

City of Treasure Island Beach Stewardship Committee

March 12, 2008

1:30 PM

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

Chairman Dennis Velasco 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 February 13, 2008 meeting had been distributed and reviewed by the Committee members. Upon appropriate motion, the minutes were approved as drafted.
2. Without objection, three items were added to the published Agenda: 1) Elnor Island update; 2) Signage at Sunset Vista Park; and, 3) Follow-up on Bird Nesting area.
3. Chairman Velasco asked each Committee member for their input and opinion on the idea of expanding the Committee's involvement into other environmental issues which might *relate* to the beach, but perhaps are not directly *on* the beach. It was also pointed out that some types of change in Committee mission would require prior action by the City Commission.

Committee members discussed the options and their respective preferences. There seemed to be a majority who felt that some additional issues could be included in the Committee's scope. Other opinions suggested that the Committee already had enough of a workload and if more issues were of concern to the City, then perhaps a different existing committee and/or newly formed committee should handle those concerns. This led to discussion of some example issues such as water quality and native plants, and how those topics were presently being addressed. Mary Daughtry noted that the Beautification Committee is knowledgeable and supportive of using native plants, but they do not have programs in place to directly promote their use by residents. Rick Raus said that the DPW landscaping program tries to use native plants and xeriscape techniques when possible, but there is no specific requirement for it. Similarly, DPW works with Code Enforcement on water quality protection through enforcing stormwater retention/detention management practices and stopping illegal discharges from contractors and other vendors doing work in the City. Commissioner Minning noted that the City had eliminated the requirement for minimum runoff detention from the City land development regulations in favor of a surcharge tax to fund future planning to deal with stormwater problems on a broader basis, but that plan has yet to be developed.

Mary Daughtry moved to recommend expanding the Committee's scope of involvement in environmental issues and to ask the City Commission to take appropriate action if necessary. The motion failed for lack of a second. Commissioner Minning agreed to bring the basic topic up for discussion at the next City Commission meeting under Commissioners' "Comments."

4. Cliff Truitt reported on information Nicole Elko had received from the City of St. Petersburg legal staff about the status of the draft resolution supporting an interlocal agreement in place of establishing an Erosion Control Line (ECL). The indication is that the City of St. Petersburg seems to be reluctant to enter into such an agreement directly with Treasure Island. One option suggested by Cliff would be for both Treasure Island and St. Petersburg to execute separate agreements with the State, but not necessarily with each other. Our legal staff, the Mayor and Commissioner Minning will continue to work together and meet with St. Petersburg staff on the situation.

5. Commissioner Minning reported that the Notice to Proceed on the Elnor Island work was being sent to the contractor, BRA. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission staff had reviewed and approved BRA's proposal for a revised scope and extended grant schedule that would allow for spraying the exotics with herbicide once a year for 4 years. The first spraying event would be in the end of March to first part of April. However, the portion of the funds originally intended to hire a barge to help volunteers remove trash from the site was not carried forward by the FWC. There was Committee discussion about the problems associated with a clean-up day, including an alternative for the leased barge, shallow water access, and eventual disposal of the trash. Dennis Velasco will take over Commissioner Minning's role on the Elnor Island sub-committee and planning will continue on arranging a volunteer day following the BRA exotic spraying.

6. Dr. Beth Forys from Eckerd College did follow-up after last month's Committee meeting with suggestions for three areas suitable for the more proactive bird protection/conservation measures. One area was south of Sunset Beach; the second at mid-island; and the third on the north end, almost to the jetty. The areas would be staked with warning tape early in the potential nesting season to reduce foot traffic and encourage birds to be drawn to the areas. Other measures that had been discussed such as active enforcement of 'dog prohibition' and 'extra care' in driving maintenance vehicles would also be part of the effort. With the consensus of the Committee, Commissioner Minning will ask for the item to be placed on the City Commission agenda.

7. The City Commission has asked the Committee to look at placement of the educational/interpretive signage at the Sunset Vista Trail Park. One dune walkover is being removed and as a result, the current signage placement would need to be changed to be visible to the new beach use patterns. John Burke had looked at the area and favored placing all the signs on the waterward side of the dune front and suggested planting the walkover opening with sea oats to prevent its use as a footpath. There was additional Committee discussion about the need for permits and the possible use of some of the signs at other access locations. Eventually there was consensus that Committee members would all individually visit the area and come to the next meeting with suggestions.

8. Committee Member Remarks:

John Burke reported that the last beach pick-up day had to be cancelled because of high winds and blowing sand. He also asked about the status of the FDOT dune walkover grant money. Rick Raus replied that things were moving along again. The money has been confirmed

as available to the City and FDOT has assigned a project manager to help with the process. The next step is to coordinate a pre-construction conference next week with the project manager, City staff and the contractor.

Robert Minning observed that following the windy weather last weekend there was noticeable build up of sand in the recently planted dune areas. Dennis Velasco commented that in several areas the positive effect of plants, in general, was obvious from comparison of sand blown into the street and parking areas where planted dunes were not present to minimal problems where plants were holding the sand.

Nicole Elko was asked about the status of the 'jetty program' and the potential for extending the existing structure. She responded that there really was no formal program and the existing jetty is not considered part of the Federal project. The jetty had been constructed without objection from the Corps, but entirely at non-Federal expense. The County's overall Federal beach project authority is scheduled to expire in 2019 and she will pursue adding alternatives such as the jetty as part of the re-evaluation study needed to re-authorize the project. She also noted that the USF modeling study to look at processes around the passes was still underway, but not funded as a priority.

There was further discussion about the status of continued Federal participation in the County program. Nicole said that she had recently met with Congressman Young's staff and funding through FY 2009 looked good.

There were no further remarks.

9. The next regular Committee meeting date was set for April 9, 2008 at 1:30 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30.