



Keeping Citizens Informed and Involved July 29, 2009

A Win-Win Solution:

Resort development and national security

Last year, the City Council adopted an ambitious, long-range plan for the Oceanfront. It is called the Resort Area Master Plan and it came after a year of work with the public. It is vital to keeping Virginia Beach competitive with other East Coast tourist destinations.

Among other things, it calls for new development at Rudee Loop, a headquarters hotel adjacent to the Convention Center, an entertainment megaplex at the old Dome site, and a revamped Laskin Gateway. Each would be up to 180 feet tall – the maximum height allowed by the military. Until recently, it was also the maximum height allowed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Then, in June, the FAA notified the city that Oceanfront buildings taller than 110 feet could create a “wall” that hinders air surveillance radar located off Oceana Blvd. Just two years earlier, the FAA determined that buildings up to 180 feet tall were acceptable.

The City is now working with the FAA to find out why the height limitations were suddenly changed.

The current radar facility began operations in 1995, but by then many Oceanfront buildings were more than 110 feet tall. Many more were built in the years that followed, without objection from the FAA until this year. There are now more than 30 Oceanfront buildings taller than 110 feet. Some, like the 180-foot-tall Mayflower Hotel, have been staples of the Oceanfront long before the radar existed.

How do those buildings affect homeland security? Is it necessary to relocate the radar to preserve the safety of our region’s residents and visitors?

The city wants to develop a solution that works for everyone – one that preserves homeland security and allows Virginia Beach to remain a vibrant, sustainable home for its residents. The tourism industry generates more than \$78 million a year in direct tax revenues for the city. It plays a huge part in keeping Virginia Beach’s real estate tax rate the lowest among cities in the region. Redevelopment at the resort ensures that Virginia Beach can continue to compete against other East Coast tourism destinations.

The city would never compromise safety in favor of development. We are dedicated to preserving military operations here. For now, we want to hear from the FAA why it recently lowered its height restrictions. The city does not want to rule out the possibility of working with the FAA to relocate the radar to a better location. It has been done successfully before. That may be the basis for a win-win solution in Virginia Beach.

New toys at VB recreation centers

Just in time for summer, the city’s six recreation centers have added a bunch of new play areas and gadgets for kids.

- **Rock climbing wall in a swimming pool!** No ropes or experience required. If you fall, you just splash. At Kempsville.

- **Indoor playgrounds.** Climb, crawl and slide through these multi-level structures. For kids 12 and under. At Bayside, Great Neck and Princess Anne.
- **Unusual gaming systems.** And now for something completely different. Gaming bikes at Bow Creek, where kids can race against each other. Dance pads at Kempsville and Seatack. X’er Boards offering virtual reality surfing or skating at Princess Anne.
- **Sports walls.** Remember whack-a-mole? It’s like that, except the wall has flashing lights choreographed to music. Whack it! Starts slow, gets faster. Can be played alone or in competition. At all rec centers.
- **Pool slide.** Coming in August to Bow Creek.
- **Float-a-Rama.** Transforms the pool into a huge lagoon with fun floats. Picture this: Teeter-totters, huge icebergs to climb up and slide down, dragons to ride. Catch the next Float-a-Rama on Sunday, Aug. 23, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Bayside.
- **Movie Nights in the Pool.** Family-friendly movies on big, floating screens. More fun than sitting at home in the living room. The next three movie nights are:

Madagascar 2 – July 31 – 6:30 Bow Creek

Bolt – August 7 – 5:00 Princess Anne

Cars – August 28 – 6:30 Bow Creek

The Incredibles – Sept. 4 – 5:00 Princess Anne

Some new items will be available at different locations on different days. For more information, visit www.VBgov.com/parks. Or call your local recreation center.

Red light runners, beware!

New cameras + police crackdown = Safer intersections

Next week, Virginia Beach police will pay special attention to intersections where drivers often do not come to a complete stop before turning right on red. It’s all part of National Stop on Red Week, August 2 to 8.

In addition, red-light cameras are now keeping motorists safe at two new intersections in Virginia Beach. That brings the total number of PhotoSafe intersections to nine. Police use the cameras to assist in ticketing cars that drive through red lights. Four more PhotoSafe intersections are pending state approval.

In 2007, almost 900 people were killed and about 153,000 were injured in the United States in crashes that involved red-light running. In a recent national survey, 69 percent of Americans said they support red-light cameras at the most dangerous intersections.

