

BEACH & SHORE PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Indian River County (IRC) Beach and Shore Preservation Advisory Committee (BSPAC) met at 3:00 PM on **Monday, February 22, 2021**, in Building B, Conference Room B1-501, 1800 27th St, Vero Beach, FL. You may hear meeting audio and review the agenda and minutes on the IRC website: www.ircgov.com/Boards/BSPC/2021.

Members present

David Barney, Chairman, BCC Appointee
William “Tuck” Ferrell, Vice Chairman, BCC Appointee
David Cox, BCC Appointee
Fred Jones, City of Sebastian Appointee
David Morgan, BCC Appointee
Mark Tripson, BCC Appointee
Commissioner Joe Earman, BCC Representative (non-voting member)

Members absent

Robbie Brackett, City of Vero Beach Appointee
Christian Hendricks, Town of Indian River Shores Appointee
Inocensia Hernandez, City of Fellsmere Appointee
Paul Knapp, Town of Orchid Appointee
Francisco San Miguel, BCC Appointee

IRC staff present

Kylie Ariotti, Beach Program Specialist
Quintin Bergman, Environmental Specialist
Eric Charest, Natural Resources Manager
Kevin Kirwin, Director, Parks & Recreation
Molly Klinepeter, Lagoon Plan Environmental Specialist
Mike Zito, Assistant County Administrator/General Services
Ed Offutt, Commissioner Assistant, Recording Secretary

Others present

James Gray, Executive Director, Sebastian Inlet District (*via Zoom*)
Paul Hart, General Manager, Disney's Vero Beach Resort (*via Zoom*)

Call to Order

(3:00 PM) Chairman Barney called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2021

(3:00 PM) ON MOTION BY Mr. Tripson, SECONDED BY Mr. Ferrell, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021, as presented.

Coastal Division Updates

A. Round Island Beach Access Project – Mr. Charest

(3:01 PM) Mr. Charest revealed that the Round Island project had gone to bid and was currently in the “cone of silence.” (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest’s report.) Overall cost is estimated

at \$306,000.

B. Derelict Vessel Removal – Mr. Charest

(3:02 PM) Mr. Charest remarked that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) had yet to formally tag any boats in the Indian River Lagoon for removal. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest's report.) He noted that any agency or municipality can make a request to assess a boat for removal, and that currently six vessels are being tracked. Mr. Tripson wondered how many derelict boats might be present, and Mr. Charest stated that it would depend on the definition of the word derelict, as an owner can move a boat a few hundred feet and it would no longer meet the criteria. Commissioner Earman explained the process for removing derelict vessels, recounting how FWC "stickers" a boat and provides a number for the owner to call; if no response is heard from the owner and the vessel hasn't moved or been repaired within a reasonable timeframe (currently 60-90 days), the boat may be subject to removal. Mr. Charest added that a derelict vessel on a person's record will prevent the individual from registering other vehicles in Florida, such as automobiles, until the fees associated with the derelict vessel – sometimes in the thousands of dollars -- are satisfied. Dr. Cox noted that FWC will approve contracts for any boat removals that risk environmental damage. Mr. Jones related that boat owners should be careful when transferring ownership to another party, as the new owner must fully complete the transfer process to avoid responsibility for derelict vessel removal falling back on the original owner. Mr. Kirwin mentioned the difficulty of tracking down responsible owners when a sale is poorly documented.

C. Local Gov't Funding Requests (LGFR) Grant Application – Mr. Charest

(3:12 PM) Mr. Charest announced that the staff is working with the new Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) grant coordinator to secure funding for future work in Sector 3. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest's report.) He detailed that \$50M for this purpose – money which comes from "doc stamps" -- is moving through the Legislature for approval, and he hoped that this budget line item would be left unscathed. Mr. Barney asked if the \$50M would be committed to IRC, and Mr. Charest replied that the County is presently positioned well, with a ranking that appears that we would receive some funding on our request, although any funds received under the agreement would require a 50/50 fund match from the County.

