

## **City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee**

April 11, 2001- revised May 9, 2001 1:30 PM

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Robert Minning, Barbara Blush, George Greenfield, Dennis Velasco, Sully Lowe, Sid Rice, Don Hambidge; Jim Terry, Pinellas County; Richard Davis, USF; Cliff Truitt, Melynne Chiariello, Coastal Tech.

Chairman Robert Minning called the Beach Stewardship Committee meeting to order at 1:45 PM in the City Hall Auditorium at 120 - 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida. Mr. Minning noted that the Committee meeting was being video recorded to allow for it to be televised on public access television. Dr. Truitt introduced Melynne Chiariello, an engineer with Coastal Tech, who will be helping on the Sand Sharing project.

1. The draft minutes of the March 7, 2001 meeting had been previously distributed for review. Dr. Greenfield discussed the minutes' references to the proposed Dune Doctors' planting concepts, showing a composite photograph of a narrow section of the north beach where new plantings might conflict with existing vegetation. He also confirmed the reference to action by the Sunshine Beach Homeowners Association in opposition to a proposed concrete walkway on the north end of the beach. However, no changes in wording were suggested and upon appropriate motion the minutes were approved as drafted.

2. Jim Terry was asked about proposed changes to the percentage of Federal cost sharing allowable for erosion control projects such as Pinellas County/Treasure Island. It has been rumored that the administration will propose reducing the allowable Federal share for such projects from a maximum of 65 percent to a maximum of 35 percent. The effect would be to shift a greater amount of the project costs back to the States and to local sponsors such as the County. Mr. Terry noted that there has been no specific notice or guidance to date from the Corps or from OMB. Also, Congressman Young has already stated his opposition to such a change and his intent to continue that opposition if any action comes before Congress.

There was subsequent discussion about the issue from the Committee including a comment from Dr. Davis that a reduction in the Federal share will put pressure on the State to increase the annual 30 million dollar erosion control program funding. Sid Rice ask about using the "Penny-for-Pinellas" as a source of additional funds. Mr. Terry noted that the County's funding has come from one-half of one cent of the Tourist Development Tax and that has been adequate so far.

3. Status reports were provided on the following:

The Beach Emergency Management Plan has been adopted by the City Commission. Following up on a previous request, Dr. Truitt provided the Committee with a list of the implementation tasks recommended by the Plan, annotated with each task's status and how it would be addressed and by whom. Several of the recommendations have already been addressed by the Committee and/or staff; others will be work products of the Sand Sharing project.

The City has issued Coastal Tech a notice to proceed on Phase 2 of the study - the Sand Sharing project. Substantial completion of the work is expected by the second week of August 2001. Substantial completion includes preparing and submitting the required permit applications, but does not include the subsequent time necessary for those applications to be reviewed and processed by the various agencies.

In response to the Committee's call last month for greater public input into any proposed beach revegetation project, staff developed a draft questionnaire for possible distribution to residents. The draft was reviewed and discussed by the Committee as follows:

Dr. Greenfield re-stated that he felt that some elements of the revegetation design concept might not be applicable to the northern beaches where the existing dune system is relatively continuous. For example, he would not want to see *new* ground-level access paths through the dune in areas where elevated wooden walks already existing.

Dennis Velasco said he generally supported the questionnaire, but felt that it should be sent/made available to beach users other than just beach-fronting property owners.

Don Hambidge noted that he had discussed a vegetation project with the FDEP area inspector, Steve West. The Department's policy is that [with certain restrictions on vehicles and monitoring] vegetation can be planted any time of the year, including during turtle nesting season. Sand can be moved to create dunes or "islands," but typically that work must be done outside of turtle season. And, sand fencing *might* receive objections from the Department no matter when it is proposed to be installed.

Discussion continued about the idea of creating one or more 'demonstration' areas this year so residents could see actual dune examples as part of their consideration of any future work. Dennis Velasco noted that an access point near his home might be suitable for a demonstration and offered to assist in developing such a project.

Sid Rice felt that the draft questionnaire could be somewhat simplified, but should be used and distributed island-wide for the broadest input. He also suggested that a scale model, along the idea of a "sand table," might help people visualize the proposals.

Dr. Davis commented on the draft questionnaire, agreeing that it should be distributed island-wide, and suggesting some specific additions such as a map scale and features to orient the reader as to which direction is the upland versus the Gulf. He also felt that there were too many accesses proposed. In his experience, the north end of Sand Key,

adjacent to Clearwater Pass, has been one of the most successful vegetation projects, as well as a very low cost one. We might want to look to that plan for ideas.

It was noted that we should take advantage of the County's vegetation buying program and Don Hambidge responded that the City has done just that in the past.

Barbara Blush reinforced the importance of either a full size demonstration area or a scale model; people need to be able to see what is proposed.

Sully Lowe suggested that photos of successful projects such as Sand Key might be incorporated in the information as "after" examples. Dr. Davis added that signage and 'handout' sheets could be placed at any demonstration sites explaining the project.

Robert Minning summarized the comments and suggested that the Committee further review the questionnaire *and proposed design* and provide any specific changes to Don Hambidge within two weeks (by April 25th) so that we can finalize it at the May meeting.

4. Mr. Minning reported on his meetings with the Sunset and Sunshine Homeowners' Associations. He said that they had been very positive meetings and he enjoyed being able to report on the progress the Committee had made. People were interested in reading the Beach Emergency Management Plan and it was suggested that the document be linked to the City's website. Coastal Tech will investigate converting the document to an appropriate format and provide it to the City before the next meeting. There was further discussion and interest in taking a similar presentation to other groups on the island.

5. Remarks by members.

Dennis Velasco remarked that we should start the vegetation project as soon as possible after receiving input from the questionnaires. He suggested that while we were talking to various groups about the Committee's activities, we might ask for volunteers for the planting and subsequent maintenance.

Barbara Blush said that Robert Shogren had forwarded a magazine listing dredging equipment for sale with the suggestion that it might be worth purchasing a plant for maintenance work. She also noted that a Federal flood mitigation program had listed 'dune grasses' as eligible for funding and we might investigate that as a revenue source. Dr. Greenfield was invited to the next Commission meeting to present his idea for a unique Treasure Island license plate or sticker. Commissioner Blush had received a comment from Heidi Horack that some sort of wildlife/habitat assessment should be part of the Committee's review of beach proposals.

There were no further member remarks or suggestions.

6. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for May 9, 2001 at 1:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.