

## Tybee Island Beach Task Force Minutes

October 18, 2007

**Members Present:** Berta Adams, Cecil DeLorme, Harvey Ferrelle, Amy Lanier, Henry Levy, Mary McCracken, Walter Parker, Freda Rutherford, and Lou Off

**Ex-Officis Present:** Hampton Spradley, Dan Parrot, ACOE; Paul Wolff, City Council; Diane Schleicher, City Manager

**Members Absent:** Helen Downing, Wick Searcy (E), and Mark Smith (E)

**Visitors:** Kevin Haas, GA Tech Consultant; Wanda Doyle, City Council; Jimmy Burke

Lou asked Chantel Morton for information concerning a meeting for all non-profits groups. Chantel responded that this meeting is to establish what type of needs the non-profits have and to go over any guidelines/issues that the non-profits might have and the city has with non-profits. The meeting will be next Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 pm. Lou invited any members that would like to attend. Lou stated that this would be a good opportunity to coordinate activities. Lou will attend.

Lou called the meeting to order.

There was an article in the newspaper on October 12<sup>th</sup> about tourism. The state aims to become a top 5 destination by 2020. We are currently \$17.7 billion in our tourist industry comparing to the top 2 – CA is \$77 billion and FL is \$61 billion. They mentioned the word “beach” so in talking with the Governor remind him that he wants to expand tourism.

There was another article on October 13<sup>th</sup>, FL Port Ivy's Expansion, not sure if they would be competing with the GPA or not.

From the Coastal Connection, there are several interesting things.

WRDA is back on hold. The Committee Chairman, James Oberstar Democrat from Minnesota, said last week the House would not send the multi-billion dollar WRDA to the President for his expected veto until Congress has finished work overriding his veto of a bill to reauthorize the S-Chip program. We haven't had a WRDA since 2000 and we are suppose to have one every other year.

A Princeton University Study comparing natural disasters globally since the 1960's, stated that they are more frequent, but less deadly. The account for that is a better response to environmental catastrophes. The study found the percentage that died in natural disasters decreased by ten fold between 1964-1968 and 2000–2004 period. At the same time the numbers of reported disasters increased from an average of 64 per year to 332 per year.

Someone in the National Defense Transportation Association stated that by investing \$2 billion in coastal shipping in ports, 700,000 trucks could be removed interstate 95 and 85 each year by connecting 4 pairs of ports on the east and gulf coast. It would cost \$8.5 billion to maintain the roads where as it would only be \$2 billion to invest in the ports. Road capacity is not keeping pace with the demand from 1980 to 2000 vehicle miles traveled on the nation's highways increased by 80% while miles of highway lanes grew 2%.

## **Minutes**

Freda made a motion to approve the September minutes. Walter seconded. Minutes Approved.

### **Corps Action and Status Report (See attached report for more information)**

#### Tybee Coastal Zone Management

Lou stated that this is very important to us because it rolls in the Advance Maintenance Widener, Regional Sediment Planning, and HB 727. Lou asked for more information on this.

Dan stated that they have prepared the report and they are looking at a variety of alternatives such as the definition of sand. They should have an answer from the Division on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>. Division may accept the report as it is or they may ask for it to be revised.

Lou asked if this report defined the sand for the beach and near shore and was the definition used that DNR established.

Dan stated that it was the same definition as well as how far off shore is in play. The proposed limits of the channel are from the AIWW (Inter-coastal Waterway) to Fields Cut approximately 5 miles up stream.

Lou stated that this will tell us the past and present maintenance dredging for the last 3 years. Once the report is available the BTF will review with Erik Olsen.

#### Channel Impact Feasibility Study

Five copies of the report delivered. The Beach Force needs to review and Erik Olsen review it. Diane will mail Erik a copy. Comments need to be received by November 1. A report presentation conference has been tentatively set for Tuesday, Nov. 27th, from 9 am to 4 pm. Analysis will be scheduled for the morning and the afternoon utilized for the scope of the next phase. Hamp stated that they had a preliminary list for mitigating possibilities, but would be opening the floor up for other ideas.

Lou asked if this would be important to coordinate this with the CZM Study.

Dan stated that there is confusing about the CZM Study and the Channel Impact Study. The differences are that the CZM puts a quantity in play based on what is beach quality sand and doesn't try to assume what is going to be on the beach. The Impact Study determines the quantity. Essentially they do the same thing. They are going to be coordinated, but they are have two different purposes. CZM is O&M practices and Channel Impact Study is a federally authorized construction general action to mitigate forever. They are related and parallel and they will be coordinated together.

