

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

November 14, 2007

1:30 PM

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

Chairman Dennis Velasco called the Beach Stewardship Committee meeting to order at 1:34 PM in the City Hall auditorium, 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, Florida.

1. The draft minutes of the October 10, 2007 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 changed to include a report from Brandy Downing with the Pinellas County Health Department on the Healthy Beaches Program.
3. Ms. Downing had been invited to visit with the Committee and discuss the bacteriological testing that is done by the Health Department on local Gulf water samples. The testing results had generated public attention over the past three months because some test results off Treasure Island appeared to exceed criteria for specific pollutants, including fecal coliform. Ms. Downing said that testing water samples had been done by the County along the City's beaches since 2000. She explained the details of how/when the samples are collected and test results reported to the Health Department, including provisions for a 're-test' if an initial test value is over the threshold. Another element of her discussion involved the "moving average" approach – meaning that each new week's results are averaged with the ones for the previous 5 weeks. The disadvantage of this approach is that a single 'high' reading from one sampling event can skew the results for several weeks into the future because it continues to be counted in the moving average. There was considerable Committee discussion about the actual test results and potential sources. Ms. Downing said that the Department had looked at a number of potential sources (outfall pipes, vessels, etc) and also tried to correlate sample results with other events such as specific tidal conditions, but there was no conclusive relationship to any specific source or condition. She further noted that because of the many species and forms of similar bacteria, it is not even clear that the original source was human-related.

Dennis Velasco asked if there was further research on the situation underway. Ms. Downing said that it appears a USF professor is interested in the problem, but it would be very costly and time consuming to pursue the necessary research work. The Health Department will stay in contact and still try to promote the research effort.

There were other Committee questions and suggestions including Dr. Greenfield suggesting more sampling inside the pass and Mr. Burke asking if residual soil contamination, like from the previous O'Brien's Lagoon, might be a source. Stormwater runoff also could be a typical candidate source, but rainfall has been very low. Dennis Velasco asked if there was historical precedence for the high readings. Ms. Downing said that there had been two previous events that

she was aware of – in 1999 and 2005 – but, they were not nearly as prolonged. Bacteria levels typical do ‘spike’ in the summer months because the warmer weather promoted growth, but the values recently recorded are well above historical trends.

4. Cliff Truitt reported on the status of the work to establish an Erosion Control Line (ECL) or other ownership instrument as a requirement for the Sand Sharing project. The Mayor finally received a response to her letter to Mike Sole, the FDEP Secretary. The Department’s position is to allow for the local agreement to move forward in place of an ECL. The City Attorney, Maura Kiefer, had previously drafted a version of a local agreement. Following receipt of the FDEP letter and discussion between Nicole Elko and the City Manager, that draft agreement was sent to FDEP staff for review and comment. A draft resolution for City Commission action has also been prepared and will be modified for the Commission agenda as soon as FDEP comments are received.

5. Committee Member Remarks:

George Greenfield noted that the last planting had gone very smoothly and that the plants on Sunshine were looking very good and healthy. Commissioner Minning added thanks to all who participated, especially a family at 101st Avenue who took over the work and planted the entire area – the Committee would like to find out their names in order to further recognize them. General discussion of the planting continued, including the need to look at all remaining areas where plants could be placed and prepare another request to the County by December 1st for more plants to be delivered in February or March 2008.

Robert Minning also reported that he had attended a St. Petersburg Beach, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting. He had discussed with that group, and asked for our Committee’s input on the idea of a possible future joint meeting. He also said that the previous issue about dune walkovers on City property at the new Marriot and at Sunset Vista had been referred to the City Manager for investigation and recommendations. The preliminary suggestion was that the walkover could be built by the property owners, but under a special license from the City. There was a concern from Committee members about controlling the design of what would be built; however, it was noted that an FDEP permit would still be required and that review would dictate the design regardless of who actually did the construction.

Rick Raus reported that the bid advertising period had closed for the dune walkover construction package and one response looked technically sufficient and was within budget. That proposed contract will go to the City Commission for first review on November 20th. The bids are based on a linear footage rate, but the details of exact locations, lengths and design for each of the 18 sites would be addressed with the contractor in advance.

Nicole Elko asked about the status of the dune walkover agreement between the city and county. Rick said it was with the City Manager for final execution. Dennis Velasco then asked Nicole, based on her experience with other municipalities in the County, how Treasure Island was ‘doing’ on its beach program. She was very complementary of the City in terms of its organization and approach to the program, including having the formal Committee structure and the City’s use of volunteers. The very aggressive and successful dune planting program is one

example of how the Committee, staff and volunteers all 'come together' to effectively support and enhance the County/Federal fill project.

There were no further remarks.

6. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for December 12, 2007 at 1:30 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30.