a proclamation for Veterans Day, which Councilmember Charlie Blalock then presented to members of the Oak Island VFW post, who received a standing ovation. **PRESERVATION:** The Oak Island Fire Department presented a brief summary of recent multiple incidents in which firefighters were able to offer life saving assistance to members of the community.

COUNCIL REPORTS: Councilmember Mark Martin provided

an update from the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee which noted that the expansion of HWY 211 is currently on schedule. Councilmember Charlie Blalock commended staff efforts for the Halloween activities and improvements to Veterans Park. Councilmember Bill Craft noted the Oak Island Water Rescue "Open House" event, along with David Canal cleanup efforts by the "MarshMallows" group, and the fundraisers by the Friends of Parks Foundation. Mayor Pro Tem Bach also noted the OIWR Open House, and previewed the new Memorial Brick Purchasing program for Veterans Park.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS began with a Financial Update from Finance Director, David Hatten which noted the Town had received a grant for \$965,000 for beach management from the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), as well as updated efforts on FEMA reimbursement and pension audit. Town Manager David Kelly noted the improvement efforts at Veterans Park, and the new Brick Purchasing Program. **NOTE: Monthly Department Reports are available to view any time on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/DEPT.**

OLD BUSINESS: **(1)** Consideration of Funding Request from the Environmental Advisory Committee to Fund Promotional Materials for the Voluntary Elimination of Plastic Straw Use and an Associated Resolution: The Resolution and request were approved. **(2)** Presentation of End-of-Season Report on Beach Services (parking and dune/beach violations

enforcement): The report is summarized in the Meeting Minutes. **(3)** Consideration of Approving Request for Proposal for Paid Parking Services: The motion to approve the RFP passed with four votes in favor cast from Mayor Pro Tempore Bach and Council members Bell, Blalock and Martin; Councilman Craft abstained, which also counts as a vote in favor. **(4)** Consideration of Amendment to Sec. 28-5 of the Code of Ordinances: Council approved the amendment as presented. **(5)** Discussion/Review of Council's Fiscal Year Priorities: Mr. Kelly's review of the Public Safety priorities is summarized in the Meeting Minutes, and the additional priorities will be reviewed at future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS: **(1)** Consideration of Requesting a Local Act to Allow the Town of Oak Island to Use Proceeds from On Street Parking in the Same Manner in which Proceeds from Off-Street Parking Facilities Are Used: The Resolution was

adopted by unanimous vote. **(2)** Consideration of Adopting Resolution of Appreciation Thanking Beach Ambassadors: The Resolution was adopted by unanimous vote. **(3)** Consideration of Budget Ordinance Amendment for Additional Funds Needed for Leaf Truck Purchase: Council unanimously approved the BOA.

Council then moved into **CLOSED SESSION**, with no action taken following Closed Session. Council then moved back into open session, and adjourned at 10:36 PM.

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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Dredging in December

On **Monday, November 21, 2022**, a series of familiar sights and sounds began to take place in the off-seasonally quiet areas around **The Point**. Dredges, barges, and bulldozers started their seamless choreography to move tons of sand through several hundred feet of pipeline.

While these efforts will help **add** sand to the public beach areas of The Point, which were heavily battered by Hurricane Ian earlier this year, the main purpose in this project actually to **remove** sand from the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Back in September of 2021, The US Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$3.8M contract for maintenance dredging of Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway to Southwind Construction Corp. out of Evansville, IN. The contract covers several North Carolina counties including Brunswick, Carteret, Onslow, and Pender County. The work will focus on dredging the high shoaling areas of the waterway for both commercial and recreational purposes.

For the Town of Oak Island, the project area includes The Point, moving EAST for approximately 1,000ft. This will provide an additional 92,444 cubic yards of sand to the public beach, servicing an area approximately 1,000ft. in length, with

an average width of 150ft. As of December 1, operations for the project are anticipated to take another 2-3 weeks, and be completed by mid-December, with full equipment demobilization completed before the Christmas holiday. Updates for this project are available on the Beach Nourishment Projects page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAND, or by clicking the link below.

