

January 2023

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Welcome to 2023

WELCOME to the **JANUARY 2023** edition of **THE CURRENT**.

January 1, 2023, 12:01 AM. The temperature is a mild 65° Fahrenheit. Barometric pressure of 29.98" Hg, with 94% humidity and winds blowing from 250° southwest at 8 mph.

Cloud coverage is OVERCAST. Although the stroke of midnight had ushered in a new day, and with it a new year, there really was no significant visual to mark the occasion. The waxing gibbous, working its way towards January's full "**Wolf Moon**" was completely unseen as it slipped along the night sky. For those not attending a party or watching a countdown, for a brief time in the night it was only their nearest clock that told of a new day starting; ***and yet ... it had still started.***

Regardless of whether the moon was visible or not, it was still there. And even through that cloud, it still pulled the tide along just the same. That's because the sun, moon, and their actions in the sky do not stop just because we can't see them. And it is the exact same way with the opportunities brought on by a new year as well. Regardless of whether you ***think***,

hope, or plan for 2023 to be a good year or a bad one, the number of days (***and opportunity to make the most of them***) stay the same either way. It's up to you to realize that each new day is that new opportunity.

We like to think the people of Oak Island tend to grasp this concept a little better than most. Whether it's dark and

cloudy, or even pouring with rain, we know that just like it did later on the morning on January 1, the sun will soon come out

later on the morning of January 1, the sun will soon come out and burn away all those clouds, revealing a bright new day! Speaking of bright new days, there's a lot of new things to cover moving into the new year. So grab the sunscreen and set your shades, as we cast off into the JANUARY 2023 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 **December 13, 2022** began with a presentation of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Audit. The audit presentation will be summarized and included in the Meeting Minutes.

COUNCIL REPORTS: Councilmember **Charlie Blalock** complimented the efforts of all staff and volunteers who organized in the Christmas By the Sea Parade, and reminded of the need to keep service member in thoughts and prayers during the holidays. Councilmember **Mark Martin** provided report on a new state reimbursement program that may be beneficial to Town development. Councilmember **Bill Craft** commended the *Oak Island Angels* group for their assistance to

provide meals to needy families during the holiday season, and mentioned an upcoming book signing from local author Cali Horton. Councilmember **Sheila Bell** seconded Mr. Blalock's comments on the successful Christmas Parade, and further noted additional festivities. Mayor Pro Tem **John Bach** noted the generous charitable efforts during the holiday season. Mayor **Elizabeth White** reflected on the previous years since being sworn into office, and reported that she regularly attends group meetings of local mayors, and has entered into a leadership program sponsored by the School of Government.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: Council unanimously re-appointed Jeff Flaum to the ABC Board (one term ending Dec 2025).

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Town Manager David Kelly reported that the construction of the Kevin Bell Skatepark is now underway. Additionally, the new leaf collection truck had been delivered and put into service. Kelly also reported that the PHASE I Pedestrian Improvement Plan for Oak Island Drive was nearing final draft stage and should be posted on the Town Website shortly into 2023. **NOTE: Monthly**

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

OLD BUSINESS: (1) **Consideration of Proposals for Paid Parking Management:** Council unanimously approved a motion to select Otto Connect to work with the Town on a paid parking program and to direct staff and the Town

Attorney to work with the vendor to develop a contract for the implementation of the program for the 2023-2024 season. (**Editors Note:** All updates on the development of the Paid Parking Program can be followed on a dedicated page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PaidParking) (2)

Consideration of Awarding a Bid for the Ocean Drive Area Stormwater Project: Council awarded the bid to Hickman. (3)

Discussion/Review of Council's Fiscal Year Priorities: The discussion, which included an update on the Rec Center project, will be summarized/included in the Minutes.

NEW BUSINESS: (1) **Selection of a Mayor Pro Tempore for 2023:** Council selected John Bach to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. (2) **Consideration of the 2023 Town Council**

Meeting Schedule: Council adopted the meeting schedule as amended. (3) **Selection of a Representative for the Cape Fear**

Council of Governments: Council selected Mayor White to

serve as the representative. **(4) Consideration of Accepting a \$965,000 Grant from the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund (for the Beach Management Plan) and to Adopt the Associated Resolution:** Council adopted the Resolution as amended. **(5) Consideration of Fire Department Plan for Purchasing Trucks:** Council approved the recommendation for the change in this year's budget. **(6) Consideration of a Citizen Request to Abandon a Portion of the Town's Right-of-Way:** Council denied the request.

