



**BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH
COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

155 Corey Avenue
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706

Wednesday, May 21, 2025
9:00 AM

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call

REGULAR MEETING

1. Approval of the Agenda -

Action Request: Motion to approve the May 21, 2025 agenda.

2. Audience Comments -

Comments shall be limited to 3 minutes for general and agenda items. Public comment on agenda items will be allowed when that item is called. Please complete and submit a comment card to the Clerk.

3. Action Items -

a. Approval of February 26, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes and March 20, 2025, Workshop Meeting Minutes

b. Election of Committee Officers 2025-26

Sec. 22-306. - Election of officers; conduct of meetings.

(a) The beach stewardship committee shall annually, at the first meeting held following the appointment of members, organize by electing a chairman and vice-chairman and such other officers as may be necessary from among its members.

Current Officers: Chair Dan Rothenberger; Vice Chair John Kurzman

Requested Action:

Motion to APPOINT _____ as the Committee Chair for 2025-26 Fiscal Year.

Motion to APPOINT _____ as the Committee Vice Chair for 2025-26 Fiscal Year.

4. Items for Discussion -

- a. Update from Pinellas Co. regarding emergency beach renourishment/dune work**
- b. Update regarding the new staff liaison to the Beach Stewardship Committee**
- c. Budget request for needs affecting the beach - maintenance, marketing, code enforcement.**
- d. Continued enforcement on the beach for dogs/e-bikes/alcohol consumption.**
- e. Status of Beach Ordinance and Lighting Ordinance.**
- f. Turtle nest activity**

5. Adjournment -

APPEAL: In accordance with 286.0105, Florida Statute (Notices of meetings and hearings must advise that a record is required to appeal), if a person decides to appeal any decision made by this committee, board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA): In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Florida Statutes, if any person with a disability defined by the ADA needs special accommodation to participate in this proceeding, then not later than two business days prior to the proceeding, he or she should contact City Hall at (727) 367-2735.

**The public is cordially invited to attend this meeting.
All agenda material is available for review at City Hall or www.stpetebeach.org.**

DRAFT BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 26, 2025 - 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Dan Rothenberger, Chair
John Stevens, Vice Chair
John Kurzman, Member
Natalie Looney, Member

ABSENT: Brad Panek, Member

STAFF PRESENT: Ayako Ruckdeschel, Code Enforcement Officer
Ariana Wilson-Romo, Admin-City Clerk's Office
Nancy Stuparich, Vose Law Firm – Via Teams
Becky Vose, Vose Law Firm – Via Teams

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

1. Approval of the Agenda –

Member Kurzman asked to add two discussion items, item 4.d – Procedure For Getting Information Between Meetings, and item 4.e – Zero Tolerance Policy.

Vice Chair Stevens moved, and Member Kurzman seconded the approval of the February 26, 2025, agenda as amended; the motion passed 4-0.

2. Audience Comments –

No audience comments.

3. Action Items

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes November 13, 2024

Vice Chair Stevens moved, and Member Looney seconded the approval of the November 13, 2024 minutes as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

4. Items for Discussion

a. 2025 Beach Stewardship Goals Plan

Ms. Ruckdeschel informed the Committee she prepared 6 goals and an implementation plan based on the comments she received from the Board Members. The document is made part of the record. She reminded the Committee that this was not a permanent document, and they could add/remove any items as they saw fit. She reviewed the following goals and objectives:

1. *Keeping The Committee Informed On Matters Relating To Its Charter*

Action steps:

- Regular staff updates
- Public meeting agendas
- Information sharing

Resources Needed:

- Staff time
- Attorney time
- City Commission review/approval

2. *Development Of A Holistic Beach Strategy And Plan For Restoration, Renourishment, Preservation, And Protection Of The Dunes/Beaches*

Action steps:

- Assessment of current conditions
- Stakeholder engagement
- Implementation plan
- Monitoring and reporting

Resources Needed:

- Staff & industry experts
- Attorney time
- City Commission review/approval
- Staff to implement

3. *Beach Ordinance*

Action steps:

- Review & discussion
- Consultation with experts
- Present recommendations

Resources Needed:

- Staff & industry experts
- Attorney time
- City Commission review/approval
- Staff to implement

4. *Complete The Sea Turtle Ordinance (Adopting The Florida State Model Ordinance For St. Pete Beach)*

Action steps:

- Review of State model
- Public consultation
- Implementation

Resources Needed:

- Staff & industry experts
- Attorney time
- City Commission review/approval
- Staff to implement

5. *Public Beach Access*

Action steps:

- Mapping and analysis
- Strategic enhancement
- Public engagement

Resources Needed:

- Staff & attorney time
- City Commission review/approval
- Staff to implement

6. *Further Education Opportunities For Residents And Visitors Regarding Wildlife, Dunes, And Beach Protection*

Action steps:

- Public awareness campaigns
- Collaboration with local organizations

- Outreach materials

Resources Needed:

- Staff time
- Commission review/approval
- Staff to implement

Ms. Ruckdeschel listed steps to take in Quarters 1-3 of 2025. She noted additional meetings would need to take place to achieve these goals. She also noted that her position with the City has changed and she is no longer Beach Manager.