Lou stated that at the next BTF meeting (Nov. 15), the BTF will take that time to develop the coordination input. Lou stressed that the BTF needs to have input on this because now the federal government is saying that 70-80% of sand is being stopped. We need to think about what we are going to do about it and the choices we have?

Freda asked if it was true that in the federal budget, islands south of shipping channels that have had these studies done moved to a different category.

Dan stated that it was correct. If it is shown through reports that the channel impacts, those have higher priority in the current administration.

Freda asked if they got funded this last cycle.

Dan stated that those that were established did get funded. They are working to get Tybee on that list.

Lou wanted copy of those funded.

Dan stated that Marlowe and Company could probably provide that information. It could be 4 to 5 years before Tybee is on that list.

Freda stated that our goal to get this done should be before the following re-nourishment.

Dan stated that higher priority does not necessarily mean getting funded.

Lou asked if Dan could get us a list of those places that are on the high priority list and how they are doing as far as getting funded.

Dan stated that in January 2009 there will be a new administration and they may have a different priority.

#### Tybee Island Shore Protection Project

According to Lou, Erik is on track to have everything completed in order to get the permit. Mark Padgett feels that he needs 90 days to get the COE permit so we are looking at being permitted by April 1, 2008.

Dan would like to go on record saying that the COE cannot control the other federal agencies. They can let them know what is coming. If Fish and Wildlife, EPA, and all the rest do their work on time then the COE can have the permit in 90 days.

Lou stated that one of the things Erik is working on is the environmental project which he can't do until the borrow area is defined. The borrow area can't be defined until the Vibraco vessel is ready. Pictures of the whole area have been taken.

Diane asked if the federal government decided they wanted to fund the re-nourishment, could a project agreement be signed. It was discussed and decided there is no downside to having a PCA (Project Cooperation Agreement).

Dan stated that it would take about 3 months for a PCA. They will amend the 2000 PCA. COE will be coordinating with Erik on this.

#### Tybee PIR Report for TS Andrea

COE is still proceeding with this.

Lou asked if the COE had received the beach monitoring and if Tybee could get a copy.

Hamp felt that Erik already had a copy of it.

There was discussion on the COE getting Tybee a copy or if Tybee would just get one from Erik.

Diane stated she would talk with Erik.

Kevin has the report, but is only going to share the near shore not the deep water.

#### FY-08 Budget

Berta felt that there was a bit of confusion after the meeting the other day. She understood that it would be best to do short term looking for State dollars for re-nourishment and long term to follow up with the Impact Study. We need to communicate to Washington that at the least we want the funding for the second phase of the study and the most \$6 million for the re-nourishment.

Jasper County Terminal Development, Brunswick Harbor Deepening, Savannah Channel Maintenance, and Savannah Harbor Expansion – See Attached Report

#### Old Seawall

Stan Kinmonth has researched some of the old files. This may answer some of the questions raised. There was a question asked on how long the timber pilings were.

Dan stated that they had no idea how much had eroded off.

Paul asked since these groins are so exposed if it would be feasible at dead low spring tide to take a tractor and dig out 6 ft and cut it off 6ft lower than it is and cover it back up. This would probably cover us as long as we re-nourish on a regular cycle. This seems to be the most economical way rather than pulling the whole thing out.

Lou asked if this could be done without a permit. It was suggested to talk with DNR.

#### Tybee Island Erosion – Kevin Haas

Kevin was asked by Diane to survey the beach to access how much damage had occurred in the last several weeks due to the northeastern. The survey was performed on the ocean facing beach between the North and South Federal groins. Nineteen cross-shore profiles previously established by the COE were surveyed to determine volume changes of sand and the position of the shoreline at mean high water (MHW). Data collected by the COE from August 2007 for each profile was extracted for comparison with the newly surveyed data – 6 week period.

Sand is moving from North to South Beach. There is a net loss of sand in the North, but not in the South. The total loss of sand for the whole area is 24,000 cubic yards. This is just in the inter-tidal zone so it is basic from the mean lower water-line up to the point the COE measured to on each profile. He also computed the position of the shoreline at Mean High Water. The average shoreline retreat is approximately 30 ft. for the entire island.

Berta asked if Kevin could characterize the loss of sand as a normal occurrence this time of the year and if it might be recovered.

Kevin stated that some may be recovered, but that this is some what unusual because it is so early in the year. On average the beach will continue to retreat up until the spring.

Lou stated that the last northeastern hit on a 9.5 ft tide.

## Packet

Lou passed out a packet that included general information for everyone to review. The first sheet is a composite of a letter that the American Shore and Beach Preservation sent out. The second sheet is a list of the Beach items (1-11) and a summary of the details. This would be helpful to people in conversations. The third and fourth sheet is a letter that Jason wrote to Major General Don Riley. The fifth sheet is an email Lou sent to John Woodley. The last sheet is a resolution written by the Mayor.

Lou asked the members to read the resolution and to see if they would like to present this from the City to the SEG at their meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Henry made a motion that the BTF pass the resolution and recommend it to the City Council.

Walter seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Lou has one fear. Bill Bailey's work is the least cost method which basically means the COE could say that it would cost more money not to place the material in the near shore.

Berta asked if the COE could give us the money for the cost to put sand near shore.

Dan stated that they had a dredge full of material they need to dump. If it is not place near shore then it has to go somewhere.

There is no more cost to take the material out than it is to place near shore.

Berta stated that if the Council passes this resolution, that basically the COE would place the material somewhere else besides near shore and there would be no money given to Tybee.

The resolution needs to be rewritten.

Henry withdrew his motion with permission from Walter who seconded the motion.

Jimmy Burke asked the cost of extending the pipeline.

Dan stated very little, but the problem is with the material coming out of the channel. He stated that in 94 the COE pumped sand right onto the beach, the proposal is to place the material near shore so that it will wash out.

Berta stated that if the material is deposited near shore will not beach quality sand, but it will washout.

Mary asked if it was better to put this material on the beach than not have it at all. Lou stated that it is going to be between the upper tide and lower tide line. It will basically be on the beach, but in the tide area so that it can washout. This will give us a buffer that is needed.

Lou stated that we had a presentation months ago. Two zones that go out from Second Street it is designed by ERDK as to the best locations to get sand on the beach. This is a theory that the material will come to the beach. What is not a theory is that the bad material will go out to sea while the good material will remain there or move to the beach.

Berta stated that we really don't have an option and the best solution for what we have to choose from is for us to accept this. Berta commented that we have to recognize where we are politically. One of the reason that she doesn't like to wait beyond the 7 year period is because of the acceleration of the erosion starts to move quickly and we react in desperation. She feels that we need to work for the short term re-nourishment and get that extra \$3 million from the State and get the re-nourishment done then work on to get the long term funding through the Channel Impact Study. Get ourselves recognized as one of those priority projects and then with that we can see if we can find other ways to supplement that. She stated that the State is working with us to get that extra \$3 million, but let it known in the meeting that it would not be advantageous for us to sue the COE.

Henry stated that another alternative is to object so strongly to the deepening of the harbor without re-nourishing the beach.

Berta stated that the word was spoken from the Governor on down by holding the port hostage and crippling the economic position of the port and it's complete edge would be such a bad thing that anything Tybee wanted would not happen. We would not only jeopardize getting sand. The Port knows this. We need to get the State to be generous to us now because we are not causing problems, get us that short term funding and then have L&G and some of the other industries to volunteer to give us the fund.

Freda asked if the Port was going to put a mitigation plan into the Harbor Deepening.

Lou stated that the plan is the 10 million yards of material near shore.

Henry feels that it is time to get mean.

Lou stated that when we are in the position to spend \$10 million of "Tybee" money then we can start suing them.

Berta stated that she is not opposed to suing when she feels that option is correct. She stated that when she went to GPA Board she was the one who stated that it may be a possibility. She didn't like doing that and they did not like hearing it, but she feels that this is not the right action now.

Walter stated that they have worked with us over the years.

Lou stated that we have had 4 re-nourishments: the feds have paid 60% for 3, the state has come in. Tybee has paid nothing for sand yet.

Dan stated that one thing to talk about is federal funds for the continuation of the study. There is approximately \$170,000 in the GPA account. The COE feels that it will cost \$250,000 (federal/non-federal) for this fiscal year to finish this study to get it ready for review. There is an \$80,000 short fall.

Dan stated that there is not money for the study in the present budget, House or Senate budget for FY08, but it could come in through negotiations.

Lou stated that none of this stuff is new. The first priority is the money for the study. We have to lobby for the COE. These are matching funds - 50/50 cost share. We are working through the system. There are good things that are happening. We have waited for 10-15 years for the army to do the study on their channel. We have gotten good information and we need to

continue that. We have HB727 and we need to marry these together. Lou encouraged all to be at the meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup> for their input.

