



Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 30, 2024, 9:00am
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

Present: Andrew Vega, Dan Slotchiver, Tim Ahmuty (via phone), Council members Pierce and Miars, Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Stephen Traynum

Absent: Council Member Campsen, Cindy Solomon, Mayor Pounds

1. Call to Order

2. Discussion of developing long and mid-term beach preservation strategies

Mr. Traynum reviewed the draft IOP Beach Management Planning Scenarios document that can be found alongside the agenda for this meeting on the City's website. He defined reaches and stations with regards to beach monitoring efforts. He also shared beach volume data from 1996-present. He said, "You are quantifying how much sand do you need to get to a healthy condition and then how much sand in addition to what you need to keep that condition over a certain amount of time, assuming that the world is working in the future like it has worked in the past and our erosion rates aren't changing." At this time, it is not possible to know if the changes the island has seen recently are an outlier or the new normal. Mr. Vega added that citizens should be aware that there is no permanent solution, and the plan will be evolving over time.

Director Kerr said the staff would like to have triggers in place that prompt a permitting process and funding options already laid out by City Council to facilitate future decisions regarding beach management.

Mr. Traynum added that it will take some effort on the City's part to have regulatory agencies on board with open-ended permitting requests, but he believes it will help to communicate the City's desire to avoid dire situations in the permitting process. Administrator Fragoso believes it is crucial to stress to these agencies that the City needs multiple options to act upon to avoid long-term impacts to public beach access.

Mr. Traynum noted two things that need to be looked at when discussing a minimum healthy beach profile: is there enough sand to protect during a "decent storm event" and the long-term erosion rates. He said, "So, the ideal is really what are you okay with where you may have seasonal changes in the winter, you are going to have a narrower beach because you have more wave energy, so you want some season fluctuation in that, and that you can accommodate that and the storm events."

Mr. Traynum spoke briefly to the concern about harvesting sand from one area of the beach and taking it to another. He believes this to be more like recycling since so much sand has been placed on the north end and it naturally moves south over time.

Of the conditions at the Avenues, he said, “There’s a surplus of sand there. Let’s take it from that area and try to buy time. But again, with having that trigger there, if the beach condition is eroded to a point where you wouldn’t want to take the 100,000 yards anyway, we are going to be landward of the 600’ buffer, and it wouldn’t be an option.”

He said approximately 50,000 cubic yards of sand are needed at the erosional areas on the north end because he anticipates some additional erosion there as the shoal attaches over the next 12 months.

Administrator Fragoso said there was nothing in the recent data that would have triggered activity on the south end. “It’s so dynamic that we have to get creative, too, at identifying what those triggers are, and I think having a permit in place, knowing that it could have happened because we saw it happen last year, have something in place that would allow us to act quickly as conditions are changing, which we saw they were, as quickly we can maybe execute a project depending on the condition of the time.”

Director Kerr added that knowing the erosion rate and the year-over-year change in sand volume is critical in identifying triggers.

Mr. Traynum believes it is in the City’s best interest to align projects on the north and south ends of the island to save on mobilization costs. “If you do a project every six years, compared to every 10 years, adjusting for erosion rate, you have to do bigger projects every 10 years. But over a 30-year period, you are doing four projects every 10 years or you’re doing six projects at every six years because you have the one at year zero. So that saves you about \$10 million in mobilization over that 30-year period, plus you are getting some additional sand on the beach.”

He added, “So, having a 10-year time frame with the option for an interim project I think is a good planning goal, but then having the permit in place, should year seven, eight or nine warrant it, because we have just lost a ton of sand, had big storms, whatever it may be, certainly doesn’t hurt. So, I think my recommendation would be three years or so after the last big nourishment project, start the permitting for the next one so that in year five you would have a permit in hand for a large-scale project. At the same time, you would have a permit in hand for the shoal management projects. But then from years 5 to 10, you would have that permission ready to go at any moment for either of those two projects.”

The Committee then discussed the funding scenarios in the plan for joint projects at the north and south ends of the island over the next 30 years. Council Member Miars said, “If we are going to borrow the money, that we are going to pay extra in borrowing, is that canceled out by doing a larger project that is going to last us and we have less mobilization cost, and so we actually end up saving money by borrowing?”

Council Member Pierce asked if the City can work on this plan while also pursuing USACE projects. Mr. Traynum said yes, adding that the City should be prepared to act independently

until they are sure of funding from the Federal government. He also said any actions taken at Wild Dunes must be separate of the rest of the island.

Director Kerr said the staff needs from the Committee their idea of a minimum healthy beach profile, erosion rates for each end of the island, ideal project intervals, and triggers for small, medium, and large-scale projects which then lead to funding programs.

The letter to the USACE about the City becoming a federally funded beach and the minimum number of public parking needed inside Wild Dunes to qualify it for Federal funding were briefly discussed.

3. Next Steps

The Committee will meet on Friday, June 7, 2024 at 9:00am.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:26am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk