

**Below are my notes from the Town Hall Meeting Saturday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Brannon Center, Riverside Park, New Smyrna Beach. Please excuse the style; the technical details of beach restoration are very complex, so I am attempting to record only what I heard.**

***Judy Johnson***

District Three County Councilman Jack Hayman's Town Hall Meeting Saturday morning began with Port Authority Manager Joe Nolin. He explained the current sand project as a temporary dune berm to restore pedestrian access from Sapphire Road, to Ocean Club North, approximately one mile south of Hiles Boulevard.

Nolin: Long Range: Plans, engineering and design effort are underway for full scale south beach restoration with same quality and beach compatibility of material only four to five times the width of the current temporary dune restoration project. That effort will seek to borrow sand from submerged resources under the submerged continental shelf.

The Sand Source Study slated to be completed this summer is targeting four million cubic yards of sand, four to seven miles offshore to be mined or vacuumed off the seabed and pumped onto both south and north beaches.

The Engineering Design permitting focuses on eight to nine miles *of critically eroded beach* from the Inlet south to Canaveral National Seashore. That effort is to be completed in 2007. *This is the area a beach concessionaire reminded Joe Nolin he had to make special provision for. Joe remembered the special provision but no one else understood what they were talking about. ???*

Contracts *for studies* total approx. \$1.9 million county pays 65% and state pays 35%.  
*(\$1,235,000 from county)*

Nolin is advancing an agenda item for consideration of Volusia County Council next week to initiate federal involvement with long-range beach erosion control. The Federal feasibility study and analysis is to cost approx. \$3 million to be paid 50% fed and 25% split between county and state. *Cost to the county is \$750,000.*

Then we will forge a long-term project for long term beach restoration control.

Two that support long term beach restoration are the federal government and US Army Corps of engineers.

In recent years, county has been advancing solely with the State of Florida with a feasibility analysis first and then plans, engineering, design and sand source investigations, finding a good borrow source. Two efforts have been underway only in partnership with the state.

In 2000 *the Feds* requested a reconnaissance level study. Feds have their own steps necessary to advance. The steps are in parallel in many cases; data can be used by many agencies. County Council has advanced more quickly in partnership with the state.

Next week we are ready to move forward in partnership with the federal government. Advancing federal beach cost feasibility and federally funded shore protection. Very complex from

engineering and environmental regulatory standpoint, forging this partnership can be a complex task.

We are currently identifying lenses of sand, three to four million yards of sand. . . Before you plug 4 million cubic yards of sand, *you have to* identify environmental resources and cultural resources, and have to determine what this big hole in the bottom of the sea bed could do to the coast. The Feds, Minerals Management Services, Army Corps of Engineers, US Wildlife Services, want to discreetly review. . . *the data*.

How can we best achieve that naturally functioning beach that we want?

Complex engineering, how waves break and function, etc.

Characterize plants and animals that use our beach, some of them endangered species, as well as at bureaucratic level, who is going to pay for this?

Five times the width of *the current* dune project along 8 miles of shore line was estimated in 2003 to cost between twenty and forty million dollars. County has challenge about where they will come up with \$40 million along 8 miles of beach. Our interest is to attract federal interest to share the cost burden among three local entities and share the cost to put sand on the beach from an offshore borrow source.

Nolin reported the most recent structural change or navigation project at the Inlet. In the last decade or two the channel has migrated due east and winds from the north bring waves that crash into the north jetty. Surfer Randy Richenberg, a local sponsor, ante upped funds and looked out for local interest. Richenberg brought forth surfing concerns, had a few meetings with federal government, and explored alternative designs for the jetty on the south side of the Inlet, allowing for a greater amount of northeast swells to enter the surfing zone.

Based on federal government, in 2007, about an \$8 million project with 50/50 local and federal split. This project can be initiated as early as October of '07.

Kelley DeSoto spoke next and thanked Mr. Hayman for calling the meeting. Council is giving consideration to move ahead next week with beach process. Money for long-range beach restoration plan could be eight to ten years before fed antes up. If we moved in partnership with state, cost would be 65% county and 35% state.

Joe replied there is not enough money in the Inlet and Port District fund to pay for sixty-five percent of a forty million dollar project. If the community decides to advance more quickly than the federal government and move forward with a project solely funded by county and state, *you'll have to find the money*. Port Authority has made it a budget item over the past five years. With regard to applying for federal funds, \$750,000 is to be considered next week.

DeSoto: We have not addressed long term construction. Economic impact of beach erosion on the community.

Nolin: Economic contribution to community budget in Port Authority 4.25 million.

Jack Hayman: Options have been limited because we have a Port Authority taxing district to take care of this. Creating a new taxing district is a last resort for Jack Hayman. If you're on the west side of the county, it's going to stop at I-95. We all benefit from the beach. The economy is driven by the beach and the quality of life we have here.

