

Drifter for Life: Meet Councilman Kenneth Allison, Jr.

Within the Allison family, it's "All Drifters", four generations of Colonial Beach Public Schools (CBPS) graduates, including Town of Colonial Beach Councilman Kenneth Allison, Jr. and his children, two of whom now work locally, another a sophomore at Old Dominion University, and his youngest a second grader.

"I grew up in Colonial Beach. I used to joke about either knowing a person or being related, but in the last few years I've met so many wonderful new-to-me residents," muses Allison, who is actively involved in the school system. "Our community is one-of-a-kind; and I've always found ways to support it."

Like his predecessor, former Councilman Pat Ey, Allison is passionate about the Town's local youth and CBPS' sports program, which he feels makes him a good fit for Liaison to Parks & Rec. As a lifelong resident, Kenneth recalls the vibrant boardwalk, game rooms, the Reno, Hops and more from his childhood, and believes the Dodson project will bring back the Boardwalk's allure.

"I think we lost the charm of the Boardwalk. I joined council to make sure kids today have what I had growing up...although I doubt, we will ever get the Banana Slide back," jokes Councilman Allison.

Allison says he wants residents to have a good outlook for the future, especially in terms of public safety and revitalization. "We've hired a new Chief of Police who hit the ground running and hasn't stopped."

Working as a contractor for the federal government for 25 years, Councilman Allison realizes, perhaps more than most, how "things take time". He explains, for example, that the fiscal year for the Town budget is July to July, hence, a project may be budgeted for 2023 in July of 2022.

"Funds for development and infrastructure projects may be initiated in one year, but budgeted for the following year because several milestones must first be met: bid process, applications, validations, safety inspections, and more are all steps in the process," explains the councilman. "As an individual, I can build my deck in two weeks. In the government, where there are State and Local regulations to adhere to, it could take years."

As Planning Commission (PC) liaison, Councilman Allison encourages residents to read official documents, or better yet, attend public meetings to hear information for themselves and not rely on what may be disinformation.

"Town Council [TC] and the PC are as transparent as we can, being upfront and letting citizens know what's going on through minutes, YouTube videos, graphics, documents, and official social media posts. The information is out there," stresses the councilman. "And if there is something you don't understand, ask questions to the entire TC. Our emails and phone numbers are right on the Town website."