

May 2023

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Welcome to The CURRENT: SPECIAL EDITION

WELCOME to the **SPECIAL "SUMMER SAFETY" EDITION** of THE CURRENT. Ask an astronomer when the "*the start of Summer*" is, and they'll tell you it's the solstice on June 21. Ask a meteorologist, and they'll say June 1. Ask a travel agent, and you get yet a third answer of Memorial Day. However, as anyone looking out their window at the traffic on Oak Island Drive can tell you ... ***Summer is already here!***

The secret is out, and the masses have realized you don't need 90° temperatures or federal holidays to tell you when to enjoy the outdoors. That's a great thing too! Because ***Oak Island was made for the summer.*** The smell of food cooking on the neighbor's grill, the sounds of children playing in the Splashpad, and visitors from all over the world coming to

enjoy this small slice of paradise! It's the time when Oak Island truly gets to shine.

However, with the increase of people, comes an increase in the need for safety, particularly for those visitors who DON'T get to live their lives in constant contact with the ocean and whose awe of its beauty is tempered with a healthy respect for its potential danger. The Town of Oak Island has already been hard at work preparing for the influx of visitors and seasonal residents, working together to make this a safe and enjoyable season for all. Later on in this SPECIAL EDITION, we'll break down some of the more visible efforts made so far. In the meantime, the water's warming and there's a lot happening to go over, so grab your [Rescue Tubes](#) and let's hit the water, as we dive into the **May 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 Meeting Recap

The Town Council's regular meeting on **April 11, 2023** began with a PUBLIC HEARING on proposed text amendments to Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the Unified Development Ordinance: Council unanimously approved the ordinance amendments as presented.

PRESENTATION: Update on the Brunswick County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP): Planning Director Matt Kirkland gave an update and noted several opportunities for the public to provide input. The schedule of in-person and online meetings is available by [CLICKING HERE](#).

PROCLAMATION: Arbor Day: Mayor White read the Proclamation and noted there would be an Earth Day

celebration on April 14, and that Arbor Day would be recognized on April 28.

ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The Town Clerk asked to add the appointment for the Recreation Advisory Board, which was a carryover from last month. A request from Mayor White to join other Brunswick County towns in sending a letter opposing certain legislation was added under New Business. Councilman Bell removed Approval of Amendments to ARTICLE IV. - BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES[4] to Align the Ordinances with the New Policy for Boards Committees from the Consent Agenda, and Mayor Pro Tempore Bach removed Approval of Water Tower Lease Agreement and Site Access Agreement from the Consent Agenda. The agenda was approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Comments will be summarized in the Minutes; video can be viewed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

COUNCIL REPORTS (MAYOR AND COUNCIL): Reports will be summarized in the Minutes; video can be viewed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

CONSENT AGENDA: Approval of Minutes (March 2, 2023 – Special Meeting) The Consent Agenda was approved with the following items removed:

I.2 *Approval of Amendments to ARTICLE IV. - BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES[4] to Align the Ordinances with the New Policy for Boards Committees:* Council voted 3-2 in favor of a motion to adopt the ordinances Amendments

(Mayor Pro Tempore Bach and Council members Craft and Martin in favor, and Council members Bell and Blalock opposed).

I.3 *Approval of Water Tower Lease Agreement and Site Access Agreement:* Council unanimously approved the agreements.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: Recreation Advisory Board: Council unanimously re-appointed Gail Burr to a term ending March 2026.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Department reports are available on the Town's website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/DEPT. Reports will be summarized in the Minutes; video can be viewed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

OLD BUSINESS: (1) Consideration of Amendment to Sec. 28-42(a)(1)(b) to Allow Right-of-Way Parking in the Police Enforcement Zone: Council unanimously approved the ordinance amendments as presented.

NEW BUSINESS: **(1)** Consideration of Approval of Major Site Plan - Pine Forest Cottages: Council unanimously approved the site plan.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM. To view the video, agenda, and minutes for any 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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CRC Beach Management Plan Approved

On Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 6:00 PM the Town Council held a Special Meeting for the purpose of considering a Beach Management Plan, to be submitted to the [NC Coastal Resources Commission](#) (CRC). Following a an overview presentation from engineering firm [Moffat & Nichol](#), the Town Council unanimously approved the plan.

Dubbed the **CRC Beach Management Plan**, it will provide the Coastal Resources Commission with a commitment to maintaining beach nourishment projects, for the purpose of

beachfront development. It is important to note that the *CRC Beach Management Plan* is different from the [Beach & inlet Management Plan](#), which addresses the long-term funding and planning of nourishment efforts.

BACKGROUND: In July 2022, the CRC adopted new regulations that repealed the ability for coastal communities to utilize a "Development Line" as the setback measurement line for beachfront development. To allow regulatory flexibility for oceanfront construction setbacks moving forward, towns would need to submit a Beach Management Plan for approval by the CRC.

In August of 2022, the Town Council approved a contract with Moffatt & Nichol to assist the Town in preparing and submitting a Beach Management Plan for consideration and approval by the CRC. In October 2022, Moffatt & Nichol presented an initial plan to the Town Council, who voted to

postpone a decision for 100 days, to allow for closer review. Following this review, at the April 13 Special Meeting Council voted unanimously to approve the Plan at the recommended level of 1.359M cubic yards of sand, with a projected cost of \$33M.

A complete review and history of the CRC Beach Management Plan, along with download links for the Plan itself and its four Appendices, are available on a dedicated page of the Town Website, under the **Residents & Visitors** section. This page can be viewed directly at www.OakIslandNC.gov/residents-visitors/beach-information/crc-beach-management-plan or by clicking the link below.

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Budget Workshops

On the morning of **Thursday, April 13, 2023** the Town Council held the first in its series of **Budget Workshops** for 2023. The Budget Workshops are held annually during the spring, and allow the Council to provide direction in the development of the Town's upcoming Annual Budget. Workshops typically last between 2-4 hours and review the proposed budgets for 1-3 departments per day.

In all, a total of five (5) Budget Workshops were held throughout the month of April:

- [Thursday, April 13](#)
- [Wednesday, April 19](#)
- [Friday, April 21](#)
- [Tuesday, April 25](#)
- **Thursday, April 28**

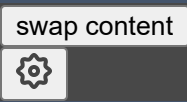
All previous and upcoming Budget Workshops are available to view anytime on-demand, by clicking on each date listed above, or on the [Meetings Information](#) page of the Town Website.

Once all workshops have been completed, the proposed budget will then proceed to a public presentation, followed by a public hearing during the Council's regular meeting on June

20, 2023. All meetings are being held in the Town Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Dr.

To view any past meeting, or upcoming meeting agenda, visit www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS or by click the link below.

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NEW Low Speed Vehicle Info Cards for 2023

While Memorial Day weekend in May is traditionally viewed as the start of the summer tourist season, for all practical purposes in Oak Island, the Easter holiday weekend is the true unofficial kickoff. With the advancements in the comfort and features of Low Speed Vehicles (LSVs), the Town has seen a noticeable rise in recent years of the number of businesses that rent LSVs within the Town limits.

To reinforce safety and address new concerns, the Police Department has published an entirely new [LSV Info Card](#) for 2023. This new info card replaces the popular "Respect The

Road" cards of previous years, and provides fresh response to the most common issues seen last summer season.

In early April, copies of the new new [2023 LSV Info Card](#) were sent to all known businesses that rent LSVs within the community, along with a letter written by Police Chief Charlie Morris, encouraging their partnership in community safety.

This letter urges the business owners and operators to provide this information to their customers. By making sure all drivers and passengers are aware of this critical information, it can help to ensure a safe and enjoyable summer for everyone.

Whether in a car or LSV, the road safety laws of North Carolina apply equally to all vehicles. The Police Department remains committed to traffic safety within the community, and will continue to enforce these laws.

To help spread the message, and download a copy of your own [2023 LSV Info Card](#), simply click on the "Low Speed

Vehicles" tab on the dedicated page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/LSV, or click the link below.

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Arbor Day Celebration & Tree Planting

Arbor Day is a time observed by many countries throughout the world, in which individuals and groups are encouraged to plant trees. The date varies, depending on climate or suitable planting season, with the North American date falling on Friday, April 28.

