



Dear Friends and Neighbors:

May 2015

It's been just over 60 days since the March 10th election when the Town of Hillsboro Beach set a new record for the number of votes cast in a local election. We also had the highest turnout percentage in Broward County! Many thanks to those of you who put your trust in me. Quite a bit has happened in the short time since the election, and I wanted to let you know that progress has been made on several key issues.

First, this Commission is in the process of changing the Town Charter to allow for a Town Manager/Town Commission form of government. Finally! A Town Manager will provide the daily management oversight at Town Hall that has been sorely lacking. The referendum for the Charter change has been drafted, approved by the Commission, and the first and second public readings have been completed in record time. The next step is voter approval. Unfortunately, since the previous Commission kept the issue off the ballot in the last election, we now must wait until next year before voters can weigh in. Our next scheduled election is March 2016.

The second area of progress relates to our beach. On Tuesday, May 5th, the Town of Hillsboro Beach achieved a major milestone—the Commission voted to engage the law firm of Oertel, Fernandez, Bryant, & Atkinson, P.A., a niche firm specializing in coastal/environmental law. Oertel will provide guidance in navigating the labyrinth of agencies, regulations, and permits relating to our erosion issues caused by manmade obstacles in other municipalities (the Deerfield groins and the Boca Raton Inlet). For the first time, the Town is being proactive to protect our shoreline by addressing the root causes of our erosion problems instead of looking to the next nourishment as a pricey, temporary Band-Aid. This is the first step of a long journey, but at last we're moving in the right direction.

In addition, there have been successes in other areas: 1) We have strengthened our Marine Advisory Committee with four new, highly qualified members as a result of contacts made during the election campaign (Gerry Freedman, Mark Rowat, Jack Schulman, and Don Taggart); 2) For the first time ever, we have begun direct dialogue with Commissioners from Broward County and Deerfield Beach requesting relief for our erosion problems; 3) Scrutiny of existing contracts has yielded savings for the Town of nearly \$200,000.

The past two months have been a whirlwind, and many residents have voiced approval of the forward motion that's been established. There is, however, a long way to go with regard to getting the right Town Manager in place and mitigating the damage to our beach, but I'm happy to say the ball is rolling. I'm also happy to say, it is my honor to serve our Town and you in the capacity of Vice Mayor. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of service.

Enjoy your summer!

Deb

Deb Tarrant  
Vice Mayor



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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

August 2015

It's hard to believe five months have passed since the election in March. What an incredibly busy few months it's been! The newsletter that went out at the end of May generated terrific feedback, so hopefully you'll enjoy receiving an update.

First, the Town of Hillsboro Beach achieved an important milestone last month. You may have read about it in the Sun Sentinel and local newspapers since there has been quite a stir. On July 9th, the Town made an official request to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) asking them to enforce the terms of the permits for the Deerfield groins (the purpose of which is to trap sand).

Those terms, as stated by DEP when the agency issued the permits, say that if the structures cause erosion to down-drift properties, it is the responsibility of the Permittee (Deerfield) to "alter, remove, modify, or adjust" the groins. As an alternative, the State also allows for placement of beach-quality sand in the damaged area at the expense of the Permittee.

These permits were granted in the early 60's, and have been buried/archived for half a century. Although several residents have worked for the past few years to address our beach issues, it is because of the diligence of one resident in particular, Mr. John Carlson, that against all odds these permits were unearthed. The Town owes him a debt of gratitude for the countless hours he has dedicated to our quest to restore the natural balance of our beach. Thank you, John!

So what happens now? DEP has 60 days (until September 7th) to enforce the terms of the permits. If/when DEP requests that Deerfield abide by the terms of their permits, Deerfield then has 30 days to comply. For now, we wait.

