

Sea Isle City Taxpayers Association, Inc. – A non-profit taxpayer advocacy organization

## Sea Isle City's 2008 Budget

*Taxes up 15%, but cost savings still missing*

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, City Council introduced the Administration's revised 2008 budget, including a proposed tax increase of 15% or \$1.6 million.

The tax increase was needed to cover increased spending of 7% (\$1.1 million) as well as the loss of other revenues (\$0.5 million). However, this budget reflects little operating efficiencies within it, even though the City is now spending over \$17.4 million.



This budget is shocking. Last year, Mayor Desiderio and the Commissioners, under the old form of government, signed labor contracts with large salary increases and uncommonly high benefit costs. Additionally, our neglected City infrastructure and problems with State pension systems have all come home to roost.

Unfortunately, our Mayor and Council have made little effort yet to respond fiscally to these problems. Public meetings were held to explore areas of cost reduction. However, the few actions that may be approved in the next 45 days appear mostly targeted for next year's budget. In the meantime, the current increased costs have been passed along to the taxpayers and our wasteful cost problems remain.

We do support the Government's new "Blueprint for the Future" initiative. However, SICTA believes that some material action was reasonable now, within this budget, not later. The Mayor and Council should not be given a pass after eight months in office to just announce a new and future initiative.

Good news? Well, the budget workshops were a breath of fresh air this year. The Administration presented detailed information on each line item, and an open, public discussion on them was the best that we have seen in a long time. The new government has created an improved review process. However, it's results that count, and fiscal results to date are still sadly lacking!

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A note from: **TOWN WATCH/TOWN PRIDE**

In January, with the help and advice of our police department, TWTP enlisted citizens to volunteer to perform surveillance on our streets and neighborhoods. Today our volunteers are walking our streets as well as the promenade, driving and bicycling, and watching over our town. Our volunteers number 31, including three of our councilmen. Each volunteer spends about an hour each month driving through our town.



Our TWTP volunteers state when driving our streets at night, it would be much easier to observe between houses and beneath homes built on pilings, if our homeowners used outside lights. The lack of light makes it very difficult for our police and lighted areas discourage burglaries. Our request to all property owners is they consider turning a light on every night. With the convenience of timers, resident and non-resident homeowners can adopt this practice. Consider the following:

The cost to light a 100-Watt bulb between 7PM and 12 midnight each evening is **\$2.10** per month. If you use the latest "environmentally green" light bulbs -say an equivalent to 100 Watts the cost is an unbelievable **.35** per month! The typical homeowners policy carries a \$1,000 to \$2,000 deductible. However, this home-owner doesn't have lights on around his property and we know the absence of lights encourages mischievous behavior. Consequently a burglary occurs and his new HIDEF TV is stolen.

The cost of the new HI DEFTV is about \$2500. The sad irony of this story is, for the cost of one bottle of Pinot Grigio, the owner could have very possibly discouraged this theft if his lights were turned on nightly as the police have suggested. This scenario applies to all homeowners. Set your timers and light your home every evening and of course enjoy your wine as you watch your HI DEF TV!!!

TWTP needs volunteers and we would appreciate your involvement. Through your participation we believe that positive things will happen in our town. For information about our organization please contact Carl Lingesso at 856-952-4074.

## **School Board Candidates Forum (4) OPEN SEATS**

*Saturday, April 5, 2008, 1:30 P.M. Community Lodge  
JFK Blvd. across from SIC Police Station*



There are 8 candidates for 4 seats on the school board, with 3 three year terms and 1 one year term.

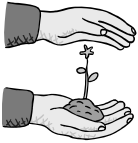
The School Board Election is Tuesday, April 15, 2008. The people that get elected to the board will have to make very hard decisions. At present there are less than 100 students in the school. Should the school remain open? Busing students to a larger school district, what are the advantages and disadvantages? Are special needs and gifted children requirements being met in a small school? Is our school preparing the students for the future? Why are we paying \$33,800 per student (highest in the state) when the state average per student is \$12,150?

