

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

June 11, 2003

1:30 PM

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Robert Minning, Barbara Blush, George Greenfield, Sully Lowe, Dennis Velasco, Don Spatzer; Nicole Elko, Pinellas County; Cliff Truitt, Coastal Tech;

Also present: City Commissioners Richard Kraus and Phil Collins

Chairman Robert Minning called the Beach Stewardship Committee meeting to order at 1:35 PM in the City Hall auditorium, 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida.

1. The draft minutes of the May 14, 2003 meeting were distributed and reviewed. Dr. Greenfield asked for clarification of a statement in the minutes by Barbara Blush about the City receiving NOAA funds for the dune and beach trail extension – was this money to extend the project along the entire island? Commissioner Blush explained that the “extension” she referenced was the limited addition across the two properties adjacent to the south side of the Trailhead Park, as was originally proposed. No northern extension has been formally proposed or discussed. Commissioner Blush requested that other language related to the delay in the Federal beach maintenance project (Item 4, first paragraph) be changed to reflect that the Sunset area renourishment has indeed been “recommended” for renourishment, but was temporarily delayed only because was not considered a priority need. Upon appropriate motion the minutes were approved as amended.

2. Nicole Elko with Pinellas County was present for the Committee meeting and without objection, the agenda was revised to include a status report from her on County projects and issues.

3. As noted, Nicole Elko reported on project schedules and issues. She explained that the Upham Beach project had been planned for this past spring (2003), but was delayed for several reasons. As recent erosion progressed into the portion of Upham Beach where the former diked oil containment/treatment area from the last maintenance project was located, residual fine-grained soils and possibly some oil were noticed; it will take additional time to remove those deposits before new fill can be placed. Also, there is still some uncertainty about the use of the “T-head” groins in the final plan. The Corps will not cost share in that portion of the construction, so it would be divided between only the County and St. Petersburg Beach. In order to be effective and because of the water depths, the proposed design would result in very large groins, 300+ feet long and up to 15 feet high. The City and County continue to discuss using structures versus more frequent fill projects using Blind Pass sand.

Nicole stated that the Corps did not really intend to separate the Upham Beach fill and Sunset Beach maintenance projects. Apparently the Corps’ consultant did not include Sunset in the original contract in order to preserve all of the sand in Blind Pass for down-drift bypassing to

Upham and because they did not feel conditions were that bad at Sunset. The two projects have been contractually joined again so that the spring 2004 effort will include placing sand on Sunset Beach *centered on R-140 and extending north and south as needed based on surveys at the time*. The source of sand for both projects will be the outer Pass-a-Grille channel, which has State permits valid through 2005. If subsequent, more frequent fill is needed for Upham Beach, they may go back to Blind Pass. Dennis Velasco noted that Blind Pass is shoaling rapidly and may be near closure by the time the next fill project is needed.

Dr. Greenfield asked Nicole's opinion of the effectiveness of the proposed groins. She responded she believed they had more disadvantages than advantages. While they might be effective in reducing the maintenance interval for sand placement on Upham Beach, she was concerned about potential downdrift impacts to the adjacent beaches. It was noted that the Corps' refusal to cost share in the construction includes a determination that, on balance, the groin construction and long-term maintenance costs exceed the value of expected benefits to the project.

Nicole also described the Corps' recent investigations and application for State approval for about a dozen potential offshore borrow site to help reduce dependency on the inlets for sand.

4. Cliff Truitt reported on the status of the Sand Sharing project permit application. As noted last month, the Corps has formally requested comments and a revised Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service; USFWS is working on the review. No response has been received from the Corps to the letter Cliff sent on behalf of the City in response to the Corps' Project Manager for Treasure Island statements of concern about the scope of our sand sharing proposal and the Corps' schedule for maintenance. A number of Committee members expressed frustration about the time involved in the permitting process and a discussion ensued about various elements of the Beach Management Plan and whether the City could move forward in any areas.

5. Committee Member Remarks:

Dr. Greenfield mentioned a newspaper article reporting that Representative Carassas in the House and Senator Jones in the Senate had been successful in preserving the legislative funding of the Beach Erosion Control Trust Fund at about a \$22.5M level for next year. Nicole noted that this does not really affect the 2004 maintenance projects described above because almost three-quarters of the project cost is Federal and the remaining ~\$1M of State and County money has already been appropriated.

Barbra Blush said that she had received a letter of concern from a resident about shorebirds along with some information that we will keep for Committee reference. She also said that the City Manager had reported to the City Commission on discussions with Paradigm Learning, but no action was anticipated in the near future. A "clean-up" program and "Fact Finding" program/assessment is scheduled for Eleanor Island. The biologist conducting the assessment will report back to the Commission.

Nicole Elko said that the County was working on a draft beach lighting [turtle protection] ordinance based on a State model – she will provide us with a copy for comparison to the City’s lighting ordinance.

Mr. Minning asked Commissioner Blush about the status of any northern extension of the beach trail. She replied that the Commission had not received any proposals and had taken no action. Mr. Minning noted that Nicole had provided copies of the latest USF surveys and he asked her to also forward them to Cliff for review by the next meeting. Lastly, Mr. Minning wanted staff to remember in their planning that when the time comes, the Committee wants to participate in the planting portion of the new NOAA-funded dune extension at Trail Head Park.

There were no further remarks.

6. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for July 9, 2003 at 1:30

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.