

# Islanders full of questions at community meeting

October 4, 2019 (/2019/10/) | Local News (<https://islandfreepress.org/outer-banks-news/>) | From The: Ocracoke Observer (<https://ocracokeobserver.com/>) | [🗨️ \(https://islandfreepress.org/outer-banks-news/islanders-full-of-questions-at-community-meeting/\)](https://islandfreepress.org/outer-banks-news/islanders-full-of-questions-at-community-meeting/)



About 400 islanders attend a community meeting Sunday, Sept. 29, in the Berkley Barn. Photo: C. Leinbach

Approximately 400 islanders showed up for a community meeting at the Berkley Barn on Sunday (Sept. 29) to hear updates from Hyde County, state and federal officials, and to have the opportunity to ask questions. Here are some of the highlights of the issues from the meeting and updates as of today. Prior to the meeting, those attending were treated with free meals prepared and served by Fat Fellas of Newport.

After a few opening remarks by Hyde County and state officials, the meeting was devoted to questions from the audience. Although this story is late in being published, since the meeting, some things have changed, which we have updated.

North Carolina: Joe Stanton, North Carolina Emergency Management assistant director & recovery chief, said the state is dedicated to providing what support it can for your recovery efforts. "The last week it was amazing," he said. "Y'all have made so much headway." He said they are working on adding the private roads to the debris pick-up schedule. In the meantime, those on private roads may take flood debris to Irvin Garrish Highway. Household trash only should go to the Ocracoke Convenience Site.

Recovery Center, a large semi-truck trailer, opened on Tuesday. Islanders are encouraged to fill out housing needs applications which will help the state know what people here need, he said. As for a FEMA declaration, Stanton said it is in process. "The FEMA documents are in Washington, D.C.," he said.

Fire ban: Islanders are reminded that a county ordinance prohibits the burning of yard debris, including tree stumps, all year on Ocracoke. The issue was brought up because there is so much plant debris, especially downed cedar trees, on the sides of the roads. With the lack of rain since Dorian, this material is highly combustible. As if fate wanted to make a point, during the meeting, the Ocracoke Volunteer Fire Department was called out for a burning stump near Cutting Sage Road that had gotten



of control. A burn ban has been in place, including personal pyrotechnics, since 2007. [\(https://islandfreepress.org/\)](https://islandfreepress.org/)



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**Alcohol ban:** John Fletcher, former Hyde County commissioner for Ocracoke, asked why “they disrespect the people of this county so much to not allow them to buy a beer.”

Hyde County Manager Kris Noble said the ban might be lifted in a few days, but it depends on if the N.C. Ferry Division can accommodate leaving a ferry for emergency use at Silver Lake. This is needed in case Hyde County Sheriff deputies have to arrest someone and take that person to the mainland. But first, the Ferry Division needs to install temporary housing on Ocracoke for ferry staff to be able to run a ferry to Swan Quarter should there be an emergency. Once that happens, the Ferry Division will again adjust the ferry schedule.

**Ferry service:** Cat Peele, an interim planning and Development Manager with the Ferry Division, said the current schedule will continue for the time being with the addition of limited service to Hatteras via South Dock for those who have 4WD vehicles. See story here (<https://ocracokeobserver.com/2019/10/02/ferry-division-restores-hatteras-to-silver-lake-runs-sets-new-schedules/>). Islanders expressed concern that they are not allowed to get same-day reservations on the mainland ferries, which impacts making appointments. Peele said she'd take that concern back to the office.

**Replacement stickers:** People whose cars got towed can get replacement stickers/receipts from the Ferry Division and the National Park Service. For replacement re-entry tags, see Theresa Adams, who is still working in the Emergency Operations Center inside the OVFDF.

**First National Bank:** Opened Monday.

**Restaurants:** Some have or will partially open: Back Porch for take out lunch and dinners; Sorella's for a limited menu starting today (Oct. 2) and Plum Pointe Kitchen in conjunction with Helios Hideaway. Helios will offer breakfast from 7 to 11 a.m. and Plum Pointe lunch and dinner items, Monday through Saturday.

**Ocracoke Community Library:** Sustained flooding which damaged many books and the library is currently closed for repairs. About 100 books had been checked out before Sept. 6. Sundae Horn, library manager, said those who have library books can bring them back to WOWV starting Oct. 7 where the library will have a small, temporary location. If you have library books that got damaged let Horn know. The library has insurance on the book collection.

**WOWV,** Ocracoke's Community radio at 90.1 FM is back on air. Due to safety concerns, it was shut down at the peak of the storm and the electric meter was pulled. Local shows, with an exception or two, have not yet resumed but many hope to be back on the air beginning the week of Oct. 6.

**N.C 12:** N.C. 12 reopened today (Oct. 3), with limited 4-wheel drive access from near the breach points to the South Dock. See story here. (<https://ocracokeobserver.com/2019/10/02/ferry-division-restores-hatteras-to-silver-lake-runs-sets-new-schedules/>)

**Hyde County Transit:** The Hyde County Transit bus is again available for shopping and medical appointments when feasible, to Hatteras Island, Nags Head and other points up the beach. It is available for islanders to use with some small fees. To schedule a ride with Hyde County Transit, please call 252-926-1637.

**Flu shots:** Luana Gibbs, Hyde County Health Dept. director, said if the state offers free flu shots, Hyde County will have them available for free. Yesterday, the Health Center announced that there will be a flu shot clinic tomorrow, Oct. 4 from 2 to 5 p.m. No appointment necessary. 305 Back Road.

**Tax bills:** Some islanders were upset that in the midst of life-changing disaster, they were hit with the real estate tax bills. Noble said the county has to send them out at a certain time each year by law but noted that residents have until Jan. 1 to pay the bills.

**Distribution of donated money for disaster:** Concerns were raised about the manner in which money would be distributed to islanders in need. The Ocracoke Volunteer Fire Department, a nonprofit, was assigned to administer the program along with representatives from the two churches and a member of the Latino community. Pastor Ivey Belch, the disaster relief commodities manager, and Charles Temple, an OVFDF officer and who is on the committee, said the process is being developed to ensure anonymity, equity and transparency. Bill Rich announced that Wells Fargo would be donating \$250,000.



Ocracoke School: Hyde County Schools Superintendent Stephen Basnight said classes will resume in the classrooms: the  
(https://islandfreepress.org/)  
nd floor of the elementary building, NCCAT, and Ocracoke Child Care. Although they hoped that school would resume this  
week, Tuesday it was announced that the opening would be pushed back to Monday, Oct. 7, Basnight said he has added 12  
days to school calendar but is asking the North Carolina General Assembly if Ocracoke can be "forgiven" for the rest of the  
days missed. See story here (https://ocracokeobserver.com/2019/09/23/ocracoke-school-to-resume-on-monday/).

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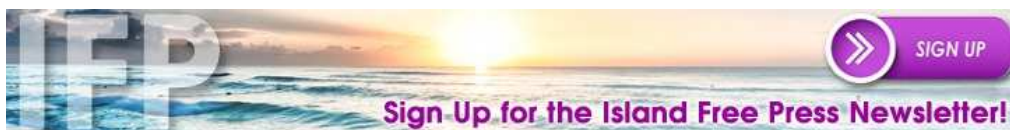
VOADs: The Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, such as the Baptists on Mission (who are serving food in the  
Community Center) and Samaritan's Purse, will continue to be on the island until Oct. 11.

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