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Toys For Tots is in Town

One of the best ways to share the joy of the holiday season is through giving. For the next few weeks, opportunities will be available to give through one of the most trusted charitable organizations in America.

From now through the second full week of December, **Toys For Tots** boxes have been placed in several Town facilities.

Donations can be dropped off anonymously at any time during the regular business hours for each, including:

- Town Hall (4601 E Oak Island Drive)
- Police Department (4621 E Oak Island Drive)
- Recreation Center (3003 E Oak Island Drive)
- Oak Island Pier (705 Ocean Drive)
- ALL three (3) Fire Stations at 101 E Oak Island Drive (Station 1), 8510 E Oak Island Drive (Station 2), and 4151 Vanessa Dr. SE (Station 3)

The collection boxes will only be in place through December 15, with a final collection of all donations set for December 21 at Station 2.

Although there is no official "wish list" provided for the campaign, Toys for Tots reminds you to please bring new, unwrapped toys that are preferably around the \$10 or above price range. Homemade toys are also accepted, and books are also needed. Children receive 2 toys each, and 3 books count as ONE gift! Please avoid donating realistic looking weapons or gifts with food.

For more information on the Town of Oak Island's participation in this year's Toys for Tots campaign, just contact

the Oak Island Fire Department at 910-278-1000 or use Contact Form on their page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/FD.

ABOUT Toys For Tots: Since 1947, the US Marine Corps and Toys for Tots have been working together to provide toys for children in need during the Christmas holiday season through their "Fill The Box" campaign. They remain a top rated charity, with over 97% of donations going directly to the mission of providing toys, books, and other gifts to less fortunate children. The 3% spent on support, principally covers fundraising expenses. Not one donated dollar goes to salaries or any other manpower costs. To date, the programs has provided over 627 MILLION TOYS and supported over 281 MILLION CHILDREN.

To learn more about Toys For Tots and the "Fill The Box" campaign, just visit their website at www.ToysForTots.org or click the link below.

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Skatepark Construction Started

On **September 13, 2022**, during the regular meeting of the Oak Island Town Council, Recreation Director Heather O'Brien provided a much-anticipated update on the long-awaited replacement for the **Kevin Bell Skatepark**. O'Brien reported that **Pillar Designs & Artisan Skateparks** had a tentative start time set for late October or early November of this year. While that time shifted slightly (*see "tentative" mentioned above*), construction crews did arrive during the week of November 21, and began site preparations just prior to the Thanksgiving holiday break. The forms for some of the new park features were constructed onsite prior to Thanksgiving, with the last week in November spent preparing the site for concrete.

A "conservative" estimate, leaving some time for weather and supply delays, puts total construction at 4 months.

A *tentative* opening for the Skatepark is anticipated for March

2023.

For those who just can't wait to **Fakie Five-O** a **Frontside** off the **Flatrail** with a **Flip** into the **Funbox** (yes, *those are real words*), there's several options for staying informed on project progress. Construction can actually be viewed in real-time, by watching the [Oak Island Water Rescue Webcam](#), mounted on the OWIR station just next door to the Skatepark. With permission from Oak Island Water Rescue, this webcam has also been embedded on the Kevin Bell Skatepark page of the Town Website. All other updates on the project are available are available on this page by visiting

www.OakIslandNC.gov/SKATE or clicking the link below.

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Beach Bonfire Season Beginnings

As reported in the last month's edition of **The CURRENT**, Beach Bonfire Season for the Town opened up on November 15. For those unaware, a permit is required from the Fire Department for bonfires on the public beach areas. In 2021, the permit process went digital, with online forms now able to be filled out and submitted entirely through the Town Website. As with previous years, there is NO charge for a permit, as the main purpose is to provide the Fire Department with a record of when and where to expect fires on the beach.

