

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 19, 2021 - 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Linda Borgia, Member
Janet Harris, Member
Michael Welch, Member
Dan Rothenberger, Chair

ABSENT: Lenny Stamos, Vice Chair

ALSO PRESENT: Mandy Edmunds, Parks Supervisor
Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer McMahon, Parks and Recreation Director
Ginny Keeter-Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk

After calling the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, Chair Rothenberger welcomed returning Committee member Michael Welch and thanked Linda Lynd Fontana for her many years of service to this Committee. New staff liaison Mandy Edmunds was also welcomed.

1. Presentations

a. Suncoast Rise Above Plastics - Carrie Ruckdeschel, Co-Chair of Suncoast Rise Above Plastics (RAP), and Hunter Miller, Florida Gulfcoast Field Representative of Oceana, gave a presentation on the problem of single use plastics, their degradation into microplastics, their effect on the health of animals, humans and the environment. They provided graphics and discussed what actions other municipalities in Florida have taken to combat this problem. Various approaches were offered including the implementation of an ordinance(s); resources were offered. Ms. Edmunds reported that following this same presentation at one of their meetings, the City Commission's direction was to speak with businesses and embark on an educational plan prior to making any mandatory changes.

b. Sunshine Law and Public Records - Assistant City Attorney Matthew McConnell reviewed a presentation on the Sunshine Law from the Special Council for Open Government as an annual refresher for Board members. The presentation included the background and scope of the Sunshine Law, three basic requirements of all public meetings, meeting conduct and penalties. He reviewed the Public Records Law, definitions, accepting requests, records retention and penalties. He provided additional resources and encouraged members to reach out to the City Clerk or Attorney with any questions or concerns.

Member Harris left the meeting at 9:55 AM.

2. Changes to the Agenda – There were no changes.

3. Audience Comments – There were no audience comments.

4. Action Items

a. Approval of Minutes – 2/17/2021

Chair Rothenberger noted that the minutes had Vice Chair vs. Chair Rothenberger in the minutes motion.

Member Borgia moved and Chair Rothenberger seconded the approval, with the correction, of the February 17, 2021 minutes; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Election of Officers 2021-2022

Member Borgia moved and Member Welch seconded the continuation of current officers Dan Rothenberger as Chair and Lenny Stamos as Vice Chair; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Items for Discussion

a. Status of Florida Senate Bill CS/SB 334 - Ms. Edmunds reported that the Bill died in Senate, therefore there has been no action at the local level. Her discussion with Pinellas Deputies finds it would be difficult to enforce. Chair Rothenberger added that the Bill did pass the Community Affairs and Environmental Committees but died in the Rules Committee.

b. Update on Volunteer Beach Cleaning Basket Stations - Although this is a successful program, Ms. Edmunds reported that the baskets have had to be replaced three times; the situation will be re-evaluated.

c. Sea Turtle Season - Sea Turtle season is now through October 31st. There are currently four active nests on the beach. Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer McMahon reported that all lighting on City property is now amber and turtle friendly. The City has worked with Sea Turtle Trackers to identify the condos and hotels that need to replace their lighting and there will be funding from the State in 2022 to assist private properties with making the conversion. The City is working with Duke Energy on some final lights of concern near concession stands in the next month or two. To promote further education, Ms. McMahon has asked Sea Turtle Trackers to provide a live Zoom educational webinar that could be posted on the City's website and shared with hotels and water sport vendors.

A discussion followed regarding electric bicycles on the beach, despite being prohibited. Mr. McConnell reported that his office is drafting an ordinance to inclusively address all beach activities. Transportation Director Michelle Gonzalez is looking at what other municipalities have done.

Following the agenda items, Ms. McMahon reviewed the powers, duties and scope of this Committee according to its governing City Ordinance.

6. Adjournment Next meeting is August 18, 2021

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 AM.

These minutes were approved at the August 18, 2021 Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.