

TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND

Environment & Wildlife Committee
Regular Meeting

[September 8, 2022] – [1 PM]

Virtual Meeting Hosted via Zoom
[Live Streamed on YouTube](#)



MINUTES

Members Present: Jeri Finke, Mark Andrews, Martha Goldstein, Dean Morr, Patti Romano]

Members Absent:

Guests Present:

Chairman Jeri Finke called the meeting to order at 1 PM].

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting: A motion was made and seconded to approve the August 11, 2022 meeting minutes.

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Seabrook Island Shoreline Management Information Meeting

Chairman Jeri Finke asked Mark Andrews to recap the previous day's September 7, 2022 community information meeting highlighting the history and future of Seabrook's shoreline management program, presented by Tim Kana (Coastal Science & Engineering) and Steve Hirsch (SIPOA Director of Engineering).

Some of the major points mentioned were:

1. To date there have been 3 successful relocations of the spit, 1983, 1996, and 2015, which has allowed Seabrook to take advantage of the sands coming from the Stono Inlet to nourish and expand the Seabrook Island beaches. We are currently about 1200 feet from where the channel was cut in 2015.
2. The migration of the inlet is close to the point where seeking of permits for a 4th relocation is required.
3. Three major areas (aside from the inlet conservation zone) that have been re-nourished as a result of these inlet relocations are in front of the houses from North

Beach to Renken Point, Renken Point to the beach club, and in front of the Pelican Watch villas.

4. SIPOA is also currently seeking permits to scrape approximately 100,000 cubic yards of sand , during the winter months of 2023-2024, from the area of boardwalk 1 to Renken Point.

5. The history of erosion along the North Edisto beach was also addressed including the sloughing of sand at the stairs at boardwalk 8.

6. The area of the beach that is free of vegetation on North Beach, where the shorebirds nest, is getting smaller and smaller. Relocating the inlet actually increases this habitat which the following 3 threatened bird species depend upon: Piping Plovers, Red Knots, and Least Terns. The Wilson's Plovers also use this area.

Chairman Finke mentioned that the work our Environmental and Wildlife Committee is doing to protect wildlife and the habitat/nesting areas of the shorebirds will help Seabrook Island residents and visitors understand that the relocation of the spit and the renourishment of the beach is enhancing protection efforts, not harming them.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

1. 2023 Shorebird Festival

Chairman Finke then asked Mark Andrews to report on the upcoming 2023 Shorebird Festival, a joint effort between Kiawah and Seabrook Island to show the significance of both islands for the continued survival and protection of shorebird species. The festival is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, May 11 and 12, 2023.

This festival Initiated by the Kiawah shorebird steward leader, sponsored by the The Kiawah Island Conservancy will feature a biologist from the Town of Kiawah, representatives from SCDNR, USFW, SC Audubon, and a prominent international shorebird conservation group

Kiawah will host a breakfast kickoff and an evening reception with speakers and presentations at the Sandcastle on Thursday. Seabrook will host the final presentations at the Lakehouse Live Oak Hall on Friday. Additional activities will include displays by vendors, artists, and photographers at a central location along with scheduled bird walks on North Beach, Night Heron and the east end of Kiawah.

Festival planners anticipate approximately 150 attendees depending on the capacity of venues, this being a mixture of residents and visitors to the islands.

2. Recap of August 15, 2022 Beach Patrol Meeting

Chairman Finke reported on the meeting which covered the Town of Seabrook Island contract with the beach patrol and expansion of coverage on the beach. Beach patrol proposed four options which Joe Cronin will present to the Town Council as the Town is currently starting the 2023 budget process. Much of the discussion regarded additional coverage on the beach. Other items which are being addressed in the Town Ordinance so that beach patrol can effectively enforce:

Glass on the beach

So many of our sister communities prohibit glass on the beach. Beach patrol commented that glass is not a safety issue on our beach because of the composition of our beach sand. They did not report any sighting of glass shards on our beach.

Swimming and water activities

Definitions of swimming by the Spit where Kiawah prohibits swimming and wading. Beach patrol suggested consistency with Kiawah's rules. Beach patrol is willing to explain the dangers to beach goers.