Council then moved into **CLOSED SESSION**, during which no actions were taken. Council then moved back into open session, and adjourned the meeting.

To view the video, agenda, and minutes from this or any other Town Council meeting, just visit the **Meetings Information** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS, or click the link below.

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Huge Holiday Happenings

Parade, Market, and music and lights! The Town of Oak Island kicked off 2022's year-end holiday season in grand fashion, with an entire weekend full of sponsored and partnered activities in December.

TREE LIGHTING: As always, the first Friday in December saw the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, held on the amphitheater stage right in the heart of the Middleton Park Complex. Activities began just before sunset with an hour of games, food, hot chocolate, and live music provided by both **Brunswick Brass** and **Cape Fear A Cappella**. Finally just after 6:00 PM a sea of excited children, and even a few adults, joined Mayor Elizabeth White on stage in a countdown to the Tree Lighting. Afterwards attendees were treated to a surprise visit from jolly old Saint Nick himself in the specially decorated Splashpad.

PARADE: While Friday night's tree lighting was the warm up, the following Saturday morning brought out the holiday spirit in force! On December 3, the Town's main thoroughfare of E

Oak Island Drive played host to the LARGEST ***Christmas By The Sea Parade*** (pictured) in the Town's history. Thousands of spectators lined the street as participants trekked the 2.5-mile route from Town Hall to McGlamery Street, providing sights, sounds, and plenty of candy. Previously coordinated by the Southport-Oak Island Chambers of Commerce, the 2022 parade was actually a joint effort between the Chamber and Town staff. This partnership served as a gradual transition to the Town, who will fully assume coordination responsibilities for next year's event.

HOLIDAY MARKET: The weekend wrapped up on Sunday, December 4 with one activity the Middleton Park Complex is best known for ... a **Farmers' & Artisans' Craft Market**. The "**Holiday Market**" has become a regular staple around Christmastime in Oak Island, and it seemed a perfectly fitting way to cap off the first weekend in December. Residents and visitors seemed to agree, as hundreds of shoppers came out to support the **more than 90 vendors** who were setup, making it one of the largest market events of the entire year!

Photos of all events can be found in the **PHOTO REVIEW** section at the end of this edition.

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Pearl Harbor, Remembered

Eighty-one years is a long time. It's an even longer time to remember a person, place, or event. However, 81 years ago America made a promise the brave souls who lost their lives in the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, HI ... **to never forget**.

On Wednesday, December 7, 2022, members of local VFW Post #10226 were joined by local veterans, residents, visitors, the US Coast Guard, and senior staff with the Oak Island Police Department and Oak Island Fire Department for their annual **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony**. As is tradition, the ceremony was held at the end of the Oak Island Pier, with over 40 in attendance altogether.

Opening statements, prayers, and the playing of **Taps** all preceded a moment of silence and a time of reflection. All

who were present faced and saluted due West, towards Hawaii. The ceremony concluded with a casting of roses into the sea, again in the direct heading West.

The Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony is held each year on the Oak Island Pier, and is open to all. For more information on this or any other remembrance events hosted by the VFW, you can contact Post 10226 at 910-278-5300, or visit them at 103 SE 50th St.

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Toys-For-Tots Totals

It may not have been a sleigh pulled by "8 tiny reindeer" that brought one special load presents to Oak Island this year, but it was shiny, red, and V8 powered! No, in this instance it was the big red truck of the Oak Island Fire Department that served as "Santa's Support Vehicle" instead.

Throughout the months of November and December, the Fire Department coordinated the placement and collection of Toys-For-Tots donation boxes at several Town facilities. Locations included the Town Hall, Police Department, Fire Stations, and the Oak Island Pier House.

By all accounts, the Town's combined Toys-For-Tots effort for 2022 was a massive success. On the final collection day, the Fire Department counted a total 30 boxes and 50 large bags FILLED with toys collected from various Town facilities, participating area businesses / organizations, and neighboring communities!

The final haul (*pictured*) took up a full truck and multiple trailer loads.