### **Review of the Meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup>**

This meeting was a State meeting. It was the state committee organized by Lt. Governor Casey Cagle to look at Tybee issue and funding for re-nourishment. They were holding it as a hearing and so that had people speak to the issues and a question and answering time. Dr. Alexander, Skidaway Institute, talked about the history of beach erosion, migration, sand bars and how that works from a historic perspective. He talked about the impact of the channel deepening over the last hundred years and the effect that has had on Tybee. Mr. Solomon, a local business person, spoke on the need for the beach to be a quality beach so that people would continue to be attracted to the area. Businesses would prosper and property would be protected. Dan, COE, talked about the federal option. Berta again stated that the best option is go short term with non-federal funding and to look long term for the completion of the study and working out re-nourishment through the mitigation aspects of that study. Mr. Pickle gave a presentation what had been done in 5 different states – SC, CA, NC, TX, and FL – their approach of funding beach re-nourishment, their different strategies, most had a state fund program that was 50/50 cost share – 50 for State and 50 locally. Berta sensed that under this administration or in the immediate future any state programs established for re-nourishing beaches such as FL and SC. The State is not going to establish a trust fund, dedicated fund, or anything like that.

Amy stated that they would support the hotel tax.

Berta stated that the state's role is to encourage and support economic growth in the different areas of the state like supporting the GPA. Support whatever they do in Southwest Georgia, Atlanta and as those economic entities start to general and build up the area and that prosperity is to be used to and applied to the needs of the local area.

Berta felt that the outcome of the committee is that they are going to open the way for the City of Tybee to implement some taxing mechanism or some funding source that would generate enough funds for re-nourishment over the 7 year cycle period. In the past the state has not tried to help us with that. Erik Johnson has not committed to, but has expressed a strong interest in finding the \$3 million short fall.

Walter stated that in the past the City would always lobby the Dept. of Natural Resources Committee, the Senate and the House.

Berta stated that Tybee lobbied everyone for \$2.9 million that was the regular state contribution had the federal dollars been allocated. Since the federal government is not funding the re-nourishment, we are asking for an additional \$3 million. We are looking at \$7 million which we have never gotten. This will be an extraordinary allocation.

Diane had a meeting yesterday in Atlanta and was advised to do a market analysis and do a one page bullet presentation report to the governor to see if we could make our request for the balance. It becomes a request in the executive branch and not the legislative (not local assistance). All the local legislators will support it. The federal government is interested in storm surge protection. The state is interested in the recreation and tourism. Now we have to make a case on the recreational value, tourism and the economic impact of the beach. Diane stressed in the meeting that it was a state owned beach with public access to the beach, and we will continue to honor public access, but Tybee needed help. She working on that presentation.

Walter is meeting with Susan Shipman and Mike tomorrow.

Berta feels that Eric Johnson is going to be a strong help on this along with Regina Thomas.

Diane will be working with tourism. Erik Johnson and Ron Steven's office is working with the Dept. of Revenue to isolate sales tax to this zip code in order to do the analysis to show the spin off effect. The Governor is all about economic development and if we could present our case and get the additional funds into the executive budget. Susan Shipman is going to review the final presentation. Diane's goal is to have this completed in 2 weeks.

Amy stated that we should not down play down the storm surge too much because the more sand we have, the more protection we have, the faster the island can economically contribute.

Diane said this needs to be seen how it will affect the State of Georgia not just Tybee.

Berta stated that people locate in Savannah because having a coastal community close to the area attracts businesses.

Harvey made a point that we need to get the people back from Hilton Head because their beaches are always nice.

Lou stated that on October 24<sup>th</sup>, the Mayor has a meeting with the Lt. Governor. Amy has a meeting with the L&G Public Relation person. No news on the October 10th meeting Bobby Chu had with Steve Green, new Chairman of the GPA. The Mayor has also been having on-going meetings with Steve. There is dialogue going on and if we can get GPA behind us willingly, they can help us with the state. If L&G comes out with a voluntary program, the other 17 shipping companies may contribute. If we can do away with the federal and state funding, we can do what Hilton Head is doing. We can put the sand where we want it and when we want it. We will still need to market it. We have our parking revenue and also for every percentage increase of taxes on hotel/motel on Tybee alone is a little under \$300,000.

### **Storm Damage**

The Mayor asked Lou if the Beach Task Force would recommend as a possible temporary solution between now and next year as far as what we could do on the beach.

