



9/17/19 - Mayor's Town Hall Meeting Recap

October 21, 2019

Dear Surfsiders,

Thank you to the residents who attended the most recent Town Hall meeting held on September 17, 2019. Since taking my first oath of office, my enduring goal for Surfside has been to build a stronger sense of community. One way this is accomplished is through town hall meetings, which provide an informal opportunity to share your thoughts with me and our Town Administration on matters that are important to you.

Enclosed please find a recap of the discussions that took place at the recent Town Hall meeting, along with a deeper dive into topics that required further research from our Town Administration.

In the event you missed the Town Hall Meeting and/or have further concerns, please email me directly at ddietch@townofsurfsidefl.gov. You can also find contact information for our Town Commission on the Town website at: www.townofsurfsidefl.gov.

Regards,

Daniel Dietch
Mayor
Town of Surfside

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1. Beach Renourishment Project Update

The Beach Renourishment Project to address critical beach erosion in Surfside is currently underway. For regular updates and frequently asked questions, please refer to the Town website at: www.townofsurfsidefl.gov.

2. Tourism Revenue in Surfside

Surfside is one of only three municipalities in Miami-Dade County authorized by Florida State Law to impose, levy, and collect a resort tax of 4% on accommodations (i.e., bed tax) and 2% on food and beverage sales, as a source of revenue. To learn more, please find enclosed a helpful guide about how resort tax dollars work and their benefit to the Town of Surfside, including fully-funding the Community Center and its operations; therefore, lessening the tax burden on Surfside residents.

3. Undergrounding Utilities

Since 2012, the Town of Surfside has engaged in public education campaigns, public meetings and commissioned several studies to weigh the pros and cons of undergrounding utilities (e.g., electricity, phone and cable), as well as determine its impacts on Surfside residents. All studies reach different conclusions.

Additionally, the Town Administration engaged Dr. Ted Kury, Director of Energy Studies for the Public Utility Research Center (PURC) at the University of Florida, to present on the topic to Surfside residents in September 2017. During Dr. Kury's presentation, he shared the following key take-away's:

- Location of powerlines underground mitigates the effects of damage from wind events and flying debris;
- Underground lines are more susceptible to damage from storm surge and flooding; and
- Underground lines may also be more difficult to access, leading to longer outages when they do occur.

According to Surfside Town Manager Guillermo Olmedillo, the Florida Legislature has two bills on the table, HB 797 and SB 796, requiring the submission of a public utility storm protection plan that includes potentially undergrounding utilities. FPL is required to present its plans to the Florida Public Service Commission in October.

4. Mulch in Storm Water Drains

Residents are reminded to please keep the front of their property free and clear of all types of mulch. The use of mulch in the adjacent swales or public right-of-way (e.g., five feet away from the street edge into the property) is prohibited. In April 2018, the Town Commission adopted changes to the Town Code on Property Maintenance Standards in order to address this matter. Especially during heavy storms, mulch typically washes into the roadways, ending up in the Town's storm drain system, which clogs the system so it does not function at its maximum capacity.

The Town of Surfside's Code Compliance Division conducts periodic inspections of properties and property owners will be notified of any violations.

5. Striping Roads | Sidewalks in Surfside

Several residents expressed their desire for sidewalks and/or striping of the roads in Surfside, like Miami Beach, to segregate vehicular and pedestrian areas to help make the Town safer for families. This issue has been addressed numerous times in multiple public forums over the years.

From December 14, 2017 to April 11, 2018, the Town initiated a pilot test of a new streetscape design and one-way street trial on 89th and 90th Streets, between Harding Avenue and Hawthorne Avenue. The proposed designs were recommended by the Planning & Zoning Board and voted on by the Town Commission in a continued effort to make Surfside a more walkable and pedestrian-friendly place to live. However, in response to displeasure expressed by many residents, the trial was discontinued.

More recently, the Town of Surfside has partnered with the University of Miami School of Architecture on a connectivity study to help explore other solutions to promote a more walkable and safer community.

6. Climate Crisis Overview Plan

In coordination with the University of Miami's School of Architecture LU_Lab and Calvin, Giordano & Associates, the Mayor, Town Manager and Town Administration have drafted a comprehensive Climate Crisis Overview - Actions Taken and Next Steps to address sea-level rise and climate change in Surfside. The Climate Action Plan has been presented to the Sustainability and Resiliency Committee and will be shared with the Planning & Zoning Board and then presented at the next Town Commission meeting on Tuesday, November 12th.

7. Miscellaneous – Food truck parked on 90th At Abbott Avenue

A resident brought up concerns about a commercial food truck parked on 90th Street and Abbott Avenue. The Town Administration researched the matter and concluded the owner has a proper Town Commercial Vehicle Parking Permit to have the vehicle parked on the property of 9032 Abbott Avenue. The vehicle was parked fully within the curtilage of the property and is not impeding the roadway.