The Oak Island Fire Department and the Town's administrative staff extend a sincere THANK YOU to all Oak Island residents, visitors, area businesses, local community organizations, and surrounding communities. Together, this community worked to make the world a little brighter for many in need during the holiday season and beyond.



End of Year Officer Awards

In winding down the year and looking forward to 2023, the Oak Island Police Department took a few moments pause to reflect on what made them so successful in achieving their goals for 2022. While thankful for the equipment, technology, and training they have been afforded, Chief Charlie Morris and the administrative staff know that their best asset is always the PEOPLE who make up the Department.

To reinforce this concept and recognize the most outstanding among them, Chief Morris presented several awards during a Department gathering in mid-December. Please join the department in congratulating the winners of their Departmental Awards for 2022 which include:

- TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARD: *Officer Robert Phillips* has contributed greatly in our improvements to public safety, through his outstanding work in the traffic division.
- OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE AWARD: *Sara Crissman Edge* consistently delivers a kind, superior level of service to both the officers and the public she interacts with on a daily basis.
- TOP GUN AWARD: *Officer Nicolas Bass* has time and again demonstrated his keen eye and steady hand, through a

Firearms Qualification score of 99.8 (a rigorous scoring involving multiple rounds and varying firearm types).

- OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD: *Corporal Jesse Birchfield* displayed an unmatched commitment to overall excellence and dedication to the Department, Town residents, and the community at large.

In the spirit of thankfulness during the holiday season, these individuals have certainly given Oak Island residents and visitors something to be thankful for; just as they themselves are thankful for the community they serve as well.

Photos of the Officers and staff with their awards can be found on the Police Department Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OakIslandPD 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: KNOX BOX

(Contributed by Lee Price) The turning of a new year is always a great time to stop and take inventory of your surroundings; and it's also a great time to review your plans on how to keep those surroundings safe and protected in the event of disaster.

One plan to consider for protecting your house, your belongings, and possibly even your own personal health, would be the addition of a **KNOX BOX** for your home. The home Knox Box is a special key system that allows only firefighters and medical personnel to enter your home without damaging it during an emergency. The system consists of a sturdy, locked box (*pictured*) mounted on the outside of your home, which contains your house key. This is similar to a "realtor's lockbox" with the main difference being that ONLY the fire Department has access to this system.

We currently have many calls that require us to "gain entry" into a home to find the cause of a fire alarm. Now as much as

us firefighters LOVE our axes, sledge hammers, and Halligan bars, a simple key is usually a lot quicker and much less destructive! That's where having a Knox Box can greatly assist us in protecting your home. If there is a fire alarm or other emergency, we can get inside to assess and respond to the situation in a fast and less damaging way.

For more information on the Fire Department and how we make use of Knox Box systems, feel free to contact us directly by calling 910-278-1000. To learn more about the Knox Box systems or purchase one of your own, visit their website at www.knoxbox.com, or click the link below.

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Friends of Parks: Year End and Looking Ahead

(Contributed by Dennis Maneri) The Oak Island Friends of Parks wrapped up its fundraising Pickleball tournament in October and raised more than twice as much as last October's [2021] games. A big shout-out for the support of Board Members, volunteers and local companies like *Fixins*, *Pepperoni Grill*, *Oak Island Subs*, *Food Lion* and *Publix* which made food and drink donations. To help the Foundation raise money through tournament raffles, several individuals came forward with craft gifts, including contributors Debbie Neel, Nancy Arvan, and Mary Beth Errington.

A real "shot in the arm" came from several local companies that stepped up to provide financial sponsorship support. Second Wind generously covered the costs of over 100 T-Shirts – each player received one – plus great looking sports visors for all winners. *EmergeOrtho* was a **Gold Sponsor** while *Cape Fear Fitness* and *Brunswick Family Medicine* supported the fundraiser as the **Bronze Sponsors**.

As always, all proceeds will help improve the Town's parks and benefit the Recreation Department.

Looking forward to 2023, the Friends of Parks Foundation is accepting New Volunteers to join its Board of Directors. If

you'd like to make an impact on the lives of everyone on Oak Island, this is your opportunity. As we say in our motto, we believe "**better parks = better lives.**" Please join us and be part of the equation. We keep meetings to a minimum and the time commitment is limited according to the particular fundraiser you choose to support. For details, please contact either of our new co-chairs who have taken over leadership starting January 1: Rebecca Squires at surfbecca@gmail.com or Steve Watkins at whitey880@gmail.com.

