

BEACH & SHORE PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Indian River County (IRC) Beach and Shore Preservation Advisory Committee (BSPAC) met at 3:00 PM on **Monday, June 20, 2022**, 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/2022.

Members present

David Barney, Chairman, BCC Appointee

David Cox, BCC Appointee

Commissioner Joe Earman, BCC Representative (*non-voting member*)

Bob Auwaerter (for Christian Hendricks), Town of Indian River Shores Appointee

Inocensia Hernandez, City of Fellsmere Appointee

Fred Jones, City of Sebastian Appointee

David Morgan, BCC Appointee

Members absent

Robbie Brackett, City of Vero Beach Appointee

William "Tuck" Ferrell, Vice Chairman, BCC Appointee

Paul Knapp, Town of Orchid Appointee

Francisco San Miguel, BCC Appointee

Mark Tripson, BCC Appointee

IRC staff present

Kylie Ariotti, Beach Program Specialist

Quintin Bergman, Environmental Specialist

Eric Charest, Natural Resources Manager

Melissa Meisenburg, Lagoon Plan Environmental Specialist

Rich Szyrka, Director of Public Works

Ed Offutt, Commissioner Assistant, Recording Secretary

Others present

Richard Mutterback, Assistant Director, Public Works, City of Vero Beach

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes from April 18, 2022

(3:00 PM) ON MOTION BY Mr. Auwaerter, SECONDED BY Dr. Cox, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the minutes of April 18, 2022, as presented.

Coastal Division Updates

A. Sectors 3 and 5 Beach Restoration Project Updates – Mr. Charest

(3:00 PM) Mr. Charest reviewed the performance of Sectors 3 and 5 dune plantings during the warranty period. (See Attachment 1 for a full summary of Mr. Charest's report.)

B. Sector 7 Beach Restoration Project Update – Mr. Charest

(3:03 PM) Mr. Charest detailed up-to-date information on the postponed Sector 7 project, including the lack of progress in acquiring further signed easements. Chairman Barney asked whether the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) were fully aware of the requests for one-year beach renourishment funding extensions, and Mr. Charest responded affirmatively. (See Attachment 1 for a full summary of Mr. Charest's report.)

C. Sea Turtle Updates – Mr. Bergman

(3:06 PM) Mr. Bergman reported that IRC's leatherback turtle nesting numbers were well on their way to breaking the county's annual record. (See Attachment 1 for a full summary of Mr. Bergman's report.) Dr. Cox inquired as to how the county enforces beachfront light pollution restrictions to support turtle hatchlings, and Mr. Bergman replied Code Enforcement takes the lead in this regard. Dr. Cox then expressed concern about short-term rental occupants not adhering to the lighting requirements; Mr. Bergman affirmed that he was attempting to obtain a copy of the county's list of approved short-term rental units so he could engage with owners to insert informative language into rental agreements and install prominent decals and "window clings" at those locations to fully inform the renters.

D. Indian River Lagoon Updates – Ms. Meisenburg

(3:12 PM) Ms. Meisenburg disclosed that the county staff had filed reimbursement paperwork with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for prior vessel removals, adding that new grant funding for derelict vessels would be available starting July 1, 2022. (See Attachment 1 for a full summary of Ms. Meisenburg's report.) Mr. Auwaerter, in a similar vein, asked about enforcement of new time-limited-anchoring guidelines, and several meeting participants alluded that local law enforcement would likely take the lead in this regard.

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

(3:15 PM) Mr. Gray was not present.

Status of County Beach Parks – Ms. Ariotti

(3:15 PM) The Parks & Recreation Division was not represented, but Commissioner Earman mentioned that Beth Powell would serve as the new Parks & Recreation chief. He announced that she was seeking to acquire textile mats to improve beach accessibility for wheelchairs, and that the county was working to renovate Ducks Head, Hogs Head, and Earman Islands. He mentioned that Ducks Head and Earman Islands will be made more "people-friendly," while Hogs Head will be maintained in a more natural state.

Commissioner's Matters – Commissioner Earman

(3:18 PM) Commissioner Earman presented his thoughts on the postponed Sector 7 beach renourishment project. He expressed his opinion that finding practical beach access points for a “truck haul” operation was a key enabler, first mentioning the potential of an empty lot at 816 Reef Road at the southern border of Sector 7 but cautioning that a gopher tortoise colony would have to be moved in order to access the beach through that location. If usable, however, he believed the lot would grant convenient access to the southern 3,700’ of Sector 7. He also mentioned the possibility of using one of several empty, privately-owned lots at the northern extremity of Sector 8, but cautioned that the further south the access point sat, the more distance trucks would have to cover when moving sand. In the northern end of Sector 7 (Treasure Cove to Anglers Cove), Commissioner Earman questioned the practicality of using any of several open, private lots as beach renourishment access points, commenting on how perhaps 150 dump trucks would have to drive through a gated community each day, past 15-to-30 homes, with a strong potential for damage to the neighborhood’s roads. Chairman Barney commented that a dredging system with a beach staging point was used the last time Sector 7 received sand, but believed this system was no longer an option.

(3:27 PM) On the topic of easements, Commissioner Earman advised the BSPAC that his conversations with key oceanfront homeowners had revealed their dissatisfaction with the perpetuity of the current easement language; off-beach property owners in the same neighborhoods, however, showed enthusiasm for the Sector 7 project. Still, he opined that the easement situation should be secondary to finding practical access points to deliver sand. Mr. Auwaerter wondered whether coastal homeowners’ associations could be pressured to grant passage through their neighborhoods, but Mr. Szpyrka felt that such a tactic was inappropriate for county staff to pursue, leaving it for the commissioners to consider.

(3:32 PM) Chairman Barney felt that, if the county could not collect the required number of easements and retain the FEMA and FDEP funding streams, the Sector 7 project should be abandoned. Mr. Szpyrka added that FEMA and FDEP were unconcerned about the method of sand delivery and simply wanted the project completed. Commissioner Earman commented that he was not certain of BCC support for a dredging operation (due to the anticipated expense), and Chairman Barney specified that a project of under 300,000 cubic yards would be hard to justify using a dredge operation despite Sector 7’s location as the closest beach to the county’s offshore sand borrow area.

Committee Members Matters

(3:41 PM) There were none.

Chairman's Matters

(3:41 PM) There were none.

Public Discussion Items

(3:41 PM) There were none.

Adjournment

(3:42 PM) With no further business, Chairman Barney adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting of the BSPAC is scheduled for **July 18, 2022, at 3:00 PM**, in Building B, Conference Room B1-501, at 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL.

Attachments

Attachment 1 -- BSPAC Updates from the Coastal Engineering Division, 6/20/22 (E. Charest)