

Citizens' Association **NEWS AND VIEWS**



JULY SUMMER UPDATE

Editors: Linda Sullivan and JJ Butler



Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa 10th Anniversary Celebration

On Thursday, July 13th, the Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa celebrated their 10th Anniversary of being a valued service to all who visit Palm Beach. The evening was centered around several local restaurants providing delicious food stations to all that attended.

We look forward to the Eau Palm Beach continuing their "above and beyond" service to all visiting patrons.



Sargassum Weed Update

By: Ronald Matzner

Two months into the summer season, the Citizens Association is pleased to report to our members and residents, this summer in Palm Beach, that the expected assault of Sargassum weed has not yet materialized on our beaches.

Each morning I walk the beaches of Reach 8 from the Lake Worth pier to South Palm Beach. Although there are strips of weed here and there east of the mean high tide line, there is a broad swath of beautiful sand from the water's edge to the beginning of the dry beach. It is pleasant to walk and even to swim. There is no odor.

This has been facilitated by a steady diet of southeast breezes early in the day followed by thunderstorms with westerly winds in the afternoon and evening. This has caused an escarpment to form separating the wet sand from the dry beach. The lack of high surf and the presence of the escarpment have inhibited the depositing of sargassum higher up on the dry beach. Conditions were very different at this time last year. There was a dense mat of Sargassum 20 to 30 foot wide and up to 2 feet high from the water's edge up onto the dry beach. It was not possible to reach the water without stepping on the sargassum weed. This year one can walk from the dunes to the water by winding through the dry beach on open sand and bypassing the patches of seaweed.

I am also pleased to observe that turtle nesting appears to be proceeding apace with about a dozen new nests each night. (Last year there was a record number of turtle nests on South End beaches.) CAPB will continue to monitor the situation. Surf, wind and weather conditions can quickly change. If there is any change, we will inform you. Anticipating a sargassum onslaught this year, CAPB had reached out to our beach cleaning contractor to arrange additional mechanical beach cleaning in the event sargassum weed accumulated as it did last year.

At the present time, our contractor cleans the 4.5 miles of Reach 7 and 8 beaches south of Sloan's Curve twice per week on Tuesday and Thursday. If additional service is required, he has agreed to extend to CAPB or to individual condominiums the same rate that he is charging the Town of Palm Beach for the cleaning of the sand at Phipps Park and the Par 3 Golf course.

Please be aware that mechanical beach cleaning can only be done on the wet sand east of the average mean high tide line. State law prohibits mechanical cleaning on the dry sand west of that line. Anything west of the line must be raked by hand. The only properties currently raking the dry sand are the Four Seasons and Tideline Hotels in Reach 7.



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Homesteaded residents will not see increase to property taxes

By: Kristina Webb Palm Beach Daily News

Homesteaded residents of Palm Beach will see no property tax increase from the town for the coming fiscal year under the initial tax rate unanimously approved Thursday by the Town Council.

Under the initially approved millage rate of \$2.61 per \$1,000 of taxable value, non-homesteaded property owners would see an increase on their tax bills of \$179 per million of property value, said Bob Miracle, deputy town manager of finance and administration. In Miracle's first budget year with the town, his team proposed a tax rate and assembled a \$104.8 million budget that council members praised as "well put-together." "What I like about this budget is that it does focus a little bit more than previously on these people concerns," Councilman Lew Crampton said, pointing to increases in the proposed budget for police presence, code officers, and parking and traffic enforcement.

The initial tax rate set by the council Thursday is lower than the current fiscal year's millage rate of \$2.69 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Still, the town will see an increase in property tax revenue with a taxable value of \$29.08 billion for the coming year, up about \$3.5 billion from this fiscal year.

This will be the sixth year in a row that the town's tax rate does not amount to an increase in property taxes from Palm Beach on homesteaded owners' tax bills, Town Manager Kirk Blouin said.

The \$104.8 million budget is nearly \$8 million more than the current fiscal year's \$97.1 million budget, records show.

Citing South Florida as "a hot spot for inflation," Blouin told the council there are significant cost of living increases for town staff planned for the coming year's budget. In South Florida, inflation averages about 9%, he said, noting that the rest of the country is averaging about 4% inflation. "We've been experiencing a significant increase, much higher than the 9%, in our construction costs," he said.