Please mark your calendar for two of the Foundation's biggest fund-raisers coming up the 2nd Quarter of 2023: **Spring Battle at The Beach Pickleball Tournament** (April 22-23) and the **Car Show** (as part of the 2nd Annual *Oak Island Sea Food Festival & Cruise In* on May 13).

ABOUT: The **Friends of Parks Foundation** is a 501 (c)(3) public charity – an entity separate from the Town – which raises

money through events, auctions and donations to purchase tangible goods which are donated to the Town with the goal of enhancing the Oak Island parks experience for everyone. For more information, visit the Friends of Parks Foundation website at www.okifriendsofparks.org, or click the link below.

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Environmental Advisory Committee: First Educational Series of 2023 Announced

(Contributed by Maureen Burns) The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) is excited to kick off the **2023 Educational Series** with a presentation by **Dr. Samantha Athey** from the **Plastic Ocean Project**. The event will be held on **January 26, 2023** at **7:00 PM** at the **801 Event Center**, located at 801 Ocean Drive, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

Dr. Athey currently serves as the Education & Outreach Coordinator at the Plastic Ocean Project, where she leads outreach events within the community and develops marine

debris education programming for a wide audience. She received her B.S. with honors and M.Sc. in Marine Science from the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where she conducted research in collaboration with the Plastic Ocean Project on microplastic ingestion in marine species, and later obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Toronto.

In addition to Dr. Athey, EAC member Lee Maxwell will do a short presentation on Oak Island's voluntary 'Skip the Straw' initiative, similar to what he presented to town council, as well as the resolution.

Public education programs are a large part of the Environmental Advisory Committee's mission, and although they were unfortunately on hold during much of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are excited to once again have them back as part of our efforts. Please consider attending this highly educational opportunity!

ABOUT: This EAC is a Town-appointed committee whose purpose is to advise and educate the Town on ways to enhance, protect, maintain, and preserve natural resources and environmentally fragile areas. Regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 8:30 AM in the second-floor training room of the Police Department, located at 4621 E Oak Island Drive (adjoining Town Hall). For more information on the Committee or its members, just visit the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/BOARDS or click the link below.

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Friends of the Library: Lego League & Other Programs Announced

(Contributed by Julie Paladino) The Oak Island Friends of the Library is excited to announce several programs that will be taking place throughout the month of January!

MEET THE AUTHOR: Judes Scharman Draughton • Friday, January 13 at 11:00 AM. Judes Scharman Draughton MS, RDN, LDN, will discuss her book "**12 Fixes to Healthy**." Judes

inspires with high-energy wellness presentations and 12-Fix Group Challenge Programs. She owns Nutritional Educational Solutions, but the world knows her as **Foods with Judes**.

Registration is required. Call Barbee Library at 910-278-4283 or stop by to register.

A TRIBUTE TO PHILIP GERARD: Thursday, January 26 at 2:00 PM (801 Ocean Event Center). Join us for this special event celebrating "**Cape Fear Rising**" and remembering author Philip Gerard (1955-2022). Best-selling author David Gessner, a professor of Creative Writing at UNCW and Gerard's friend and colleague, will discuss the Wilmington coup of 1898 and the importance of "**Cape Fear Rising**" which helped raise public awareness of the coup.

Registration is required. Call 910-278-4283 or stop by to register.

NEW! LEGO LEAGUE: Tuesdays, January 24 & 31 from 4:30

PM – 5:30 PM. Join us every Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. beginning January 24 for an hour of fun Lego building! No registration is required. All are welcome!

S.M.ART KIDS CLUB (Science, Math & the Arts): Thursday,

January 19 from 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM. Join us every third

Thursday at 4:30 p.m. for hands-on activities involving subjects such as electricity, magnets, and robotics as well as art projects! Recommended for ages 6 and up. Registration is required; call or stop by 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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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), 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, January 10, 2023** 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, January 11, 2023** at **10:00 AM** in the Council Chambers. The purpose of this meeting will be for the ongoing Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Audit.

