

**Draft Minutes**  
**Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee**  
**Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Commission Chambers, Room 119**  
**18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948**

*\*\*\*Please note that one or more Charlotte County Commissioners may be in attendance at any meeting of the Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee\*\*\**

**Members Present**

Clifford Kewley, Member-at-Large, Chairman  
Peter Gerhardt, District 1  
Tommy Brock, District 3 / Vice Chairman  
Rich Parchen, District 4

**Members Excused**

[vacant], District 5  
Katherine Ariens, District 2  
Robert Pierce, FL Shore & Beach Preservation Assoc.

**Staff Present**

Gayle Moore, Recording Secretary

**Guests Present**

Peter A. Ravella, PARC  
Tyler Buckingham, PARC  
Lillian Johnson, PARC  
Michael Poff, Coastal Engineering Consultants

**Call to Order**

Chairman Kewley called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Kewley made opening comments on the current meeting, giving an overview of the scheduled speakers and the anticipated topics.

Following the roll call, and on motion made and carried unanimously, the minutes from July 14, 2016, were approved as received.

**Additions/Deletions to Agenda Items**

Chair Kewley asked whether there were any additions to the agenda; none were offered.

**Citizen Comments on Agenda Items**

None offered.

**Old Business**

**Manasota Key Beach Erosion and Renourishment**

Mr. Ben Bailey, County Building Official, on recent structure evaluations. Mr. Bailey addressed the group on the most recent storm activity (storms Hermine and Matthew)

and the inspections following those, evaluating structures on the coast, looking for any further deterioration of conditions; some structures showed additional deterioration of conditions and were tagged again, including two end units at La Coquina. Overall, they observed net sand loss, though some stretches did receive a bit of sand. He spoke about specific structures that showed compromise; he encouraged citizen alerts to the Building Dept. in the event new damage was observed.

Next to speak was Mr. Shaun Cullinan, County Planning and Zoning Official, on the process for temporary protection of affected structures. Mr. Cullinan noted that he deals with emergency declarations and related matters that impact permitting with State components; the County is in discussions with DEP and the Fish & Wildlife office on ways to expedite permitting through those agencies. Mr. Cullinan noted that establishing a control line would help matters go through the state review more expeditiously. He spoke about the impacts of timing on the process and what the County is doing to move specific work along. Mr. Wing asked about the general timeline was for a permit request for armoring; Mr. Cullinan said that about one week was the standard for the County, noting that these need signatures from numerous officials.

He was asked what "temporary armoring" was – Mr. Cullinan said that it was any armoring that has to be removed after the immediate threat. In some situations, homeowners would seek to have the temporary armoring status changed to permanent, which was a decision for the state agencies.

Another person asked about the Coquina situation; Mr. Cullinan provided some details on the re-issuing of their emergency declaration. He emphasized County can only issue temporary permits, and that only the state can issue a permit for permanent armoring. To the question "how long is the state process?", Mr. Cullinan responded that the County doesn't have any control over that, and it would depend on the completeness of the permit request that they received. Further discussion ensued, and other standards were mentioned, including references to the taking of habitat, etc. An audience member asked whether the County worked with the resident once residents were seeking "permanent" status for their armoring; Mr. Cullinan responded that at the beginning of the process, the County would issue a letter of no objection (where appropriate) that goes in the permit request package. If the state needed more information, the County could be still involved, but basically it is the property owner and / or their contractors that work with the state agencies.

In response to a question from Mr. Brock about the difference between temporary and permanent structures, Mr. Cullinan noted that a temporary structure can apply to become permanent, generally by capping the structure, since the state requires that there be no sharp edges on the structure.

Chair Kewley commented on progress of this project, and turned the floor back over to Mr. Poff for additional comments; Mr. Poff has been selected as the consultant for this project, and has much background on the subject. He also introduced economic consultant Peter Ravella who would speak following Mr. Poff.