So far, the Beach Bonfire Season is off to a similar, if slightly slower start. For the month of November, the Fire Department received **309** applications, with roughly **15%** (45) of those being on the day before Thanksgiving, November 23. For perspective, November of 2021 saw 392 total submissions, with the highest single day being on Thanksgiving itself. One factor that **is** consistent among both years is the favored location. In both cases, the area around SE 72nd street was the most popular spot to spark a blaze, with roughly 10% of all bonfires being held there. Regardless of when and where they happen, just make sure your bonfires begin with a few important reminders. Permits

are not accepted more than 72 hours out from the when they are applied for, to allow for accurate forecasts of PEAK windspeeds, which must be 15 MPH or lower. Applicants will receive an email copy of the submitted permit, which will serve as their proof of permit. If you do not receive an email copy within 2 hours of submission, contact the Fire Department so that one can be emailed directly. Finally, remember to always practice fire safety, and to please clean up after your bonfire!

Full information on Beach Bonfires, including links to Town Ordinances and the fillable permit application, can be found on the town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/BONFIRE or by clicking the link below.

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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: Holiday Fire Safety

(**Contributed by Tim Fleckinger**) While a "White Christmas" in Oak Island may refer more to **sand** than **snow** ... Winter is still right around the corner, and sending reminders every *other* weekend! Whether the cold comes in waves or settles in to stay, the Oak Island Fire Department would like to offer some important suggestions for home heating safety.

Space heaters, fire places, and other means of supplemental home heating are a great and economical way to help stay warm during the colder months. As with any heat source however, they must be used cautiously. When not given the proper respect and safety they can scald, burn, or destroy personal property. In the most severe of cases, they can even lead to fatalities. When heating your home this winter, be sure to:

- Have the device or fireplace inspected annually to ensure they are operating optimally
- Never leave fires, space heaters, candles or other means of heat unattended

- Keep combustibles, pets, and kids 3-5 feet away from heat sources as these generate enough heat to burn, melt or ignite such items
- Be sure to verify that you use the right fuel for the right device
- Place heaters on a solid flat surface to prevent from tipping (most newer models can detect a tilt and safely disable the device, but it's always better to err on the side of caution!)
- Plug supplemental heaters directly into the outlet on the wall, and NOT with an extension cord

Finally, some great advice that's worth following all year long, is to regularly make sure your smoke detectors are functioning, and have fresh batteries. A "best practice" would be a simple test once a month, or at a minimum of twice a year. Adjusting clocks for daylight savings time can usually serve as a good reminder.

For more fire safety tips, or to learn about the many ways the Fire Department works to keep you safe, just visit their page on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/FD or click the link below.

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Friends of the Library: Christmas With Santa

(Contributed by **Erika Doshier**) Bright Star Touring Theatre, a national professional theatre company based in Asheville, will visit G.V. Barbee Library, located at 8200 E Oak Island Drive, to perform "**Christmas with Santa**" Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 10:00 AM.

"**Christmas with Santa**" includes carols, Santa, and Christmas galore! The show features two lovable elves, Scrunchie and Bangles, who have accidentally misplaced some of Santa's presents. When Santa finds out about the mishap, he teaches the well-meaning elves that the real gift of the season are the people we celebrate with. The show is recommended for pre-K and older.

Admission is free, but registration is required. Please stop by Barbee Library or call 910-278-4283 to register.

ABOUT: The **Friends of the Library Southport & Oak Island (FOLSOI)** supports the mission and programs of the Margaret & James Harper, Jr. Library in Southport and the G.V. Barbee, Sr Library on Oak Island. FOLSOI is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. For more information, visit www.folsoi.org or click the link below.

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Environmental Advisory Committee: Mulched Yard Beds Key A “Smart Yard” Award

(Contributed by David Merkle, Smart Yard Volunteer

Coordinator) Think about a home with a yard where mulched beds line the lot's perimeter. Add several rain downspouts that divert roof stormwater to yard areas that allow that water to drain or percolate in nearby soil, and you're got the good beginnings of a “**Smart Yard**.”

