

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

September 8, 1999 1:30 PM

PRESENT: Alan Sansotta, George Greenfield, Dennis Velasco, Bob Minning, Jim Terry, Chuck Coward, Andy Neff, Cliff Truitt.

Also present: Nicole Elko, USF

The Beach Stewardship Committee meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by Chairman Alan Sansotta in the City Hall Auditorium at 120 - 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida

1. The draft minutes of the August 4, 1999 meeting had been prepared and previously distributed to the members for review. On appropriate motion, the minutes were accepted as drafted.
2. Mr. Terry again reported on the status of the north groin project. The construction contract was awarded by the Board of County Commissioners at their August 24th meeting. A pre-construction meeting with the Contractor is expected to take place in about 6 weeks. In the intervening time the Contractor will be providing County staff with several required submittals (e.g. bonds, insurance, etc.). Following the pre-construction meeting, assuming all submittals have been provided and accepted, the County will issue the notice to proceed and the Contractor will likely take another 30 to 45 days to actually mobilize. We should expect construction to begin in late October or early November.
3. The Corps still has not awarded the contract for the Upham/Sunset Beach Renourishment Project. The issue of possible oil spill contamination in the proposed borrow sand apparently has been resolved with FDEP and a permit has been drafted and approved, but Mr. Terry reported there is some confusion over the transmittal of the resulting permit. The start date remains uncertain and construction will likely extend into next year.

Discussion continued by the Committee members about the Upham/Sunset Beach Project status, including concerns about insuring that the Sunset Beach extension (800 feet) remains part of the plan and contract. There was a suggestion that a source of contingency funding be identified to insure the 800 foot extension is built. Mr. Terry emphasized that funding is not the issue - either the Corps or the County would step in to provide funding as they always have. The issue continues to be uncertainty about the amount of sand available in the approved borrow areas. The idea was suggested of using other borrow areas presently being investigated by the County and/or "piggy-backing" on other projects to get additional sand. Unfortunately no other County projects are planned for perhaps the next 4 to 5 years. The only project likely to occur sooner might be the "sand sharing" concept within Treasure Island itself, the approval of which is uncertain and at least 2 years away, anyway.

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The mention of contingency or emergency planning led to the discussion of formal emergency beach repair/response planning, including borrow areas, permits and funding sources, as presented at the recent Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association (FSBPA) meeting by the Captiva Erosion Prevention District in Lee County. Similar efforts for several New Jersey beaches were also noted as positive examples. Chairman Sansotta asked Mr. Velasco and Mr. Minning to act as a subcommittee to review the paper presented by Captiva and other information and develop any applicable recommendations for our Committee.

4., 5. Andy Neff followed-up on his review and previously distributed summary of the Corps project documents (Beach Erosion Control Study (1984) and General Reevaluation Report (1994)). As noted in his summary paper, the original project design was based on periodic renourishment at 5-year intervals (modified as a result of any monitoring data) through the year 2019. Dr. Truitt stated that his recent review of the survey data in the two Corps annual monitoring reports following the 1996 renourishment confirmed the general observation that the beach fills are not performing/eroding at the same rate throughout the island. "Hot spots" exist at the extreme north end and for several thousand feet on Sunset Beach, where there have been at least 7 fill projects (including channel dredged material disposal) in the past 29 years. Fill placement volumes on a "per foot" basis have been 3 to 4 times higher in these areas than on the rest of the key, yet erosion continues to be a problem. The groin project on the north end has the potential to stabilize that spot, but no new management strategies have been identified for the south end.

Members discussed the history of erosion on the south end and suggested explanations or compounding factors for the very high losses including storm vulnerability, inlet effects (Blind Pass), and the possible influence of the near shore borrow area dredged for the 1969 project. Mr. Terry volunteered to request that the Corps staff conduct a general reassessment of the Treasure Island fill performance, including the 'hot spots.' We do not know what schedule/priority staff might give to the request, but all agreed it would be a very positive step.

6. Mr. Neff provided information on a grants program, the Coastal Partnerships Initiative, administered by the Florida Coastal Management Office in the Department of Community Affairs. The County has previously applied for grants for beach work three times and been refused. The program seems to emphasize more the environmental and fisheries issues, but members were asked to suggest any recommended projects in time for the formal submittal date in early October.

7. The following were member comments and suggestions:

Chairman Sansotta reported on the recent FSBPA meeting and encouraged Committee members to participate in future meetings and in the activities of the American Coastal Coalition.

Mr. Velasco noted the recent press attention to erosion pressures at Egmont Key Lighthouse and asked if Pinellas County has any involvement. Mr. Terry replied that the primary responsibility rested with the Federal Parks Service, the State, and Hillsborough County.

Dr. Greenfield restated the point that our focus and efforts should be on long-range management of the entire key. He also supported the need for advanced planning for recovery and restoration of the beach following emergencies.

Mr. Neff stated that he had not yet received a reply to his letter to the Corps requesting clarification of COL Miller's earlier comment that sand from Johns Pass dredging was to be placed on the north end (rather than at Sunset as planned). He will follow-up with Corps staff.

Ms. Elko stated that the USF review/research work was perhaps 50 to 60 percent completed and offered to provide a progress report at the next meeting.

8. The next committee meeting date was set for October 6, 1999.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.