Mr. Michael Poff, Coastal Engineering Consultants ("CEC"), on the beach renourishment plan. Mr. Poff spoke as a member of Coastal Engineering Consultants, the newly-confirmed consultant that will carry forward the work of the beach renourishment. He spoke about the firms that CEC partners with for sand source [searching](#) and other skills that are required for such a project. He gave a brief review of their activities since their consultancy was approved in August. Details were

provided on some of the technical work that is being done, and technical terms that would be employed in these discussions, e.g., 'near shore hard bottom'. Mr. Poff also provided information on what the effects would be of covering the hard bottom (species would die) and how these issues are connected with mitigation, e.g., doing the hard bottom reconstruction as a reef further offshore than the location of what is being impacted. This is the most difficult part of the permitting process. The need for this work is supported by the need for the armoring. He felt that the next meeting he'd be able to share some details on what is to be constructed here. He noted that the ~~initial 2015 update of the original~~ beach-fill design (2001) ~~was to cover~~ demonstrated that all the hard bottom ~~would be covered~~; but the state ~~originally~~ said to minimize the beach-fill to "what is just necessary"; however, the conditions now are such that there's no question ~~but~~ that it will all be covered. This, of course, leads to higher costs for mitigation, driving up the cost of the entire project.

The goal is to have a package in the County's hands by the first of the year for detailed review; at that time, a submittal will be made to the resource agencies, working diligently to get everything permitted. Work would begin in late 2018, to be completed by May 1, 2019; this is a very aggressive schedule (keeping in mind turtle nesting season, etc.) If keeping on this schedule is not successful, then construction would not begin until November 2019.

Mr. Peter Ravella spoke next. The role of his group (PARC Consulting) is to assist the County in developing a financial strategy to pay for the project. He spoke with reference to a slideshow his group brought. They will not be laying out a financial strategy today, but just introducing his group, describing what they do generally, and the specific process they anticipate here. He indicated there would be six workshops held, and referenced yesterday's meeting (delivering this same information) on the Key.

His next remarks were general with regard to developing the financial basis for the program (making the distinction between the program and a specific project.) This will be an on-going program of beach maintenance that will continue to need to be financed; the goal is to create an ongoing funding flow that will support the program over time. Among the financial issues to be defined: How much is needed each year; how many years are available to save that money (what is the renourishment interval); and what is the fair and workable way to raise the local funds needed. Citizen input is key to this process. Mr. Ravella noted that his group has created a website: [www.parc.coastal.com/manasota](http://www.parc.coastal.com/manasota) which is available so that residents can see all his material now, and going forward.

PARC will be developing funding strategies for beach projects, by working with the community and the County; Mr. Ravella emphasized that his group doesn't just hand Charlotte County a pre-loaded approach, and stressed the importance of community input. This process will ultimately result in their recommendation for one or more strategies, which should happen at about the same time as CEC is getting their permit submittal to DEP.

Mr. Ravella next discussed the workshop schedule: today is the introduction. On Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> the next workshops will be held here at the Tringali facility. On Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 6-8 pm. This will be the first attempt to lay out some funding strategies and ideas for consideration. Community thoughts and comments in advance are welcomed. This will be repeated on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> (all workshops will be held twice, on Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons.) Mr. Ravella emphasized the invitation to participate via calls and emails, with the goal of achieving maximum community involvement and

ideas, and having these feed into the content of the workshops. Mr. Ravella then provided personal and group background for PARC.

He spoke next about the public and private benefit of beaches which are both fundamentally public spaces and also critical private spaces. He noted that Manasota Key is the most visited "park" in Charlotte County, a feature that protects public infrastructure like the roads, the foundation of the tourism economy, and a feature which benefits the entire community. He spoke to the issue of how it affects real estate values and the overall economy.

There also is beach by the private homes which protects those homes. Referencing the cost of armoring of a specific private home (its costs running \$1,500 per linear foot) highlights the value the beach adds to the safety of the house, and its value as well.

Mr. Ravella emphasized that keeping this dual reality in mind is critical in moving through this process, addressing "failures of thinking" about the beach as either completely private or completely public. It is fundamental to success going forward to keep in mind: The beach is an economic and community asset, inherently both public and private in nature, and this tells us how the funding should be put together. Additionally, the funding stream must be as persistent as the waves which cause the ongoing erosion.

They will be looking for coalitions of contributors: property owners on the Key, West County residents, the State of Florida, beach-front owners and off-beach owners, as well as those who come and rent: these are the entities that utilize and benefit from the existence of the beach in a healthy condition, and the goal is to blend together the interests and resources of them all to achieve the funding.

