



Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Friday, February 9, 2024, 9:00am
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

Present: Cindy Solomon, Dan Slotchiver, Andrew Vega, Tim Ahmuty, Council members Pierce, Miars, and Campsen, Mayor Pounds, Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Stephen Traynum

After introduction, Mayor Pounds restated the goals of the Committee: review beach restoration policies and practices and provide recommendations; develop recommendations for a more proactive response to beach erosion; and develop recommendations for new, consistent, and sustainable funding mechanisms to fund future needs and projects.

Director Kerr reviewed the beachfront jurisdictional and setback lines. He said the baseline, last set in 2018, is set every 7-10 years. Mr. Traynum added more details as to how OCRM sets the baseline and how it changes due to storm and or erosion activity.

Mr. Traynum then gave an overview of the City's beach preservation efforts since 1983 as well as the effects of the natural processes of erosion and accretion during that period. He stated that the past decade has seen more named storms that have affected the South Carolina coastline. In addition, the sea level has risen 5"-6" over the last 10-15 years. He said the island has lost more than a half million yards of sand over the past year, which is more than the previous 12 years. He shared how large-scale beach renourishment projects are considered.

Council Member Pierce asked if the City could be more proactive in the permitting process for future projects. Mr. Traynum said conversations about the next large-scale project are already underway. He said there does not need to be a need for renourishment to apply for a permit. He added, "The way we typically approach a project like that is to have triggers in place in the permit that would only allow the work to be completed should the beach reach a certain condition. So it kind of gives them some certainty that we're not just going to go move sand around for the heck of it. It is actually needed."

Mr. Traynum then reviewed the recent (2021-present) erosion activity in and around Breach Inlet. He shared that the low bidder for the Army Corps' project is currently working in Murrell's Inlet. He is unsure if they will need to complete that project prior to starting work at the Isle of Palms. If they must finish their work at Murrell's Inlet first, then the project on the Isle of Palms will be delayed for another month or two.

Committee members discussed who they would like to hear from and what they would like to discuss in future meetings. Administrator Fragoso said she would like to discuss “what we could pursue quicker today concurrently hopefully with the Army Corps’ project so that we are in a position to be able to execute a project” should the Army Corps’ project not last as long as expected.

Mr. Traynum shared, “A couple of years ago, we knew that for this next round of permitting, a large-scale project, we wanted to have an area where we focused on the south end, whether it needed it or not. So we had already kind of outlined what work would need to be done for identifying a new borrow area that was closer to the south end of the island. Right now, it is feasible to use the borrow areas that we know about on the east end of the island should we have the SHPO coordination we need. But it would be much more economical if there was a new borrow area further south. So part of our work we are doing is going to be looking at the opportunities for sand there, which would also require a lot of coordination with SHPO. So any permanent application that we have for nourishment would include both ends of the island regardless of really the sand source, and we actually did that on the last permit we had, too. We had a fill option for the south end if the condition hadn’t restored itself before the project was done, but the accretion kind of was going on there.”

He also suggested the option of installing a terminal groin but added that requires a lot of analysis and a renourishment project. He said dredging the inlet is not a good option because of the cost of mobilization and the lack of guarantee of the sand staying on the beach.

Council Member Pierce asked what, if anything, the City could do to protect the homeowners from 314 Ocean to 8th Avenue should the Army Corps’ project be delayed. Mr. Traynum said there is little that can be done other than sand scraping, trucking in sand, and adding sandbags.

Committee members would like to hear from someone at OCRM and to discuss the City’s finances with regards to beach preservation.

The Committee agreed to meet weekly on Friday mornings and taper off to every other week as needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk