

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 17, 2023 - 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Dan Rothenberger, Chair
John Kurzman, Vice Chair
Betty Rzewnicki, Member
Michael Welch, Member

EXCUSED: Lenny Stamos, Member

STAFF PRESENT: Ayako Ruckdeschel, Beach Manager
Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer McMahon, Chief Operating Officer
Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk

Chair Rothenberger called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. He welcomed new Committee member Betty Rzewnicki and shared some of her bio.

1. Presentations

- a. Jim Kilpatrick, Fire Chief - Pass-a-Grille Rip Tide Safety; Actions to Prevent Drowning

Chief Kilpatrick opened by showing a graphic of how rip currents work, and signs of which beachgoers should be aware. Pass-a-Grille is more of a rip tide due to its geographical structure. The difference between the two was discussed. Signage has been installed as an educational warning. This is a complex issue that exists all along all beaches and beachgoers should be aware.

- b. Holley Short, Audubon Society – Black Skimmer Report

Chair Rothenberger introduced Ms. Short, Tampa Bay Shorebird Project Manager of Audubon, who spoke about her role. She distributed a recent annual report. She spoke about the black skimmer colony on St. Pete Beach and reviewed a presentation, which is part of the meeting record. The Black Skimmer is a State threatened species. She explained their appearance, habits, disturbances, predation and how human intrusion affects their life cycle. The City has relocated their fireworks to respect their habitat. Volunteers (650 hours last year) report on the disturbances and assist with educating beach goers (3,500 people from May-August). She asked that the City continue to work with her organization for the bird's protection.

- c. Theresa Aronholz – Sea Turtle Trackers Report

Could not be in attendance.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Member Welch moved, and Member Rzewnicki seconded the approval of the agenda as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

3. Audience Comments –

Cindy Perry Boca of Ciega Drive, a Black Skimmer volunteer, spoke about bicycles on the beach and their effect on the skimmers. Member Kurzman gave return comment.

4. Action Items

a. Approval of Minutes 2/15/2023

Member Welch moved, and Member Kurzman seconded the approval of the February 15, 2023 minutes as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Election of Committee Officers 2023-24

Member Rzewnicki moved, and Member Welch seconded the reappointment of Dan Rothenberger as Committee Chair for 2023-24; the motion passed unanimously.

Member Welch moved, and Member Rzewnicki seconded the appointment of John Kurzman as Committee Vice Chair for 2023-24; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Items for Discussion

a. Update on Beach Ordinance –

Assistant City Attorney Matthew McConnell explained that the City Commission has reviewed the ordinance twice to date and staff thought it appropriate for this Committee to review section by section to be current for any future meetings.

Chief Operating Officer Jennifer McMahon opened the item by reiterating the plan to review the most current version, which includes updates from the Commission's February 28th meeting.

Section 6.5 Consumption or Possession of Alcohol

Committee consensus recommendation was to keep Beaches in this Section

Section 95-1 Intent and Purpose

No recommended changes

95-2 Definitions

Cabana definition discussed; *Beach* definition from Florida Administrative Code
Committee consensus was to recommend removing the word 'domestic' from *Pets*

A recess at was taken at 10:07 AM. The meeting reconvened at 10:15 AM with updated copies of the ordinance distributed to all.

Definition of *Dune* was discussed

Suggestion of differentiating public vs. private.

Consumption On Premise - Suggested differentiation between public vs. private beach
Suggestion to add Unattended Fishing Line to the ordinance since the definition is here.

95-3 Penalties

Mr. McConnell indicated that this aligns with the Sheriffs Dept.

No recommended changes

95-4 Chairs, Umbrellas Cones and Signs

Suggestion that Public vs. Private needs to be defined

Discussion on b) adding 'only if nest is found' at the end

d) Suggestion of substituting 'portable shelter' for 'tent'

e) 'Signs' will be removed in final

95.5 Picnics and Food Consumption

Suggestion to remove 'public' in b)

No additional recommended changes

95-6 Tiki Huts

No recommended changes

95-7 Temporary Structures

Discussion on taking chairs in at night

Cross-reference Sec. 95-4 c)

Suggested to address the intention of the section

95-8 Vehicle Permits

Discussion of intent of h) electric vehicles (to avoid, noise, pollution)

Discussion on tags or stickers for resident bicycles

Mr. McConnell will investigate adding bicycles to insurance exempt vehicles

95-9 Beach Maintenance Regulations

Discussion who picks up trash where

No recommended changes

95-10 Prohibitions on Sand Beach

b) Strike the word 'public'

No other recommended changes

95-11 Animals Prohibited on Sand Beaches

No recommended changes

Could say dog/cat beach

95-12 Distribution of Handbills and Other Advertising

No recommended changes

95-13 Fishing on Beach

No recommended objections

95-14 Feeding Wild Birds and Seabirds

Add 'including but not limited to' the cited species

No other recommended changes

95-15 Fireworks

No recommended changes

95-16 Micro-mobility

Mr. McConnell may change language regarding sidewalk and mention e-bikes

95-17 Vending on beaches

No recommended changes

95-18 Solicitation

No additional recommended changes

95-19 Prohibition of Activities Disruptive to Marine Turtles

Do not specify only nighttime

No additional recommended changes

95-20 Permit Required

Mr. McConnell will research *Dune* definition

d) remove 'wedding' – replace with 'beach ceremony'

No additional recommended changes

95-21 Special Events on the Beach

Discussion that permits and site plans dictate the size of an event

No recommended changes

95-22 Transient Lodging Facilities

h) should be moved to another section

Discussion on designated alcohol areas and difference between 'occupants' vs. 'patrons' and wristbands

Intent is for hotel guests and local guests to both have access to cabana service

d) and i) could be all 'patrons' vs 'occupants'

The Chair called a recess at 12:15 PM and reconvened at 12:19 PM.

Robert Czysteczon, owner Plaza Beach Resort, 4506 Gulf Blvd. gave comment that the focus/starting point needs to be on private beach vs. public beach. He also commented on rip currents.

Jeremy DaSilva, General Manager of the Postcard Inn, gave public comment regarding cabanas, serving their guests, cabana zones, and wristbands vs cups.

Geoff Click of Suncoast Watersports commented on cleaning the beach, sports equipment, and turtle season.

Dave Winkler of Suncoast Watersports thanked the Committee for taking this deep dive and that the consideration of removing 'public' from the ordinance would send the wrong message.

Vice Chair Kurzman spoke about chairs at the County Beach.

Member Rzewnicki spoke about the area beyond high-water line protecting our barrier island; she believes the intention of the ordinance is to protect the beach.

5. Adjournment – Next meeting will be August 16, 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:49 PM.

These minutes were approved at the August 16, 2023, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.