

Announcement

This is SICTA's annual free mailing of its newsletter to all property owners of Sea Isle City

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www.sicta.org/aboutsicta.htm

- OR -

from your mobile device



SICTA Survey Results Are In!

In December of 2014 SICTA sponsored a survey of all Sea Isle City property owners. It was a follow up to our last survey in 2009. The Stockton Polling Institute administered an online poll and reported the results. The survey response was very good and exceeded that of all past SICTA surveys with 708 respondents. An executive summary of the survey findings has been recently shared with Mayor Desiderio and Council President Divney. SICTA will be presenting survey results to the full City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and SICTA membership in the coming months. Some of the key findings are presented below. Complete results can be found at the SICTA website (www.sicta.org).

Who Responded?

The vast majority of respondents have been in Sea Isle for ten years or more. Most also spend the whole season in Sea Isle and do not rent. So, the opinions reflect people that have a strong vested interest in the City's present and future. They truly care about the quality of life in Sea Isle and what it has to offer to them, their families, and future generations!

The Good News

There were many things that respondents really liked about Sea Isle. In general they believed the City has evidenced tremendous progress over the last 5 years. The top 10 things that taxpayers viewed most favorably were as follows—the % favorable rating is in parentheses:

- General maintenance and cleanliness of beaches (92%)
- SIC is doing a good job of promoting the city (92%)
- Lifeguard services (91%)
- Trash Collection Services (89%)
- Customer Service from city employees (89%)
- City Communications with the public (88%)
- SIC Welcome Center (85%)
- SIC Parks & Recreation programs (83%)
- Off season events (83%)
- Police Services (82%)



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Future Opportunities

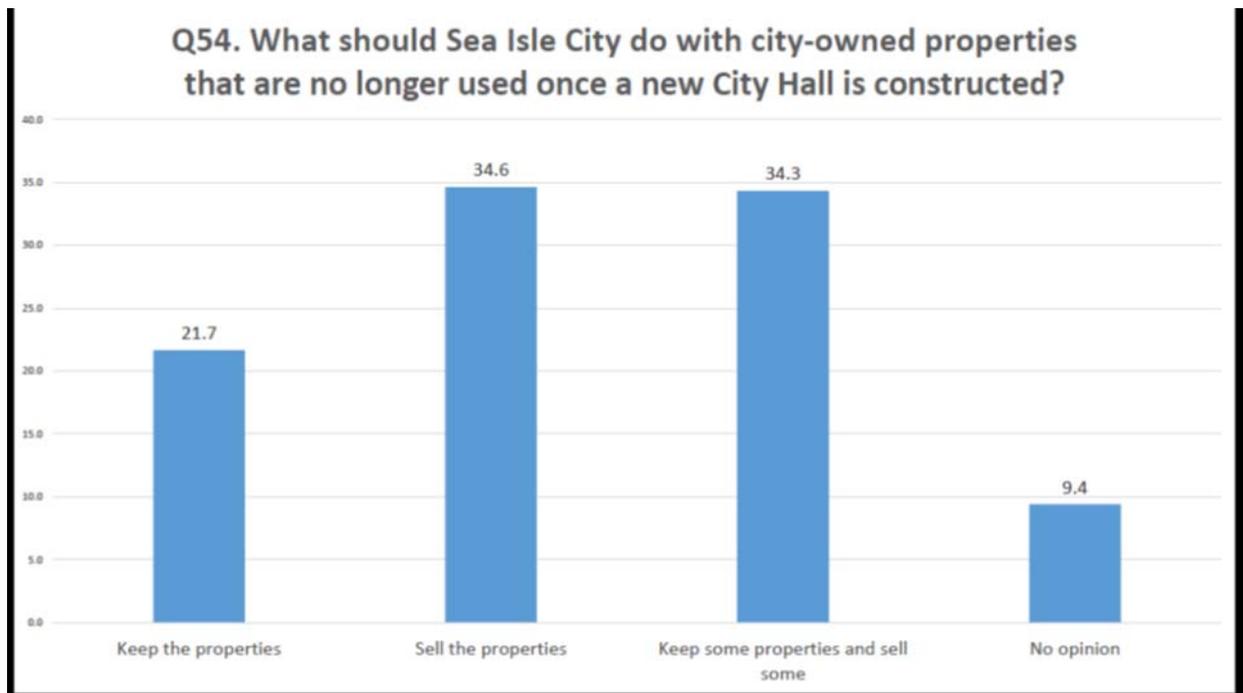
There were also areas where the respondents believed the City had not yet fully “cracked the code”. The bottom five responses were as follows—the % dissatisfied is in parentheses.

- Parking is adequate during the summer season (68%)
- Water and Sewer rates are fair (67%)
- Biking is easy to do in SIC (45%)
- SIC has a lot for teenagers to do (45%)
- SIC taxpayers receive a great deal for their tax dollars (38%)

The last point is interesting—we have no way to compare how people in other communities may rate the value of their tax spend. It is quite possible that only having 38% of people unhappy with what they are getting in return for their tax dollars is a strong endorsement—paying taxes is not something many of us like to do! However, the first four do seem like real opportunities for improvement.

What To Do With All That Extra City Property?

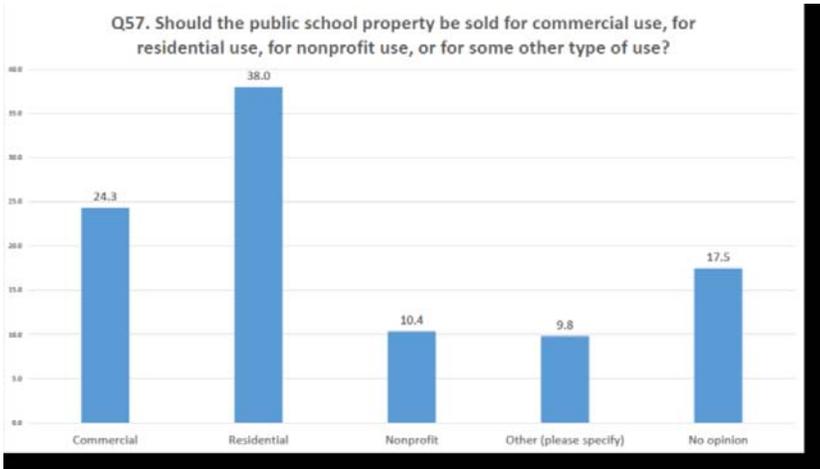
Come June, the new municipal complex should be finished and the school property will be vacant. The former City Hall is a parking lot. Other properties are also not in use. We asked respondents for their ideas about what the City should do with these properties. Here is what they had to say:



So, most people think the City should get rid of some or all of the excess properties. We can only guess that respondents would like to see these properties as a source of revenue, both from the sale of these properties and the restoration of these properties to the tax rolls.

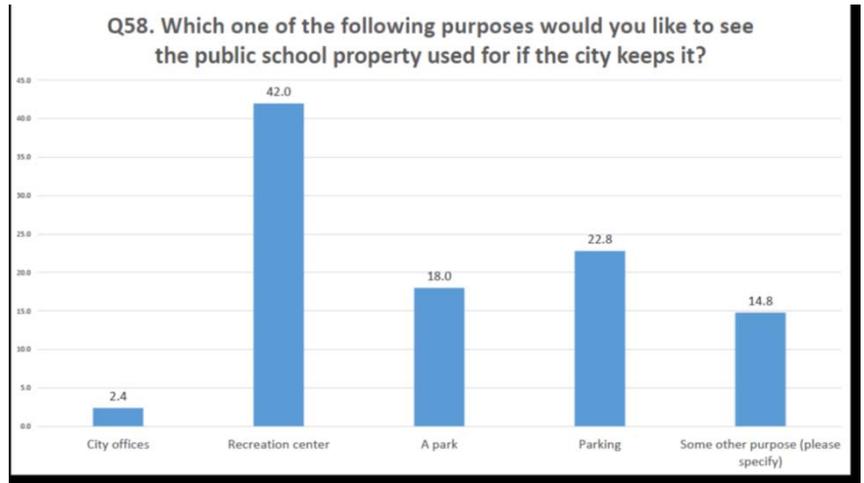
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Interestingly, most people want the school property to be sold for commercial or residential use. The City is set to have extensive public debate on this topic, and people should let their voices be heard.

Clearly if the City keeps the school property, a recreation center is the preferred use. Again, there should be ample debate on this. We offer SICTA's views in another article in this newsletter.



SICTA's Priorities

Respondents were asked where they wanted SICTA to focus its energies. Below are the top 5 responses in order of priority--% agreeing in parentheses.

