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A Growing & Evolving Riverside Community: Colonial Beach Reflects on Town's Recent Achievements and Shares Future Goals

(November 1, 2022) Colonial Beach, VA - The Town of Colonial Beach nestled on the Potomac River in the Northern Neck region, today highlighted key milestones achieved over the past year as it undergoes an economic development renaissance and revitalization phase for the popular riverside community.

The town, which has a rich and colorful maritime history and has the second-longest public beach in Virginia, outlined this year several focus areas for the community to continue to improve the quality of life for town's residents and the destination experience for visitors and tourists. Focus areas range from infrastructure enhancements, operational efficiencies, and laying groundwork on future initiatives.

A Look Back - Town Wins

Townwide Infrastructure Improvements

- *Central Drainage Area Project* - Town Council approved over \$2 million dollars in federal funds, known as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to fix the drainage and stormwater issues in the Central Drainage Area, which includes a large portion of our downtown from Colonial Ave to Boundary Street. This entire project is fully funded by federal funds, in which no local tax money was utilized for this project. The Town contracted with engineering firm Dewberry & Associates, who have been investigating and studying this over for the last year. The drainage issues have been identified for nearly 30 years, and the funding will fix several issues related to outdated sewer and water lines. This project is set to break ground in early 2023 and will be a major jump start in fixing other infrastructure issues throughout the town.
- **Water and Sewer Improvements** – The Town was a recipient of \$5.7M funding allocation by the state to help support several necessary water and sewer improvement projects in the town.
- **Robin Grove Living Shoreline Project** - The town received grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to prevent shoreline erosion, improve water

quality, preserve marshland, and improve habitat for fish and wildlife at Robin Grove on Monroe Bay. The project involved the installation of rip-rap sills, oyster shell walls, and planting vegetation in the .3-acre project site to achieve the above goals. The Town partnered with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to produce designs and Resource Environmental Solutions executed the construction phase of the project.

- North Beach Project- As part of the legislative agenda process, the Town Manager's Office and Department of Public Works has worked with the Baltimore District Army Corp of Engineers on an erosion project on North Beach. The project would be an extension of a collaboration between the Town and the Army Corp of Engineers in the 1980s which saw rip-rap bulkheads installed that have successfully protected our beaches for decades. This project is currently being assessed by the Army Corp of Engineers. The Town anticipates being notified if the project will receive federal funding by the end of 2022.

Financial Impact

- *Improved Town Budget Process & Fiscal Policies*- the Town engaged with Davenport & Finance to assist with restructuring the town's debt which saved over \$260k over the course of loans. With the help Davenport & Finance, they collaborated with Town Manager's Office and Finance Department to adopt the town's first financial policies ahead of the last budget process. In addition, town staff created the first budget in brief and produced a budget a month and a half ahead of the state mandated schedule.
- *Improved Capital Improvement Plan Process with Planning Commission & Town Council* - this year the town launched a new CIP process which collaboration with the Planning Commission members and all town departments to plan for the town's most critical infrastructure projects in alignment with the Town's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans. The CIP fund is used to account for all financial resources that are needed in the acquisition or construction of capital assets. Revenues for this fund are obtained from federal or state grants, a transfer from the General Fund, or bond issuances.

Economic Development

- Economic development initiatives were front and center this year with several key milestones and projects taking place in this arena. The Town installed new beach signage that identify specific areas of the beachfront, supporting emergency services response and pedestrian wayfinding. In addition, the town was awarded \$32,500 from the VA Department of Housing and Community Development to improve wayfinding signage throughout the town.
- Representatives of the Town and Downtown Colonial Beach attended the National Main Street Conference in Richmond. Downtown Colonial Beach is collaborating with the Town to become a fully designated Main Street, which will increase grant opportunities and demonstrate Colonial Beach's business-friendly environment. As part of this

partnership, the Town has received an ABC Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area license, which will allow customers to consume alcoholic beverages while they enjoy the outdoors in the downtown and boardwalk area at designated times.

Public Safety/Police

- Guardian Score Launch - Colonial Beach was one of four localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia to pilot a program called Guardian Score that provides the community an opportunity to provide meaningful & verified feedback about individual police officer behavior' allowing for police supervisors to evaluate officer performance more holistically. During an interaction with an officer, the officer hands you a Guardian Score card with a QR code, the individual scans the QR code and fills out a brief anonymous survey about officer's performance in which data is immediately available to police supervisors. Since the launch of the program the police department has an overall rating of 4.8 out of 5.0.

Government Performance & Operations

- Technology Refresh - The town underwent a variety of technology upgrades to help better enhance user experience and engagement such as a new ColonialBeach.gov website, the migration to SharePoint cloud technology from outdated servers, to upgrading the online business licenses process, resulting in the increased issuance of licenses and enhanced compliance with local regulations.
- New Town Hires - The Town continues to recruit and retain professional staff to support the surrounding needs of the community. Within the last year, the Town welcomed a new Chief of Police Greg Deaver, Director of Public Works, Diane Beyer and part-time Economic Development Manager, Kelly Evko.

"I want like to thank our state and federal partners that work with the town on a variety of initiatives to better our community," said Colonial Beach Mayor Robin Schick. "In partnership with our town staff, all have worked daily to improve the lives of those in the Town of Colonial Beach."

"Focusing on and improving some critical infrastructure needs for our town were a top priority this year," said Town Manager India Adams-Jacobs. "In order to help increase and enhance the quality of life for our town's residents and visitors, some key projects and efficiencies needed to be addressed to set us up for future success as a community. We are proud of what has been accomplished for Colonial Beach this year and look forward to continuing to work to further strengthen our local economy and enhance the quality of life for our town's residents."

What's Next for Colonial Beach - Future Goals

The town has on deck several initiatives and projects scheduled to roll-out later this year and into 2023. Examples include the North Beach Erosion Project, ongoing work on the Central Drainage Area project, to public safety improvements to the development of a parks master plan.