The two newest intersections are at:

- **Princess Anne Road at Lynnhaven Parkway**
- **Princess Anne Road at Dam Neck Road**

Cameras at those intersections were activated on June 30, followed by a 30-day warning period. Police are now using the cameras there to help them issue tickets to violators. Cameras are under construction at **Independence Boulevard at Bonney Road and Euclid Road**. They will be activated soon.

Earlier this year, Virginia Beach activated cameras at six other intersections throughout the city:

- **Virginia Beach Boulevard at Independence Boulevard**
- **Indian River Road at Kempsville Road**
- **Indian River Road at Military Highway**
- **Holland Road at Rosemont Road**
- **General Booth Boulevard at Dam Neck Road**

- **Virginia Beach Boulevard at Great Neck Road**

In addition, the city has submitted four more intersections for approval by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). It is not known when they will be activated. They are at:

- **Lynnhaven Parkway at International Parkway and East Mall Drive**
- **London Bridge Road at Dam Neck Road**
- **Independence Boulevard at Baxter Road and South Boulevard**
- **Diamond Springs Road at Northampton Boulevard**

For more information on Virginia Beach's PhotoSafe program, visit www.VBgov.com/photosafe, e-mail VBPDPhotoSafe@vb.gov or call 385-7235.

Prepare, Plan and Stay Informed

Emergencies happen every day – usually when you least expect them. But some things you can plan for. Hurricanes pose a great threat to Virginia Beach and now is the time to get ready. The most important thing you can do is to prepare, plan and stay informed.

These three steps take little time and money, but they will provide your family with peace of mind and the tools and information you need when it counts. Disaster prevention includes being prepared and reducing damages. Actions include:

- **Preparing an emergency supply kit.** It should include essential items to last each member of your family at least three to seven days. These items should include a battery-powered radio and extra batteries, non-perishable food, water, a manual can opener, flashlights, a first aid kit and medications.
- **Making a family communication plan.** Discuss the hazards and threats for your area and what your family would need to do during an emergency. As you create your plan, decide on a meeting place if your family cannot return home. Designate an out-of-town friend or relative as a point of contact and plan for the specific needs of your household, such as an evacuation shelter for pets or transportation for medical equipment.
- **Staying informed.** Before, during and after a disaster, it is critical that you listen for the most up-to-date information from emergency officials. Coastal residents should become familiar with their designated evacuation routes and know where they will go if ordered to evacuate by city officials. Local media will give instructions, such as details about evacuation orders and how to safely shelter in place until the emergency has passed.

Don't wait until it's too late. Additional information on emergency preparedness can be found at www.VBgov.com/beprepared or by calling 385-4228.

Rate a book – Read a blog

Like reading book reviews from ordinary folks? Then log onto the Virginia Beach Public Library's online catalog. We've joined a national network of libraries where regular Joes, Janes and kids rate and review library books. Check it out at www.VBgov.com/libraries and add your own reviews.

While you're online, visit the VBPL's blog. Library staffers recommend and review books in every genre. It's updated frequently at <http://vbplrecommends.blogspot.com/>

Get Together with Neighbors: National Night Out

Every year, the first Tuesday in August is National Night Out. Step outside and get together with your neighbors this Tuesday, August 4.

Neighborhoods throughout Virginia Beach are joining forces with thousands of communities nationwide for the 26th Annual National Night Out. Last year's campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from more than 15,000 communities in the United States, Canada and military bases worldwide. More than 37 million people participated.

It's sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch www.nationaltownwatch.org. For more information, call Master Police Officer Helen Gillespie at 385-1331 or hgillesp@VBgov.com.

UPCOMING EVENT

34th Annual Artisans in the Park

Aug. 1 and 2 – 10 a.m. - Great Neck Park

Admission and parking are FREE.

Outdoor art and craft festival. Live entertainment, special children's activities and great festival food. Call 385-0401 or visit www.VBgov.com/parks

City Council

City Council Goal-Setting Workshop

August 3 and 4 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Virginia Beach Convention Center

Formal sessions: 6 p.m.

Preceded by informal sessions (Times to be determined)

August 11 and 25

City Hall, Second Floor, Council Chamber

Public Meeting

August 13 - 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Virginia Beach Convention Center

Discussion of 2010 Legislative Agenda

Workshop

August 18 (Time to be determined)

City Council Conference Room

For information, call the City Clerk's Office at 385-4303 or visit www.VBgov.com/city_hall



Contact Us:

Media & Communications Group

2401 Courthouse Dr., Suite 220

Municipal Center, Bldg. 1

Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Main: (757) 385-4679

mcg@vb.gov