



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

155 Corey Avenue
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706

Wednesday, May 20, 2026
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 20, 2026 agenda.

2. Audience Comments -

If you wish to speak, please complete and submit a speaker's card to the City Clerk. When called, approach the podium and state your name and address for the record. Comments are limited to 3 minutes for both general and agenda items. Public comment on agenda items will be taken when that item is called.

3. Action Items -

a. Approval of Minutes February 25, 2026

b. Election of Committee Officers 2026-27

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 chair and vice-chair from among its members.

The committee may move to retain current officers.

Current Officers: Chair Jon Stevens; Vice Chair John Kurzman

Requested Action:

Motion to APPOINT _____ as the Committee Chair for 2026-27.

Motion to APPOINT _____ as the Committee Vice Chair for 2026-27.

4. Presentations -
 - a. **Beach Capital Improvement Projects Update**
 - b. **Beach Activity Report 2026 Quarter 1**
5. Items for Discussion -
 - a. **Events on the beach**
 - b. **Signs on the beach**
 - c. **Public beach access point signage**
6. 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.**

BEACH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 25, 2026 - 9:00 A.M.

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

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Peckins, Assistant Public Services Director; Ralf Brookes, City Attorney; Ginny Bodkin, Deputy City Clerk

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

1. Approval of the Agenda -

Vice Chair Kurzman asked to add the five discussion items he previously sent in an email – Florida law Customary Use action plan, posts and signs on the beach, beach access points, and dune fencing (5a.-5e.). Member Thompson asked to add a discussion item on construction on the water side of the Sirata (5f.).

Motion: Vice Chair Kurzman moved and Member Thompson seconded to approve the amended February 25, 2026 agenda; the motion carried 5-0.

2. Audience Comments – No one came forward to comment.

3. Action Items -

a. **Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2025**

Motion: Member Looney moved and Member Rothenberger seconded to approve the November 19, 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

4. Presentations -

a. **Beach Activity Report 2025 Quarter 4**

Brian Peckins, Assistant Public Services Director, summarized the weddings, special events, and future special events from October through December, 2025, which had been included in the meeting packet. He reported that Keep Pinellas Beautiful held nine events, using 177 volunteers who put in 328 volunteer hours and removed 424 total pounds of trash. He also reviewed the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office violations for the same period (also included in the packet).

b. **Beach Capital Improvement Projects Update**

Mr. Peckins reported that Pinellas County is coordinating a dune planting project along Pass-a-Grille from 1st to 17th Avenues with EarthBalance as the contractor. Work will occur on weekdays only from sunrise to sunset, with equipment allowed to remain onsite overnight. Plant species will be finalized onsite based on actual dune conditions, with planting began around February 11th and will last 1-2 weeks depending on weather.

Mr. Peckins also reported that the dune walkover replacement project began on February 4, 2026, and will include the walkovers at 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 51st, and 52nd Avenues. Each walkover should take 1-2 weeks to complete. 2nd Avenue is completed.

Member Thompsom requested that in the future, walkover projects come to this committee for design involvement and input prior to work beginning. Mr. Peckins acknowledged the request and suggested that the members do site visits on the current project and provide feedback to Public Services. Treading has already been suggested by a resident. Chair Stevens added that the City Manager's Weekly Operational Reports contain helpful, current updates. They are available on the city's website [Government-Departments-City Manager-Operational Weekly Reports].

5. Items for Discussion –

a. **Florida Law Customary Use Action Plan (Added)**

City Attorney Ralf Brookes reported that the First District Court of Appeal issued a recent ruling related to customary use; the decision and an accompanying article were previously forwarded to the Clerk for distribution to the committee and are part of the meeting record. He summarized what he had spoken about two meetings ago regarding statutory framework in Florida and explained that customary use does not require action from the city to become the law; it already is the law. Nothing the City has done abrogates any rights under customary use doctrine. A more comprehensive presentation on the customary use doctrine will be provided at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Kurzman spoke about rights to the public beach and the distinction between 'wet sand' and 'dry sand.' He discussed the mean high-water line (MHWL) determination, and that the apparent line may differ from the calculated legal boundary. He referenced a 2019 City Commission meeting in which the former City Attorney indicated there was historical support for the beach having always been public, but that the city had missed the opportunity to adopt a comprehensive customary use ordinance after changes in state law. He noted the city instead adopted a more limited ordinance allowing customary use as an affirmative defense. He opined that this is a time to strengthen local ordinances related to customary use.

Vice Chair Kurzman also recalled that in August 2024 the City Commission discussed holding a joint meeting with the Beach Stewardship Committee to develop a plan for customary use but delayed action due to pending cases and later shifting priorities following a hurricane; he proposed moving that forward.

b. **Posts and Signs on Beach (Added)**

Vice Chair Kurzman raised concerns about the installation of 4x4 posts observed on the beach south of the Silver Sands. The posts may be intended to delineate alcohol-permitted areas associated with nearby hotels, which could function as a de facto exclusion of the general public from portions of the beach. It was noted that the stated purpose of alcohol control may not reflect the practical effect of the installations. Also, the location of certain posts may not correspond with the landward cabana or alcohol zones and may conflict with the natural beach conditions or public access expectations.

Attorney Brookes requested that photographs and addresses of the observed posts be submitted in advance of the next meeting so staff can research their location and purpose, whether permits were

issued, and compliance with City and State requirements. It was noted that installation of a rope-and-post fence would require a state permit, and potentially a city permit. Questions were raised regarding whether single posts are permitted locally, the total number and locations of new posts, and their relationship to approved cabana/alcohol service areas. It was also noted that at least one post included a red reflector and that some observed posts did not appear consistent with established cabana zone boundaries.

Vice Chair Kurzman will provide photographs and location information to the Clerk, Attorney and staff to research permitting, regulatory requirements and compliance and report back at a future meeting.

c. City Revenue from Beach Services (Added)

Chair Stevens questioned whether it is in the committee's purview to discuss tax revenues. Attorney Brookes explained that there is a committee of staff that are looking at revenue sources in the event the House Bill and legislation pass that would increase the Homestead exemption by \$100,000 for each year for 10 years, which would have a huge fiscal impact on the city. The Attorney will incorporate the beach revenue discussion with staff, to make full use of all opportunities, keeping in mind the balance between commercial interests/hotels and residents/residential.

d. Beach Access Points (Added)

The committee discussed preserving public beach access points and that remains a time-sensitive priority. There were concerns that access locations historically used by the public are being lost and stressed the need to identify, document, and protect existing easements and prescriptive access rights, particularly in light of state law supporting lateral public beach access when such access has historically existed. Attorney Brookes suggested compiling a list of specific access point addresses as the next step so staff can verify their legal status with the City. The group also noted that some areas are legitimately private but believed others may have traditionally been public. To support this effort, staff will assist with contacting a former city planner who may have historical maps and planning records and who may help clarify how access points were originally established.

e. Fencing for Dunes (Added)

Vice Chair Kurzman commented on research he had done that supported the use of slatted sand fencing to both clearly delineate dunes for the public and naturally trap wind-blown sand to help build and stabilize dune systems. He noted that current rope markings are often unclear and suggested fencing as a low-profile, physics-based solution that could strengthen coastal protection. He also raised the idea of using partial slatted barriers near sea turtle nests to help block artificial light from inland sources without impeding hatchlings.

Other members agreed that established Florida Department of Environmental Protection guidelines already support rope-and-post barriers, sand fencing, and planting sea oats, all of which function like natural dune builders and should be pursued, potentially through grants. The discussion clarified that lighting affects both nesting mothers and hatchlings, so solutions must address both behaviors. Members also noted uncertainty about typical nesting locations and suggested consulting sea turtle experts for data.

f. Construction at Sirata (Added)

Member Thompson highlighted the increase in active and planned resort redevelopment projects along the beach—including new pools, walkovers, restaurants, demolitions, and long-term plans at the Sirata, TradeWinds, and PCI sites—and said the committee needs a clear, high-level status report to stay informed and respond to public questions. He requested early updates on projects, including permit conditions, location relative to the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL), and dune requirements, rather than learning about them after construction begins.