- City spending (97%)
- Street maintenance (97%)
- Water and Sewer rates (96%)
- Parking (94%)
- Capital improvement (93%)

We wonder if #2 is an immediate issue because the City is currently upgrading its infrastructure. Numbers 1, 3, and 5 will clearly be the focus of our energies. Parking is an area where we have advanced our ideas in the past (e.g., we were one of the first to advocate for the Jitney), but we will continue to speak up if we have ideas to offer.

We thought the survey was a worthwhile effort. Let us know your thoughts on the findings by sending an e-mail to survey@sicta.org.

Sea Isle City Pay Levels: How Do they Stack Up?



For years SICTA has been using available public data to assess the pay competitiveness of City employees. Our resources, in the past, have been published reports, both state and national. Additionally, we have delved into our neighboring municipalities in Cape May County. Information was only available for a limited set of jobs¹. As a result we tended to focus on certain jobs, for example the Police. We did this because it was where the data took us.

This year it is “*a whole new ballgame*”. SICTA discovered that Sea Isle City along with other New Jersey municipalities, participated in a 2013 statewide survey of key municipal jobs. We have obtained the survey report and have used it to compare Sea Isle’s salaries with those of like communities in N.J.

We have defined like communities to be other shore communities with resident populations of less than 5,000. We have included shore communities up and down the coast versus just Cape May County, which gives us a broader sample. Thus, we have captured municipalities that have relatively low year-around populations, but also tend to have large seasonal populations. So, places like Ocean City, Atlantic City and Asbury Park with large resident populations have been excluded, while places like Avalon, Stone Harbor, Longport, and Long Beach have been included. In total, there are 16 communities in our sample, including Sea Isle. Sea Isle was about average in population, ranking 6/16. We chose this approach because we felt it would allow us to compare Sea Isle to communities that made similar demands of their municipal employees.

Our findings were interesting to say the least. In the past, when relying on national and state data, we found that our Police Department appeared to be paid well above the average. However, when using the new data from other shore communities, we find that Sea Isle pays around the average for Police compared to these other communities. The same cannot be said for the key management jobs in the City. We looked at eight of the top jobs in the City:

- City Manager,
- Municipal Clerk,
- Tax Assessor,
- Chief Financial Officer (which also includes Tax Collector in Sea Isle, so we compared it to the combined jobs in other cities),
- Construction Inspector,
- Recreation Head,
- Purchasing Head,
- Public Works Head.

¹ 2013 New Jersey Municipal Salary Report, New Jersey State League of Municipalities, 2013.

Although each of these jobs probably has its own peculiarities in Sea Isle and elsewhere, we thought in aggregate they would give us a good sense of how Sea Isle pays relative to others.

We found the following:

- Sea Isle pays well above average across virtually all of these management positions. In fact, it pays at the 75th percentile (i.e., it pays above $\frac{3}{4}$ of similar positions in other communities).
- Looked at another way, Sea Isle pays about 60% more than the average (the mean) for these positions.
- For 5 of the 8 positions, Sea Isle is either the highest or the second highest paid.

The results for our sample are summarized in the following table.

Position	Number of Municipalities Reporting Position	SIC Rank (Ranked Highest to Lowest)	Average Pay in \$000 (Mean)	SIC Pay in \$000	SIC Pay Vs. Average Pay
City Manager	13	1/13	\$94	\$148	+58%
Municipal Clerk	13	1/13	\$77	\$107	+38%
Tax Assessor	13	3/13	\$35	\$74	+115%
Combined CFO and Tax Collector	16	6/16	\$91	\$103	+29%
Construction Inspector	10	10/10	\$130	\$73	-44%
Recreation Head ¹	7	1/7	\$52	\$95	+121%
Purchasing Head	7	2/7	\$48	\$85	+127%
Public Works Head ¹	16	2/16	\$86	\$127	+48%
Average					+62%



Sea Isle City Council E- mail Addresses

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BUILDING A RECREATION CENTER AND POOL

SHOULD THE CITY LOOK BEFORE DIVING IN?

As you may know, the City is considering the construction of a pool and/or recreation center, probably on the Park Road site of the old public school and temporary city hall. Rough cost estimates were first discussed publicly by Council at a Capital Planning Workshop held on 10/28/14: \$3 to \$5 million for a rec center, and \$4 to \$5 million for a pool facility. [\$800 thousand dollars is already budgeted for recreational upgrades to the school/city hall site. We are not sure how that spending would be affected by a decision to build a rec center and/or pool.] Business Administrator George Savastano estimated the tax impact of each facility to be one cent per \$1,000 of assessed value (two cents if both facilities are built).

