



Town of Bluffton
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To: Town Council
From: Stephen Steese, Town Manager
Date: January 2, 2025

Town Operations / Community Meetings

- We are preparing for two ribbon-cuttings and openings for the first of the year.
 - January 25th – Opening of the New Riverside Park. Celebration with music, drinks, and food.
 - January 6th – Opening of the Welcome Center. This will be a soft opening as we get everything finalized for the Grand Opening on February 3rd.
- The Town held our Tree Lighting event on December 6th and Christmas Parade on December 7th. Both events went well and were well attended. We had a debrief the following week to review ways to continue to improve. There was also a Hannukah Celebration on December 29th in Martin Family Park.
- Staff met with the engineer that is reviewing the entire Bluffton Parkway as part of the LATS study. They are hoping to have their recommendations in draft form and have a public input session in February and will present to the LATS committee in the future.
- Town Hall was closed on the December 24th and 25th in observance of Christmas and January 1st in observance of New Year's Day.

Town Council/Town Attorney Related Meetings

- Weekly Mayor / Mayor Pro Tempore / Manager meetings.
- Mayor Toomer, Councilman Wood, and Executive met with our State House and Senate members to discuss the upcoming legislative session and priorities. Rep. Herbkersman was not able to attend, but I met with him the following week. I sent an email outlining the topics of discussion.
- I met with the Historic Bluffton Foundation Director following discussion at the December Council Meeting. They have provided an estimated costs for the docents and the amount awarded by Council will cover these costs. We will meet after the first of the year to determine whether we will bring in house or continue to contract with HBF.
- Based on input during the Workshop item, staff and legal have made edits to the proposed Buckwalter Development Agreement Amendment and Willow Run. We are waiting on the signed application from the owner and BCSD to start the process.
- Please note that we have Hometown Legislative Action Day in January. There will be no session on January 21st, but we will have the training and regional dinner. We will update should any of legislators be in town, but we do not plan to visit them that day.

Updates and Miscellaneous Information

- December kicked off the start of the FY 25-26 Budget Process. Meetings were held with all departments to review potential staff and capital requests due in January.
 - The Splash Pad at Oscar Frazier Park closed for the season on December 2nd. We will work to prepare it for the winter and plan a kickoff for the opening in 2025.
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