TOWN COUNCIL (televised) will hold its first ***Council Retreat*** meeting on **Tuesday, January 17, 2023** from **9:00 AM - 4:00 PM** in the Council Chambers.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (non-televised) will hold its regular meeting on **Thursday, January 19, 2023** 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, January 19, 2023** at **10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

TOWN COUNCIL (televised) will hold its second ***Council Retreat*** meeting on **Tuesday, January 31, 2023** from **9:00 AM - 4:00 PM** in the Council Chambers.

CLOSURES & HOLIDAYS

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY: Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be CLOSED on Monday, January 16, 2023 in observance of **Martin Luther King Jr. 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 2023 closure dates can be viewed in the *Holiday Calendar* on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY.

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2023 Citizens Academy Now Accepting Applications

[Editor's Note: as of the time of this publishing, only about 10 participant spaces remain available]

The Oak Island Citizens Academy is set to begin its 2023 session on **Thursday, February 2, 2023**.

The Town of Oak Island Citizens Academy is an interactive program designed to educate and familiarize Town residents with the various departments and services provided by their local government.

Through hands-on learning and demonstrations directly with administrative staff, Citizens Academy helps to provide a deeper understanding of the "**who, why, & how**" government operates at the municipal level. The program also serves to

encourage stronger participation in local government from residents of all interest levels.

While in session, Citizens Academy will meet two (2) nights per week for four (4) weeks throughout the month of February, for a total of eight (8) individual classes. Participants will learn about a new facet of local government each week, and upon program completion are honored with a special dinner ceremony where they are presented with graduation certificates.

Following a two-year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program returned with great success in 2022. Anticipation for the 2023 session promises to have class fill up fast, so early registration is encouraged.

PLEASE NOTE: Class size is limited to 25 students, due to the program's strong emphasis on direct learning. Once classes are full, some early applicants may be placed on a wait list in

case of student drop outs, but no there is no guarantee of availability. This program requires a commitment to attend all eight (8) classes over the four (4) week period. Please DO NOT register for the program if there is a likelihood of schedule conflicts or missed classes.

Detailed program information, along with Participant Applications and the 2023 Course Schedule are available on the Citizens Academy page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/ACADEMY, or by clicking the link below.

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Grinding of the Greens Program

After working with the Beach Preservation Society to evaluate the success of previous years' efforts, the Public Works Department made the decision to NOT host a Tree Dune Planting project for 2023. As an alternative, those with live Christmas trees are encouraged to participate in the Town's new ***Grinding of the Greens*** program.

Through **Friday, January 13, 2023**, the Public Works Department will be collecting live trees, which will be ground into mulch for use in the Town's walking trails at the Nature Center, Recreation Center, and other Town properties.

Trees must be cleaned of all non-vegetative decorations, such as lights and ornaments, and can be dropped off at any of the following three (3) locations:

- Public Beach Access parking lot at 604 Ocean Drive
- Nature Center parking lot at NE 52nd Street & E Yacht Drive
- Disposal Convenience Site at 4110 Airport Road (during regular operating hours)

All locations have areas clearly marked for tree drop off. The exact trails and properties which will benefit from the added mulch will depend entirely on the volume collected.

For those not wanting to participate in the new *Grinding of the Greens* program, trees will also be collected from the right-of-way as part of the regular Yard Debris Collection Schedule; but again, must be free of ornaments and decoration. The

Collection Schedule can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/YardDebris.

Full information on *Grinding of the Greens* program, along with a map of all drop off location can be found in the **NEWS & NOTICES** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/NEWS or by clicking the link below.

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Duke Energy to Test Sirens Around Brunswick Nuclear Plant

(NOTE: This notice is provided by Duke Energy) A five to 30 second test is scheduled between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM on Wednesday, January 11. 2023. **No public action required.** The 38 sirens within 10 miles of the Brunswick Nuclear Plant will sound for five to 30 seconds. To ensure they are functioning properly, it may be necessary to test some sirens more than once. Testing is performed in cooperation with emergency officials in Brunswick and New Hanover counties, who are responsible for sounding the sirens.

Because this is a test, local broadcasting stations will not interrupt regular programming to broadcast Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages. If there were ever a real emergency at the plant requiring the sirens to be sounded, local radio and television stations would broadcast information and instructions to the public.