SICTA has some questions for the City and residents and feels that the answers should guide the City's path forward:

- If the City builds it, will you come? Does the expected demand for the facilities justify the construction and maintenance/operation expenses? What level of demand should be demonstrated before the City proceeds? How will the city assess this demand?
- Are there other less costly alternatives? For example, are current facilities like the Community Center and library now fully utilized? Can a temporary enclosure be used for the existing basketball courts for off-season usage vs. building an entire new facility?
- Given the expected \$3-10 million expense, are there other needs that should take precedence over building one or both facilities? What other recreational opportunities would serve, say, kids and teens?
- What entity would operate the facility most cost effectively? Options that come to mind are the City, perhaps the County, and non-profit groups like a YMCA or perhaps even a group created specifically to operate the facilities. Could the construction costs be fully or partially subsidized by a group other than SIC taxpayers?
- Would there be a membership or user fee, or would the ongoing expenses be fully funded by SIC taxpayers?
- Ocean City has a pool and recreation center. Has the City had any discussions with OC? We note that OC does charge membership and program fees (like, for example, the YMCA).
- Should the City ask taxpayers before spending \$3 to \$10 million dollars on a pool and/or rec center?

SICTA will create a brief e-mail survey to see what our Members think, and then submit some questions to the City. If you have any thoughts that you would like to share with us in the meantime, please e-mail us at recpool@sicta.org.

Sea Isle City Project Updates

Beach Replenishment

The schedule for beach fill operations has been revised.

Initially slated to begin 4/29/2015 the latest update posted by the City states: *The dredge Illinois has arrived, and is positioned off the northern end of Ludlam Island, approximately 2 miles offshore. Beachfill operations commenced on Wednesday, May 6, at the south-central section of Strathmere, with sand pumping proceeding toward the northern end of the island.*



Sea Isle Boulevard

If you haven't been to Sea Isle City since construction started on Sea Isle Boulevard, get ready to **slow down** — for the *next six years* or so. Even with strict enforcement of a 40 mph speed limit, there have been a number of (off-season) accidents. Summer traffic will most likely see a rise in incidents.

For information on all City projects visit the Sea Isle City website:

<http://www.seaislecitynj.us/>

Town Watch

Judge Morrison reported that the hearing schedule has been changed to make it easier and less time consuming for those reporting for court.

The new times are:

- 1 PM for those being arraigned
- 2 PM for those without lawyers
- 3 PM for those with lawyers

The Landlord hearings were held on April 15th with only three landlords there.

This was the lowest number of problem properties in years.

Hearings resulted in the following:

- 347 39th Street. was dismissed due to the fact the house was torn down.
- 315 38th has to put up a bond of \$500 for 2 years
- 321 39th has to put up a bond of \$5000. For 4 years.

For more information or questions contact Anne Organ at 263-8348.



Your SICTA Officers

Mary Tumolo, Acting President
 Joe McDevitt, Secretary
 Ben Tartaglia, Treasurer

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- Seymour Burchman
- Steve Howard
- Larry Lentini
- Jim Malloy
- Phyllis Evans
- Larry Evans
- John Ruzila
- Marye Ruzila
- James Sofroney
- Mike Stein
- Mike Tumolo

Sea Isle City Council Meeting Schedule

Generally the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month
 at City Hall, 4501 Park Road
 from 10am to 11:30 am
 to confirm



check city website <http://sea-isle-city.nj.us/city-departments/city-meetings.aspx>

JUN	June 9, 2015	10:00 AM	June 23, 2015	10:00 AM
JUL	July 1, 2015 (Wednesday)	12:00 PM	July 21, 2015	10:00 AM
AUG	August 11, 2015	10:00 AM	August 25, 2015	10:00 AM
SEP	September 8, 2015	10:00 AM	September 22, 2015	10:00 AM
OCT	October 8, 2015	10:00 AM	October 27, 2015	10:00 AM
NOV	November 10, 2015	10:00 AM	November 24, 2015	10:00 AM
DEC	December 8, 2015	10:00 AM	December 22, 2015	10:00 AM