So, what is this ‘so-called’ “Smart Yard”? And since when can a ‘yard’ have intelligence??? A “Smart Yard” helps to keep our waterways unpolluted. How? It uses simple and usually inexpensive techniques that restrict stormwater from flowing into the streets, creeks, canals, etc. The same stormwater that would otherwise pollute our waterways delivering remnants of lawn and other yard fertilizers, pesticides, etc. That same stormwater-if allowed to flow onto the street and town Right-of-Way-also helps collect car and truck deposits of oil, fuel, etc. on their way to points of entry to our local waterways. Did you know that our local waterways are polluted to the extent that shell fishing is prohibited???

This article is intended to inform how we all can make a difference and get those waterways healthy ... and get our shellfish safe and available to ourselves - right here on Oak Island.

The “Smart Yard” citation that is referred to is that of Cal and Cindy Gramlich who reside adjacent to the ICWW on our island. The Gramlich’s property has other features that contribute to good environmental practices that are part of the “Smart Yard” criteria.

Oh yes; how can a ‘yard’ have intelligence? Well, that intelligence essentially comes through property owners realizing that we all have a stake in our environmental health and safety and that we all can take easy, economical, and common sense steps to do our part.

To request an assessment of your yard or to have a “Smart Yard” volunteer give recommendations on qualifying for the award, just contact the Public Works Department by calling 910-201-8083, using the contact form at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PW, or clicking the link below.

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Oak Island Water Rescue: Event Successes!

(Contributed by Carl Mauney, OIWR Information Officer) Oak Island Water Rescue would like to thank the community for their support with our recent **25th Anniversary Open House**, **Golf Tournament**, and the community organized **Witches Ride**. Each of those were a huge success and will greatly help fund the needs of OIWR so that we can continue to provide water rescue service to the residents and guests of Oak Island. Those fun-filled opportunities are a way for us to connect with the community and share in the joy of our island paradise.

Our 50/50 raffle tickets were sold at the Witches Ride and Golf Tournament. Rachel Pittman (*pictured: left*) was the winner of our 50/50 raffle which was drawn at the Golf Tournament.

We are gearing up for the **Christmas By The Sea Parade** and already discussing ways to enhance next year's Witches Ride

and Golf Tournament. Thank you again for your continued support of Oak Island Water Rescue!

ABOUT: Oak Island Water Rescue (OIWR) is a non-profit 20-member volunteer emergency response team that aids swimmers and boaters in distress. OIWR also assists the Oak Island Police Department and Oak Island Fire Department with missing persons and beach transfers, as well as the United States Coast Guard with in-shore Search and Rescue operations. For more information on OIWR, just visit their website at www.OIWR.org or click the link below.

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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 its regular meeting on **Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

PLANNING BOARD (televised) will hold a special called meeting on **Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at 10:00 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive. The purpose of this meeting will be for the ongoing Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Audit.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (non-televised) will hold its regular meeting on **Thursday, December 15, 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 its regular meeting on **Thursday, December 15, 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

Saturday December 3, 2022: the Recreation Center will be CLOSED all day, to allow for staff preparation for the Christmas By The Sea Parade, and other weekend events.

Friday, December 9, 2022: the Town of Oak Island Administrative Offices, Public Services Offices, Recreation Department, and Oak Island Par 3 Golf will CLOSE at NOON for the remainder of the day, to accommodate a holiday gathering and time for staff recognition in the afternoon.

Monday & Tuesday, December 26-27, 2022: All Administrative Offices and the Recreation Center will be CLOSED on in observance of Christmas.

Monday, January 2, 2023: All Administrative Offices and the Recreation Center will be CLOSED on in celebration of New Year's Day.

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**, public **Beach & Water Access Locations**, and facilities will be open as well. All 2022 closure dates can be viewed in the *Holiday Calendar* on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY.

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Oak Island Pier & Pier House Now on Winter Schedule

One of the **best** things about December? Christmas dinners! One of the **worst** things about December? The distant memory of **Daylight Saving Time** (*though, perhaps not for long*).

As we move into the darker and colder months, the **Oak Island Pier & Pier House** has adapted to the changing seasons with a transition to its **Winter Operating Schedule**.

