

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

February 8, 2006

1:30 PM

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Robert Minning, Alan Bildz, John Burke, Dennis Velasco, George Greenfield, Rick Raus; Nicole Elko, Pinellas County; Cliff Truitt, Coastal Tech.

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 January 11, 2006 meeting had been distributed and reviewed by the Committee members. Upon appropriate motion the minutes were approved as drafted.
2. Without objection the regular Agenda was amended to add several items including an update on beach conditions and project status by Nicole Elko and discussion of a memo from Don Hambidge about funding future projects.
3. Cliff Truitt reported progress on the FDEP permit application for Sand Sharing. The change in the borrow area design has been reflected in a new legal description prepared by a surveyor and the revised document has been submitted to the state. The final, full-size construction plans requested by FDEP staff are 90% completed and will be forwarded within the next few days. We have been told that these items will complete the application and allow for final review and approval. As in previous meetings, there was additional Committee discussion of the Erosion Control Line, easement areas potential funding.
4. Don Hambidge attended the recent Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association (FSBPA) meeting in Sarasota and heard a presentation by Howard Marlowe on the outlook for continuing Federal funding for beach restoration projects. In a memo to the Committee, Don summarized what he felt was a very pessimistic projection by Marlowe based on OMB suggestions that no more Federal dollars be provided to the Corps for long-term maintenance of such projects. There was Committee discussion on both 'sides' of the issue, including the observation that in each budget cycle for many years sitting administrations tried to stop project funding, but Congress typically continued the program anyway. No specific action was proposed by the Committee other than to continue to monitor the situation and work with our elected officials.
5. Nicole Elko provided copies of the most recent USF beach surveys and discussed the general conditions in the area. She said in summary that the surveys showed a typical seasonal variation with some longer-term storm-related changes at some specific locations. At survey monument R-127 on the north end there has been about 50 feet of erosion due primarily to the hurricanes. South of there, along the rest of Sunshine Beach, there also has been some erosional loss, but not as much as at R-127 and it may be within the expected seasonal variation. The survey comparison shows that the middle beach, from about R-130 to R-136, varies seasonally

but is otherwise generally stable. At Sunset Beach, from R-136 through R-141, there have been storm-related losses, but less than fifty feet in width on average.

Nicole went on to say the funding and basic permits for placing sand at Sunshine Beach, from about R-127 to R-128.5, were in place and the project “looked good” for a start soon. The Corps construction plans for Sand Key will need to be revised to include Sunshine and a minor modification to the permits will be necessary because the type of equipment proposed will change. There was a Committee question about whether Madeira Beach has ever needed to be renourished. Nicole said that Madeira generally benefited from sand losses from Sand Key. There are also several old groins on the island, but they seem to not have been the primary stabilizing factor because they were never visible in aerial photography. That situation changed as a result of this year’s hurricanes and the groin signatures are visible for the first time.

With respect to general funding of the beach projects, Sand Key is being done under a special Corps authorization for storm damage repair. The Corps has put out a notice asking local sponsors if there are any other projects that need to be addressed while this authorization is still available. Nicole will respond by re-listing all of the County’s projects including Sunset Beach. It may be considered by the Corps to be too soon after the last maintenance fill to return and place more fill, but the request is worth trying.

The Upham Beach project is basically finished. Some rock still needs to be removed, but the tube groins are in and have been coated with a more UV and abrasion resistant material. The final cost for the project is about \$1.5 M and it covers about 2000 feet of beach.

Nicole was asked if sea oats would be available from the County again this year and she said they would. We will need to put a request in early in June for delivery in July. Dennis Velasco asked if other plants – other than sea oats – were available and Nicole confirmed that they could be requested. Someone will research the Dune Doctors report to see what was recommended and we may want request some of those species instead of all sea oats.

6. Bob Minning had revisited the “no rake” areas as recommended by Delta Seven, asking Delta Seven to provide a graphic identifying the areas in better detail. The maps were provided to the Committee and to Rick Raus. Rick noted that Public Works is already implementing the recommendations and the only exception to “no rake” along the middle beach will be about a 15-foot wide swath along the ‘sand wall’ on the existing beach walk. Sand has to be removed and leveled in this area to prevent it from building up against the wall/fence and causing damage. There was additional discussion about other raking activities and Rick said that private raking companies often did work in the area and were sometimes confused as being the City’s operation. Private vendors are not supposed to be raking on the public beach, but it is difficult to monitor them.

7. A representative of a group called “Citizens for a Natural Treasure Island Beach” asked after the last beach trail planning meeting if they could be on the Stewardship Committee’s agenda. Mr. Minning expressed concern that he did not want such an appearance to turn into a debate on specific aspects of the trail design, because we don’t have any control over that

process. With that caveat, however, the organization will be invited to be on the March meeting agenda.

8. Committee Member Remarks:

John Burke said that in addition to the pamphlet on exotic plants mentioned last month, he had found a Tampa Bay National Estuary Program video called 'Wicked Weeds' which expands on the issue; we can get a copy on loan. He then reported on the upcoming north beach clean-up day schedule.

Alan Bildz said he had received an Email after the last Committee meeting from a resident who say the meeting and wanted to participate in any volunteer effort organized to deal with exotic plant removal or replacement planting. Mr. Minning will continue to coordinate with the Beautification Committee on some joint effort. Commissioner Bildz also noted that the City is going through its State-mandated periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan and one question raised in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) was: "... is the City meeting its goals for beach protection and preservation?" He suggested coordinating with the PZB staff to see what input we might have into helping to answer that question.

George Greenfield raised a concern about the new pedestrian crossing signs on Gulf Boulevard. The sign at 125th is hidden from view by on-coming traffic and may endanger pedestrians trying to cross there.

Nicole Elko said that she read in the minutes from last month the Jeff's video had been submitted to the Future of the Region Awards program. She said that she had submitted the entire 2004 beach project to the same awards program as an example of successful project implementation during a particularly adverse hurricane season. Nicole also said she had just submitted her doctoral manuscript to the university and expected to have her defense early in March.

Rick Raus said that after last month's discussion of exotic plants he had gone to the Groundskeeping Crew and worked out a more formal program that would involve at least one full day of work on the problem each month.

9. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for March 8, 2006 at 1:30

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.