"Inflation is making an impact on the budget itself," Miracle added.

An \$11.2 million chunk of the coming year's budget is dedicated to a major capital improvement project to renovate the town's historic North Fire Station, town records show. The council Tuesday approved a nearly \$15 million contract for the project, which includes a total overhaul of the 1927 landmarked structure.

The fire station project was "a large hit to our budget," Blouin said.

"It was an unexpected and unfunded expense," he said. "We were not anticipating rehabbing the North Fire Station, but it had mold issues and unfortunately major structural issues."

Councilman Ted Cooney said the project was "the elephant in the room" for Thursday's budget discussion. The work had been projected to take place in a few years, but had to be moved up because of the building's condition, he said.

From the general fund, the budget proposed nearly \$8 million more in spending, including \$2 million for cost of living increases for town staff; \$1.2 million more for benefits; \$1.2 million more for the retirement fund; nearly \$2 million more for contracted services includes sewage treatment and information technology; and a \$1.5 million transfer to the town's capital and coastal funds, records show.

The council discussed including a \$1 million contribution to the Phipps Ocean Park redesign and update project on the town's South End.

Councilwoman Julie Araskog said that with the increase in personnel costs and a budget of more than \$100 million, "I just don't think this is the year" for a contribution to that project.

Council President Maggie Zeidman suggested a \$1 million contribution for the coming fiscal year, and another \$1 million for the year following that. The discussion will be added to the council's August agenda for further discussion, she said.

The council plans to pull a few items, including funding for Phipps Ocean Park, from the proposed budget for further discussion ahead of a pair of public hearings to finalize the budget. Those are scheduled for 5:01 p.m. Sept. 12 and 5:01 p.m. Sept. 21.

Once approved, the budget takes effect Oct. 1.



CHECK THESE LINKS FOR HAPPENINGS IN PALM BEACH

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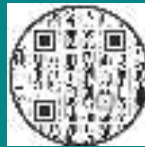
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If contacted - they will pick up at your condo!

Update on A1A Project

By: Donald Singer

The Florida Department of Transportation held a town meeting in June, at which time, Ronald Matzner represented and presented the Citizens' Association of Palm Beach's point of view. CAPB wrote a letter indicating we are unable to support the project based on that hearing and wrote a letter to the Governor of Florida and Ricardo Castro, FDOT's project manager as well as, David Kerner, Executive Director of FDOT.

That letter resulted in the following statement:

THE CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION OF PALM BEACH RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS A DEFERRAL OF THE PROJECT SO THAT THE ACKNOWLEDGED SAFETY CONCERNS AROUND SLOAN'S CURVE CAN BE ADDRESSED BY COORDINATING THE THREE PROJECTS INTO A TOWN WIDE INTEGRATED APPROACH.

As a follow up; the Town Council, at its monthly town mtg on 11th of July, indicated support for CAPB's position. In addition, Susan Wiley, a recent resident of Palm beach and Ronald Matzner reiterated our position to the Council. We continue to request that reach nout to our elected officials to convey our position.

TOWN OF PALM BEACH UNITED WAY 11TH ANNUAL SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE



The Town of Palm Beach United Way School Supply Drive collects school supplies and donations to benefit low-income families in Palm Beach County. Supplies and funds are donated to our nonprofit partner agencies to distribute to students in need. We accept supplies for all grade levels.

SUNDAY, JULY 23 - SUNDAY, AUGUST 6

Drop Off Locations:

United Way Office
44 Colonial Pkwy, Suite 4020
Palm Beach, FL 33480

Field of Greens PG
260 Royal Palm Lane West
Field of Greens WTB
40 Clematis Street

Central Fire Station
255 South County Road
South Pine Station
2825 South Ocean Boulevard

To Benefit:

American Association of Caregiving Youth
Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County
Opportunity Early Childhood Center

In Partnership With:

Field of Greens
Palm Beach Daily News
Palm Beach Fire Rescue

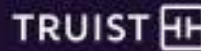
Other Ways to Donate:

Call:
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Write a check for:
Town of Palm Beach United Way 11th Annual School Supply Drive
44 Colonial Pkwy, Suite 4020
Palm Beach, FL 33480

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