As of November 28, the Pier & Pier House is open during seasonal hours of 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. The next seasonal

change will come in March, when the Pier switches to its Spring Operating Schedule of 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM.

Located at 705 Ocean Drive, the Oak Island Pier and Pier House are open 7 days a week, year round. In addition to fishing passes, anglers and visitors alike will find the Pier House conveniently stocked with frozen bait, fishing tackle, sundries, snacks, ice cream, and drinks for purchase. Shirts, sunglasses and other souvenirs are also available.

Even fans who aren't nearby can still visit the Pier anytime, *virtually* through the **Oak Island Pier Cam**. To view the Pier Cam, along with full details on the Pier and Pier House, simply visit the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/PIER, or click the link below.

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Garbage & Recycling Collection Holiday Schedule

Speaking of "changing schedules" there won't be much change this holiday season for one heavily depended upon service.

The [Town Disposal Convenience](#) site will **CLOSE** at **NOON** for the remainder of the day on **Friday, December 9, 2022**, to accommodate a holiday gathering and time for staff recognition in the afternoon.

However, due to both the Christmas and New Year holidays falling on the weekends, there will be **NO closures** for the Town Convenience Site, and **NO interruptions** in the [Garbage & Recycling Collection](#) schedule. Although, immediately following the holidays, service may move slower due to increased volume.

For full information on Garbage & Recycling Collection Schedules and Collections Zones, as well as the upcoming 2023 Collection Schedule, just visit [www.OakIslandNC.gov/COLLECTION](#) or click the link below.

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NEW Speed & Traffic Data Page

On **November 8, 2022** during the Town Council regular Meeting, Oak island Police Chief Charlie Morris provided Council with a report on several Police Department initiatives. During that report, data on vehicle speeding and traffic totals were provided with a level of detail previously unavailable, thanks to one of the latest tools acquired by the department. In May the department purchased a [SpeedAlert 18](#) mobile radar unit from [All Traffic Solutions](#), for the task of registering, displaying, and recording the speed of approaching vehicles in

areas of concern.

Now after more than six (6) months of deployment, Chief Morris is making good on a commitment made during that November 8 Council meeting ... ***to put the data online!***

That's right! The Oak Island Police Department is excited to announce the launch of the new ***Speed & Traffic Data*** page of the Town Website. In addition to providing information on traffic safety and accident statistics, this page will also feature a comprehensive list of the locations (***and data***) where the mobile radar unit has been deployed.

No more guessing games about how busy your street is, or how fast (or slow) traffic is in your area. Towards the bottom of this new page readers will find an expandable list of the units ***LOCATION REPORTS*** from 2022 and every year moving forward. These reports provide a brief summary of the dates and locations where the unit was deployed, along with the average vehicle speed, average daily vehicle volume, and the total volume of vehicle during deployment.

To view the new ***Speed & Traffic Data*** page of the Town Website, simply visit www.OakIslandNC.gov/SPEED, or click the link below.

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Brick Purchasing is Back

With Veterans Day falling in November, last month's edition of the CURRENT featured the recently updated Veterans Park. In preparation for the 2022 Veterans Day activities, Town staff and the community partnered together to provide both structural and visual updates to Veterans Park. New lighting, landscaping, and other improvements were all made thanks to efforts from the Town Public Works Department, Police Department, and Fire Department; along with donated materials from the Lowe's Home Improvement in neighboring Southport, NC.

Most notable in these renovation however, was the complete remodel of the 20-foot-long Memorial Brick Wall, located on the Park's northern facing side. Originally constructed as part

of a park improvement project in early 2018, the Memorial Brick Wall provides an opportunity for residents and their family members to be honored for their military service. Much like veterans themselves, bricks provide a symbol of individual strength and multiplied effort. On their own they are sturdy and resilient, but when also combined as a whole, can build great structures which provide safety and convenience for their community, at a level far beyond "the sum of their parts."

The recent renovation to the Memorial Brick Wall has helped to reignite a public interest in its purpose, and how to participate in its mission.