Member Kurzman complimented Ms. Ruckdeschel on her summarization and for putting this together for the Committee. He discussed how this Committee does not have authority and only makes recommendations to the City Commission. He stressed how difficult it has been that the Commission has not sought this Committee's approval or input on any matter related to the beach. He questioned how much further this Committee can be effective in a non-authoritative manner.

Vice Chair Stevens noted that the powers and duties of the Beach Stewardship Committee are very limited. Discussion ensued regarding making changes to the charter.

The Committee expressed interest in scheduling a workshop, to review all goals further. The Committee thanked Ms. Ruckdeschel for putting this packet together.

b. Beach Ordinance

Chair Rothenberger opened the floor to public comment.

The following individuals expressed sentiments about the Beach Ordinance and the hardships their businesses may face if the ordinance passes a second reading. Most comments focused on the removal of equipment and setbacks.

- Joe Smith – CEO of 1754 Properties
- Travis Johnson – Tradewinds
- Ed Sheeds – Post Card Inn
- Shawn Kwiatkowski – Bellwether & Beachcomber
- Krystn Simmons – Post Card Inn
- Parker Harvey – Don CeSar
- Rob Czyszczon – Plaza Beach Resorts
- Brad Cochran, Sirata Beach Resort

Discussion ensued regarding a chair model for hotels to use, tint on windows, and previous comments submitted to the City Commission.

Member Kurzman moved to request the City Commission table the Beach Ordinance until a town hall can be scheduled.

The motion died for a lack of second.

Member Looney discussed some hardships that they have faced as a committee. She stated this felt rushed; however, she is aware that this Committee has been working on this Ordinance for a couple of years.

Member Kurzman noted a plethora of mistakes still in the draft ordinance, including some specifics that he pointed out to the former legal team. He discussed how previous edits have altered the document and how cutting and pasting has changed the chapters.

Vice Chair Stevens reminded the board members of the challenges the City has faced such as administrative changes, legal department changes, new city management, back-to-back hurricanes, etc. He noted that they may have gotten into the wording instead of the intent of the Ordinance. He hopes the City Commission grants the community more of an opportunity to be heard.

Member Kurzman touched on the Code Enforcement Ordinance that is also being prepared for a second reading, which would allow Code Enforcement to enforce beach rules.

Vice Chair Stevens moved, and Member Kurzman seconded to advise the City Commission to consider an additional round of public feedback before the second reading of Ordinance 2025-02 (Beach Ordinance); the motion passed 4-0.

c. Beach Quarterly Report, 1 Oct. – 31 Dec. 2024

The report was published in the meeting packet. Ms. Ruckdeschel gave a brief overview.

d. ADDED – Procedure For Getting Information Between Meetings

This was not discussed formally.

e. ADDED - Zero Tolerance Policy

Member Kurzman stated he had some discussions with the Pinellas County Sheriffs and was informed that they were asked to enforce the Code, however, the Beach Stewardship Committee was not informed of this policy or the forthcoming changes. Ms. Ruckdeschel reminded the Committee that a lot of initiatives are engaged or driven by the City Commission who then give direction to the City Manager who implements those initiatives.

Vice Chair Stevens stated he is not a fan of this zero-tolerance policy; however he has noticed a positive impact with visitors following the rules. He does agree the policy is harsh, however is in support of this enforcement.

Member Looney commented on the FDOT sign that was placed at the Bayway Bridge, and how it can feel negative to residents and visitors. She stressed how important it is to educate the general public of why these rules are being enforced and stated the City may receive better compliance.

Vice Chair Stevens reminded everyone that every beach public access point has a sign that lists what is prohibited on the beach and these signs have been there for years.

Chair Rothenberger requested the Clerk's Office communicate with Commissioner Marriott regarding Member Panek's absence.

5. Adjournment – Next meeting will be May 21, 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:48 AM.

These minutes will be considered for approval at the May 21, 2025, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.

DRAFT BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MINUTES

March 20, 2025 - 9:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Dan Rothenberger, Chair
John Stevens, Vice Chair
John Kurzman, Member
Natalie Looney, Member

ABSENT: Brad Panek, Member

STAFF PRESENT: Ayako Ruckdeschel, Code Enforcement Officer
Ariana Wilson-Romo, Admin-City Clerk's Office

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

1. Items for Discussion –

a. Review of Beach Stewardship Goal Plan FY2025-26

Ms. Ruckdeschel thanked committee members for being present and stated that they would be reviewing the goals plan that she had drafted based on members' wants and needs. This is made part of the record. Discussion ensued regarding the board's liaison. Vice Chair Stevens noted that the City has restructured the Public Services Department to now include all beach services. He requested Ms. Ruckdeschel get in contact with Camden Mills, Public Services Director, to see if he has a timeline in which he plans to take over as the board liaison.

Chair Stevens stated he would like to review their goals and align them with the City Commission's top three priorities, which are internal operations, resiliency, and infrastructure.

The Committee Members reviewed the goals plan section by section.

1) Keeping the Committee Informed on Matters Relating to its Charter

Board members discussed some hardships they've faced with beach matters not being communicated to this Committee. They stressed that the City Commission should be consulting this Committee before making major decisions that affect the beach. Board members expressed interest in being informed on any beach matter prior to it going to the City Commission and they requested they be alerted as soon as staff is made aware of any beach matters.

Vice Chair Stevens stressed that there should be a standard so that everyone knows when to contact the Beach Stewardship Committee. He gave an example of a request for bid that was advertised in January for Dune Walkovers. Discussion ensued on standards for different projects and where those standards come from.

The Committee would like to receive notification of beach matters on a quicker basis whether that is by sharing agendas as they're posted, sharing newsletters and any information as it comes up. They would also like to expand their page on the City's website to include additional resources and information sharing.

2) Development of a Holistic Beach Strategy and Plan for Restoration, Renourishment, Preservation and Protection of the Dunes/Beaches

Board members discussed the critical need for beach renourishment and the role of dune systems. Member Kurzman clarified that while dunes serve as a protective measure for the beach, they are not directly related to the renourishment process.

Ms. Ruckdeschel reviewed the action steps listed and asked board members who they would like to do an assessment of the current conditions of the beach. Board members expressed they felt a lot of the assessments have already been completed by staff and the County due to the hurricane recovery. However, they would like to see more regularly scheduled assessments done.

Ms. Ruckdeschel stated she could invite some stakeholders such as representatives from Sea Turtle Trackers, Audubon Society etc. to provide insights on potential improvements for the beach and to share additional resources that could benefit the City.

Vice Chair Stevens raised concerns regarding the need for funding, leading to further discussion on the involvement of the Army Corps of Engineers and the status of easements.

3) Beach Ordinance

Vice Chair Stevens expressed some hardships with having the beach ordinance as a goal given that it is currently undergoing a second reading with the City Commission.

Member Kurzman stated he disagreed and would like to break the ordinance down by sections and topics such as alcohol, chairs, vehicles and bikes, animals, etc. He emphasized that this approach would allow for a fresh start and greater board involvement in the ordinance's development.

Member Looney echoed Vice Chair Stevens's comments and stated they already requested the City Commission pause the beach ordinance to allow for public input and they granted that request.

Board members concluded and agreed that they should be reviewing the beach ordinance regularly and make recommendations as needed to the City Commission. Additionally, they expressed interest in reviewing any ordinances related to the beach. Member Kurzman further suggested that ordinance language be shared with the public between readings to ensure a clearer and more transparent review process.

4) Complete the Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance (Adopting the Florida State Model Ordinance for St. Pete Beach)

Vice Chair Stevens reminded the Committee that during last summer's workshop on the beach ordinance, they decided that wildlife turtle lighting would be addressed through a separate ordinance. He stated the Committee was directed to work on this and there a model ordinance available. However, due to staffing changes and storm recovery efforts, progress has stalled. Staff needs to review the model ordinance and compare it with the beach ordinance.

Member Kurzman suggested that Code Enforcement conduct a nighttime review of the beach to assess deficiencies in the current ordinance, particularly regarding the continued presence of white lights.

Ms. Ruckdeschel clarified that the ordinance Member Kurzman is referring to is outdated and includes parameters that are not current. The new state model the city was given is up to date and needs to be adopted. She noted that Code Enforcement does a preseason and mid-season survey. Sea Turtle Trackers also do surveys on their own and report any findings to Code Enforcement. Any properties that are not in compliance receive a notice of violation.

Chair Rothenberger questioned how much time is given to properties to become compliant. Ms. Ruckdeschel stated that with a notice of violation, properties are given a ten-day minimum to begin corrective action. She noted that there have been chain supply issues. Vice Chair Stevens shared it took his condominium 9 months to receive the proper lighting and then additional time for installation.