Some possible solutions are:

1. Moving sand to the beach within the beach
2. Changing the City Ordinance so that people could use the dunes

There was much discussion on changing the City Ordinance so that people could use the dunes. Many members were against this.

Lou stated that we have an emergency situation. DNR has already told us that under the situation that we are in this would be okay. There is a City Ordinance that prevents people in the dunes.

Henry stated that we should consult Erik.

Harvey stated that it is going to be hard to police it.

Paul stated that the best thing that the city could do is not enforce what is on the books because if the ordinance is changed then people will start taking their blankets and chairs, the sea oats will deplete and the dune will be gone.

Jimmy Burke stated that the COE contract states that we can't have a scarp over 18 inches. We have escarpments that are 3 ft high. We should level that area out.

Berta argued that once you implement that procedure. You open the door.

Lou stated by law we are required any escarpment over 18 inches to level out. We have discussed that with DNR. The point Jimmy is making is shouldn't we be leveling out that 3 ft escarpment according to our PCA.

Mary asked if we could put a time frame to this.

Lou asked again if the BTF wanted to make a recommendation to City Council about people sitting in the dunes even if it is as little as not enforcing the ordinance.

Henry stated that we can not recommend to the City that they don't enforce their ordinances.

Diane stated that she had been working with DNR and the dune sign has been moved back so that the first line of the dune is such a flat area that it is between the dunes. There is no vegetation there. A dune is vegetative and these are the ones we need to protect. The worse thing the city could do is have passive enforcement. Diane would like to check with DNR to see if the front dune closest to the ocean is not a stable dune and it can be leveled out and to make sure the signs are in place where they are going to be enforceable.

Berta stated that there is enough time between now and the spring to have Erik counsel the City Council and that's why we have a consultant. She doesn't understand the objection having the person with the knowledge look at it and give the City some direction. She stated that every dune starts out as a pile of sand. If every dune was leveled before vegetation there would be no dune on the island.

Diane will look at the escarpments to see if there is management that needs to be done and she will see what the DNR thoughts are on the front dune. The City has pushed the signs back, remove the snow fence in the front and allow people to lie in that front area.

Lou asked if Diane would like the Beach Task Force to provide to the Mayor and City Council a motion to have Erik Olsen come here and analysis the beach and if there is any way by the forced movement of sand that we can improve our beach for next summer.

Jimmy Burke stated that Erik Olsen was against moving the escarpment. The COE wanted to take it down because it was acting like a wall.

Lou stated the problem is with the turtles.

Henry stated that all it would take is a phone call to Erik to see if he was willing to give us a recommendation.

Amy stated that there is no place to go – CA, TX. People don't expect to have a beach. They know that the tide is going to come in. Why do we have to have the vast area for people to lay out?

Paul stated that St. Simon's has zero beach at high tide.

Lou suggested that Diane discuss with Erik Olsen the situation to see if there is a solution.

Paul stated that Kevin profiled our entire beach. Could he not give us a solution?

Diane sent the work that Kevin did to Erik so that he has that current data. She did ask Erik about moving sand for short term relief around the curve. He said that it would wash out right away. Tybee needs a re-nourishment to help that problem.

Lou feels that the beach should be closed from the entrance of Fort Screven to all the way down. There is 6 to 8 inches of steel exposed and when it is high tide those objects are covered.

Henry stated that adequate signs should take care of it. We need signs big enough to read where the objects are with arrows.

It was suggested to have sand fencing at the high tide line.

Jimmy Burke suggested putting a sign at the northeast end side of the North Beach Parking and stating that there is no swimming beyond this sign and the same at first. The majority of people that live here know and it will not affect them, but the tourists need those huge signs.

Henry and Walter didn't feel that we could close the beach.

Lou disagreed because he has seen beaches closed in other areas. Lou thinks that if the city doesn't mark that area that something terrible is going to happen. We need adequate signage.

Harvey suggested some type of a buoy that can be tied to that jetty that is covered with signage.

Henry made a motion that the Beach Task Force recommend to the City Council that adequate signage is needed for public safety with an explanation and indicating where the under water hazards are.

Mary seconded the motion.

Paul stated he felt Harvey's suggestion was good. We could tie buoys to the jetties with signs stating "underwater hazards, swim at your own risk."

Lou stated that we are not going to tell the City what kind of signs, but the City needs to be aware of the danger and that they have the responsibility to keep the people out of the area.

Motion was approved.

Meeting Adjourned.