MINUTES
Regular Meeting – October 16, 2023

BEACH & SHORE PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John Heanue – Town of Orchid Appointee
Inocensia Hernandez – City of Fellsmere Appointee
Fred Jones – City of Sebastian Appointee
Mary Alice Smith – Town of IRS Appointee
David Cox – BCC Appointee
Shelby Graziani – BCC Appointee
David Morgan – BCC Appointee
Francisco San Miguel – BCC Appointee
Michael Sole – BCC Appointee

William Ferrell, Jr. – BCC Appointee, Chairman
Joseph Earman – Commissioner, District 3, Commission Liaison

The **Beach & Shore Preservation Advisory Committee** met at 3:00 PM on Monday, October 16, 2023, in room B1-501 of County Administration Building B, located at 1800 27th Street in Vero Beach.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman William Ferrell, Jr. called the October 16, 2023 meeting of the Beach & Shore Advisory Committee to order at 2:59 PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

William Ferrell, Jr., Chairman BCC Appointee
Inocensia Hernandez, City of Fellsmere Appointee
Cherry Stowe, Town of Orchid Appointee
Fred Jones, City of Sebastian Appointee
Ray Neville, City of Vero Beach Appointee
Bob Auwaerter, Alternate, Town of Indian River Shores Appointee
Shelby Graziani, BCC Appointee
David Morgan, BCC Appointee
Michael Sole, BCC Appointee
David Cox, BCC Appointee
Francisco San Miguel, BCC Appointee
Commissioner Joseph Earman, BCC Liaison

Members Absent

David Morgan, BCC Appointee

Also Present

Eric Charest, Indian River County Natural Resources Manager

Quintin Bergman, Sea Turtle Environmental Specialist
Gustavo Vergara, Indian River County Director of Parks and Recreation
James Gray, Sebastian Inlet
Jim Harpring, Indian River Shores
Ashley Brown, Indian River County Recording Secretary

3. **Approval of Minutes**

ON MOTION by Bob Auwaerter, SECONDED by Michael Sole, the members voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of September 18, 2023.

4. **Coastal Division Updates, including Beach Restoration Projects**

Eric Charest began the Coastal Division updates with information on the revised FDEP Grant 23IR2. This grant provides funding for beach damages sustained during Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. The grant has been received and executed. It identifies a revised amount of $7,722,000.00 in funding allocated to specific beach sectors to support repair efforts called out in the FDEP Recovery plan for Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

Task #	Eligible Project Task	DEP Cost Share (%)	Federal Estimated Costs	DEP Cost Share	Local Cost Share	Total
1.1	Construction – Sector 3 Beach	100%	$0.00	$2,656,800.00	$0.00	$2,656,800.00
1.2	Construction – Sector 4 Dunes	100%	$0.00	$2,376,000.00	$0.00	$2,376,000.00
1.3	Construction – Sector 5 Beach	100%	$0.00	$885,600.00	$0.00	$885,600.00
1.4	Construction – Sector 7 Beach	100%	$0.00	$1,803,600.00	$0.00	$1,803,600.00
Total			**$0.00**	**$7,722,000.00**	**$0.00**	**$7,722,000.00**

Additionally, the County has applied for $3.5 million in funding under the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) $350 million Repair and Recovery Program (Hurricanes Ian & Nicole). This request was made for Sector 4 funding as the grant is eligible for non-engineered beaches. The County has received a Letter of Award from the FDEM announcing that the County's Sector 4 Dune Renourishment Project is being awarded $2 million in non-cost share legislative funding. Lastly, the County has applied for $7.1 million in 50/50 cost share funding for Sector 3 under the FDEP Local Governmental Funding Request (LGFR) Cost Share funds during the current application period.

Sector 4 – Critically Eroded Shoreline Evaluation
(**Location: 0.5 mi south of Old Winter Beach Road to Surf Lane**

Mr. Charest stated all easement packages have been mailed to the oceanfront property owners. Digital easement packages are available to be sent by email if email addresses are provided. Several stakeholder groups have reached out to assist the County and digital easement packages have been provided to them. Staff members are coordinating with stakeholder groups for additional outreach efforts. The estimated Volume losses are 135,000 cy based on preliminary design documents based on dry beach with estimated costs: $6.0 million. Lastly, the FDEP JCP Permit Application has been

submitted and the USACE permit application has been submitted.

Sector 7 – Porpoise Point Beach
(Location: Treasure Cove subdivision south to the Floralton Beach subdivision ~2 miles)

Staff members have spoken with FEMA regarding how this project cancellation impacts funding for the other Sectors. The discussions continue, but will delay reimbursement from FEMA and FDEP for Sectors 3 and 5 until a determination can be made.

Sector 5 Update – Vero Beach
(Location: Sea Watch south to Riomar Beach Access 3.1 miles)

Insurance payouts received by the County for Sector 7 is now being reconsidered by FEMA for Sector 3 and 5 contributions in lieu of the County cancelling the current Sector 7 Hurricanes Matthew, Dorian and Irma project. This will further delay reimbursement funding from FEMA and the FDEP.
There are no Sector 5 projects anticipated during this upcoming construction season 23/24.