Mark asked if wake boarding and water skiing are prohibited as well. Could we also get SCDNR to make that a "No Wake" zone?

Beach patrol would also like the authority to recall swimmers from the water near the sandbars between boardwalks 3 and 4, where the currents/tides can become dangerous. Chairman Finke said she would like to include this in the Town Ordinance based on beach patrol's recommendation.

Martha asked if there would be signage designating the area at the Spit where swimming/wading is not allowed. Kiawah does have a sign and Seabrook would as well. Exact wording of the sign to be determined.

Shibumi Beach Shades and Umbrellas

Beach patrol mentioned that their visibility of beach goers/swimmers/shoreline is inhibited by the Shibumi shades. The committee was asked to think about considering prohibiting these shades from a safety perspective and also to require that shades/umbrellas must be firmly anchored down to prevent injuries to others.

Fishing

Beach patrol commented that there is too much ambiguity in our fishing rules - these rules are difficult for them to enforce. They suggested no fishing on the beach between 10 am and 5 pm between boardwalks 1 and 9 (where dogs off leash are also restricted) during peak season (April through September also consistent with the rule for dogs). Fishing would still be permitted above boardwalk 1 and on the Edisto

beach. Our committee agreed with this proposal. Also to be mentioned in our rules is that a SCDNR fishing license is required; however beach patrol will not be required to enforce possession of a license-that is SCDNR's responsibility.

Fishing would continue to be allowed on North Beach in the area of the Spit.

No more than 3 fishing poles will be permitted. Person fishing must attend to those poles at all times by being in their immediate vicinity.

At night, poles must be hand held and not set in the sand because of the decreased visibility.

Group Activities on the Beach

All group activities should require a town permit containing the name of the group contact person, date and time of activity. The permit would be filled out on the town website, there would be no charge, and a list of rules would accompany the permit form. Applicants would check the box that they have read the rules.

Permits would also be required for weddings and memorial services with rules prohibiting airborne memorials and any memorials that are lit. Floating biodegradable memorials would be permitted.

Joe Cronin mentioned that fitness classes, yoga, horseback riding, and any other commercial activities where money is changing hands is technically not permitted on the beach. He suggested that we revisit this after Stephen Brown, the town attorney, is consulted.

Further discussion of these items by Chairman Finke and Joe Cronin is needed. Rules concerning commercial activities need to be further clarified.

Digging/Shovels on the Beach

Beach patrol will be authorized to remind beach goers if they are digging on the beach to completely fill it with sand before they depart the beach.

Fires on the Beach

Chairman Finke has contacted SIPOA and Heather to review permitting fires on the beach, what times of the year they are allowed, and enforcement of rules.

Beach Patrol Incident Report

Dean Morr questioned what is the definition of the number of incidents represented

in the report. It's unclear whether that represented beach goers counted.

Proposed Beach Patrol Coverage Options

Before closing the meeting, Joe Cronin suggested presenting the actual proposed beach patrol options to this committee:

When the Town contracted with beach patrol, it was a 2 year initial contract with up to 3 one year renewals. This is the end of the initial 2 year contract.

1. Current level of service: just under \$210,000
2. Same number of coverage months (April 1 - Sept 30) but 2 patrol people, 2 vehicles: \$240,000
3. Adding limited coverage for 2 months of shoulder season plus option 2 above: \$270,000
4. Year round coverage 2 patrol people 2 vehicles: \$294,000

Joe is planning to recommend beach patrol option 2, same coverage months but with 2 patrol people and 2 vehicles.

The town is also planning to hire a full time Town Code enforcer who will address license, permit violations, and rental violations, and add also support for both increased beach patrol and response to incidents and beach violations, including shorebird protection violations.

3. Miscellaneous

Since Dean Morr belongs to the SIPOA Environmental Committee, Chairman Finke asked if there has been any resolution to the armadillo problem on the island. As of this time, the committee has not come up with any recommendations. Dean agreed that the armadillos are now invasive and must be dealt with.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 2:48 pm.

Minutes Approved: