Town of Hilton Head Island
TOWN MANAGER UPDATE

An Update from Assistant Town Manager Josh Gruber
8/25/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

Here's an update of what's happening around Town.

Today, we released the following statement on behalf of Mayor John McCann and Town Manager Steve Riley:

On Monday, August 24, the Beaufort County Council voted to impose a uniform law enforcement service charge for the Town of Hilton Head Island. This charge would generate surplus revenue for Beaufort County on top of the approximately $52,000,000 that it already receives annually from Hilton Head Island taxpayers.

We vehemently object to this charge, which would mean Hilton Head Island residents would have to pay additional fees beyond what their households are already assessed for the same level of law enforcement services that Beaufort County and the Beaufort County Sheriff are constitutionally required to provide.

As such, we are considering legal action to block implementation and collection of this new service charge to protect Island residents from having to pay this illegal and unconscionable fee.

In our opinion, this is an unfair move on the part of Beaufort County Council and its Administration to collect more money for services our residents already pay for with their tax dollars. The Town has and will continue to maintain its financial support for the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office and the excellent stand-alone services it receives. In its operating budget, the Town of Hilton Head Island provides direct reimbursement for beach enforcement, bar patrol, enhanced security services at the Heritage Golf Tournament, additional housing stipends for sheriff's deputies to allow them to live on the Island, and free centrally located office space to ensure quick response to the community.

We are disappointed that our County leaders have taken this step rather than consider other ways to equitably provide services for our residents.

While we are supremely disappointed in these actions, there are a number of projects and services that we working on jointly with Beaufort County. These include the Mitchelville Preservation Park, the U.S. 278 Gateway Corridor Project, and the relocation of St. James Baptist Church. We will continue to work amicably on these projects and others, and toward a fair solution to ensure our citizens have the protection afforded to other municipalities throughout Beaufort County.

Poll Workers Needed for Election Day, November 3
The Board of Elections and Voter Registration of Beaufort County is looking for volunteers to work the November polls on Election Day. To qualify, residents must be registered to vote in SC and attend an online Poll Manager training. Register online at www.noexcusesc.com.

Each volunteer will be paid $165 for the training and working Election Day. Health precautions will be taken at every polling location and each volunteer will be provided personal protective equipment. Sixteen and 17 year-olds are eligible to volunteer. For more information and questions, call the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County at 843-255-6900.

Voter Registration and Ballots
With election date approaching, we have received some calls regarding voter registration and ballots. If you have questions about voter registration, early voting, absentee ballots or other voting concerns, please contact the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County at 843-255-6900 or visit beaufortcountysc.gov/vote.

COVID-19 Updates for Our Community
We encourage you to continue taking steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Wearing a mask in public.
- Practicing social distancing.
- Getting tested.
- Avoiding group gatherings.
- Regularly washing your hands.
- Staying home if sick.

The S.C. Department of Health and Environment department maintains data on the latest confirmed and estimated COVID-19 cases by ZIP code for our area on its website at scdhec.gov. For Hilton Head Island, those zip codes would be 29928 and 29926. We also share this data on our COVID-19 hub page at hiltonheadislandsc.gov/COVID19.

COVID-19 Testing Locations
If you're in need of a COVID-19 test, visit SCDHEC.gov or reach out to Hilton Head Hospital. DHEC maintains a list of community pop-up testing sites and dates on its website. These free drive-thru events don't require an appointment or doctor's order. Additionally, Hilton Head Hospital offers free drive-thru testing 8 a.m. to noon, Monday thru Friday. No appointment is necessary, but a doctor's order is required.