D. Sector 4 Critically Eroded Area – Mr. Charest

(3:14 PM) Mr. Charest stated that staff, with APTIM's assistance, had fulfilled all FDEP requests for information, and was now awaiting state evaluation of the County-provided data. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest's report.)

E. Beach Preservation Plan (BPP) – Mr. Charest

(3:14 PM) Mr. Charest remarked that the next step in the BPP process would be to approach the BCC for final approval. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest's report.) Mr. Charest disclosed that the final version would be ready for endorsement by the BSPAC at the next meeting in March. Dr. Cox mentioned that he saw no reference to enforcement of beach lighting restrictions in the BPP, but Mr. Charest proposed that such inputs might be more applicable to the Habitat Conservation Plan. Mr. Charest affirmed that he'd send out another link to the final BPP to the members.

F. IRC Beach Restoration Project Updates – Mr. Charest/Ms. Ariotti

(3:20 PM) Mr. Charest recounted that Sector 5 was complete and in the first year of post-construction monitoring (out of four required years). He then reviewed the Sector 3 easement status, noting there'd been no movement in the numbers but advising the members that Sector 3 Phase 2 would still move forward based on the number of easements already accrued. Mr. Morgan asked to see photographic

examples of “skipped” (i.e., no signed easement) properties in Sectors 3 and 5, and wanted to know if these photos had been shown to Sector 3 homeowners; Mr. Bergman explained that he’d regularly used the photos in his discussions with them. Mr. Jones asked what might happen to a non-renourished property during a hurricane when positioned between two neighbors who had signed their easements, and Mr. Charest commented that it would weaken the entire project, with Mr. Barney adding that empirical evidence showed that seaweed would tend to collect in these depressions. Mr. Bergman remarked that while some wind-blown sand will partially fill the gaps, the missing sections of the dune would remain evident for some time, or at least until the next severe weather event.

(3:27 PM) Ms. Ariotti discussed the progress in Sector 3 Phase 1, showing photographs as she spoke and specifying that the contractor was finishing up in the Windsor area of the beach. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Ms. Ariotti’s report.) Mr. Barney inquired as to whether the project timeline had been extended due to the \$2.5M contract amendment approved by the BCC, but Mr. Charest said it hadn’t, adding that the end of April would be a “hard-stop” date that was only workable with daily monitoring for new sea turtle nests. He explained that the additional sand was required due to ongoing erosion in the Sector 3 Phase 1 project observed since the summer 2020 Surveys up to the pre-construction surveys performed in December 2020. Ms. Ariotti pointed out that 15% more plants like sea oats would be added, using FEMA funding, to stabilize the dune. Mr. Ferrell asked what other plants might be used beyond sea oats, and Ms. Ariotti mentioned railroad vine, dune sunflowers, and bitter panicgrass, in limited numbers.

(3:34 PM) Mr. Charest detailed the lack of movement in the Sector 7 easement shortfall, citing March 1st as an initial request date for gaining homeowner signatures. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Charest’s report.) Mr. Tripson noted that some residents still objected to the perpetuity of the current easement being offered. Mr. Hart asked if any change in the easement strategy might be coming to make Sector 7 a constructible project, but Mr. Charest again answered in the negative.

G. Sea Turtle Updates – Mr. Bergman

(3:37 PM) Mr. Bergman mentioned that the official turtle nesting season begins on March 1st, and that the first leatherback nest was observed in Martin County over the weekend of February 20-21. (See Attachment 1 for a summary of Mr. Bergman’s report.) Mr. Barney asked about enforcement of lighting restrictions during turtle season, and Mr. Bergman replied that Code Enforcement -- either at the County or municipality level -- was responsible for issuing citations. Mr. Charest said that many volunteer efforts in this regard had been curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Update from the Sebastian Inlet District (SID) – Mr. Gray

(3:40 PM) Mr. Gray reported that the SID had completed their programmed dune repairs on February 4th, encompassing 1.5 miles of dunes and using 60K cubic yards of sand. Total cost was \$1.1M, slightly increased from the original plan due to some material not being as usable as expected. He added that he would distribute the 2020 version of the “State of the Inlet” report as soon as the document is complete.

