

BRENDA KUPCHICK:

Fairfield, with its population of 62,000, has a multitude of pressing issues affecting our residents and businesses. These challenges include school redistricting, the UI transmission line, overdevelopment driven by predatory development under the 8-30g State Statute, issues related to traffic and pedestrian safety, crime, flood control, and so many other issues including the rising cost of living that strain families.

For the FBRA specifically, I think coastal resiliency and flooding, Penfield Pavilion, relations between students living at the beach and year round residents, quality of life and property taxes rise to the top.

Among the many challenges my administration inherited, we discovered the Town rebuilt Penfield Pavilion in 2016 knowingly against FEMA regulations (and had also placed a large amount of contaminated soil from the fill pile beneath the building). Working with regulating agencies on consent orders and notices of violation took leadership and communication with our residents and elected officials, to get to the point to finally receive approval for corrective action.

Spending millions of taxpayer dollars on misfeasance of the past has been frustrating for us all. My pledge to our community was to comply with all state and federal laws including the notice of violation from FEMA and ensure Penfield Pavilion would finally be in compliance. Due to the necessary reconstruction of Penfield's foundation, many residents expressed concerns regarding flooding. To address those concerns, the Town engaged a consultant to propose potential flood mitigation strategies along the coastline.

Additionally, the Town has set aside significant ARPA funds in anticipation of a number of flood mitigation efforts. The Town's Engineering Department and CAO have worked in conjunction with members of the FECB on a RFP to develop a design for offshore structures to lessen wave impacts from anticipated storms. The Town is also undertaking a resiliency study on the eastern end of the beach area. We want to do all we can, with federal and state regulatory approval, to protect our homeowners from storm effects in the coastal areas.

Quality of life is important for our residents along the coastline. In collaboration with Fairfield University and the Fairfield Beach Residents Association, my administration developed a "Living at Fairfield Beach" guide which was published and sent to all full-time residents and renters as well as being posted on the Town website.

The goal of the document is to provide helpful information for all residents of the rules and regulations of the Town and University in an effort to positively impact the overall experience of living at the beach. Our guiding principle is to maximize the health, safety, and quality of life of all residents, and ensure the fair and impartial enforcement of laws and Town ordinances in the beach area throughout the year. The stakeholder meetings hosted by the Fairfield Police Department with representatives of the beach neighborhood associations and the University have been a helpful process in planning and responding to issues as they arise.

