



The Facts

Official News and Information



September 19, 2025

Town Manager's Commitment

Professional management is essential to effective, efficient, fair, and democratic local government.

As a local government management professional, I am committed to keeping the Juno Beach community informed on local government affairs.

This newsletter is intended to support informed public participation in local government decisions, promote public transparency, and provide a trusted source for official news & information of interest to the Juno Beach community.

Cheers,
Rob Cole
Town Manager
rcole@juno-beach.fl.us

The Facts: Welcome, Juno Beach!

Welcome to this edition of **The Facts** newsletter.

In April 2024, [Collier, et al.](#), wrote of civics on United States District Court, Eastern District of Tennessee, letterhead that:

... Laws are written and published so that everyone can know them and have fair advance notice of what they demand. These laws apply to everyone, and everyone is bound by them, including the government itself and its leaders ...

When followed it ensures fairness, justice, and equality before the law. It is a noble ideal that underpins our society. We are fortunate that for most of our history we have had men and women in the judiciary of high character and integrity who were committed to upholding its principles, even in the face of political pressure or adverse public sentiment. These men and women followed the law even when it was unpopular or inconvenient ...

As Town Manager, I am obligated by Oath of Office and ethically committed to supporting federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations. Like the judiciary, I must do so "...even in the face of political pressure or adverse public sentiment." Sometimes, laws that we lack authority to change don't allow us to do what we want. Yet, as a community we can work together to understand our constraints and find the best available solutions.

Warmly,
Rob Cole, Town Manager

The Facts: Motion to Terminate Town Manager

The Facts: At the [September 16](#) special meeting, Councilmember Halpern made a motion during the Council Comments portion of the agenda to terminate the Town Manager's contract and the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Pro Tem Davis. The motion failed by a 3-2 margin, with opposing councilmembers having dismissed counterfactual information employed to justify the proposed termination, as well as having expressed viewpoints that the Town Manager serves the Town well and is a valued asset.

Additional Background

Of note, Councilmember Halpern reported in support of her motion alleging inappropriate conduct that "the Major" witnessed me shout at her during the August Council Hour, having gestured to Assistant Police Chief Saloio, adding that she would not ask him "to testify" to that effect. However, having been drawn into the matter, Assistant Police Chief Saloio nonetheless approached the microphone to "set the record straight as to what [his] involvement was or was not."

He advised Council and the public that, from his position next to me, he observed only *one person* yelling at Council Hour, and it was not the Town Manager, but rather a public attendee.

The factually incorrect statements employed in mischaracterizing my performance in this and other communications are part of a continuing pattern involving Vice Mayor Pro Tem Davis and Councilmember Halpern seeking to weaponize political pressure and misinformation to inappropriately influence my team's roles as objective, non-partisan municipal staff charged with supporting effective public discussion and informed Town Council decision-making. Such efforts to control municipal operations have thus far been successfully rebuffed by simply pulling back the blanket of misinformation to reveal the underlying facts and supporting evidence – the truth, by any other name.

I remain committed to serving the Juno Beach community in an objective, non-partisan manner with integrity, high ethical standards, and full public transparency. Consistent with our legal and professional obligations, neither my actions nor those of my staff will be influenced by political pressure to violate laws, rules, or regulations, or to misrepresent information. We will continue to provide factual information to inform public participation and support responsible decision-making. Furthermore, staff will faithfully execute policies according to a Town Council majority, not any effort by one or two members to inappropriately redirect our activities and/or professional recommendations.

Threats of termination and/or efforts to impugn my professional reputation through innuendo and misinformation will not deter me from these professional commitments and ethical obligations to the Town Council and Juno Beach community.

The Facts: Strategic Plan

The Facts: Vice Mayor Pro Tem Davis made a motion to make final payment to Mr. Karas (the consultant, *Community Marine and Water Resource Planning*) and move forward with adopting the [draft] strategic plan. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Halpern, then defeated 4-1 after discussion.

Following a couple of other motions and Council discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Callaghan to direct the Town Manager to prepare a recommendation to Town Council for how to complete the strategic plan; the motion passed 3-2.

Additional Background

Cutting through the fog of innuendo and incomplete, misleading, and incorrect information conveyed by Vice Mayor Pro Tem Davis and Councilmember Halpern in support of the initial motion to adopt Mr. Karas' draft document and pay him for work **not yet completed**, I provided a factual accounting of the myriad issues plaguing Mr. Karas' work and deliverables.