**COME – April 5, 2008, 1:30 PM**  
**ASK QUESTIONS – GET ANSWERS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES**

## By the Sea!



### Plant a Tree!



Council has passed an ordinance allowing trees to be planted between the curb and sidewalk. Get this.....If every SICTA member planted a tree this Spring, we could have over 1500 new trees lining our city streets! Let's do it! See SICTA website for details on approved trees and tips on planting. If you don't have internet access, call 263-6359 and we will mail info to you.

### Get a Key!



If your house was newly constructed, your builder may have used a "construction key" or a "master key" to be used by workers during construction. This tip was picked up from a Home Improvement Website - "all types of master-key systems involve placing master pins inside the cylinder of the lock. This compromises the security of the lock, making it easier to pick or manipulate. Remember that master-key systems were developed strictly for convenience. So if you're not sure if your locks have been master-keyed, get them re-keyed."

### Nothing's Free!



Capital Plan was released. Preliminary wish list added up to over \$35 Million Dollars, but has been prioritized down to a bite-sized \$7M for immediate consumption in the way of bonds this year

### Hard to See!



The reassessment for Sea Isle City saw an increase in the Assessed Values of over \$1Billion, coming in at \$4.7B. But get this...it's still less than the \$4.9B Equalized Value the county is using to distribute county taxes. In fact, the Equalized Assessed Value for Sea Isle City has increased from \$4.3B in 2006 to \$4.9B in 2008. When most experts are saying property values have dropped, the increase in Equalized Value is, well, hard to see.

### Library!



The Council voted to have the new County library built on the 48<sup>th</sup> Street Lot. The architect is working up the new design which will have decks to take advantage of the wetland views. The new building is estimated to cost \$4.5M. The terms of the lease, which is yet to be signed, are unknown, as this newsletter went to print.

### Win a Nintendo Wii!!!!!!



SICTA is sponsoring a Wii Tournament to be conducted by the Recreation Department on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Details have not been ironed out, as we go to press, but the tournament will be open to resident children and children of non-resident taxpayers. One Wii console will be raffled off to one lucky participant.

### Fin-al-ly!



The Master Plan has been approved. The development of a good master plan was a point of discussion in recent municipal elections. A key change in the master plan is support for preserving the commercial district by allowing more residential density above but preserving first floor for commercial use. The Master Plan also identifies the town's COAH (Council on Affordable Housing) obligation which is sure to be in the spotlight this year.



# SICTA

Sea Isle City Taxpayers Association, Inc.

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## Join the SICTA:

Membership applications  
available on the website or  
by calling (609) 263-3784

## Board of Directors

Gary Egnasko	(609) 263-6359
Zack Lilienfeld	(609) 487-7757
Jim Malloy	(609) 263-6208
Pete & Sally McWilliams	(856) 589-2081
John & Marye Ruzila	(973) 742-4724
Greg Schoultz	(609) 263-0094
Deanna Parise	(609) 263-7965
Dan & Mike Tumulo	(609) 263-6213
Bonnie O'Brien	(609) 263-0393
Mike Stein	(610) 446-3898
John Fee	(609) 263-6817
Tom Gillen	(609) 263-5567

## Your SICTA Officers

### President

Tom Henry  
(609) 263-3784

### Vice President

Ed Sgalio  
263-9210

### Recording Secretary

Mary Helen Hoffman  
(215) 368-2207

### Treasurer

Ben Tartaglia  
(856) 983-7665



## 2008 SICTA Meeting Dates

*Public Safety Building Commissioners'  
Meeting Room (PSB)\*  
Or Community Lodge (CL)\**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Location</u>
Mar 29, 2008	1:30 PM	Budget Forum	(CL)*
Apr 12, 2008	10:00 PM	Board Meeting	(PSB)*
May 10, 2008	1:30 PM	General Meeting	(CL)*

**\*\* All members are invited  
to attend the Board Meetings**

Please check [www.sicta.org](http://www.sicta.org) for announcements  
or last minute changes.