The other recent accomplishment (which you may also have read about in the newspapers) is the hiring of Mr. Bob Kellogg as our interim Town Manager, effective immediately! Bob has been hired on an interim basis because voters need to approve the position on the March 2016 ballot in order to make the position permanent. The need for managerial oversight at Town Hall is undeniable, and expense control will be Bob's top priority. It is a daunting task given increases in insurance premiums, health care costs, and a huge quoted increase for fire/rescue services. With the restructuring of administrative personnel, including the retirement of our long-time Deputy Clerk, Irene George, the increase to the budget for the interim Town Manager position is approximately \$25,000. And this, friends, is money well spent in order to get operating costs under control.

I hope you're having a good summer, and I hope you find this update informative. My favorite aspect of serving as your Vice Mayor is receiving communications from you, so please feel free to email me at the address below any time you have questions or input for the Town.

Thank you for allowing me to serve,

*Deb*

Deb Tarrant  
Vice Mayor



Funded by Deb Tarrant

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November 2015

Dear Fellow Hillsboro Beach Residents,

Recently, we've experienced accelerated erosion in Town, with the Deerfield rock piles (groins) once again exacerbating the problem. You may remember from my August letter, Hillsboro Beach submitted an official communication to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requesting enforcement of the terms in the Deerfield groin permits. The most important of these terms stipulates that Deerfield, as the permit-holder, is responsible to mitigate down-drift damage caused by the groins.

As a result of Hillsboro's official/legal appeal and in recognition that a regional approach is necessary, DEP coordinated a meeting with the stakeholders in our coastal cell (Boca Inlet to Hillsboro Inlet). Since our erosion is a result of man-made obstacles in other municipalities, namely the Deerfield groins and the Boca Inlet, it's imperative that a regional approach be taken to solve the problem.

The Stakeholders Meeting was held on October 27th in Boca Raton, and included representatives (lawyers, engineers, and staff) from Boca, Deerfield, and Hillsboro Beach, as well as four levels of DEP top management. There were 24 attendees in all. **It was quite a coup to get all these people in the same room!** For the most part, the tone of the meeting was cooperative, however as you would expect, Boca and Deerfield were very protective of the status quo. Our attorney, Ken Oertel, did an excellent job of clearly stating Hillsboro Beach's request for enforcement of the groin permit conditions. In addition, he made it clear it is our preference to work together with Deerfield in developing a solution, as opposed to pursuing litigation.

Our engineering expert, Dr. Bill Dally, also addressed the group and offered a suggestion on how the region could better utilize sand. The net of his techno-speak is that sand accumulated in the Boca ebb shoal (the big sand bar that sometimes hinders navigation at the Boca Inlet) could be moved directly to "hot spots" within our coastal cell. In other words, with the right type of dredge at the Boca Inlet, our north beach could be nourished using sand currently languishing in the ebb shoal. If Deerfield would like to keep their groins in place, this scenario provides a means for them to mitigate the down-drift damage. It would, of course, require an ongoing arrangement.

At our request, the second half of the meeting took place on the beach at the Deerfield/Hillsboro line. DEP staff was shocked to see that a nourishment done just six months ago is already one-third gone. Getting the group to actually visit the beach and see the damage first-hand was invaluable to our cause. DEP Director Aschauer acknowledged: 1) Hillsboro has a legitimate position, and 2) the State has an obligation to see that sand as a natural resource is used wisely on a regional level.

The takeaways from the meeting were: 1) Mr. Oertel will meet separately with Deerfield's attorney to see if common ground can be found, and 2) DEP will re-evaluate the amount of sand Boca is sending south from their inlet management activities. The fact that all three municipalities are engaged in the discussion and are anticipating separate follow-up meetings is progress, but it's no surprise, we're not looking at a slam-dunk. We do, however, have the attention of the appropriate people now, and they realize we've done our homework. We also have well-respected, qualified people working on our behalf and some brilliant residents working behind the scenes.

As your elected official, I'm committed to continuing to give this effort the time and attention it needs to keep moving the needle. In the meantime, please contact me at the email address below if I can assist you in any way!

Thank you for allowing me to serve,

*Deb*

Deb Tarrant  
Vice Mayor



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