That same day, Mayor Elizabeth White joined representatives from the *Environmental Advisory Committee* (EAC) and volunteers from *TreePeaceOKI* to welcome 30 students from the South Brunswick Middle School to [Bill Smith Park](#), for a Native American Tree Planting ceremony.

The students, all National Junior Honor Society members, named and adopted the six (6) trees as their service project, and will be taking shifts to help water them over the summer.

After the planting, Mayor White gave spoke briefly on the importance of tree preservation and sustainable urban forestry in our community. Mayor White then awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Harrison Cable, a graduate of SBMS who fulfilled last year's pledge to water the trees planted in 2022 at Veterans Park.

For more information on the Environmental Advisory Committee, and their coordination of Arbor Day and other educational and awareness efforts, just visit their page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/EAC or click the link below.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

This section features content contributed from various Town Departments, as well as the Town's municipal and non-profit partner organizations. Regular contributing 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, please reach out to the contributing organization directly.



Fire Department Safety Brief: NEW Rip Current Awareness Webpage

(*Contributed by Lee Price*) As you'll read further down in this edition, the Fire Department is making great strides for the 2023 summer season to educate and inform everyone on current [Beach Warning Flag](#) conditions. The warning flag system is one of the simplest, and most effective ways we have to communicate potential dangers from marine conditions, particularly **rip currents**.

But we're not the only ones working to expand public knowledge and increase awareness. Earlier this Spring, our friends at the National Weather Service (NWS) Wilmington were excited to announce their new [Carolinas Rip Current Awareness](#) webpage.

As rip currents are the #1 weather-related killer in the coastal Carolinas, the NWS wanted to strengthen awareness by gathering important facts, local statistics, and safety messages in one place. Additionally, the page also includes photos and videos specifically from the Carolinas.

The page is a wealth of resources for important content such as:

- Facts about rip currents (how they form, how to spot them, etc.)
- Information on how to survive a rip current
- Rip current statistics for the Carolinas
- Threat from distant tropical cyclones
- Important links to the NOAA and USLA rip current webpages

If you're like to learn more about rip currents, and help spread the knowledge to those around you, check out the new **Carolinas Rip Current Awareness** webpage by visiting www.weather.gov/ilm/ripcurrents, or clicking the link below.

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Nesting Season Starts on May 1

(**Contributed by Suzan Bell**) We are excited to announce the **2023 Sea Turtle Season** will begin on May 1, and will continue through October 31! Last season we had the second largest number of nests on record at 140, with the highest number of emerged hatchlings on record at 12,737. Additionally, we had a never before recorded leatherback sea turtle nest on our beach ... *we had a fabulous season!*

The Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program is the only permitted program from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) to care for and protect the sea turtles that visit our beach. Please call us day or night, 24/7 if you see a nesting turtle, emerging hatchlings, washed-back hatchlings, or stranded or deceased turtles on the beach. It is a federal offense to remove a turtle from the beach, to disturb or shine lights on them, to harass or pick them up and pass them around. Please respect our sea turtles and all marine and wildlife!

Please call 910-945-8888 or the Sea Turtle Stranding Hotline at 252-241-7367 with locations and details of all activity, and we will respond asap! Your help is appreciated!

If you hook a turtle fishing from the pier or beach, please call us immediately! We will assess the turtle and transport it to Karen Beasley Rescue and Rehab Center if needed. Please, pull the turtle up with a net, not the line, or if it is a large turtle, try to lead it to the shore, cut the line no less than 2

feet and when we arrive, we will tape it to the carapace so the turtle does not swallow it. Never remove a hook from a sea turtle's mouth or throat, and please do not pass the turtle around for pictures. If you see a nesting turtle, stay back a minimum of 25 feet, stay quiet, and watch from a distance. She might not lay her clutch of eggs if you disturb her or shine lights on her. If you see hatchlings on the beach without volunteers there, please call us! Do not take pictures of the hatchlings (at night) or shine lights on them. They can become very disoriented and crawl the wrong way! Sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act so we appreciate all of our volunteers, locals, and visitors who help us in protecting them!

We invite you to come and sit with us in the evenings at our nests when the hatchlings are ready to emerge! We do not share locations of nests per the NCWRC, but when you see a

nest with the runway attached, that nest is in the time frame for emergence! Due to nature, we can never predict a day or time the hatchlings will emerge but we hope you will sit with us and hopefully, see the emergence! Oak Island is one of the top sea turtle habitats for the state of NC and we are so very excited to share this experience with everyone! We ask that everyone please follow all state, town, and program guidelines concerning our sea turtles, nests, dunes, gear on the beach, etc... and please be respectful of our volunteers and follow their guidance at the nests!

Please look for us at the Oak Island Recreation Center’s Artisian and Farmer’s Markets held every Monday beginning May 22nd. We are collaborating with the Bald Head Conservancy and the Caswell Beach Turtle Watch Program to take turns at the markets so we can speak with and educate everyone about our sea turtles! We also present at schools, churches, and community events!

We love our sea turtles and our town so THANK YOU to those in our community who share our love of sea turtles! You make a difference in their care and protection and we appreciate YOU and your help so much! We hope 2023 will be another great season for all of us on Oak Island! For more information on the Oak island Sea Turtle Protection Program, just visit www.okiseaturtle.org or click the link below.

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Environmental Advisory Committee: Living Shoreline Initiative

(**Contributed by** Elise Snavelly) March 17, 2023 event at Veterans Park.

The North Carolina shorelines are eroding at increasing rates due to rising sea levels, concentrated waves from boats and more extreme storms. Erosion control structures like bulkheads are not as effective as living shorelines in protecting shorelines. By installing buffers using slat marsh, oyster reefs, and other natural materials, living shorelines

control erosion while protecting the natural beauty and productivity of our waterway shorelines. One such waterway shoreline that is being protected by a living shoreline constructed of oysters is located at Veterans Park.

The Living Shoreline site on Oak Island is located at Veterans Park (1408 E Yacht Drive). The Living Shore site is maintained and monitored by volunteers. Join the NC Coastal Federation and members of the Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) to maintain and monitor the site at Veterans Park. Volunteers will learn how to properly maintain a living shoreline while placing new bags on the oyster reef, removing any broken bags, and replacing any bags that have fallen off the reef. Volunteers will also participate in a monitoring session to assess the quality of the reef and surrounding waters. Volunteers will also work to remove any problematic marine debris from the site.

No special skills or knowledge are required. You will receive the basic training needed. Volunteers should wear plenty of sunscreen and bring reusable water bottle, hat and sunglasses. Please dress for the weather in clothes that are comfortable and that you don't mind getting wet and dirty. Gloves, boots, trowel pickers and trash bags will be provided. Children under the age of 18 must have parent or legal guardian with them. All project supplies and equipment as well as snacks and refreshments will be provided. Restrooms and parking available.

Oak Island Beautification Club: Plant Sale

(***Contributed by Susan Long***) Please mark your calendar for the annual Oak Island Beautification Club Plant Sale, to be held on **Saturday, May 6, 2023 at 8:00 AM**. The location will be at **SE 56th Street**, under the water tower.

The Club will have vegetables and flowers as well as many other plants that grow well in our area. Master Gardeners will be available to provide growing tips. See you there!

The **Oak Island Beautification Club** is a non-profit group

dedicated to improving and maintaining the visual appeal of Oak Island community, mostly through the natural and botanical areas. The club meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the [801 Ocean Event Center](#), with refreshments at 9:30 AM, followed by a program at 10:00 AM. for more information on the Beautification club, contact members through their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/gardeningandmuchmore or click the link below.

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MEETINGS, NEWS, & NOTICES

Council, Committee, & Board

Meetings

REMINDER: Televised public meetings are broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/MEETINGS.

For a complete schedule of all upcoming Council, Committee and Board meetings, visit

www.OakIslandNC.gov/CALENDAR.

PAR 3 ADVISORY COMMITTEE (non-televised) will hold its regular meeting on Friday, May 5, 2023 at 1:00 PM in the Par 3 Pro Shop, located at 4188 Vanessa Drive.

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (non-televised) will hold its regular meeting on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 4:00 PM in the Recreation Center, located at 3003 E Oak Island Drive.

ABC BOARD (non-televised) will hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the Oak Island ABC Store, located at 5402 E Oak Island Drive.

TOWN COUNCIL (televised) will hold its regular meeting on **Tuesday, May 9, 2023 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 its regular meeting on **Thursday, May 18, 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, May 18, 2023 at 10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

CLOSURES & HOLIDAYS

MEMORIAL DAY: Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be CLOSED on Monday, May 29, 2023 in observance of Memorial Day. Garbage & Recycling Collection will NOT be affected.

Police, fire, and other emergency services are not affected during any holiday closure, and are always available by calling

during any holiday closure, and to always available by calling 9-1-1. The Oak Island Pier will be open during their seasonal hours. All currently available [Parks](#), [Beach & Water Access Locations](#), and facilities will be open as well. All holiday closure dates can be viewed in the *Holiday Calendar* on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.gov/HOLIDAY.
NOTE: The **Summer Schedule** for [Garbage & Recycling Collection](#) begins on **Saturday, May 13, 2023**.

• • SPECIAL EDITION: SUMMER SAFETY • •

As noted earlier in the introduction, the busy summer season is pretty much already upon us. along with the crowds come an increase in the efforts to ensure everyone has safe and enjoyable season. In the this special section, we take an in-depth look at the preparations taken by the Town so far, including ...

Water Safety Stations: Reinstalled

On Thursday, April 20 staff from the Public Works Department (*NOT pictured here ... because hey, they're kind of camera shy!*) set out early in the morning with a long task

ahead: ***reinstalling the Rescue Tubes at all 68 Water Safety Stations.***

Since their implementation in August of 2022, the Water Safety Stations and the Rescue Tubes they provide, have proven a tremendous resource for immediate action during water emergencies. A result of the partnership with the [Jack Helbig Memorial Foundation](#), the Water Safety Stations were installed at ALL 65 of the Town's public [Beach Access Locations](#), and additional locations in some of the remote stretches in-between.

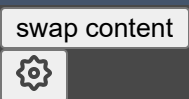
Each Station consists of two (2) main components: a Beach Warning Flag & Instructional Sign, and Rescue Tube Personal Floatation Device. (NOTE: Tips for reading the Station signs can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAFETY.)

For the 2023 season, a total of 9 posts, 6 signs, and 4 Rescue

Tubes were replaced due to damage from storms, weather, accidents, and one theft (**sigh* looking at you, SE 69th Street*). However, once all of the replacement materials were in, Public Works crews quickly went about returning the stations to full service.

To learn more about the Water Safety Stations, how to use them, and the Rescue Tubes they provide, just visit the SAFETY page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAFETY or click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE



Fire Department: Flags Flyin'

Through Town agencies like the [Fire Department](#) and [Police Department](#), and partner agencies like the volunteer [Oak Island Water Rescue](#), Oak Island stands ready to assistance beachgoers during emergency situations. However, as any of those first responders will tell you, they would much prefer to not be needed at all.

The BEST method for preventing emergencies is through strong public education on how to avoid them. Building upon

early progress last year, the **Oak Island Fire Department** is fully diving into its education initiatives for 2023.

FLAGS: The Fire Department has committed to making sure anyone about Town can know the current [Beach Warning Flag](#) condition, no matter where you are! For 2023, **ALL** of the departments vehicles will fly the current color of Beach Warning Flag (*pictured*) and signage describing their meanings. Additionally, Fire Stations 1 & 2, located at 101 and 8510 E Oak Island Dr., respectively, will both fly the flags on their flagpoles as well. Finally, Fire Chief Lee Price has secured an agreement to fly the Beach Warning Flags on the flagpole of [Crossroads Gathering Place](#), which is located at the base of the Barbee Bridge, so travelers can see the conditions as they enter the Island.

QRV: New for 2023 is the addition of a **Quick Response Vehicle** (QRV) for the Fire Department. This brand new F-150

is specially equipped with the famously torpedo-styled Rescue Cans, emergency medical supplies. It will continually patrol the the Beach Access Locations throughout the summer months ahead, staffed by employees of the Fire Department with water rescue training. The QRV will serve as a compliment to both the response efforts of Oak Island Water Rescue, and the observation efforts of the Beach Services Unit (BSU).

And speaking of the BSU ...

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Beach Services Unit: On Patrol

Another innovation returning for 2023 is the [Beach Service Unit](#) (BSU). A division of the [Oak Island Police Department](#), the BSU is solely devoted to patrolling the beach areas throughout the busier daytime hours.

A civilian unit, BSU members do not carry firearms or conduct police tasks, but are authorized to issue citations for violating Town ordinances related to dunes, and beach safety.

Additionally, their patrols provide valuable observation of beach conditions, and help identify potential emergency situations.

All BSU members wear specific uniforms, with BEACH SERVICES prominently displayed across the back of their shirt.

In 2022, the BSU utilized two utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) for patrolling the 10 miles of public beach areas. In 2023 a **THIRD** UTV has been added, greatly increasing the patrol coverage. In a visual change, all three of the UTVs will be fully marked with Town decals and visibility graphics. They will all still fly the current color Beach Warning Flag, along with mounted signage describing the conditions.

Due to the successful first season, ALL of the BSU staff members hired in 2022 **will be returning for the 2023 season!** Season update training will begin on May 8, with **patrols scheduled to start on May 15.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: With the implementation of the Town's [Paid Parking](#) program, monitoring and ticketing for

parking violations are now being administered by the contracted parking services vendor, [Otto Connect](#). While the Police Department and BSU staff are available to help if needed, this shift in responsibilities allows the BSU to now provide more attention to on-beach observing.

Beach Drive: Speed Limits & Emergency Access Locations

More people visiting the beach, means more people on the streets leading to the beach areas. With the increase of pedestrian and [Low Speed Vehicle](#) (LSV) traffic, the focus on beach safety extends far beyond just the sand and surf.

SPEED LIMIT: As is routine for mid-May, the Speed limit on along both E Beach Dr. & W Beach Dr. will be **lowered to 35mph**. This allows LSVs and Mobility Devices to legally travel along the entire beach strand. The NCDOT doesn't publish exact date of the changeover, but it usually expected around middle of the month. As noted on the [Speed & Traffic Data](#) page, the Police Department maintains a strong motivation towards monitoring and addressing speeding concerns in these heavily traveled areas.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS: Of the 65 public Beach Access Locations within Oak Island, approximately 23 are designated as **Emergency Vehicle Access** locations. These special locations feature a wider path over the dunes and modified parking lot design, which together allow emergency vehicles to access the beach quickly during a response.

Coming full-circle to the Public Works Department where this special Edition began, crews have been hard at work to clean, maintain, and prepare these Emergency Access Locations for the coming season. The special signage posted at each location has been checked and ensured visible, with any needed replacements provided. An updated list and interactive map of all Emergency Vehicle Access locations can be found on the SAFETY page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/SAFETY.

SAFETY SUMMARY: Whether its flags flying, patrols patrolling, or speeds lowering, all of the Town's efforts for summer safety depend on one critical element ... **YOU!** Equipping yourself and your friends or neighbors with the knowledge to ensure your own personal safety is vital. On your way to the beach, be sure to **slow down** and pay attention to everyone else who's just as excited to get there. When parking, make sure to "**Keep Paths Free From Street to Sea**" so emergency vehicles can access. Before going in the water, check the **Water Safety Stations** for the current flag condition. And most importantly, if you see an emergency, before grabbing that nearby Rescue Tube ... **CALL 9-1-1**. By educating ourselves and working together, we can provide Summer Safety for all!



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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CHOP With A Cop

WHEN: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 • 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

WHERE: Throw Baxe Axe House and Board Game Lounge • 806 N Howe Street, Southport, NC

COST: FREE (registration required - only 48 spaces available!)

REGISTER: www.OakIslandNC.gov/RecDesk

ABOUT: Chop with a Cop is an exciting and FREE program that allows teens aged 13-18 to join officers from four different agencies in axe throwing competition. This event provides teens with one hour of practice and one hour of competitive throwing. Teams will be randomly assigned, however selected time slots will be honored. Competition will be held in two sessions: 10:00 AM - NOON -&- 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM. Waivers must be signed by parent or guardian day of event)

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Summer Concert Series

WHEN: May 26 - September 2 • 6:20 PM

WHERE: Middleton Park Complex Amphitheater

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. The scheduled time for most concert events will be each Friday, from 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM unless otherwise noted. Full series information, concert dates, and scheduled bands are available at www.OakIslandNC.gov/CONCERT.