Mr. Ravella next addressed the general idea of the state's contribution to beach projects (up to a maximum of 50% of the cost of a project) which is based on public access to the shoreline. Simply put, if the State is going to invest public funds, there has to be public access. So, the fundamental discussion to be had is that with the property owners, to get their buy-in to this concept. He indicated that he feels it is very unlikely that the funding strategy will include any Federal shore protection funding component; it is very rare in general, and particularly recently.

In his comments directly regarding the Key itself, based on a preliminary visit last month, Mr. Ravella offered praise for the beach. He noted that the working group is all generally familiar with working project concept; and noted that the project fell in the \$20 million-range, with a renourishment interval of about five years, noting that those parameters will become more precise as the design process proceeds. He referenced the prior CEC project presentation, particularly looking at the varying state cost share calculations, commenting that the DEP cost-share analysis on this project is not going to be simple due to the variety of factors (a 19-40% spread.) Referencing another page from the CEC presentation, Mr. Ravella emphasized how many different criteria the project will be scored on to determine the level of cost-sharing; it is a large number, the most significant being public access.

So where will the contributors come from? [This part of Mr. Ravella's presentation is closely mirrored in the attached PDF, particularly from page 12 onwards.] He began by identifying the various types of properties on the water, arriving at a rough estimate of about \$400 million worth of property on Manasota and Sandpiper Keys, of which about 30% are beach-front, representing about 40% of the total value. He

discussed the advisability of saving in advance of the spending, noting that you first need to know how much you are looking at spending; in this case, the precise final design plan is not yet known, but the general outline is.

Mr. Ravella next looked at various sources of revenue, including the bed tax, about 70% of which comes from the coast. He provided an example of a beach town from North Carolina which went through this same process, and discussed their choices and the outcomes in some detail. Their choice was to fund their project through property taxes (ad valorem) and their target was \$75 per month per half-million dollar of structure value, and the structure would receive FEMA beach eligibility after a bad storm.

This would allow them to raise about \$715,000 a year which was nice but wouldn't pay for a \$20 million project; so they added about 8 additional cents to the property tax rate (about 30% increase for them) which is widely considered "poison" to suggest. However, they looked at it in depth, understanding they couldn't punt, and the process turned out really well for them in the end. But, emphasized Mr. Ravella, Charlotte County's solution has to be discovered by citizens working together; there's no boilerplate solution, and he understands the difficulty of the conversation regarding raising taxes.

He emphasized that this process exists to discover the solution, not impose the solution; it has to be fair and equitable in the eyes of the community, and although that sounds 'squishy' it is the key point. The process has to be open and transparent; there have to be numerous workshops, and the funding plan must have the support of the community to be adoptable. Additionally, it is important to recognize that each community is unique, that in Charlotte County there are already an MSTU and MSBU in place, and other projects going on at the same time (Stump Pass.) It is important to make choices that minimize debt financing wherever possible. And finally, there is the "perfection trap": there's not ONE answer, there's not a PERFECT answer ... but there are reasonable, workable solutions to be had. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Then there's the element of getting tourists and visitors into the process via the bed tax, parking fees, and possibly a toll bridge to get on the island. He also advised that citizens pay attention to FEMA beach eligibility; if you contribute to this investment, which can be washed away in a weekend, you need to know it will get FEMA funds to restore. So you need to meet the criteria for being on top of your beach management program.

It will also be necessary to address citizen concerns that money will go elsewhere than intended, so these funds have to be dedicated to the beach management program, and cannot be used otherwise. And that means not for beach patrol, beach clean-up or any ancillary activities that are not actual beach building and renourishment.

He closed this part of the presentation by encouraging input prior to the next workshop on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, including any questions now. To kick off this part of the workshop, Mr. Ravella asked them how many think beach renourishment is the right idea? Most, but not all, responded affirmatively. He spoke to the fact that the first question is always whether to do it or not, and commented that when you start placing sheet metal and rip rap, the time has come. People ask about what happens if you don't do it; Mr. Ravella pointed out that the choice is not between doing it and not doing it: The choice is between spending money on a plan in an organized way, or spending money on one emergency situation after another, while other revenue

(tourism) goes down when locales that don't act lose their visitors and property owners to other, better-managed communities.

A gentleman raised the issue that there are a lot of low-income, fixed-income people in the community. How can the already-struggling contribute? Mr. Ravella agreed that's a hard question, noting that some older people got in when it was cheap, and now values and the cost of maintenance have skyrocketed and people are being priced out. The idea that some people could be priced out of their homes is a very real danger, in dealing with this sort of situation. It was the same in the Carolinas, where mechanisms had to be added to cap property taxes on the least able to pay. This will be a real issue that will have to be grappled with.

A woman commented on "spreading the pain" to the whole county. Mr. Ravella responded to this idea, suggesting that it would be necessary to broaden the contributor base as much as possible; but he noted that if you try to make east County residents to pay the same as Key residents, it will fail. In a town where the entire economy is beach-based, then there's less of a problem. But that's not the case here, as discussions with the community will uncover; a tiered system will be necessary. Residents on the island have to commit first, though ... don't ask inland residents to pay until it can be demonstrated the primary beneficiaries have stepped up in a big way.

A gentleman said the whole county paid for Murdock Village, so the Key should get 'paid back'. Mr. Ravella gave a counter-example of a municipality building a convention center, or an airport, and how people don't generally resist contributing to that but that it's different with shoreline projects, unless the entire community depends on the beach. Whereas no one says "I don't go to the convention center" people will easily say "well I don't go to the beach" or that they chose not to take the risk of living on the shore. However, the economics are about investing in the single greatest tourism asset that the County has; for instance, Outer Banks beaches get more visitors in one summer than go to ALL NFL games all season. Regardless of that, it still remains true that the Beach property owners have to go first.

A woman commented on broadening the base, noting that the Key comprises two counties, and asking what the strategy is to engage with Sarasota County. Further discussion ensued on the inter-county cooperation. Mr. Andy Wing noted that Sarasota County had published a document on beach erosion assessment which will be posted online.

Mr. Ravella commented on how long the process might turn out to be and how economics start to drive things toward a specific solution.

Mr. Tommy Brock asked about data on Key property owners versus the whole County. Mr. Ravella responded that the island is an object of intense analysis but that he was not sure what there is available about the rest of the county.

#### [Charlotte County Erosion Control Project](#)

Chair Kewley turned the meeting back over to Mr. Poff, who provided detail regarding [the Erosion Control Project and Stump Pass progress dredging, focused on sharing the outcome of bids in June, which turned out to be nearly double \\$5 million dollars over the expected amount. The final decision, because we will need an offshore dredge to do beach renourishment later, was to complete the dredging of Stump Pass for navigation with sand placement on both sides of the inlet and construct the terminal groin on south end of Manasota Key now through a rebid process. Then phase the](#)

[beach renourishment of the gulf front beaches along Knight-Bocilla-Don Pedro Island concurrent with the Manasota Key Restoration project ~~do both sand placing jobs~~](#) at the same time and save the additional \$4-6 million in mobilization costs.

### **Citizen Comments**

Chair Kewley opened the floor to citizen comments. Mr. Van Hubbard (who had commented earlier on Murdock Village) asked about pest-level mitigation for sand fleas, etc., that feed fish, expressing concern that the sand renourishment would negatively affect those populations. Mr. Poff answered with reference to prior projects which required pre- and post-construction sampling; the sampling indicated that those species recover very, very quickly, to the point where such sampling is no longer required.

*[To hear the discussion in its entirety, please visit the Charlotte County Government website at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/boards-committees/bsac/Pages/Meeting-Minutes.aspx> and choose the audio file for October 11, 2016.]*

### **Staff Comments**

None were offered.

### **Member Comments**

Mr. Brock requested that information regarding these future workshops be put on the website.

Chair Kewley introduced new member, Peter Gerhardt, and spoke in praise of Mr. Whitney who had contributed so much to the Committee over his 20 years as a member.

Chair Kewley noted that the next meeting would be held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> in the regular meeting space in the Building Construction Services large conference room, commencing at 9 a.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Moore  
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved by

Clifford Kewley, Chairman  
Beaches & Shores Advisory Committee