MINUTES - DRAFT
Regular Meeting – April 21, 2025

BEACH & SHORE PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John Heanue – Town of Orchid Appointee
Inocensia Hernandez – City of Fellsmere Appointee
Fred Jones – City of Sebastian Appointee
Taylor Dingle – City of Vero Beach Appointee
Michael Korpar – BCC Appointee
David Cox – BCC Appointee
Shelby Graziani – BCC Appointee
James Power – BCC Appointee
Francisco San Miguel – BCC Appointee
William Ferrell, Jr. – BCC Appointee

Bob Auwaerter – Town of IRS Appointee, Chairman
Joseph Earman – Commissioner, District 3, Commission Liaison

The **Beach & Shore Preservation Advisory Committee** met at 3:00 PM on Monday, April 21, 2025, in room B1-501 of County Administration Building B, located at 1800 27th Street in Vero Beach.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Bob Auwaerter called the April 21, 2025, meeting of the Beach & Shore Advisory Committee to order at 2:59 PM; a quorum was present.

Members Present

Bob Auwaerter, Town of IRS Appointee Chairman
Commissioner Joseph Earman, BCC Liaison
John Heanue, Town of Orchid Appointee
Fred Jones, City of Sebastian Appointee
David Cox, BCC Appointee
William Ferrell, Jr., BCC Appointee
Michael Korpar, BCC Appointee
James Power, BCC Appointee
Inocensia Hernandez, City of Fellsmere Appointee

Members Absent

Taylor Dingle, City of Vero Beach Appointee
Shelby Graziani, BCC Appointee
Francisco San Miguel, BCC Appointee

Also Present

Kylie Yanchula, Director of Natural Resources

Eric Charest, Assistant Director of Natural Resources
Beth Powell, Director, Parks, Recreation & Conservation
Joe Tilton, Recreation Programs Manager, Parks, Recreation & Conservation
James Gray, Sebastian Inlet District Executive Director
Ashley Brown, Indian River County Recording Secretary

2. **Approval of Minutes**

ON MOTION by William Ferrell, SECONDED by David Cox, the members voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of March 17th, 2025.

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

Eric Charest, Assistant Director of Natural Resources, began the meeting with Coastal Division Updates. He referred to the document that was emailed to committee members last week and added the following:

Project and Grant Updates

- An early announcement was issued last week summarizing project updates.
- A key development not included in the written update: The County received a $1.692 million hurricane restoration reimbursement grant from the State of Florida. This was part of a first-come, first-served allocation.
- Because Sector 4 was not eligible for FEMA reimbursement, the absence of federal delays has expedited the funding process.

Funding Summary

- To date, the County has received approximately $3.7 million for Sector 4 restoration: a $2 million front-loaded grant already in-hand0 and the newly received $1.692 million reimbursement.
- An additional grant under the Hurricane Ian and Nicole Recovery Project (Grant 23 IR2) is pending and is expected to cover nearly all remaining construction costs.
- The project has been very well-supported through state and legislative funding.

Sector 4 Designation

- Sector 4 has officially received Critically Eroded Beach designation, a milestone achieved through persistent efforts by County and Town representatives.
- Recognition was given to the Town of Indian River Shores and individuals who advocated in Tallahassee and worked closely with FDEP to secure the designation, which has been in pursuit since 2015.

Sea Turtle Nesting Season Update

- As of the meeting date, 12 leatherback nests have been recorded on county beaches. The

nesting season remains in its early stages.

3A. Sebastian Inlet MOU Negotiation Update

Prior MOU	Draft MOU	Justification
Sediment bypassing objective annual objective of 70,000-90,000 cubic yards	Sediment bypassing objective of 75,000 cubic yards (average)	Update for consistency with 2023 Inlet Management Plan
	Bypassed quantities of sand from dredging and upland hauling shall count toward IMP bypassing objective	Includes fill template and supplement fill template
Supplemental fill template from R-17 through R-40	Supplemental fill template from R-17 through R-30	Area of influence of Inlet as identified in recent TAC
	Entity performing the project is responsible for the permit required pre and post project monitoring	Ensure SID placement of R20-R30 would not trigger County required monitoring
	District may utilize Treasure Shores Beach Park for construction related activities. Ambersand may be closed but not used to access the beach.	Formalize current practice
County reimbursement to District for travel costs associated with placing sand in the supplemental fill template	Removed	Create flexibility to allow for negotiation where and when appropriate
County will undertake applications for storm loss mitigation for Sectors 1 and 2 given the County's "engineered beach" template qualifies the project for reimbursement.	County or District will undertake applications for storm loss mitigation for Sectors 1 and 2. Template may be from the County or District. If the County awards a contract to restore the beach, the District may have the option to fund a portion and receive credit towards the bypassing	Added to accommodate District participation in storm loss mitigation for Sectors 1 and 2
Term of 5 years with one 5-year renewal option	Term of 10 years with one 5-year renewal option. Either party may terminate agreement with a 90-day written notice	Deemed appropriate by both parties

Kylie Yanchula, Director of Natural Resources, provided an update on the ongoing negotiations regarding the updated MOU with the Sebastian Inlet District. The 2013 MOU and a proposed 2025 draft were distributed to committee members prior to the meeting for review. It was reported that despite multiple meetings involving county staff, legal counsel, and representatives from the Inlet District, a consensus could not be reached at the staff level on incorporating language regarding the bypass target objective and deficit tracking. As such, the current draft omits any specific language requiring accountability for bypass objectives.

Ms. Yanchula requested that the committee provide comment and, ideally, issue a recommendation of support or opposition for the current draft. If supported, the MOU would proceed to the County

Commission for further consideration. If not, discussions with the Inlet District may be revisited or potentially escalated via a special-called meeting between the two entities.

Committee Discussion:

Chairman Bob Auwaerter expressed opposition to the current MOU draft. He noted that, in his view, the MOU lacks sufficient accountability mechanisms to ensure the Inlet District fulfills its obligations under the Sebastian Inlet Management Plan (SIMP), which is mandated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). He cited language from the November 2023 SIMP final order indicating the Inlet District's responsibility for sand bypassing and expressed concern about past shortfalls, noting that the district only achieved 59% of its sand placement objectives in a previous year. He proposed an amendment that would require tracking bypass performance and planning remedial action if shortfalls occur.

Several committee members and staff acknowledged Chairman Auwaerter's concerns but expressed differing views:

- Some emphasized the importance of continued cooperation and flexibility between government agencies, rather than enforcing rigid accountability clauses that could hinder collaboration.

- Others pointed out that while the Inlet District may not always meet bypass targets independently, additional funding sources—including state and federal grants—have allowed the county to meet total volume goals.

- It was clarified that while the Inlet District is responsible for implementation, beach nourishment is funded from a variety of sources including ad valorem taxes in specific areas, state appropriations, and local tourist development taxes.

Commissioner Liaison Comment:

Commissioner Earman noted that while beach renourishment funding does not rely solely on county taxpayers, a portion of Indian River County and Brevard County contributes via the Inlet District's taxing authority. He expressed that while accountability is important, so is flexibility in recognition of natural and logistical variables affecting sand placement. He supported maintaining a cooperative, rather than adversarial, relationship with the Inlet District.

Mr. Ferrell shared historical context, acknowledging that while past sand replacement efforts were sometimes delayed or partial, the Inlet District has shown increased cooperation in recent years and is currently engaged in a significant sand placement project.

ON MOTION by James Power, SECONDED by William Ferrell, the members voted 8-1 in favor of accepting the draft MOU as developed by staff, with Bob Auwaerter dissenting.

Sector 4 – Dune Restoration Project
(**Location: 0.5 mi south of Old Winter Beach Road to Surf Lane**

Construction activities are complete, and site restoration has been accepted. We are now finalizing costs to close out Contract and present to the Board of County Commissioners for release of retainage.

Sector 7 – Porpoise Point Beach

(Location: Treasure Cove subdivision south to the Floralton Beach subdivision ~2 miles)

The Alternatives Design Proposal from Coastal Tech was approved by the BCC on March 25th and moving forward.

Sector 5 Update – Vero Beach

(**Location: Sea Watch south to Riomar Beach Access 3.1 miles)**

Staff members are continuing to receive responses on efforts to obtain remaining gap easements within Sector 5. The pre-construction workorder is under review and will be presented to the BOCC in May.