With the completion of this renovation, it also restarts the ***Brick Purchasing Program***. Now any individual or group can participate in preserving family history, honoring special heroes, or just thanking our military community for their service. For a one-time fee of just \$100, bricks can be purchased in any of three (3) visual options. Once ordered, bricks take about 4-6 weeks to arrive. *All funds received from brick purchases go towards the maintenance and beautification efforts for Veterans Park only.*

To download the NEW Memorial Brick Program Order Form, simply visit the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/BRICK 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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Santa Paws in the Park

WHEN: Tuesday, December 6, 2022 • 4:00 PM-6:00 PM

WHERE: Middleton Park • 4610 E Dolphin Drive

COST: Free to Attend

REGISTRATION: www.OakIslandNC.gov/RecDesk

ABOUT: This holiday season is going to the dogs! Bring your furry friends to Middleton Park so Fido can share his holiday wish list and get a photo with Santa Paws. For more information please contact Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon at 910-278-4747 or by emailing rgordon@oakislandnc.gov.

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Drop & Shop

WHEN: Saturday, December 10, 2022 • 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

WHERE: Oak Island Ocean Education Center • 4700 E. Oak Island Dr.

COST: \$18 Oak Island Residents / \$22 Nonresidents & Island Visitor (Space permitting- Fees increase \$5 beginning 1 week prior to program)

REGISTRATION: www.OakIslandNC.gov/RecDesk

AGES: 6 - 12 Years

ABOUT: Take care of all your holiday shopping while the kiddos get celebrate the season at Oak Island Ocean Education Center! Designed for children ages 6-12 years old; participants will create holiday decorations, write letters to Santa, play holiday games, watch a seasonal movie (rated PG), and more! Children must be 6-12 years old with pre-registration required. For more information contact Recreation Center Supervisor, Carrie Winkler at 910-278-5518 or by emailing cwinkler@oakislandnc.gov.



Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt

WHEN: Saturday, December 10, 2022 • 6:00 PM

WHERE: Bill Smith Park • 4446 Fish Factory Rd. SE

COST: Free

AGES: 10 Years & Under

ABOUT: Get out that trusty flashlight and head over to Bill Smith Park (4446 Fish Factory Rd. SE, Southport, NC) this holiday season. There, youth will be delighted as they hunt for candy canes as well as green & red eggs that have been filled with holiday treats. This year's hunt will be held on the parks softball fields, and football field, and will serve as a fantastic photo opportunity for families and social circles with youth ages 10 years and under. For more information please contact Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon at 910-278-4747 or by emailing rgordon@oakislandnc.gov.



Holiday Bingo Night

WHEN: December 12, 2022 • 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

WHERE: OKI Recreation Center at 3003 E. Oak Island Dr.

COST: \$3 in Advance / \$5 At The Door (If Spaces Are Available)

REGISTRATION: www.OakIslandNC.com/RecDesk

AGES: Youth Category (5-14 years) Adult Category (15 years & older)

ABOUT: Celebrate your favorite holidays with friends, family, and your social circle while competing for seasonal goodies at OKI Recreation Center. Featuring prizes for both youth and adult categories, it's the perfect way to make memories with your loved ones this holiday season. Spaces are limited, so secure seats in advance by visiting

www.OakIslandNC.com/RecDesk. Dotters will not be provided. For more information contact Oak Island Recreation Center Supervisor, Carrie Winkler at cwinkler@oakislandnc.gov or Oak Island Recreation Center Assistant, Hannah Ennis at hennis@oakislandnc.gov.

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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TOWN FEATURE: WILLIAM S. "BILL" SMITH PARK

Twenty years. Two decades. That's enough time for your children to grow old enough to have have children of their own ... and for their children to be old enough to play baseball. And if your children's children are going to play baseball in the Town of Oak Island, there's a good chance they may do so at the William S. "Bill" Smith park; which coincidentally, has been around for twenty years too! It was a cool February evening in 2003 when the Public Utilities Director at the time, a young man named David Kelly, presented the Town Council with a masterful vision to

transform the 23-acre site on Fish Factory Rd into a premiere quality space for outdoor recreation.

Baseball, softball, football, and soccer fields were all part of the original design for the land which had been purchased by the Town in 2002. The dual intent was to provide a space for "*the additional disposal of the effluent water from the Town's treatment facility,*" located nearby at 4600 Fish Factory Rd. In basic terms, the excess water generated by the treatment plant would be used to irrigate the ball fields and green spaces of the park. This provided a win-win, as the treatment facility get rid of the excess water, and residents would have a new park with always irrigated lawns! Although history isn't clear on whatever happened to that visionary David Kelly character, with ideas like the Bill Smith Park, we're sure he had a bright future ahead of him.

Originally dubbed the "Oak Island Reuse Park" the facility eventually found a better name by the time of its dedication, in honor of longtime Yaupon Beach Commissioner William S. "Bill" Smith. Throughout the years since, the Bill Smith Park has developed to become Oak Island's largest active park. It currently features four (4) baseball fields, a football field, soccer field, walking trails, disc golf course, dog park, picnic shelter, kayak launch, fishing T, and a recreation building available for rentals.

swap content



PROFILE: the **Public Utilities Department** is responsible for the treatment and application of water within the Town of Oak island. They manage the Treatment Facility just up the road, and since the water for the park irrigation comes from that facility, Public Utilities also manages the Bill Smith Park as well.

A small contingent of staff work onsite at the park, located in the garage along the parks southern trail. Facility maintenance, grounds keeping, and of course **irrigation** are all within their daily duties.

Keeping the park in top shape is top priority for these employees for more reasons than just maintaining a pretty

lawn. As noted in the park's original win-win assessment above, keeping the park looking good means they're also helping to keep the water treatment facility running at optimum efficiency. From The Point to the Pier, and all spaces in between, a properly run water treatment facility is something that benefits everyone!

swap content



"Yo dog, we heard you like parks, so we put a dog park inside your people park!"

Almost exactly 10 years after the park's initial proposal, it further expanded to include new options for fury, four-legged parkgoers. Deemed a "park within a park" the ***Salty Dog Park*** opened in March 2013 to wide acclaim reception.

Now almost 10 years after that initial "leash cutting" ceremony, Oak Island's pet population has equally kept pace with the boom in human population as well, growing significantly from the 600 dogs registered at the time.

The Salty Dog Park still offers one of the only dog parks in the area, and features gated play spaces, with plenty of shade and places to grab a cool drink of water.

Parks and picnics. They just go hand in hand, like peanut butter and jelly (but in bread ... *not in your hands*). That's why one of the best activity spots in the Bill Smith Park, isn't a sport activity at all. The Park's picnic shelter offers 400 square feet of shading eating area, all overlooking the beautiful scenery provided by the nearby Dutchman Creek. As with most Town parks and facilities, the picnic shelter is available for public use. Birthday parties, family reunions, or a simple cookout for your local kayak club, if you have a group that wants to enjoy some food and fellowship in the shade by the water, it's the place to be!

If you want a little more activity that simply hanging out under

the shelter in the shade, then it's literally just steps away! The park also includes a commercial-grade kayak launch. The launch lets out into the upper Dutchman Creek, just a short paddle away from the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). This feature provides a stable, easy way to launch kayaks. The aluminum ramp and handrails leading down from the fishing tee, helps open up options for fun physical activity on the water for people of all mobility levels.



Whether it's for a walk through the woods, a baseball game for the kids, or even some quality time with man's best friend,

the Bill Smith Park literally offers something for everyone in the great outdoors. Except bathrooms, those are thankfully indoors and available during the parks open hours of 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM daily. If you're interested in Town-sponsored events at the Park (such as the upcoming **Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt**) or looking to reserve facilities for your own special occasion, just contact the Recreation Department at 910-278-5518, or use the contact Form found on their page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/REC.

To view or share location and amenity details about the Bill Smith Park, or any of the parks and outdoor facilities within Oak Island, just visit the **Parks Information** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PARKS, or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



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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