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2023 Farmer's & Artisans Market

WHEN: Mondays • 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM • May 22 - September 4

WHERE: Middleton Park (Behind Town Hall) • 4610 E Dolphin Drive

WHO: All Ages

COST: FREE to attend or shop / Vendor Fees of \$15 Daily or \$200 Seasonal (\$40 savings!)

PARKING: Please note that Paid Parking is **NOT** charged during Market times, in areas around the Middleton Park complex (Se 46th - SE 49th streets)

ABOUT: The Market is great opportunity to see and financially support the very best of Oak Island's local farmer and artisan community. Baked goods, produce, handmade crafts, and artistic masterpieces are just a few of the many treasures waiting to be uncovered at the popular annual tradition, which runs throughout the summer season.

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Ride The Tide: Community Kayak Float

WHEN: Saturday, June 3 , 2023 • Float Begins at 9:15 AM

WHERE: Recreation Center • 3003 E. Oak Island Dr. to Blue Water Point Marina

WHO: Ages 12 Years & Older

WHO: Ages 13 Years & Older

ABOUT: The Oak Island Recreation Department and Adventure Kayak Company will be sponsoring the annual Ride the Tide Community Float! This years event will consist of a 5.2 mile float from the recreation center kayak launch to Blue Water Point Marina. The Davis Canal is a calm and scenic paddle trail with the float taking place as the tide is flowing with paddlers. Come and paddle with us! For questions simply reach out to Program Supervisor, Ryan Gordon, at rgordon@oakislandnc.gov or by calling **910-278-4747**.

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: OAK ISLAND PIER COMPLEX

In 1954, following the devastation felt by Hurricane Hazel, there was a massive push to rebuild the communities of Yaupon Beach and Long Beach. An original *Build Back Better* program so to speak, the goal was to provide more offerings to the communities and surrounding areas at large. One result of that effort was the opening of the new Yaupon Beach Fishing Pier in 1955. In the more than six and a half decades since its initial construction, storms have blown, names have changed, and additional facilities have been added, but the pier has stood as the icon of enjoyment for countless residents and visitors. The pier itself has undergone multiple rebuilds, first in 1972, then 1993, and most recently in 2017 after Hurricane Matthew. Ownership of the pier has changed

hands throughout the years, and with the addition of a restaurant, coffeehouse, and the [801 Ocean Event Center](#), the property it sits on eventually grew into what is now the **Oak Island Pier Complex**.

It's at the Oak Island Pier Complex where the current and future chapters of this area come to life. Comprised of five distinct components, the Complex is home to the *Oak Island Pier*, the *Pier House*, the *Koko Cabana* restaurant, *Ruby's Coffeehouse & Eatery*, and the *801 Ocean Event Center*. The pier itself was acquired by the Town in 2009, becoming the first municipally owned pier in the state of North Carolina. While operation was still privately leased for several years, it reopened under direct management of the Town following the

completion of a Hurricane Matthew rebuild in 2019. A surf-spanning spectacle of marine engineering, the pier is the tallest in the state at 27 feet high, and one of the longest 880 feet long. It provides 30 stations for King fishing, handicap accessible portions, and a unique "grated" center section, which allows for tall waves to pass through during storms, preventing floor boards from being pushed up. The connected Pier House offers everything the casual pier walker or even seasoned angler might need for a day out in the sun; conveniently attached to the privately leased Ruby's Coffeehouse & Eatery for a quick caffeinated treat, and the KoKo Cabana restaurant, for those with a serious appetite for lunch and dinner.

