



January 12, 2006

Glenn Storch, Chairman Volusia County Beach Policy Advisory Board  
420 S. Nova Road  
Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Subject: Long Term Beach Management/Erosion Plan

Dear Mr. Storch:

I am writing as a follow up to a meeting I attended of the Volusia County Beach Policy Advisory Board, conducted on December 13, 2005. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for the support you and the other Board members demonstrated in regards to addressing the serious issue of Beach Erosion in Southeast Volusia County. I would like to also recognize Volusia County Commissioner, Jack Hayman, for his support and verbal commitment to expediting and fulfilling the direction that our community needs to accomplish the goal of implementing a long-term beach restoration program.

I do have to admit I was surprised of the lack of knowledge the committee seemed to have regarding this ongoing issue. The presentation ("Critical Beach Erosion & Management Plan") by Phil Flood, FL State Dept. Environmental Protection, appeared to be news heard by the committee for the first time. In my observation, this could be due to the lack of communication between the County Staff and Commissioners and the Beach Advisory Board. As Mr. Flood noted in his presentation, Volusia County has been "lackadaisical" over the past seven years in addressing our long-term Beach Erosion issues. He also stated that the State funds appropriated for assisting our county in funding a beach renourishment project may not be there in the future, providing Volusia County continues to delay and stall progress and ignore State appropriated monies. Looking ahead, it is important to keep this issue at the top of the agenda until a successful Long Term Beach Restoration plan has been fully organized and implemented by the County Leadership.

Volusia County has enjoyed a dramatic increase in tax (Ad Valorem & Sales) revenues over the past several years, primarily due to increase in property values and tourism. It is a known fact that one of our largest resources and attractions for primary and secondary residents and tourists are our beaches. Without maintaining and aggressively implementing a long term beach restoration plan is without a doubt, a lack of foresight and local leadership. The economic impact of a continuing eroding beach will be devastating to our entire local community, as well as, create a negative ripple effect across other local regional industries. I can share with you that our vacation rentals are down 65% for the month of December 2005 versus December 2004 and I have received reports from other vendors that are experiencing a 35% year to date decrease in business. The primary reason from our customers is due to the lack of beach and negative press they are receiving regarding our local beaches. This is a very serious issue and the negative economic impact is already beginning to affect us. Less tourists and residents, also relates to fewer sales in retail, property sales, restaurants, and other local professional services, which in turn, creates less taxes and a decline in property values.

Please review the list of items below I have created were addressed at the December 13, 2005 meeting that need to be defined by Volusia County, perhaps the Advisory Board can continue to provide needed guidance:

- **Scope/Timeline of Long Term Beach restoration project** - needs to be created by County Staff/Commissioners, which includes defined goals, timelines and commitments. This would include, but not be limited to, design, permitting, construction and funding resource parameters. This needs to be kept updated with current progress and setbacks. Also, needs to be available to general public for review.
- **Dedicated County Staff** – additional county staff needs to be assigned to this project to research additional funding sources other than the Port Authority (if needed), track project progress and monitor the ongoing state of erosion on our beaches. Maintain good relations with State and Federal agencies cooperating with our project.

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- **Network with neighboring counties** - that have implemented and currently maintain beach renourishment projects. Volusia County is one of the last counties in the State not to participate with the State Agencies in protecting one of our most valued resources. Brevard County, located to our south would be the most logical to contact. Virginia Barker, with the Natural Resources Management Office of Brevard County, is a primary contact regarding Beach and Dune Restoration projects for Brevard County. Her contact number is 321-633-2016. Please review Brevard County's website at the following web address to review additional information about their ongoing Beach restoration project: ([http://www.brevardcounty.us/environmental\\_management/bbbb\\_home.cfm](http://www.brevardcounty.us/environmental_management/bbbb_home.cfm)) - You will see that Brevard County addresses Beach Erosion as a serious issue and has dedicated staff and current information available to keep the public informed and educated. In comparison, Volusia County's website only refers to, but not limited to, public beach access, vehicular access, lifeguard programs and water quality issues on the "Main" page of the website, not the issue of Beach and Dune restoration. The limited information about Beach Erosion is located on the "Ponce Deleon & Port District" section. It is clear that this subject is not a high priority for Volusia County.
- **Maintaining good relations with State Agency (FDEP)** – Volusia County needs to continue to work closely with the FDEP (Mr. Phil Flood) and request additional assistance regarding consultation and guidance, if needed. Mr. Flood indicated that the State's position is not only to provide monetary funds; however, it can provide other educational services related to this matter. (i.e. funding resources, education to general public, etc.)
- **Funding sources** – These need to be researched and developed "NOW". How much money is needed to fund the initial project? How much money is appropriated by the Port Authority to fund this project? Are there other resources that can be accessed for funding? (i.e. Portions of Sales Tax revenues, Resort Tax revenues, Ad Valorem revenues) It is my understanding there was a specific tax district already in place for the Port Authority to raise funds for this project. What is Volusia County Commission currently studying as a funding source? What funding vehicle will be used to fund ongoing future beach restoration maintenance projects?

In closing, Beach Restoration planning needs to be put on the top of the priority list. Our local beaches provide economic support to many industries across Volusia County and to take a "lackadaisical" approach to this matter is a disservice to the well being of our community. If this continues, there will certainly be a decline in the "quality of life" that our citizens and visitors have come to enjoy over the years. I look forward to the Advisory Board taking an aggressive interest in this matter and providing the oversight and direction to the Volusia County Commissioners and Staff. I welcome the Advisory Committee's input and response to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Kelley N. Desoto  
 Director of Marketing  
 Ocean Properties & Mgmt. Inc

Encl./Sample of Brevard County Website page

Cc: Volusia County Policy Advisory Board Members, Volusia County Commissioners, Jack Grasty - NSB City Commissioner Zone 1, Judith Johnson – NSB Board of Realtors, Randy Richenburg – NSB City Commissioner Zone 2, Bill Eldeton – Publisher – The Observer, Joy Schere – President, NSB Hospitality Mgrs. Assoc., Terry Roberts – Chairman, Southsat Volusia Advertising Authority, Steve Dennis – EVP –Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce, Deborah Boyd – Director, Southeast Volusia Advertising Authority

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