Member Kurzman stated he would like to hear from some researchers who have studied western-facing beaches to inform the Committee on how the moon can affect lighting. Board members did not share the same sentiments as Member Kurzman.

Member Looney requested Ms. Ruckdeschel reach out to Legal for a status update.

5) *Public Beach Access*

Member Kurzman stated he was previously provided a map of public beach access points and it does not reflect the same information as the map that Ms. Ruckdeschel provided. Both maps are made part of the record.

Vice Chair Stevens shared that he believes this committee should be reviewing all public access points to ensure they are clear, open, and safe to the public.

Member Kurzman would like the Committee to identify all current beach access points. Board discussion ensued on easements and deeds and whether this discussion would be a better fit for the planning board.

Ms. Ruckdeschel suggested having Senior Planner Brandon Berry share information and input with this Committee.

Member Kurzman would like this to include resident access as well.

6) *Further Education Opportunities for Residents and Visitors Regarding Wildlife, Dunes, and Beach Protection*

Member Looney shared she would like to see more education opportunities given to the public. She stated there are organizations that want to educate the public but need the space to do so and it would be nice if the Beach Stewardship Committee could initiate some of these education opportunities. Ms. Ruckdeschel suggested collaborating with the Library for a week focused on wildlife. The Committee agreed.

Chair Rothenberger mentioned that The Florida Institute of Oceanography hosts monthly programs with over 300 people in attendance. He suggested reaching out to some local centers such as USF Marine Center, Eckerd College, etc. He also suggested having people who directly work on the dunes come to inform the public as well.

Ms. Ruckdeschel reminded the Committee that in the past they partnered with the Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce to educate the public about turtles and lighting and they produced a small card that could be handed out with a demo of appropriate beach lighting. These are currently available at City Hall. Member Looney added that many hotels host events regularly but they are not being widely communicated.

Vice Chair Stevens asked Ms. Ruckdeschel to share the draft goal plans with the discussed changes as it is available. He suggested removing the dates from the timeline section as it is no longer applicable. Committee members agreed. Ms. Ruckdeschel will make the necessary adjustments and will share the reworked document with the board members prior to sharing it with the City Commission.

Board Members suggested the City Manager look at the resource needs and then provide input to the Committee.

Ms. Ruckdeschel inquired whether the Committee had any feedback regarding the guest speaker from a few months ago who discussed resiliency and underwater artificial reefs. She asked whether the Beach Stewardship Committee views this as a long-term solution for beach resiliency. Board members expressed interest in exploring the concept further but acknowledged funding constraints.

The Committee agreed to maintain their regularly scheduled meetings and will call for special meetings as necessary.

2. Adjournment – Next meeting will be May 21, 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 AM.

These minutes will be considered for approval at the May 21, 2025, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.

BEACH REPORT

1 Jan – 31 Mar, 2025

Activity

- Beach cleanups - 168.83 lbs. / 120 volunteers (24-31-31 Jan)
- Beach cleanups - 61.33 lbs. / 32 volunteers (26-26 Feb)
- Beach Stewardship meeting (26 Feb)
- Beach cleanups – 256.01 lbs. / 79 volunteers (19-19-27-27-27 Mar)

Weddings & Special Events

- January 2025 weddings 11
- SSOVA Tournament (4-5 Jan)
- SSOVA Tournament (18-19 Jan)
- Mind Travel Silent concert (25 Jan)
- Tradewinds iHeart Team Building (31 Jan)
- February 2025 weddings 10
- SSOVA Tournament (1-2 Feb)
- SSOVA Tournament (8-9 Feb)
- Tradewinds Beach Bonfire (7-8 Feb)
- Tradewinds Beach Bonfire (15-19-26 Feb)
- Mind Travel Silent concert (22 Feb)
- March 2025 weddings 15
- PCI Volleyball Tournament (29-30 Mar)

PCSO Violations

January 2025

Citations: 2

- Alcohol on Beach – 1
- Sleeping on Beach – 1

Warnings: 29

- Alcohol on Beach – 1
- Dog Off Leash – 1
- Dog on Beach – 25
- Sleeping on Beach – 2

February 2025

Citations: 0

Warnings: 77

- Alcohol on Beach – 28
- Dog Off Leash – 5

- Dog on Beach – 17
- Dog on Beach/Off Leash – 9
- Glass on Beach – 12
- Sleeping on Beach – 6

March 2025

Citations: 0

Warnings: 245

- Alcohol on Beach – 142
- Dog on Beach – 41
- Dog Off Leash – 15
- Dog on Beach/Off Leash – 13
- Electric Bike on Beach – 1
- Glass on Beach – 29
- Straw on Beach – 1
- Sleeping on Beach – 3