



Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Monday, July 22, 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, Dan Slotchiver, Council Member Pierce, Mayor Pounds, Administrator Fragoso, Director Kerr, Stephen Traynum

Absent: Council members Campsen and Miars, Tim Ahmuty

1. **Call to order**

2. **Updates**

Administrator Fragoso provided updates on beach-related projects. USACE will start placing sand on Sullivan's Island first as the borrow sites dedicated to Isle of Palms are still too wet. Council Member Pierce asked for updated information regarding the USACE project to be added to the City's website. Administrator Fragoso said she has requested updated documentation from them but has not received anything to date. The shoal management permit has been submitted to the regulatory agencies for approval. The public notice for the permit has not been sent out yet.

Mr. Traynum said he has requested additional sandbags from Collins and is hoping to install 100 bags at Beachwood East this week.

Administrator Fragoso asked OCRM, now known as the Bureau of Coastal Management (BCM) about declaring the area from Breach Inlet to 10th Avenue an emergency. They responded, "that approach is not feasible from a regulatory perspective." She also asked them about the changes to the language that gives them more flexibility to address areas that are in critical condition but not yet at the 20' threshold. BCM said these properties would need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. She said, "We believe that OCRM would be agreeable to grant approval or permission, if you will, for the placement of sandbags in the 200 block and about two to three other properties that are not right at 20' but are really close to this critical area."

Mr. Traynum shared what his drone review revealed from last week. He said sandbags can be placed by individual homeowners with their own bond and permit or the City would need to do the entire area with their own bond. BCM does not like the idea of individual homeowners taking part of the City's permit as it could expose the City to liability if they are not installed correctly. Administrator Fragoso said the cost to install sandbags across the entire area would be approximately \$400,000-\$450,000. Mr. Traynum noted that the City would not be spending money on scraping (approximately \$20,000/month) if sandbags are placed. It would be mid-to-late August before sandbags would be placed if City Council approves the expense.

Administrator Fragoso pointed out that it is necessary to weigh the pros and cons of placing sandbags vs. scraping in an area that is to receive sand via the USACE project. City Council will further discuss the options at the Council meeting on July 23.

3. Discussion of developing long and mid-term beach preservation strategies

Director Kerr reviewed the recommendations and considerations regarding beach nourishment already discussed by the Committee as listed in the meeting packet. He will add to the document that the City will apply for permits for a new project three years after a nourishment project has been completed so the permits will be in hand, if needed before the next scheduled project.

Administrator Fragoso said she is working on a capital planning model that shows the Beach Preservation Fund over the next 32 years overlapped with the nourishment schedule being proposed by the Committee. It shows an \$80-\$90 million gap. She will be recommending that City Council engage a financial advisor to look at it more closely. She said the model assumes Wild Dunes will cover 75% of the large projects on the north end, no state or federal funding, a 3% cost increase each year, and a 2% increase in City revenues each year. The City will need to address a \$2-\$4 million gap each year to build the reserves needed to effectuate the plan. Additionally, this funding model needs to address the other large projects facing the City such as drainage, a new City Hall building, and replacement of fire and garbage trucks.

The funding model will be looked at more closely at the next meeting. Administrator Fragoso said the City needs to identify what they can do locally to raise revenue for beach nourishment projects and what initiatives require “higher” (State and Federal) permissions.

Director Kerr shared that the Beach Advocates Group has been meeting for nearly a decade, petitioning for more money in the State budget for beach protections, and even with a “strong, united front,” the idea has not gained any traction. Administrator Fragoso will share options for raising revenue within the City budget at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed what changes to parking within Wild Dunes could be made to make the northern end of the island eligible for public beach renourishment funding. Mr. Traynum said that in theory 31 public parking spaces within Wild Dunes would open it to Federal funding. Administrator Fragoso said that she and Director Kerr “floated the idea” at their last meeting with WDCA. That decision would need to be fleshed out before further analysis can be done about becoming a USACE managed project.

Discussion ensued as to the triggers and policy that need to be in place for staff to notify City Council that monies need to be expended to respond to storm damage and or chronic erosion. Administrator Fragoso suggested a policy that includes what the City will do in certain situations and what will be the homeowner’s responsibility. Council Member Pierce would like to know what questions staff needs answered so they do not have to come to City Council. Administrator Fragoso noted that a change to City Code would be needed if she would be permitted to authorize any expenditure over \$25,000.

Mr. Slotchiver asked if the City could store extra sandbags. Director Kerr said that could be arranged.

4. Next Steps

Director Kerr will bring five key decision-making policies that would trigger City action on the beach to the next meeting. Administrator Fragoso would like to have the City's lobbyist attend a future meeting to discuss feasible options on the State level and to help the Committee understand what is outside of the City's control. She would also like to have an attorney come speak about the implementation and implications of a special tax district.

The next meeting of the Beach Preservation Ad Hoc Committee will be Friday, August 2, 2024 at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk