

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 17, 2021 - 9:00 A.M.

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

EXCUSED: Lenny Stamos, Vice Chair

ALSO PRESENT: Mandy Edmunds, Parks Supervisor
Chris Graus, City Commissioner District 1
Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk
Holley Short, Audubon Florida

Chair Rothenberger called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He introduced Commissioner Graus of District 1, who was in attendance.

1. Changes to the Agenda - There were no changes.
2. Audience Comments - There were no audience comments.
3. Presentations

- a. Shorebird Monitoring – Holley Short

Holley Short, Program Manager for Bird Stewardship and Monitoring for Audubon Florida, provided a presentation on Black Skimmers with education about their life cycle. Southwest Florida is home to 77% of skimmers in the State and St. Pete Beach has one of the largest colonies. Their movement has been northward since 2015 due to disturbance and predation; 2021 saw no fledgling chicks at all on St. Pete Beach. She spoke about common threats by human influence including personal fireworks. She would like to work with the City on building protections into local ordinances, including fireworks. Parks Supervisor Mandy Edmunds explained that barges are being manufactured for various City uses with the anticipation of using them for keeping fireworks off the beach. A new beach ordinance is in the works as well; she will convey this information to be considered for inclusion.

4. Action Items

- a. Approval of Minutes 8/18/21

Member Borgia moved and Member Welch seconded the approval of the August 18, 2021 minutes; the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Approval 2022 Meeting Schedule

Member Welch moved and Member Borgia seconded the approval of the meeting schedule for 2022; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Items for Discussion

a. Paddleboard and McKenney & Egan Launches - Ms. Edmunds reported that PADL paddleboard stations have been added at Egan, McKenney Parks and Pass-a-Grille and Upham concessions. A kayak launch was also added at McKenney Pier. Floating docks are being manufactured for Egan Park and mixed uses.

b. Mobi-Mats – Permit applications have been submitted to the local Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for Mobi-Mats at the Upham Beach and Pass-a-Grille 22nd Ave. drive-overs. Once permitted locally, they will be submitted to the Tallahassee DEP. The mats are to create easier beach access for wheelchairs and other users. Another location will be added at County Park.

c. Upcoming Projects

o Sea Oat Planting at Dog Beach There was a successful planting last weekend of 400 four-inch Sea Oats and 20 three-gallon Seagrapes. This was to enclose the area for the entry to the dog beach access point. The project was in conjunction with Keep Pinellas Beautiful and paid for and installed by their sponsors - Ideas for Us and the Ocean Conservancy. The City is hoping to work with them again in the 13th and 14th Avenue area.

o Beach Clean-ups – Ms. Edmunds reported that from January to October, 21 beach clean-ups were held on St. Pete Beach, primarily through Keep Pinellas Beautiful, using over 300 adult and 85 youth volunteers, working over 1,000 volunteer hours. The next time clean-up will be in March.

d. Beach Buoys Update – Ms. Edmunds referred the members to the map provided in the meeting packet. The Director of Community Development, Michele Gonzalez, is in the process of re-working the buoy line. Until that time, replacements have been ordered for the missing buoys and should be replaced by mid-January. Member Borgia inquired about the faded buoys stickers in Zone 1 at Envoy Point; Ms. Edmunds will follow up on replacing the decals.

e. SB 224: Regulation of Smoking in Public Places – Ms. Edmunds reported this bill has been revived and will be considered at the next legislative session. She asked the Committee for their suggestions. The Committee had previously moved a suggestion to the Commission to ban smoking on the beach. The legislation would allow counties and municipalities the ability to further restrict smoking on their beaches and in their parks. Ms. Edmunds will follow up on how the County and other municipalities are handling and update the Committee prior to the next legislative session.

ADDED

Dunes in PAG – Ms. Edmunds reported that Public Works is planning that project work in 2025 or later.

Dogs on Beach - A discussion of dogs on the beach followed; Ms. Edmunds reported that there have been 172 violations to date in 2021. She will research the current fine amounts and the Committee will consider a recommendation to double those at the next meeting.

Bikes on beach – A new Micromobility ordinance had a first read at the last Commission meeting and pedal bikes were discussed. Ms. Edmunds asked for Committee input regarding pedal bikes. Member Borgia stated that this Committee had passed a motion in 2020 recommending the prohibition of bicycles and all wheeled conveyances on the beach, except cooler and strollers.

6. Adjournment Next meeting is February 16, 2022

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

These minutes were approved at the February 16, 2022 Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.