Sector 3 Update – Wabasso Beach

(**Location: Seaview Sub. South to approx. Turtle Trail Beach Park ~6.6 miles)**

The 2021/2022 Beach and Dune Renourishment Project has received partial FEMA funding and starting the reimbursement process. Regarding the 2023/2024 Hurricanes Ian and Nicole Dune Renourishment Project, FEMA PWs were received by the County. The Storm Damage Assessment Report completed and submitted to FEMA for 2024 Hurricane Milton Storm Damage Assessment FDEP Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton Recovery Plan released. IRC Sector 3 included in Report. May lead to some additional future funding should legislature include this in their budget.

Sea Turtle Updates

Mr. Charest shared that turtle season and dune etiquette PSAs are playing on local radio stations. As of April 4th, 6 leatherback nests have been recorded on the County's beaches.

4. Follow-Up On Public Discussion Regarding Lawsuit Against Sebastian Inlet District

Ms. Yanchula provided a brief update regarding the Sebastian Inlet District lawsuit. She explained that the court's final judgment found that the sand placement limitations constituted a "taking," leading to settlements with individual property owners. This update was prompted by comments made at prior BSPAC meetings and Ms. Yanchula aimed to convey the outcome of the final judgment and subsequent actions.

5. Update from the Sebastian Inlet District

Following the extensive discussion on the Sebastian Inlet District MOU, Mr. Gray provided updates on ongoing projects. He reported that approximately 19,000 cubic yards of sand have been placed between R10 and R17, with dredging operations in Sector 1 underway since April 5th. To date, about 40,000 of the anticipated 175,000 cubic yards have been placed, with a contract extension approved to allow additional dredging and sand placement for future use. Additionally, the North Jetty improvement project is progressing well, with concrete work completed and armoring stone installation approximately 60% complete. Final phases, including restoration and additional work, are expected to finish within the next one to two months, after which the jetty will fully reopen.

6. Status of County Beach Parks

Beth Powell, Director of Parks, Recreation & Conservation, provided an overview of Indian River County's first-ever Parks and Recreation Master Plan, highlighting the importance of the county's 22 miles of beaches and encouraging committee members to review and provide feedback. She noted no new beach access points are proposed but emphasized the need to maintain and modernize existing

facilities. Ms. Powell also reminded the committee about the ongoing third nomination cycle for the Environmental Lands Acquisition program and encouraged nominations. Additionally, she shared findings from the recently completed Boat Ramp Siting Study, confirming limited options for new boat ramp locations along the mainland's eastern shore.

Mr. Tilton, Recreation Manager, reported that repairs to all three beach crossovers at Tracking Station Beach Park are nearly complete and pending final inspections. The septic-to-sewer conversion project at the Tracking Station is still on hold, awaiting development coordination. Additionally, repaving efforts for the Treasure Shores Beach Park parking area are underway, with a purchase order in process.

7. Commissioner's Matters

Commissioner Earman provided several updates of interest to the committee. He reported progress on a septic-to-sewer infrastructure project in collaboration with the City of Sebastian, which is expected to go before the Board of County Commissioners for approval. He also highlighted pending legislative actions, including a potential requirement for all local-option taxes, such as the Tourist Development Tax and sales surtaxes, to return to the ballot for voter approval every eight to nine years.

Additionally, he discussed Senate Bill 7734, which would cap tourism advertising at $50 million before additional Tourist Development Tax funds can be allocated to public facilities, with $50 million currently designated for beach restoration. Commissioner Earman also mentioned ongoing discussions in Tallahassee related to the customary use of beaches and expressed concerns about proposed property and sales tax reforms that could negatively impact small, rural counties. He encouraged committee members to stay informed and thanked them for their continued service.

8. Committee Members Matters

Mr. Jones expressed support for the upcoming approval of the interlocal agreement related to the septic-to-sewer conversion project in the City of Sebastian. He reported that the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has secured a $3.6 million grant to assist in converting approximately 92 to 94 properties currently on septic systems. Mr. Jones emphasized the importance of this project for improving lagoon water quality by eliminating septic tanks from the area.

9. Chairman's Matters

There were none.

10. Public Discussion Items

There were none.

11. Adjournment

Being no further business, Chairman Bob Auwaerter adjourned the meeting at 4:07 PM.

A full recording of this meeting is available in the Office of Board of County Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Brown, Recording Secretary