For more information about nuclear emergency preparedness and outdoor warning sirens, residents can visit duke-energy.com/NuclearEP, or click the link below.

ABOUT: Duke Energy Progress, a subsidiary of Duke Energy, owns 12,500 megawatts of energy capacity, supplying electricity to 1.7 million residential, commercial and industrial customers across a 29,000-square-mile service area in North Carolina and South Carolina.

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Flood Insurance Reduction Seminar

Does the sometimes complicated world of flood insurance leave you wondering if you've made the right decisions? On **Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM**, the Town of Oak Island will host a special ***Flood Insurance Information Seminar*** with the [Risk Reduction Plus Group](#).

The goal of the webinar is to "break down the truth about your coverage" by providing helpful tips, and steps you can take to lower your premium. Topics addressed will include:

- New Laws That Affect Policies
- NFIP Regulations
- Mitigation Steps

The Seminar is FREE to attend, and no registration is required. For those unable to attend, individual sessions can also be scheduled for one-on-one review.

Nationwide, only 20% of American homes at risk for floods are actually covered by flood insurance. With 15+ years of Flood Damage Prevention and Flood Risk Experience, the Risk Reduction Plus Group works to provide homeowners with methods on how to quickly lower those premiums, as well as flood insurance.

For more information on the Risk Reduction Plus Group and the services they offer, just visit their website at [www.riskreductionplus.com](#) 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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Mardi Gras By The Sea: Parade & Festival

WHEN: Saturday, February 25th, 2023 • Noon – 4:00 PM (Festival) • 1:00 PM (Parade)

WHERE: Middleton Park • 4610 E Dolphin Drive

COST: FREE (*Vendor Applications Available at Oak Island Recreation Center or via the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/FORMS*)

ABOUT: The Mardi Gras Parade will begin on SE 64th Street, travel down E. Oak Island Drive, and end at SE 46th Street. Parade goers will celebrate the season as floats, stations, golf carts, and more parade by in Mardi Gras style! Celebrations will continue at the Middleton Park Complex with a Mardi Gras Market, outdoor concert featuring the *Cruise Brothers Band*, carnival type games, kids zone, food trucks, and more. Festival goers and vendors are encouraged to dress in their favorite Mardi Gras themed attire as the community comes together for an all day celebration by the sea!

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Spring Fling Market & Music

WHEN: Saturday, March 25, 2023 • 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Market) • 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (Concert)

WHERE: Middleton Park Complex (4610 E Dolphin Drive)

COST: FREE to attend (vendor fees vary)

ABOUT: Spring into warmer weather with Oak Island as we say goodbye to winter and hello to Spring at the 2023 Spring Fling Market and Music Festival! This year's event is FREE to attend, and features live music, kids zone, and full farmers and

craft artisan market. **NOTE:** A LIVE concert featuring *Parlay* will be held from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

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Open Play Table Tennis

WHEN: Fridays • 8:00 AM

WHERE: Recreation Center • 3003 E. Oak Island Dr.

COST: Free

AGES: 12 & Older

ABOUT: Have fun, meet friends, and make lasting memories with Oak Island Table Tennis Club. This excitable group

encourages each other to reach individual goals through comradery and competition. For questions simply reach out to Recreation Center Supervisor, Carrie Winkler at cwinkler@oakislandnc.gov or by calling 910-278-5518.

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: HANNON A. TEMPLETON PARK

Amidst a sea of swing sets, slides, and splashpads, there's just something to appreciated in the quiet dignity of a simple park bench under an old oak tree. Sure, a "park" void of the bright plastic-coated structures kids have come to expect may not rank high on a toddlers "to-do" list, but that doesn't make it any less of a park. In fact for many, it's quite the opposite. By its common definition, a public park is "***an area of natural, semi-natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment and recreation or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats***" (thank you, [random Wikipedia article](#)). Sitting right in the middle of Town, located on the busiest street in Town, is a public greenspace that fits that definition *to a T*.

The **Hannon A. Templeton Park** provides close up encounters with some of the oldest and most beautiful coastal live oak trees in the Carolinas; and other than a few park benches, some tables, and a fenced area for dogs ... ***that's about it***. You see it's that quiet, unspoiled, uncommercialized beauty that makes it so perfect, especially when contrasted with the surrounding development.

Like most park origin stories, the Templeton Park history started with a patch of land the Town was unsure of what to do with. Known previously as "The Compound," the Town Council had all intentions of selling the 4 combined lots along E Oak Island Drive, between NE 41st and NE 42nd streets. However in early 2006, Town residents rallied hard in favor of a more public use. Rather than becoming another block of posh new beach houses, the iconic 500 feet of latticed white brick fence would remain to forever define one of the last true gems of untouched space. During their May 2006 meeting, the Town Council voted to not sell the property, and instead convert it into a public park. A few months later in June of that same year, the new **Templeton Park** was opened and

swap content



PROFILE: ***The Park's namesake***, Hannon A. "Bubba"

Templeton, Jr. was a native of Hardeeville, SC but lived as a resident of the Oak Island area for more than 50 years. He served in the United States Navy, Construction Battalion, Seabees, receiving commendations for his service during World War II when he was stationed in Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands.

His unique skillset transpired wartime, as he later became President of National Development Corporation, which developed the areas Yaupon and Long Beach (*later to become the Town of Oak Island*). Templeton played a major role in designing and constructing the Town's streets, as well as the Big Davis Canal and the bridge that crosses it.

Working under his uncle E.F. Middleton and later for himself, he donated the lands that would eventually house the Middleton Park complex, and the Town's first fire department, as well as signing the deed donating over 40 oceanfront lots to "the Citizens of Long Beach" to provide the public with recreational beach access. In 1961, Hannon Templeton even successfully lobbied the North Carolina State Legislature and received the authority to establish a local airport; which he

supervised the construction of and served as the first chairman at its dedication.

Hannon A. Templeton, Jr. passed away in 2011 at the age 90, but was present at the park's dedication in 2006, where the then 85 year old remarked "***I guess they say it's for above and beyond duty... but my line of duty was to see to the success of the island...***" Judging by the thousands who now call the Town home, and the tens of thousands who visit each year, it's safe to say that his goal was fully achieved.

With all he had given to the development of the Town, it seemed just fitting that this quiet, natural, and largely undeveloped park be named in his honor.



Dogs need parks too!

While Templeton Park focuses more on a natural aesthetic over constructed features, it still has plenty of amenities to benefit the common man, and even more to benefit "*man's best friend*."

The Park features TWO (2) large fenced in areas to provide off-leash fun for both large and small dogs. Complete with fresh water spigots and multiple waste disposal bag dispensers, the Park is a hit with individual dog owners and owner groups.

Almost every afternoon, a small collective of dogs and their preferred humans can be found enjoying time with fellow "pup parents."

In a world where the average house keeps getting larger and larger, and the average yard smaller and smaller, the Templeton Park provides nearly an acre of open space to sit, walk, play with dogs, or just watch the passersby. Even without a constructed shelter or building it makes a great area for family gatherings, or even a birthday party for your favorite "*fur-babies!*" Whether your group prefers to travel on two legs or four, the simplistic offerings of shade and ample seating makes this the place to be!

A clean and well-maintained space is the top priority for any park or public recreation area. One of the challenges for a park that so heavily features trees and natural foliage is balancing the open spaces with the natural "shedding" those trees produce. The park is maintained by the Operations Division of the [Public Works Department](#), who even as the photo above was being taken, were hard at work removing pine straw, leaves, and other debris from the dog park areas. Like so many other features within the Town of Oak Island, the Public Works staff take a direct interest and personal pride in keeping these spaces neat and organized for public enjoyment.



Whether it's for a doggie play date, or a simple rest in the shade on a wooden park swing, the Hannon Templeton Park guarantees a pleasant and beautiful space to spend ones time. Just after the Middleton Park Complex, it's one of the largest single open spaces provided on the Island, and adds a unique asset to the nearly two-dozen parks and recreation facilities offered by the Town.

To view or share location and amenity details about the Templeton Park, or any of the parks and outdoor facilities offered by the Town of 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

Provided below are examples of the visuals seen around Town throughout the past month. This section contains officially published AND reader submitted photos. Submissions are donated and not compensated, but are properly credited in the captions below. 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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