Status of County Beach Parks – Mr. Kirwin

(3:42 PM) Mr. Kirwin announced that work on the dune crossover at Seagrape Trail was complete, and that the trail has re-opened on February 20th; he added that the parking lot at that location had been refurbished during the closure. With Golden Sands Park being closed lately due to Sector 3 sand placement, the dune crossover lumber was also replaced at that location. Mr. Kirwin noted that upland improvements had been completed at Tracking Station Park, and affirmed that, this coming summer, the parking lot at Tracking Station will receive fresh millings to repair damage from sand-hauling trucks used for the Sector 5 renourishment project. Replying to a question from Commissioner Earman, Mr. Kirwin

advised the BSPAC that electrical and “trenching” work was being done at Treasure Shores to receive the High Frequency Radar antennas from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Commissioner’s Matters – Commissioner Earman

(3:45 PM) Commissioner Earman expressed his appreciation for the BSPAC’s work, and County staff’s. He remarked that the BCC had approved an additional \$2.5M in funding to properly complete the Sector 3 Phase 1 project. The commissioner announced that he was trying to maximize BSPAC member attendance. He again noted the current lack of sufficient easements in Sector 7 to facilitate sand placement beginning in November of 2021, and said further work was required in this geographic area to gain homeowner participation. He inquired as to the latest date that renourishment could occur in Sector 3 this spring, and Mr. Charest replied April 30th, with the potential limitations due to turtle nesting.

Committee Members Matters

(3:51 PM) Mr. Morgan commented that the standard easement language being used to enroll residents for perpetual sand renourishment activities could be changed to allow one-time permission for sand placement if the BCC dictated it. Mr. Charest replied that the County Attorney’s office would need to be informed if the BSPAC recommended to move in that direction. Mr. Morgan asked what easement proportion goal the County was pursuing before the Sector 7 suspense date arrived, and Mr. Charest responded that 90% was a standard objective to be sure the project would be “constructible.”

(3:54 PM) Mr. Morgan segued to the “Jones’ property on Jungle Trail,” asking if the BSPAC had any involvement with this project. Dr. Cox stated that there was no longer a citizens’ committee dealing with the Indian River Lagoon, as there had been in the past. Commissioner Earman divulged that several Lagoon projects would come before the BCC in 2021, and then commented that the \$50M “conservation bond” the County had paid-off early would be put before the voters for decision in 2022, with the options being to purchase more conservation lands, improve existing areas, or enact some combination of the two. Dr. Cox expressed his support for more conservation land purchases, and felt that any such measure put before the voters would receive overwhelming support.

(3:58 PM) Mr. Morgan asked if the County used remotely piloted aircraft (“drones”) to monitor the shoreline for damage/erosion, and Mr. Charest replied that ground-based visual inspection was the current method, although the Florida legislature was taking up the issue to better define the legal limits of drone use. Mr. Bergman added that there were already many rules governing how drones can be used, but these were being reexamined as this relatively new technology develops. Commissioner Earman considered the potential for drones to patrol County parks and beaches, and Mr. Barney contributed that Florida Power & Light uses drones extensively to map their operating areas and protect their infrastructure.

Chairman’s Matters

(4:01 PM) There were none.

Public Discussion Items

(4:01 PM) There were none.

Adjournment

(4:01 PM) With no further business, Chairman Barney adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting of the BSPAC is scheduled for **March 15, 2021, at 3:00 PM**, in Building B, Conference Room B1-501, at 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL.

Attachments

Attachment 1 -- Beach and Shore Advisory Committee Updates from the Coastal Engineering Division, February 22, 2021 (E. Charest)