

## Washington Park Town Crier Spring 2024

1. **American Rescue Plan (ARP)**: Like most municipalities throughout the country, the Town of Washington Park was awarded federal money to assist local governments' fiscal recovery from the effects of COVID. The money for smaller units of government is available for a very broad spectrum of uses.... just about any project that local governments can legally pay for using public funds. Officially, Washington Park chose the Revenue Replacement category for the available ARP funds because it was flexible and freed up the funding for other Town needs.

2. **NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP)**: The Town of Washington Park has been participating in the NC RCCP Phases 1-2 under the leadership of the Mid-East Commission, RK&K, and the Washington Park Community Action Team (CAT). The CAT has diligently been working on the program and approved the Town of Washington Park Resilience Strategy document at the CAT meeting on May 23, 2024. The Resilience Strategy document will have a portfolio of priority projects that could increase the community's resilience to coastal hazards such as flooding and coastal erosion. The consolidated project list includes:

- 1) Design and build a Living Shoreline as a means of reducing erosion and flooding.
- 2) Develop/upgrade Stormwater System.
- 3) Create a Flood Attenuation Park in frequently flooded areas along Riverside Dr.
- 4) Implement Green Stormwater/Bioretenion Cells in highly flooded areas.
- 5) Increase flood capacity along the tributary east of Isabella Ave and Shorewood Dr.
- 6) Develop infrastructure to change over from individual lot septic tank use to town-wide sewage collection and sewage treatment plant (America's Wastewater Access Gap program).

The next phases of the RCCP are Phase 3 (engineering/design) and Phase 4 (implementation). The Town is eligible to submit one selected project for engineering/design funding through the NC RCCP Phase 3 grant application. The CAT recommended moving forward with the "Living Shoreline at Public Shoreline Areas" project. At the May 2024 Town Board meeting, the Board approved a resolution in support of moving forward with the Living Shoreline project. The Board will work with the Mid-East Commission to pursue the Phase 3 grant application. There is no local match required and contractors are able to complete grant writing for the Town at no charge through existing RCCP funding.

3. **Budget**: The proposed budget for FY25 will keep the tax rate the same at \$0.29 for residents and homeowners. A copy of the proposed budget is available for viewing at the Municipal Building, during business hours. The Board will hold a public hearing during the June 3, 2024, meeting to adopt the proposed budget.

4. **Personnel**: Incumbent board members Mayor Tom Richter, Mayor pro tem Jeff Peacock (Finance), Commissioners Lee Bowen (Streets and Drainage), Belinda Cowell (Beautification), and Wade Dale (Recreation and Parks) have been duly elected. Commissioner Vail Rumley (Public Safety) is a welcome addition to the Board. The board members areas of responsibility are noted above in parentheses. Please contact them if you have questions in their area of expertise.

5. **Landscaping:** The Town's Townscape Committee has been revived. Members include Anne Baxter, Derek Cooper, Isabell Farrell (Chair), Frances Hogan, Neil Kirven, and Kathleen Taylor. They received two immediate charges; one being the care and management of Park trees and the other being the re-landscaping of the west end of the Isabella Avenue median. They are in the process of formulating plans and investigating funding that may be available to support these projects. In the meantime, they are considering a few small projects that need to be addressed or that will enhance the beauty of the community; they will be announced as they are approved. On that note, the Committee is open to and would welcome any suggestions, concerns, or other ideas from our neighbors. Feel free to share thoughts with any one of committee members. Contact Isabell Farrell by email ([imf747@suddenlink.net](mailto:imf747@suddenlink.net)) or stop by 132 Isabella Avenue for a chat.

6. **Lawn Trimmings and Debris pick up:** Washington Park has a great, hardworking maintenance staff, and we want to facilitate their work, which is why this notice is being sent to all Town residents. Part of the service the Town is glad to provide is debris pick-up, and the Town board has debated for a while about "How much debris is too much debris to pick up?" Unfortunately, the Board has become aware of a few occasions where some lawn and/or building contractors — certainly not all — have taken advantage of our pick-up policy, leaving debris from jobs outside Washington Park for our maintenance staff to dispose of. As you can imagine, this can put a huge burden on our staff.

Commercial contractors **are responsible** for removing debris and/or building materials whether they specifically charge the homeowner or not. Please make sure the debris is actually being removed. If not, a phone call may be needed to request the contractor remove the debris. If the Park maintenance staff has concerns about whether debris has been created inside or outside of the Park, a note on the door of the home in question will be left asking the homeowner to call the Municipal Building/Town Hall to discuss the issue. The Town wants to be able to continue debris pick-up. The Town also wants to ensure that the much-appreciated staff is not overburdened.

7. **Street Paving:** The Town Board obtained bids from three paving contractors and has selected Tripp Brother's Paving to perform street re-paving work. The project will involve work on sections of Bank Street, Beech Street, Fairview Avenue, Hickory Street, Oak Street, Riverside Drive, and Spruce Street. Work is anticipated to begin in June, weather permitting. We will communicate with everyone as plans develop.

8. **Other items of interest:** As a reminder, hurricane season starts June 1. If you plan to increase your homeowner's insurance coverage or add to your coverage, Beaufort County Emergency Services Director Chris Newkirk advises that it be done as soon as possible; some policies have waiting periods of 30 to 90 days before coverage will apply.

On another note, the Town is continuing to gather email addresses in order to disseminate important information to Town residents. Thank you to the ones who have provided their email contact already as the list is growing steadily. If you would like to be on the email list, please contact April Alligood at 252.946.3157 or [aawashpark@gmail.com](mailto:aawashpark@gmail.com).