



**Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting  
Friday, October 4, 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, Cindi Solomon (via Zoom), Tim Ahmuty, Council member Miars and Pierce, Mayor Pounds, Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr

**Absent:** Dan Slotchiver

**1. Call to order**

**2. Discussion of Folly Beach's Federally-Managed Beach Program with Dr. Nicole Elko and Eric Lutz from the City of Folly Beach**

Dr. Elko shared the history of how Folly Beach became a federally managed back in 1993. Because they determined that the Federal government's work was causing the erosion to the island, the City secured a favorable cost share of all projects (85%/15%). Dr. Elko and City staff have worked closely with the USACE over the last 10 years, and they say the working relationship is much better now than it was before.

Dr. Elko closely monitors beach conditions and reports those conditions to the USACE. The City makes recommendations for renourishment when their triggers are met. The USACE also provides an Operations Maintenance Manual (OMM) that details the requirements for the City to sustain the integrity of the Federal project between nourishment projects.

Mr. Lutz added that the City put numerous ordinances in place requiring property owners to maintain the private property behind the project line in between projects.

Dr. Elko also explained that how the USACE uses the Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) to rank projects. She expressed how important it would be for the Isle of Palms to include all economic impacts of a healthy beach in their application for a federally-managed beach. She also suggested having the entire island be part of the feasibility study, opting to exclude the accretional zones.

The City of Folly Beach and its consultants begin preparations for their next project as soon as the current project is completed. The project that just finished was to replace sand lost from Hurricane Ian in 2018. Dr. Elko said they are never not preparing for a federal project. She encouraged heavy engagement with the State's Federal representatives in both the House and Senate.

Dr. Elko explained that they trigger the USACE when 25% of their monitoring lines have "lost their Federal project" sand. It still takes 2-3 years for a Federal project to place sand following

that notification. She said they cannot make the triggers more aggressive to encourage the projects happen at a faster rate.

Dr. Elko noted a benefit of being a Federally-managed beach is 100% sand replacement following a named storm, but added the timing of emergency work is not faster. She pointed out that Folly Beach has been getting a renourishment about every 12 years, but that there have been named storms in those intervals that have resulted in eventual renourishment.

Mr. Lutz said the City of Folly Beach budgets money into a reserve fund every year along with the contributions from ATAX money and the 1% Beach Preservation Fund.

It has been necessary for the City of Folly Beach to place sand where it is required for homeowners to do so and then bill the homeowners. The City determines how much sand needs to be placed on private property to maintain the federal requirements.

Dr. Elko added that they receive support from the USACE in the form of beneficial use projects. She said that while some projects are expensive and slow, over time, the City pays less money. There is assurance that sand will eventually be placed even if the erosion gets bad before that placement.

Mr. Lutz directed the Committee to the City's former City Attorney to discuss the easement process back in 1993.

Administrator Fragoso asked Dr. Elko's opinion about securing State funding and or helping the State to recognize the need for an intention funding source for beach nourishment. Dr. Elko said new leadership is needed within the SC Beach Advocates from municipalities that are not federally-managed beaches to help advocate that change in policy.

Dr. Elko will send the City ordinances related to beach management, their triggers, and their dune management plan.

### **3. Discussion of schedule of funding opportunities**

Mayor Pounds said he would like to discuss with City Council next week the financial levers within the City's control. Should there be an appetite to move forward with any or all of them, he would like to get the process of readings and public hearings underway.

The Committee briefly discussed the use of the Municipal Improvement Fee.

Council Member Pierce said it would be important to point out to Council that the City uses the Beach Preservation Fee fund for ongoing expenses every year. Administrator Fragoso added that City Council also needs to understand the ongoing operational expenses of the City and how much of these potential fee increases will be used for beach preservation. They also need to see how there will be a financial shortfall for beach nourishment even with all those financial levers activated.

**4. Next Steps**

The Committee will meet with representatives from Edisto Island at their next meeting to discuss their process of becoming a federally-managed beach.

**5. Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee will be Friday, October 11, 2024 at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane  
City Clerk