

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

June 13, 2001

1:30 PM

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Robert Minning, George Greenfield, Barbara Blush, Sully Lowe, Sid Rice, Rick Raus; Jim Terry, Pinellas County; Cliff Truitt, Coastal Tech.

Chairman Robert Minning called the Beach Stewardship Committee meeting to order at 1:40 PM in the City Hall Auditorium at 120 - 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida.

1. The draft minutes of the May 9, 2001 meeting had been previously distributed for review. Upon appropriate motion the minutes were approved as submitted. Dr. Greenfield requested that an additional agenda item be added to discuss the Committee's potential involvement in the offshore oil drilling issue.
2. Rick Raus reported on the status of the revegetation demonstration project. Last week City staff planted the demonstration area at the end of the 10-foot wide pedestrian access at 84th Avenue (north side of 8406 West Gulf Boulevard). Some watering has been necessary during the week and a few of the original plants were lost, but, in general, the project is doing well. The City newsletter will be sent to residents at the end of June and will include the vegetation questionnaire as previously drafted and approved by the Committee. It was suggested that a brief notice be placed in the newsletter text about the demonstration project and, specifically, to provide information about where to park off West Gulf Boulevard in order to use the access. Barbara Blush will coordinate final newsletter information with Don Hambidge. At Mr. Minning's suggestion, Rick will also contact the *Shoreline Reporter* and ask for some general coverage of the project and the survey questionnaire.
3. Mr. Minning asked for Committee input on the desirability of developing some type of beach information pamphlet along the lines of an example Dr. Truitt had previously distributed. Barbara Blush said that she believed a need existed for such informational materials and that developing them was in keeping with the public education portion of the Committee's mission. She noted that the attendant at the Beach Pavilion has told her that many people have asked questions or requested information about various beach-related topics. Jim Terry was asked if the County has any beach brochure or similar information. He stated that the County has a booklet listing the locations of all the public beach accesses with information about parking, facilities, and similar, but it does not address specifics related to beach processes, vegetation, or habitat. He also mentioned that the State (FDEP) has developed a number of detailed publications on various topics which might be available through the FDEP website.

Mr. Minning thought that such an information program might be in the interest of the local business community and that they could be willing to assist and/or support it's development and certainly the distribution of the materials. He is speaking to the Business Association Thursday and will bring the subject up at that time. It was decided that all the members would poll their contacts about interest and need for the program and further investigate sources of information. Mr. Terry will provide copies of the County publication for review and Dr. Truitt will provide copies of another, summary version of the Longboat Key pamphlet.

4. Cliff Truitt provided an update on the sand sharing project. The necessary data (profile surveys, photography) has been received, although after some delay with FDEP. The evaluation of how much sand can be borrowed from the mid-island area without adversely impacting those uplands will be based in part on computer modeling of various intensity storms. In order to properly conduct that evaluation the model must be calibrated using some actual historical data. Dr. Truitt showed some examples of model calibration runs using water level and wave data collected during Hurricane Elena in 1985 and the subsequent surveys of the eroded beach. Over 500,000 cubic yards of sand are estimated to have been lost from Treasure Island as a result of the storm, so it should serve as a very good historical calibration. The actual design model runs will start shortly. In the interim, Coastal Tech staff will arrange for a pre-application meeting with FDEP staff to review any concerns before preparing the permit materials. Jim Terry noted that he has digital aerial photography from 1999 and 2001, which he will make available to assist with the project.

5. Cliff was also asked to report on a workshop last week sponsored by the Corps of Engineers on the topic of Regional Sediment Management. This workshop, which was the second of two in Southwest Florida during the week, was held (by coincidence) in the Treasure Island auditorium and several Committee members attended. Although the term "regional sediment management" is new, the basic idea of the program is not, especially in Pinellas County. The program seeks to emphasize the regional nature of coastal processes and the regional influence of engineering works by looking beyond typical "single project" boundaries in order to manage sediments over regions encompassing multiple projects. One particular effort is to better tie coastal navigation projects, such as inlet and ICW dredging, to the need for compatible sand on contiguous beaches. Copies of some of the workshop hand-outs were provided to the Committee and the program's website is: <http://rsm.saj.usace.army.mil> (no 'www').

6. Under the added agenda item, Dr. Greenfield asked for discussion about whether the committee felt it should review and take any position on issues surrounding the potential for offshore oil exploration and drilling. He pointed out a number of possible adverse impacts to public health, the environment and aesthetics from such drilling and production activities.

Jim Terry was asked about any County policies or positions. He responded that to the best of his knowledge the Board of County Commissioners had not addressed any aspects of the question except for emergency management issues such as coordination of oil spill recovery with the Coast

Guard and State. Recovery operations are largely a federal responsibility handled through the Port of Tampa's Coast Guard assets and a contracted commercial regional oil spill response team.

Discussion among Committee members concluded that there was interest in exploring the issues further and placing a follow-up item on a future agenda. Sully Lowe noted that the group should hear all sides in order to make informed decisions and not rush into any recommendations. Barbara Blush will research the City and County's Comprehensive Plans and other sources to see if there have been any past formal positions on the issue. Dr. Greenfield will contact the Port for information about their programs.

7. Remarks by Members.

Dr. Greenfield followed-up on a past Committee discussion about water quality sampling on the beach. The existing testing program by the County Health Department, in cooperation with the State, measures total coliform in the water. They make their public health decisions based on those counts because coliform is typically found in association with specific pathogens such as *E. coli*. However, because of the nature of conventional laboratory testing methods it is often days or even weeks before the specific pathogens and their concentrations are known. As a result, public beach areas may be closed unnecessarily if the specific bacteria actually were not present in harmful concentrations, or if the contaminated water already had moved out of the area. USF has developed a new instrument and testing method which can make the specific concentration determinations in a matter of hours rather than days.

Sully Lowe said she had read recent news about the Tampa Bay desalinization plant and that she was interested in it's potential impact on water quality, especially because of the brine discharge. Information will be developed for a future discussion item.

Sid Rice was asked about the status of the FDOT bridge replacement project. He reported on three proposals apparently under consideration ("low, medium and high" spans). FDOT will have a meeting on the project in Treasure Island on Tuesday, June 12th.

There were no further member remarks or suggestions.

8. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for July 11, 2001 at 1:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.