The commentary is available for interested parties to review at [41:01 in the meeting video](#) (the link will start the video at the right point). It provides factual rebuttal to allegations of Town Manager misconduct while relating the fully rational basis for declining to make further payment to Mr. Karas, absent him remedying the specified deficiencies and delivering a satisfactory *final* work product, approved by the Town as such.

Also note that representations made that I or staff have taken policy positions on the Master Development Plan, e.g., supporting 90/10 as the best mix of residential and commercial, were **equally misleading and false**; the consultant team, including their economics expert, were hired for this purpose and are informing that conversation, *not me or other staff*.

I encourage councilmembers to work directly with me to address concerns and resolve any real or perceived conflicts rather than turn them into public theater for whatever benefit is believed to make such spectacle appropriate.

As accountable government professionals and stewards of public funds, it would be **irresponsible to remit payment to a vendor for work tasks not completed**. Consistent with Council direction, the next step will be preparing the requested recommendation for moving forward with completion of a strategic plan that is useful for its valuable and intended purpose, which the draft work product delivered from Ms. Karas was not.

The staff recommendation will be considered by Town Council at a future meeting, with additional direction provided at that time.

The Facts: Single-Family Appearance Review

The Facts: During the Council Comments segment of the September 16 Special Meeting for discussion of the strategic plan, Town Council voted to reverse their September 08 single-family appearance review vote. Reconsideration of the path forward has been added to the September 24 agenda.

Additional Information

The [September 10 edition](#) of **The Facts** newsletter included thorough discussion of the Town Council's September 08 vote to exempt single-family homes from architectural review and appearance review, including important considerations supporting the need to do so. I will not restate all of that information here, as the same factors are relevant.

However, if you have not already read the [September 10 single-family appearance review summary](#), please take time to do so ahead of the September 24 discussion to help inform your participation. A few key considerations include:

- Legally, staff are **unable to use the metrics they had previously used to make permit decisions in the context of Appearance Review** (and Harmony), and have reported to Town Council that, absent such tools, their judgement effectively becomes individual personal interpretations of “you know it when you see it,” and they have indicated that “[without using prohibited metrics]...[there is no way for staff to do Option 2](#)” from Attorney Rubin’s [memorandum](#). I further emphasized staff concerns [a few minutes later](#).
- Staff are **prohibited from using architectural review and building design elements in their review** of permit applications and efforts to apply Appearance Review (Harmony) fairly and consistently. Without metrics and without being able to use architecture or building design elements, what is left for staff to use in exercising their police powers to make legally binding determinations about whether a person can make use of their property rights, as clearly specified in the Zoning Code? The answer is virtually nothing, apart from their personal opinions. While appropriately detailed guidelines and/or or metrics would certainly help to overcome this hurdle, [we have been advised that we are precluded from adding additional guidance or criteria](#) to solve this glaring problem. As noted, at the conclusion of the linked conversation, **Option 2 is not a viable solution**.
- Any new option for moving forward must effectively clear these **substantial hurdles**; Attorney Rubin’s [Option 1](#) (page six) does so. No other such option has arisen after four months of research and deliberations.

The Facts: Fun Fact

With each newsletter, I conclude with something of personal interest, not necessarily associated with our local context, ranging from a personal photo I've taken to a recent news article of interest . . . to *who knows what* – the idea is simply to allow each of you to get to know me not just as the Town Manager, but as a person you have some familiarity with, even if we have not had the opportunity to meet in person. Of note, I am available to meet with community members to discuss any topic of interest – just reach out to schedule: rcole@juno-beach.fl.us.

For today, I'd simply like to share a few images from our September 11 observance ceremony, which was exceptionally planned and supported by our police personnel, public works team, Town Clerk's Office, and others. In moments like this, people of all backgrounds and life experiences can rally around and support those directly involved in or impacted by the horrific tragedy that took place, as well as those across the Nation having observed it play out in real time. Chief Smith poignantly related of his personal experience something to the effect of, *The sounds of beepers indicating firemen down were like hundreds of crickets chirping on a summer night and fire rained down from the sky – I will never forget that.*



Thank you for caring enough about Juno Beach local government affairs to read **The Facts**.