



Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Friday, November 15, 2024, 2:00pm
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>

MINUTES

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

1. **Call to order**
2. **Discussion of Emergency Erosion Control Policy Protocol**

The Committee continued their discussion about the extent to which the City should be performing emergency beach restoration work to protect private property and whether or not property owners should be permitted to erect hard erosion control structures to protect their property.

Council Member Pierce reiterated his desire to have funds segregated in the beach preservation funds for beach monitoring and emergency beach restoration efforts. He does not want these monies in competition with the funds set aside for larger nourishment projects.

Mr. Slotchiver said he believes the Beach Preservation Fund was created to protect the beach and beach accesses, and if the City doesn't have enough funds to protect the beach, it does not lessen their obligation to do so. He believes the City has a duty to maintain the beach until a nourishment project can be completed.

Director Kerr said the City's position supports large-scale projects and is currently acting on a case-by-case basis during this emergency erosional situation.

Council Member Pierce said it is critical to delineate the City's responsibilities and the property owner's responsibilities much like the City of Folly Beach has done. He believes these duties need to be addressed prior to the next large project so that residents are allowed to be more aggressive in protecting their property.

Mayor Pounds pointed out that it is not the Committee's role to solve that issue, but to recommend to Council that it create such a policy. He believes the City should pivot from its current position and focus on preparing for the large-scale projects and leave emergency work to the property owners.

Administrator Fragoso added the reason it is important to set such a policy regarding responsibilities about protecting private property is because other coastal communities who have been aggressive with their nourishment projects still deal with chronic erosion issues.

Council Member Pierce reiterated his concern that City Council must immediately address where the money for the next renourishment will come from.

Director Kerr said it will be important to clarify that policies recommended by the Committee are meant to address beach management after the beach is made healthy again.

Ms. Solomon shared several ideas she believes need to be addressed, including accelerating the work needing to be done prior to the next big project, generating a citizen/City Council committee that continues to address beach management, seeking a second opinion about the City's emergency and long-range beach management plans, and considering the development of a part-time or full-time staff position dedicated to beach management.

Administrator Fragoso said that City Council had no consensus on how far outside the State's jurisdiction a property owner could place a hard erosion control structure. She added that it is important to understand why there was no consensus before issuing a recommendation because a Council majority is needed for anything to pass.

Mr. Vega asked if a seawall is permitted, is it being built to protect land or a structure? He said there is research showing that seawalls create a repetitive nature of erosion in front of the wall. He believes the maximum build line is as far seaward of where an erosion control device should be permitted.

Ms. Solomon said that some property owners are not considering a wall that can be seen above the sand, but a subterranean wall meant to protect property. Director Kerr said such walls are prohibited by BCM within the critical area.

Administrator Fragoso asked Mr. Traynum if the protection provided by a seawall changes based on its distance from a house, adding that Folly Beach is trying to limit how far away from a house a structure can be built. Mr. Traynum said it depends on how it's built and the elevation. He does not see a benefit for putting a seawall far from a house.

Director Kerr noted that communities that allow seawalls on the beach have not seen a plethora of them built.

Council Member Miars asked if, in lieu of a special tax district, it would be possible to expect more financial participation from front beach residents during times of emergency erosion.

Mr. Slotchiver added that the City needs to allow homeowners to do more to protect their properties so that the ownership does not fall entirely on the City.

3. Next Steps

The Committee will continue to discuss hard erosion control protocols at the next meeting.

4. **Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee will be Friday, December 6, 2024 at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk