

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 15, 2023 - 9:00 A.M.

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

STAFF PRESENT: Ayako Ruckdeschel, Beach Manager
Ariana Wilson, Admin. Assistant – Clerk’s Office

Chair Rothenberger called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Chair Rothenberger presented Holly Short from Audubon Society a certificate with St. Pete Beach being recognized as 4th in the Country for Marine Species.

1. Presentations

a. Status Report on Beach Ordinance - Matthew McConnell, Assistant City Attorney

Mr. McConnell gave an update on the Beach Ordinance. He stated a few Senate Bills that have passed since having meetings and workshops with the Board. One of them is Senate Bill 170, which requires Local Governments to complete a Business Impact Statement anytime an Ordinance changes. He stated the Attorney's Office was 80% in agreement with the changes wanted to the Beach Ordinance, and most updates have been made, however, the City Commission wanted them to come up with a percentage on the number of chairs based on the surface area on the beach that would be allowed to be left out. He stated this has been a challenge given that the percentage will impact everyone across the board. He will be presenting the City Commission with a report and see if they want to schedule another workshop with this board to move forward.

A brief Q&A and discussion took place.

b. Update progress report on Pinellas County Emergency Beach Renourishment project - Dr. John Bishop, Pinellas Co. Coastal Management Coordinator

Dr. John Bishop announced the emergency Dune Renourishment project is complete at Upham and Pass-A-Grille. Both have been constructed, sea oats have been placed, appropriate signage has been posted and they will periodically be watering them to ensure the dune vegetation can be established.

He gave an update on the Nourishment project and stated it is still on hold due to easement issues on Treasure Island and St. Pete Beach. He stated this is and has been a statewide problem and it has been affecting everyone not just the County.

A brief Q&A and discussion took place.

2. Audience Comments –

Rob Czyszczon, property owner spoke about the Beach Ordinance and the difficulty with finding a percentage for the allowable chairs since every parcel is a different size.

Leslie Price, resident, spoke about the zip line that has been installed on the beach.

3. Approval of the Agenda –

Vice Chair Kurzman would like to add a discussion item on what kind of information should be brought to the committee.

Member Rzewniecki moved, and Vice Chair Kurzman seconded the approval of the November 15, 2023 agenda with the addition; the motion passed unanimously.

4. Action Items

a. Approval of Minutes 8/16/2023

Member Rzewnicki moved, and Member Welch seconded the approval of the August 16, 2023 minutes as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Meeting Dates for 2024

Vice Chair Kurzman stated some of the dates potentially conflict with the Technical Review Committee meetings.

Member Marriott moved, and Member Rzewnicki seconded the approval of the 2024 meeting dates as presented.; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Items for Discussion

a. Discussions with Hotelier group regarding 'Pack In - Pack Out' concept and other means of messaging visitors at St. Pete Beach –

Ms. Ruckdeschel stated that Robin Miller could not be here today so instead Mr. Czyszczonek would be giving the update. Mr. Czyszczonek stated he has been working with Ms. Miller on this concept. He stated this concept is something that is impacting all beaches throughout Tampa Bay. Ms. Miller will be working on an educational plan to put out for all the beaches. He stated they were working on something to give to the Hoteliers that could be given to guests to remind them to keep areas clean.

b. Dune protection - signage and acceptable walkovers for beach access –

Ms. Ruckdeschel gave an update on the signage and dunes. All the new dunes have signs stating to keep off, she stated she observed guests adhering to the signage this past weekend.

Board discussion ensued regarding more signage and some plans for the installation of future walkovers.

Richard Malinowski, resident, spoke about the dune crossovers not being handicapped accessible and the lack of handicapped parking near the crossovers.

c. Inputs and Outputs -Added

Vice Chair Kurzman spoke about the City's website and what is listed as their inputs and outputs. He stated he doesn't feel enough is brought to the Board or they are made aware after

the fact. He made mention of how the Technical Review Committee processes cases and feels the Board should have a similar process. Member Rzewnicki stated she doesn't feel that this is something that is needed because the Board is involved and they do make recommendations to the City Commission as listed in the Code. Member Welch echoed Vice Chair Kurzman's comments and stated he would like to get into the beginning of things and not at the end.

Vice Chair Kurzman suggested the Board come up with a list of stuff that staff should be required to bring to the Beach Stewardship Committee.

Member Marriott reminded the Board that to achieve some of these wants, they would have to meet much more frequently.

Ms. Ruckdeschel summarized some of the discussion and what the board would like, which includes a report or summary of what applications the City has received such as weddings or events on the beach, and potentially being added to a distribution list for any matters regarding the beach.

d. Marketing – Added

Member Welch made some comments about a local business that is marketing Ebikes on the beach. He stated he wants to make sure that businesses are aware of rules and regulations.

Ms. Ruckdeschel stated although marketed, she has not witnessed or received any comments from residents of the public not adhering.

6. Adjournment – Next meeting will be February 21, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:19 AM.

These minutes were approved at the February 21, 2024, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.