

## **From the Mayor's desk – 5/23/25**

Happy Friday!

Memorial weekend is upon us. The wild flowers are looking beautiful in all the lawns and on bird & butterfly trail. A special thanks to the SOBA volunteers for the United States flags all along Ft Velasco & Bluewater Hwy. They always look great and are a wonderful way of honoring the fallen heroes and reminding all the visitors what Memorial Day really stands for in this country. Well done volunteers!

### PD:

Ditto from last week's Friday letter. This weekend the command post will be at Stahlman, but the remainder of the weekend Op Plan remains nearly identical to last weekend's preparation for Jeep weekend. One note on last weekend. I want to thank and commend our local first responders, the visiting first responders and all the Jeep weekend participants visiting Surfside. The Surfside Beach Jeep weekend was exceptional from my perspective. Fun + Law & Order. Great job by our folks and much appreciation to the tremendously courteous visitors that are welcome back anytime!

As I have communicated in the past, when we have other patrol here on these busy weekends, and those outside agencies will enforce law and ordinance by the book. This includes one way traffic on the beach for all vehicles. You may be stopped and ticketed in a golf cart going the wrong way. Again, take precautions to avoid that if you are travelling by golf cart this weekend.

Another reminder...Beach Drive: Parking on Beach Drive requires a beach pass annual sticker or a daily pass hang tag. If you are parking on Beach Drive without a beach pass, you will receive a citation.

### EMS:

Our EMS is please to announce FREE health screening. Our certified EMS professionals will be providing non-emergency wellness checks and health education. Please contact EMS Director, Frank DeMarco at (979) 233-1531 ext. 112 to schedule an appointment for you, a family member or someone you know that might need/want this service. Flyers with more detail are also located at our City Hall PD/EMS Station. Let's work together to build a healthier Surfside Beach.

### Public Works:

The new, replacement vacuum pump for the AIRVAC sewer system is in route and will be up and running very soon. Installation of the second vacuum pump will allow for full operation of all 3 sewer lines once it is running. The bad pump will be removed from the pump house, sent off to be completely rebuilt, and then sent back to us as a spare. Once we receive the rebuild, we will be in a position to quickly swap the spare pump for any failure and maintain operations of the system.

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### Human Resources:

First and foremost, we had the new Finance Director, Christie Briones start on Monday. Welcome to Surfside Christie! So happy to have you on the team.

Also this week, we had 2 people attending a 2 day Texas Municipal League (TML) Health Benefits conference to fully understand the annual changes to our health benefits program and the financial implications. We have made an effort to send more of our City Hall staff to educational conferences,

seminars and virtual learning like this from TML and others from TCEQ, TDEM, and various First Responder agencies. The educational benefits and network building opportunities with other municipalities has been invaluable to Surfside.

#### Beach & Parks:

Last weekend went great. We made some improvements to entry booth traffic flow to allow those who had previously purchased annual passes skip the line and enter at will. This along with PD patrols encouraging traffic movement on the beach, made a difference in backups on the bridge and in front of Yucca entrance on Bluewater Hwy. We intend to continue this process.

New beach signs are being installed this week. These are the 8" round (telephone pole type) posts that were driven 8-9 feet into the sand. These new poles will display all the priority beach rules and highway driving signage in a uniform fashion. The idea to use rounded poles and drive them deep is to mimic pilings near pedestrian beach that tend to remain in place after surges and large storms. If this test works, then we will be looking to use similar pilings to repair beach walkovers that get tore up with storms.

#### Other Items of Interest:

The OLIN chlorine release: I had lots of questions about lack of alerts for Surfside and I wanted to follow up with you. When an incident like this occurs, the top priority for a plant/site/business is to evacuate the immediate danger zone on site and then evaluate any potential danger zone off site and alert civic leaders and first responders. We were not alerted because we were not inside the cone, based on the wind direction & speed, plus the volume of chlorine release. So in this case, the lack of contact was a very good thing as we were out of harm's way.

Ah, the Sargassum: We have been monitoring the influx of sargassum this week and it has been a consistent daily deposit that even continues today. Based on the constant deposits we decided to let it lay as is, as it was collecting regardless of any action to be taken on our part aside from continuous raking. The beach is wider with areas of clear sand in most sections that can be used for tents, chairs, etc. I know that this decision gets wild applause from some and outright disgust from others. As I've said before, we will evaluate raking the sargassum, or not, based on many factors and there will be times when we rake it and times when we let it be natural.

Just to let everyone know, Waste Connections will be maintaining their regular Monday trash pick up and Tuesday heavy haul through the holiday weekend. No change.

School is out for most. If you have a child or grandchild celebrating their High School graduation, I hope it is an enjoyable, safe, and memorable experience for all.

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

Thanks,

Zach