Around the same time the Town acquired the pier, it also acquired the building at 801 Ocean Drive. Hardly any building has ever served a better example of the term "flex space" than 801. Having served as everything from an arcade, to a restaurant, a private club, and at one point even a skating rink, its wildly transitioning past is what ultimately defined its future usefulness. No matter what temporary role it served, it consistently provided a great ocean front venue for groups to meet. That's why it was a natural choice to simply serve as a premiere meeting space and event venue. With a walk-in cooler, nearly 2,000 square feet of floor space, and an unbeatable pier-side view, the aptly named **801 Ocean** has quickly become a much sought after destination for all types of celebrations and events.

Pier Coordinator: Trish Beatini has been living in Oak Island for well over a decade. Having first visited in 2005, it only took her family a year to make the decision to purchase their home, which they were able to move to fulltime in 2012. Trish has been working at the Oak Island Pier since the spring of 2021. Starting as a Pier Attendant, she initially took the job because of the flexibility the position. It allowed for her to be with her children while they were remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fast forward a couple of years later, and as more time freed up in the home, more commitment was needed at the Pier. As the previous Pier Coordinator, Lisa Mattiace was fully moving

into the role as manager of the 801 Ocean Event Center, Beatini stepped up to the plate, and was hired in March 2023 as the new Pier Coordinator.

"My favorite part of the job is the view, and all my coworkers are the best" Beatini said when asked about her new position. Obviously, having good weather helps in making the day more enjoyable, but even in the worst of conditions, it's hard to beat that office view!

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*801 Ocean Manager: **Lisa Mattiace*** has decades of event planning and management experience, and was the best person to serve as the first Event Center Coordinator when the Town of Oak Island acquired its only beachfront venue in 801 Ocean.

Having spent much of her professional life in academia, Lisa has worked at four different universities in West Virginia, Colorado, and Ohio. With a broad spectrum of responsibilities, Lisa developed the ability to connect and communicate with people from all walks of life. This skill has proven vital in her current role, as this job is more than

coordinating a facility - it's helping others create memories of a lifetime.

"We want to provide an experience that guests will remember for a lifetime," Mattiace said regarding her event management perspective. **"We want them to return to Oak Island in the future because of their experience and memories."**

This ability for personal connection, when combined with a lifetime of professional event coordination, makes for a consistent customer service experience. So whether you're welcoming brides and grooms, celebrating a life milestone, or holding any other community or professional meeting, **801 Ocean** is the place to be, and Lisa Mattiace is the person to see.

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While the privately leased spaces have their own employees, the Town staff you'll find in the Pier complex consists of 12 Pier Attendants and the Pier Coordinator, Trish Beatini, along with Lisa Mattiace over at the 801 Ocean Event Center. In addition to their retail duties inside the Pier House, attendants work to maintain a safe environment and help provide an enjoyable experience for all those on the Pier. The Town-operated components of the Pier Complex are open every day of the year, and only close due to adverse weather conditions. On any given day of the week, you're likely to see fishing lines being cast off the Pier, bait being sold in the Pier House, or a crowd of event attendees taking selfies at the doors of 801 Ocean.

For many visitors, the Oak Island Pier or 801 Ocean may be their only connection to the Town, or even the State! Some serious anglers drive hundreds of miles just to fish from this spot, while others have family members that fly in from across the country just to attend a beachfront wedding at 801 Ocean. Because of this, the Pier Complex Staff try to treat their roles as more like "goodwill ambassadors" for Oak Island rather than run of the mill government employees. Multiple times throughout the day, Pier Attendants can be seen wiping and sanitizing hand rails, cleaning restrooms, and socializing with Pier guests. All the while the 801 Ocean is continually hopping with caterers, florists, clients and event attendees.





The Pier is always free to walk on to enjoy the sights, and Town holds the fishing license for all paying customers, so no individual license is needed. Just pay for a seasonal or day pass, and drop a line! If you ever find yourself on the east end of Town, and are looking for a good day of fishing, a nice hot meal, or the perfect spot to host your next family reunion or work event, check out the Oak Island Pier Complex. Hours of operation for the Pier are currently 6:00 AM - 10:00 PM daily, and vary throughout the year depending on the season. The Pier is located at 705 Ocean Drive, and the 801 Ocean Event Center is at ... well, 801 Ocean Drive. For full details on either, you can call 910-523-8166 or visit their pages on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.gov/PIER and www.OakIslandNC.gov/801, respectively.



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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