

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

December 13, 2006

1:30 PM

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Robert Minning, George Greenfield, Alan Bildz, Lisa Martinez-Romano, John Burke, Rick Raus; Nicole Elko, Pinellas County; also, Tammy Langer and staff from Clearwater Marine; Cliff Truitt, Coastal Tech.

Chairman Robert Minning called the Beach Stewardship Committee meeting to order at 1:38 PM in the City Hall auditorium, 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida.

1. The draft minutes of the November 8, 2006 meeting had been distributed and reviewed by the Committee members. Upon appropriate motion, the minutes were approved as drafted.
2. Without objection the Agenda was amended to add a discussion of dune vegetation planting (item #5) and additional discussion of dune preservation policies (item #6).
3. Staff members from Clearwater Marine Aquarium had been invited to provide an update on the 2006 marine turtle nesting season and to discuss issues affecting nesting. Tammy Langer reported that last season within Pinellas County there were 115 marine turtle nests and 121 reported false crawls. The Aquarium staff had to relocate 22 nests; most of those were to avoid impacts from beach fill projects. Nine nests were recorded but subsequently lost/destroyed, including three as a result of storm impacts.

The Aquarium staff provided information to the Committee on lighting issues including a Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FFWC) model lighting ordinance. There was also literature on various types of lights and bulbs that are shielded and/or have less impact on turtles. Ms. Langer noted that the City has a lighting ordinance, but the Turtle Patrol would like to work with City Code Enforcement to better implement the provisions of the ordinance and help it be more effective. All nests in the county are 'caged' to reduce predation and to also be able to monitor and control the release of hatchlings in case there are lighting distractions in the area.

There was further Committee discussion of the lighting ordinance and code enforcement policies. It was unclear whether the City ordinance had been 'approved' by FFWC and/or if it tracked the requirements in the model ordinance. Ms. Langer was asked if she would read the City ordinance and provide any comments or suggestion and she agreed to do so. Mr. Minning asked if there was any information about the effects of changes in sand grain size from native conditions to renourished beaches. Ms. Langer said that their review suggested that there was no apparent effect, or at least any potential effects were much more minor than other factors such as lighting. Nicole Elko noted that FFWC sends letters annually to local governments saying that light shields are available without cost. The Committee asked Public Works staff to work with Code Enforcement and the Turtle Patrol to determine if shields would be helpful on the public lights and to follow-up with FFWC to request them. Lastly, Ms. Langer said that volunteers are always needed for Turtle Patrol and interested residents should contact her at the Aquarium.

4. Cliff Truitt provided a status report on the work to establish an Erosion Control Line (ECL) as a requirement for the Sand Sharing project. His update including showing the Committee the plot of the draft proposed ECL on 1968 and on current aerial photography. Cliff was asked about the next steps for completion of the ECL work and Committee discussion ensued about what level of local public participation was reasonable before the formal FDEP public hearing. The Committee was somewhat divided on the question and eventually it was agreed to ask the City Commission for direction. Cliff Truitt was asked to attend the Commission meeting on December 19th to talk about the beach plan update and to participate in any Commission discussion of local public input for the ECL.

5. The Committee next discussed the recent dune planting effort. All agreed that the plants were looking very healthy and Rick Raus confirmed that the City was no longer watering the planted areas. John Burke said he had observed areas where the larger plants were already trapping sand and showing some dune growth. The next step is to plant liner-size sea oats and to add railroad vine, morning glory and other species diversity to the area. Nicole Elko was asked if the County could provide 500 gallon-size plants each of several species plus 9000 liner-size sea oats. The next planting date was tentatively scheduled for 9:00 AM on January 27th meeting at 124th Avenue. Lisa Martinez-Romano asked about any plans for additional planting along Sunset Beach and the Committee followed with further discussion about history/plans for that area.

6. Bob Minning distributed copies of the November 14th memo from the Committee to the City Commission about Sand Dune Policy Issues. As previously noted, the Commission will discuss the issues at a workshop on December 19th. The memo summarized Committee concerns in four areas: a Dune Preservation Zone; Maintenance of the Primary Dune; Dune Walkovers (especially from private property to the beach); and, establishing “No Rake” areas on the beach. There was brief Committee discussion of each issue, leading to a general re-statement of the Committee’s concern that the City’s present approach to these issues is not consistent with the existing dune protection ordinance and Comprehensive Plan policies.

7. Committee Member Remarks:

John Burke said that the November 11th beach clean-up had attracted 56 people including a number of students from Seminole High School. Six-hundred and fifty pounds of trash was collected and disposed of. Thirty-one people participated in the December 9th clean-up. John mentioned that he had also asked the student participants about their potential interest in volunteering for one of the planting days. John circulated a photograph of the Sunshine Beach area that showed a substantial sand deposit/bar offshore. This led to further general discussion and Nicole Elko’s response that although a bypassing bar with shoreline attachment near 124th was typical of this area, the addition of over two million cubic yards of sand to the transport system had greatly ‘enriched’ the bypassing system.

Alan Bildz noted that at the same December 19th meeting the City Commission will vote on the purchase of the new raking tractor which is a significant issue affecting the beach fund balance as discussed last month. He said that the final bid for the tractor was about \$13,000

under the original staff estimate so that even if the purchase is approved the resulting fund balance will be closer to the desired \$500,000 than previously expected.

Nicole Elko discussed possible State and County assistance on new dune walkovers. Five “new” walkovers along Sunshine Beach have a cost estimate of \$180,000. The state FDEP has agreed to pay half of that amount, or \$90,000. She proposes that the City and County divide the remaining share equally, with each contributing \$45,000. A contract for the State participation is on the way and if that approach is agreeable to the City she will have the State agreement executed and returned to them.

Bob Minning said that he was not aware of significant new news on the Elnor Island grants or plans, but he would ask Lynn Rosetti to check on the status and report back next month.

There were no further remarks.

8. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for January 10, 2007 at 1:30

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15.