

## **From the Mayor's desk – 5/2/25**

Happy Friday!

I am catching up a bit this week after getting back from a nice Easter vacation off the island. A big thanks to Jennie Green-Pratt for taking my place in my absence!

First glance upon return, it appears that the sargassum has made a visit to Surfside. There has been lots of discussion and opinion on what to do with it when it comes ashore. Honestly, there are pros/cons to both sides of the debate on its removal. We will be evaluating each instance of sargassum deposits on our beaches, and based on time of year and quantity of deposits, make determination on how to deal with this situation. What does that mean exactly, well, if a large deposit of fresh sargassum coincides with a large beach crowd, then we will look to rake it towards the dune line to still provide dune nourishment along with best use of the beach for our visitors who have paid to enjoy it for the day. For now, in early May, we don't plan to move any of it. If we have large mounds as Memorial weekend approaches, then we will evaluate plans to mitigate that situation and balance the dune nourishment with the use & enjoyment of the beach by a large crowd of visitors.

### Human Resources:

Very excited to announce that we have successfully recruited, interviewed, and hired a new EMS Director. Frank DeMarco started with us on April 21<sup>st</sup>. He will be leading the EMS department, as we defined in the ordinance that was approved through Council previously. Hiring of EMS employees is ongoing as he works to get up to a full staff in his department. Welcome to Surfside Beach Frank!

Recruiting for the Finance Director position has progressed. We have a successful candidate through the interview process that will be brought before Council next week, and conclude in a vote and decision to hire the candidate.

A few other openings in Beach & Parks currently. If interested, please contact City Hall.

### Beach & Parks:

The stretch of Bluewater Highway has road repairs completed. As always, if you have any specific small scale road repairs, like potholes, please call City Hall to schedule a work order.

We have a bid and contract to repair 3 larger sections of damaged roads with concrete. The Bluewater Highway entrance/exit to Coral Court and Bay Avenue, and the corner of Surf Drive and the Main beach entrance. This work is being pressed to begin and complete prior to Memorial Weekend, but that will be dependent of the contractors schedule of other jobs and the weather. As these repairs are made, the desired cure time for the concrete will be 7 days without a load (no driving). The plan will be to block off and pour one lane of the road, allow traffic flow on the other side, and repeat the process after the 7 days of cure time. Garbage pick up on Coral Court and Bay Avenue may be affected, and we will be working with those on each street to minimize that disruption.

New beach sign posts will be installed soon. This is an attempt at a longer term solution that reduces or eliminates the need to replace and re-install beach sign posts after every bull tide or tropical storm. We will be driving the rounded 8 inch gun barrel pilings 9 feet into the sand. These sign posts will be intended to be as permanent as Mother Nature will allow, and should significantly reduce or eliminate the replacements, post storm. If these sign posts appear to be standing up to weather, then we will be looking to use the same method at some of our beach walkovers, again to mitigate the need to repair and replace after a storm.

#### Other Items of Interest:

We had a couple of surprise visitors to Surfside Beach this week that were greeted by Officer Jimmy McDaniel and made national news. Officer McDaniel welcomed two of the rarest nesting sea turtles in the world, the Kemp's Ridley, this week. The two sea turtles successfully made there way up onto the beach and deposited their 94 & 99 eggs, respectively. The eggs were then collected by the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research (GCSTR) for transport to Padre Island National Seashore where their odds of full maturation and hatching drastically improves from 75% to close to 100%. Our own "Turtle Daddy", Officer McDaniel is planning to reunite with the little ones upon hatching at Padre Island. A very cool story, and thanks to Jimmy for being out on patrol and responding exactly as he was trained.

Tomorrow the Historical Committee will be hosting a Treaties of Velasco Commemoration at the timeline fence near City Hall. It will involve a reenactment, music, rations, and refreshments. Come celebrate the historic signing of the Treaty of Velasco in Surfside Beach.

Have a great day and I hope to see you around the island this weekend!

Thanks,

Zach