Members discussed the importance of city involvement in any construction on the sandy beach, not relying solely on state approval, and suggested inviting resort representatives to provide brief overviews. Potential opportunities—such as dune restoration, protective design features, and a future coordinated boardwalk between properties—were noted, along with concern over the loss of long-standing beach establishments and the need for projects that serve a broad public.

Member Thompson mentioned the remodeling of the Paradise Grill at Upham Beach and stressed the benefit of informing Beach Stewardship members in advance of such projects, so they are aware and prepared when residents make inquiries. He also inquired whether a project for additional parking at Upham was still under consideration and requested that it be on the next agenda.

Lastly, as the next meeting will occur after spring break, members discussed whether any advance preparation or coordination is needed. One concern was that past “zero-tolerance” signage felt unwelcoming, and members suggested balancing strong enforcement with maintaining a positive tourism image. They also discussed how other destinations adopt seasonal rules, increased patrols, parking management, and alcohol controls to handle spring break crowds. Environmental impacts were raised, particularly the overlap with shorebird nesting season and the potential need for rope-offs and protection measures. Members asked staff to check on city plans for enforcement and readiness. It was also noted that ongoing resort construction and closures may reduce typical spring break activity, creating uncertainty about expected crowd levels.

6. Adjournment – Next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2026.

There being no further business, Chair Stevens adjourned the meeting at 10:05 AM.

These minutes will be considered for approval at the May 20, 2026, Beach Stewardship Committee meeting.



Upham Beach South Jetty

We have submitted a CIP project to replace the Upham Beach South Jetty for design in 2027 and construction in 2028. We have installed additional warning signs at the jetty due to hazards from the corroded sheet wall.

Dune Walkover Project

The Dune Walkover replacement project began on 4 Feb 2026. Dune Walkovers have been completed at 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, and 51st Avenues. Golf Coast Construction is still working on the 52nd Avenue walkover. Depending on weather and materials, they should be complete within the next 3 or 4 weeks.

Beach Maintenance Ride Along

We conducted a Beach Maintenance Team ride along with Jon Stevens on 8 May 2026.



To: Beach Stewardship Committee
From: Camden Mills, Public Services Director
Date: May 20, 2026
Re: Beach Activity Report 2026 Quarter 1

WEDDINGS

- January: 6
- February: 10
- March: 12

SPECIAL EVENTS

January:

- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (Jan. 9-11)
- MindTravel Silent Concert (Jan. 18)
- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (Jan. 23-25)

February:

- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (Feb. 6-8)
- MindTravel Silent Concert (Feb. 14)
- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (Feb. 27- March 1)

March:

- Sunshine Open Water Swim (March 7)
- MindTravel Silent Concert (March 12)

Future Special Events:

- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (May 1-3)
- Sunshine Open Water Swim (May 16)
- MindTravel Silent Concert (May 31)
- MindTravel Silent Concert (June 4)



- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (June 12-14)
- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (July 10-12)
- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (July 24 – 26)
- Sunshine State Outdoor Volleyball Association (July 31 – Aug. 2)

KEEP PINELAS BEAUTIFUL CLEANUP EVENTS

January-March

- 13 events
- 247 volunteers
- 579.50 volunteer hours
- 858.17 total pounds of trash

PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS

	January	February	March
Alcohol On Beach	0	5	43
Dog On Beach	9	18	6
Glass On Beach	0	0	0
Sleeping On Beach	0	2	4
Dog On Beach Off Leash	2	5	1
E-Bike on Beach	0	0	3
Feeding Birds	0	0	1
Fire on Beach	0	0	1
Total Verbal Warnings	11	30	59
Citations	1 (Alcohol On Beach)	0	1 (Sleeping On Beach)