Hayman (continued) Let's go to Echo funds. *This is a real estate property tax. By 2020 they are expected to be almost double over the approximately eighty million dollars projected.*

We have not used echo funds in this manner before. See if there is room in the ordinance. Not sure. Forever Funds. We can't do that because we're not buying real estate. But could use that if buying real estate to buy a park or beach parking. Beach tolls? Management of the beach is in excess of three million dollars a year.

Other revenue sources:

Ad valorem -- what are my options? I don't believe only the folks on the barrier island should pay. I think it has to be equitable. The only source we can point to today is the Port Authority dollars. Matching funds are essential to you and me. Matching dollars. Trying to get back our tax dollar siphoned off to Washington. That is our strategy.

DeSoto: There is a long approval process by the feds. We don't have the luxury of another eight to ten years to go through the channels.

How can we fund this and go to construction in partnership with the state to work aggressively? It's important to recognize the importance of beach to the community at large.

Citizen Input: Cleaning up hurricane debris at Esther Street. All that debris has not been cleared yet.

Citizen Input: Katrina is going to take away federal funds. I'm sorry you did that and took the risk to buy oceanfront property. Bad decisions have been made and I'm not sure you can go to the citizens of Volusia County and ask them to pay for the impact that storms have created.

Hayman: I don't think anyone realizes how much the beach properties with their high taxes subsidize western properties. Those dollars are subsidizing the schools and parks, everything on the west side of the county. These high dollars over here are paying for them. If they lose the high dollars over here, then they're going to have to make up for the shortfall somewhere else. Tax dollars: where it comes from and where does it go? Save our homes, homestead, senior citizen initiatives; taxes are not equitable.

Hayman: In the nation as a whole, a little over 25% of the people pay 80% of the tax. If you look at the economy in Volusia County today. The people sitting on the beach are paying a lot more than the people who are paying in Edgewater. County Government has gotten the message loud and clear. Life savings invested in property they cannot afford anymore. Cannot afford it and have no place to go. People say you have to go back to the rollback rate.

Citizen: Seawalls create perpetual problem. The beach replenishes itself. The whole barrier island was a dune at one time.

We are a down drift community on the south side of an Inlet. Extending jetty affects the sand on the beach.

Frank Marshall says he's doing too much to accommodate the occasional tourist and doesn't want his granddaughter paying again for beach renourishment.

Joe Nolin: The county will not advance a project the community does not want.

**Nolin: After a series of workshops, limited dune in Segment A. Sapphire to 27<sup>th</sup> would only construct a limited dune berm. In B&C would do full scale restoration.** *This was part of a conversation Joe had with a beach concessionaire. Does anyone know what they were referring to?*

Citizen: We bought it, we love it, and we are now permanent residents of Bouchelle. My gut feeling is our economy is in serious trouble. There are a lot of availability signs, properties for sale. I made a major investment and want to protect it. This is not just a beach side issue; it is an issue for all of us. Why should I have an interest in what's happening in A-1-A? When I see the availability of homes for sale, properties not selling, it is not a good sign.

Judy Johnson: Read the Statutes. Beach restoration is not a question for government, it is an obligation. (Find statutes below). Citizens in Brevard County successfully sued their government officials for a beach restoration program. Refer to the attached map showing all of the counties with beach restoration programs along the east coast of Florida, with the exception of Volusia and Flagler, and even around the southern and western regions of Florida.

With all due respect to Mr. Marshall, the beach is currently an environmental disaster. The berm project is caulk; we need the full-scale, environmentally correct, full-scale beach restoration plan. This will restore habitat to the wildlife listed on about page 37 of the 84-page Beach Study on the Volusia County Beach Task Force web site. We have tried doing nothing; that didn't work. Now it's time to try beach restoration like 175 miles of populated coastline up and down the state of Florida.

## **STATE STATUES REQUIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **ADDRESS BEACH EROSION AND BEACH RENOURISHMENT**

Because beach erosion is a serious menace to the economy and general welfare of the People of this state and has advanced to emergency proportions, it is hereby declared to be a necessary governmental responsibility to properly manage and protect Florida beaches fronting on the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Straits of Florida from erosion and that the Legislature make provision for beach restoration and nourishment projects. **(Florida Statute 161.088).**

Prior to deposit of any moneys into the General Revenue Fund, \$30 million shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Ecosystem Management and Restoration Trust Fund in fiscal year 2000-2001 and each fiscal year thereafter, to be used for the preservation and repair of the state's beaches as provided in State Statute 161.091-161.212 **(Florida Statutes 201.15(11))**

The Legislature finds and declares that the beaches in this state and the coastal barrier dunes adjacent to such beaches, by their nature, are subject to frequent and severe fluctuations and represent one of the most valuable natural resources of Florida and that it is in the public interest to preserve and protect them. . . **(Florida Statutes 161.053)**

Respectfully Submitted,

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