



Town of Hilton Head Island **TOWN MANAGER UPDATE**

An Update from Deputy Town Manager Josh Gruber 9/17/2020

Good afternoon Hilton Head Islanders and Guests,

Here's an update on what's happening around Town:

Mayor's Honored Islanders

We congratulate our local citizens who have been nominated and chosen to receive the Mayor's Honored Islanders Award in recognition of their volunteerism and contributions to the Hilton Head Island community. These recipients were selected earlier this year and were to be recognized in March. But, due to COVID-19, their recognition event was postponed. This week, they each received their award and a dinner gift certificate. The honorees are:

- Mary Stuart Alderman, who for many years served as chairwoman of the committee that was responsible for selecting Honored Islanders and is now one of them. She also has volunteered extensively with organizations throughout the community.
- Rosanne Ball, who has volunteered with the Boys & Girls Club of Hilton Head Island and the Junior League, helping those organizations sustain their services and provide a wealth of support for youths and others in our community.
- Pat Savarese, who has volunteered as a translator for The Deep Well Project and Volunteers in Medicine, helping these organizations to connect better with their clients.
- Janet Weingartern, who founded Backpack Buddies for our community and helps make sure local children and families have access to food.

County to Hire Independent Engineer for U.S. 278 Gateway Corridor Project

Beaufort County has agreed to hire an independent consulting engineer and landscape architect to examine options for the U.S. 278 Gateway Corridor Project. Town officials will be able to review the scope of work the county is putting together for consultants. We also will have a memorandum of understanding outline our involvement and responsibilities as part of this project review.

Due to Hurricane Sally, DHEC Cancels the ArborNature Public Meeting for Sept. 17



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Due to the potential of severe weather from Hurricane Sally impacting its ability to conduct a virtual public meeting, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) postponed the proposed ArborNature Transfer Station meeting that was scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2020. The virtual public meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday, September 24, 2020, at 6:30pm.

Access to the meeting will open at 5:30 p.m. on the day of the event. Early log-in is encouraged. An access link and instructions on how to join by phone or computer will be available at that time at DHEC's website at <https://scdhec.gov/events/arbornature-construction-demolition-debris-transfer-station-virtual-public-meeting-0>

During this public meeting, DHEC will provide additional information about the proposed transfer station, follow-up on questions asked during public meeting #1, and provide an opportunity for additional questions to be asked. Anyone who plans to participate in the public meeting should complete the [registration form](#). Information about how to join the virtual meeting can be found on our Virtual Meeting page at <https://scdhec.gov/virtual-meetings-hearings>

Absentee Voting Available for All Voters

Due to the state of emergency we are under for COVID-19, the S.C. General Assembly this week passed legislation authorizing absentee voting for all qualified voters. Late Wednesday, members of the General Assembly joined Governor Henry McMaster for a ceremonial bill signing of [H. 5305](#), COVID-19 Absentee Voting Bill. The bill calls for establishment of COVID-19 voting-related procedures as they relate to absentee voting for the 2020 general election on November 3. The state of emergency has been added to a list of reasons electors may choose from as their reason for voting absentee. Our thanks to Sen. Tom Davis for providing information on what the legislation does and does not do for this year's election.

What the legislation does:

- Allows all qualified electors to vote by absentee ballot.
- Voters who wish to vote by absentee ballot must request the ballot no later than 10 days before the election (October 24). Current law says no later than 4 days before the election. This change is an effort to ensure there is sufficient time for the county to mail the ballot to the voter and for the voter to return the ballot by Election Day. If a voter wants to go to the office and request an absentee ballot in person, he may do that no later than Friday, October 30. If a voter wants to vote in-person absentee, he may do that until Monday, the day before the election.



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- Allows absentee voters to return their ballots in-person to the voter registration office or to any satellite voting location in the county. This change ensures voters have more options to return absentee ballots, but it also protects against ballot harvesting and unsecured drop boxes because election commission staff must confirm the identity of the person returning the ballot and the ballot must be stored in a locked box inside the office.
- In-person absentee voting will begin statewide on October 5. The State Election Commission was encouraging counties to open on September 28, and some counties were preparing to do that. This change allows for 4 weeks of in-person absentee voting and makes the date consistent statewide.
- Allows county election commissions to begin opening the outer envelopes of returned absentee ballots at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 1. They may begin removing the ballots from the inner envelopes and running those ballots through the scanners at 7:00 a.m. on Election Day. This change should speed up the counting of absentee ballots to ensure counties can report election results on Tuesday night, while also ensuring that ballots are not revealed before Election Day.
- The State Election Commission and county board of elections must provide extensive public notice of the absentee voting process as set forth in the legislation, train poll managers and workers on the changes addressed in the legislation, conduct educational programs, and encourage social distancing at the polling locations.
- The provisions of the legislation only apply to the 2020 General Election on November 3 and do not apply to any other election.

What the legislation does NOT do:

- Permit drop boxes or unsecured voting drop-off locations for absentee ballots.
- Allow election officials to mail ballots to all voters; there must be an absentee ballot request.
- Change the process for absentee ballot applications to be requested electronically online.
- Waive the required witness signature requirement on the absentee application.



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- Permit county board of elections or State Election Commission to view absentee ballots or release absentee results before Election Day.
- Create a single curbside voting location; curbside voting remains as in current law.
- The bill does not change permanent law.

Voting With Absentee Ballots

The Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County has already started procedures for residents who wish to vote with absentee ballots. To learn more about voting absentee in Beaufort County, contact the elections office at Absentee@BeaufortCountySC.Gov or 843-255-6900. You can also visit beaufortcountysc.gov/vote or scvotes.gov/absentee-voting for information on obtaining an absentee ballots.

Voter Registration in Beaufort County

Residents who are not registered to vote in Beaufort County and want to participate in the November 3, 2020 election in the county have two more weeks to get registered. Voter registration is handled by the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County. Here are upcoming deadlines for voter registration:

In-Person: October 2, 2020 by 5 pm. You can register to vote at the County's voter registration office at 61B Ulmer Road in Bluffton. Office Hours are 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-4 p.m.

Email, Fax, or Online: October 4, 2020 by 11:59 p.m. Visit beaufortcountysc.gov/vote or scvotes.gov for forms and online registration.

By Mail (Must be postmarked by): October 5, 2020

Free COVID-19 Tests in our Community: Why Get Tested?

Testing for COVID-19 is essential because it helps identify people who are infected with the virus, whether or not they have symptoms. Learn more about [who should get tested here \(scdhec.gov/who-should-get-tested-covid-19\)](http://scdhec.gov/who-should-get-tested-covid-19). Hilton Head Hospital and its sister facility, Coastal Carolina Hospital in Hardeeville, offers free COVID-19 drive-thru testing is available from 8 a.m. to noon, Monday thru Friday, at its campus. You do not need an appointment or a physician's order. Your test results typically will be e-mailed within 72 hours to the valid e-mail address you are asked to provide. You can also visit scdhec.gov/covid19testing to find other testing clinics or events near you and what the requirements are for testing.

COVID-19 Cases in Our Community



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For the latest figures on the number of cases of COVID-19 on Hilton Head Island, please visit www.scdhec.gov or the Town's COVID-19 hub page at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov/COVID19. DHEC maintains the latest data on COVID-19 cases across the state and in our community, and we integrate some of that data on our website. Please be mindful of the following safety measures to protect yourself and others from getting or spreading COVID-19:

- Wear a mask in public.
- Distance yourself physically by six feet.
- Avoid group gatherings.
- Wash your hands often.
- Get tested.
- Stay home if you are sick.