

5/22/2026

From the Mayor's Desk

Happy Memorial Day! Summer is officially here, even if the weather hasn't quite gotten the message. Don't let the rain dampen your plans — there's still plenty to enjoy. Visit the Sea Center in Lake Jackson (it's free!) and get an up-close look at our incredible marine life. Put the phones away, dust off those board games and decks of cards, and enjoy some real face-to-face family time. Make microwave s'mores and have a picnic right on the living room floor. And when the sun does peek out, take the kids to the beach and show them how that awful, smelly sargassum is actually nature's way of protecting our coastline.

Several times a year, massive bands of sargassum break free from the Sargasso Sea in the middle of the Gulf and wash ashore all along the coast. This biomass is a good thing. It traps blowing sand, decomposes into vital nutrients, and strengthens our shoreline — all of which help fight erosion and protect our beach. While we could scrape it up and push it into the dunes, doing so removes thousands of pounds of healthy beach sand and crushes the fragile root systems of the vegetation growing there. And the Gulf would simply send us another batch with the next high tide. Sargassum is one of our strongest natural defenses, and we choose to protect the beach so it remains healthy for your children and grandchildren.

As you enjoy the beach between storms, please stay mindful of changing conditions. Strong rip currents can form quickly, especially after heavy weather, and even experienced swimmers can be caught off guard. Keep a close eye on children, avoid swimming near jetties, and always check the flag warnings before getting in the water. Your safety — and your family's — comes first.

Due to the impending storms, SOBA (Save Our Beach Association) will not be placing the flags that normally line our streets and surround City Hall on Memorial Day. We love how those flags welcome our visitors and remind us that Memorial Day honors the brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedoms. I look forward to the Fourth of July, when the weather is usually more cooperative for this beautiful display.

Have a wonderful holiday.

Mayor Marsha

CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNITY UPDATE:

Change is a funny thing. As humans, our natural instinct is often to resist it. Predictability is comfortable, and when things start shifting, it's easy to feel a bit hesitant. But more often than not, stepping through that initial discomfort is exactly what leads us to something better, stronger, and more resilient. With a new City Administrator at the helm, there are changes in how we operate. My mission for the Village is simple: to make us highly efficient. We are working hard to streamline our processes, maximize transparency, elevate our professionalism, remain strict compliance with regulatory agencies, and above all, be exceptional stewards of your hard-earned taxpayer dollars. But building something great doesn't happen overnight. Sometimes it requires making lots of small adjustments along the way until we find the right fit. That process requires a bit of flexibility and patience, but it's all about keeping our eyes fixed on the big picture for Surfside Beach.

We see the rewards of that collective effort when our town shines on the big stage. A perfect example of this was the incredible success of this year's Jeep Week. The online outpouring of support and love for our community was heartwarming, and I couldn't be prouder of our residents and staff for showing our guests what Surfside Beach hospitality looks like. Even with a busy event behind us and three of our directors away at training this week, the work behind the scenes never stops. Our department reports are a little shorter than usual, but our dedicated staff has been working double-time to keep the island running smoothly.

Here's a look at what we've been up to this week:

- Our utility crews have been on high alert due to the heavy rainfall and subsequent stormwater runoff placing heavy pressure on our systems.
- Heavy rainfall creates significant inflow and infiltration (I&I) challenges for our vacuum sewer system. Our crews worked diligently around the clock and continue to monitor daily operations. To protect our vital equipment and let vacuum pumps to cool down as needed, operators have been strategically isolating lines overcome by runoff and toggling sewer pumps using the HOA switches.
- The water crew completed their monthly water line flushing routines and responded to several residential calls for service.
- Monthly water meter reads are complete, and the team is finalizing the re-read verification list to ensure accuracy before billing.
- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) documentation for the Seashell water line project has been approved by HUD pending final notices.
- Following an after-hours water leak, it was determined that a specialized repair was needed beyond our equipment limitations. We immediately activated our emergency on-call contact, who responded quickly and made the necessary repairs with zero disruption to the community. Having agreements with back-up emergency contractors is how we build resiliency!
- The Building Officer held a productive pre-construction meeting between our General Contractor, Electrician, and staff regarding upcoming City Hall building repairs. A Pre-Construction Action Plan was distributed internally to map out the construction schedule and major milestones. Because a portion of the work requires blocking the rear parking area and temporarily removing a secondary emergency exit from the Public Safety building, we collaborated closely to establish an alternate fire exit for EMS and maintain clear access to Monument Drive for our Police Department.

- New walkovers are scheduled for replacement at Sandpiper Ave, Belanger Ave, and Driftwood Ave. We received engineering drawings for two of these locations, which allows us to open construction bidding and launch the formal submittal process with the Texas General Land Office.
- During a new home site inspection, we identified an OSSF (septic) system violating TCEQ distance-to-open-water regulations, posing a serious public health and contamination risk. We required the immediate removal and relocation of the system, upgrading it to a secondary drip system better suited for environmental safety. Additionally, following a citizen complaint, we investigated an abandoned septic tank on an empty lot that was left uncovered, unfilled, and holding liquid. A formal violation notice has been issued to the owner to initiate the abatement process.
- On a positive note, our code enforcement timeline was highly effective on Pompano Lane, where a junk vehicle (partially sunken boat in the canal) was successfully removed ahead of schedule thanks to the proactive cooperation of the property owner.
- In coordination with Finance Department and our vendors, we held technology cost reviews. We identified several immediate savings in our phone systems, including downgrading underutilized premium accounts to standard accounts, removing unnecessary direct inward dial numbers, and removing unneeded lobby lines. We are also actively negotiating a hardware buyout to maximize savings.
- We executed several updates to improve public access to information, including updating elected-official contact information for our newly elected members, correcting the City Council video archive dates, updating the Historical Committee rosters, and broadcasting the Mayor's letter.
- We finalized the Tourism Committee's meeting minutes and featured community spotlights celebrating our local graduates and recognizing our EMS personnel.
- We hosted meetings with our Short-Term Rental software vendor. Staff gathered the necessary contact lists and worked with Finance and the CSR to lock in our go-live date.
- To maximize staff efficiency and protect executive time, we are standardizing system display names and correcting internal communications loops. We worked closely with leadership to reduce unnecessary "reply-all" inbox inundation and reinforced clear escalation paths, ensuring routine committee matters route through their designated staff liaisons first.

As we look toward the upcoming Memorial Day holiday weekend, our utilities personnel have already been briefed on managing the anticipated increase in water and wastewater system usage. We are fully stocked with basic repair materials, and our on-call operators are ready to respond to ensure a safe, fun holiday on the island. I wish everyone a safe and meaningful Memorial Day as we pause to honor the brave service members who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Fair Winds & Following Seas,
-William