Sector 3 Update – Wabasso Beach
(Location: Seaview Sub. South to approx. Turtle Trail Beach Park ~6.6 miles)

Insurance payouts received by the County for Sector 7 are now being reconsidered by FEMA for Sector 3 and 5 contributions in lieu of the County cancelling the current Sector 7 Hurricanes Matthew, Dorian and Irma project. This will further delay reimbursement funding from FEMA and the FDEP. Staff members continue to work with FEMA on finalizing the Project Worksheets identifying Hurricane Ian and Nicole related damages to the Sector 3 beaches which would commit federal funding for repair projects. Details on a County-proposed Project is approximately 275,000 cy of sand and 728,000 native dune plants. Regulatory Agency coordination meetings have taken place on County proposed project and staff received confirmation that a dry beach project will not restart biological post-construction monitoring schedule. Hurricane Ian and Nicole Dune Repair project is currently out for bid with a bid opening date of October 18, 2023. Mr. Charest added that staff members are reaching out to the remaining oceanfront properties that currently do not have a beach easement for inclusion in the upcoming project.

Sea Turtle Updates

Quintin Bergman delivered the latest sea turtle nest update. The 2023 nesting season is coming to an end. One green nest was deposited last week. Lastly, nests are still incubating and hatching out.

Species	Number of Nests
Loggerhead	8639
Green	4105
Leatherback	27

As of Oct. 3, 2023

Indian River Lagoon Updates

Updates were provided on the status of the derelict vessel removal. Three of the vessels were completely removed on September 29th. A presentation will be given to the Board of Commissioners to show the progress being made and to discuss the reimbursement from FWC. Mr. Charest added that he is very proud of his team's work with the Indian River Lagoon. The Lagoon Management Plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners in late September. The county has adopted this plan which gives structure for future plans and projects regarding the lagoon.

5. **Update from the Sebastian Inlet District**

James Gray gave updates regarding the Sebastian Inlet District. He provided BSPAC members with copies of the updated 2023 Economic Analysis Impact Plan. Mr. Gray stated that this document is filled with helpful information. He proceeded to discuss information regarding boat registration in Indian River County. Our county has a total of 8,700 registered boats. Of those vessels, 60% are in the 16 through 26-foot class. The Economic Analysis documents provides information beyond economic impacts.

Mr. Gray continued on and discussed how the Sebastian Inlet District adds $536 million of value to our county annually. This value includes supporting maintenance required as well as the resources within the inlet. A study was conducted on seagrass to quantify how much value it added per acre. The Balmoral Group concluded that the seagrass brings in $29,000 of value *per acre*. Furthermore, studies indicate the Sebastian Inlet has economic impact of $1.1 billion to Indian River County. Mr. Gray concluded his updates by encouraging all BSPAC members to read the 60-page document as it contains a lot of valuable information.

6. **Status of County Beach Parks**

Gustavo Vergara delivered some brief updates on the County Beach Parks. He stated Round Island has gone through a beautification project on the north side of the park. A butterfly garden has been added and $16,000 has gone into purchasing plants and trees. The next phase will be to add a trail through the butterfly garden. Lastly, Mr. Vergara announced the final playground reveal will be coming soon.

7. **Commissioner's Matters**

Commissioner Earman began by thanking everyone who attended the meeting. He continued on and covered the tourist tax that was intended to bring in more tax money. The board voted 5-0 on increasing the tax by a penny after July 1st. However, it was not known at that time that the law had changed. Upon submitting the letter to the state in order to increase our county's bed tax, they were informed that the governor had signed a new piece of legislation which would prohibit this increase. Had it gone through, an additional one million dollars would have been raised for beach renourishment projects. Commissioner Earman stated the Board of County Commissioners would be initiating this bed tax in the future and will get it on the referendum. It cannot be during a primary election so it will need to wait for the ballot until the November 2024 election. He reminded everyone that this tax increase would only be applicable to county residents should they choose to do a stay-cation, otherwise it would not affect them. It applies to things such as hotels, vacation rentals and RV parks.

Commissioner Earman continued on to discussed the septic-to-sewer conversion, one of the biggest issues the county is facing. Residents have until 2030 to make this conversion. However, in his opinion, this is date is a little aggressive. Commissioner Earman explained that the Board of Commissioners are working hard to figure out how this transition will be paid for. He says there are a number of challenges, one being the existing infrastructure. As a county we are quickly growing but the wastewater infrastructure has yet to expand its capacity. He said in order to incentivize the transition through grants we will need to work with both the state and federal government. Constituents might have a real issue

when they discover the necessary work could cost $15,000. Alternatively, the general feeling is those people that are already on sewer shouldn't be forced to put the bill for those that aren't. Commissioner Earman emphasized this issue is being discussed by the Florida Association of Counties, the State, and Legislators. In total, there are 67 counties in Florida that will be impacted by the septic-to-sewer.

Commissioner Earman explained that this is one of the top priorities for the Florida League of Cities. In November there will be a Florida Legislative Conference and the septic-to-sewer transition will be discussed in-depth. Commissioner Earman said that they are going to get the proposed compliance date of 2030 pushed back to 2040 or 2050, as the current date is quite aggressive and may not be feasible for many Indian River County residents.

8. Committee Members Matters

Bob Auwaerter brought up that when Eric Charest introduced himself he used the term “interim” before his current title. Mr. Auwaerter explained that he’s been attending BSPAC meetings since 2015 and has always been impressed by Mr. Charest’s expertise, institutional knowledge, and ability to communicate with the state in order to get things done. Mr. Auwaerter hoped the Chairman and County Administrator would remove the “interim” title permanently.

ON MOTION by Bob Auwaerter, SECONDED by Fred Jones, the members voted unanimously to approve remove Mr. Charest’s interim title.

9. Chairman’s Matters

None.

10. Public Discussion Items

None.

11. Adjournment

Being no further business, Vice Chairman San Miguel adjourned the meeting at 4:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Brown, Recording Secretary