

May 28, 2008 Minutes

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council was hosted by the City of St. Pete Beach at St. Pete Beach Community Center located at 7701 Boca Ciega Drive, St. Pete Beach, FL 33706. President Lawrence called the meeting to order at 9:00am

1. Pledge of Allegiance. President Lawrence led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcement. President Lawrence

Thanked St. Pete Beach for hosting the meeting.
Reminded everyone to place their cell phones on silent

2. Roll Call. President Lawrence requested that everyone introduce themselves.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (Voting = V; Alternate 1 = A1; Alternate 2 = A2)

Belleair Shore	Mayor John Robertson (V)
Clearwater	Councilmember George Cretekos (V)
Indian Rocks Beach	Commissioner Terry Hamilton-Wollin
Indian Shores	Mayor Jim Lawrence (V)
Madeira Beach	Mayor Patricia Shontz (V)
North Redington Beach	Mayor William Queen (V)
Redington Beach	Mayor Nick Simons (V)
Redington Shores	Mayor Jody Armstrong (V)
St. Pete Beach	Commissioner Christopher Leonard (A1)
Treasure Island	Commissioner Phil Collins (V)

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Senator Dennis Jones
Representative Jim Frishe
Representative from Citizens' Insurance

GUESTS PRESENT:

Al Halpern	City Commissioner, St. Pete Beach
Linda Fisher	Program Planner, Pinellas Planning Council
Kristi Cheatham	Clearwater Gas
Bill Berger	Business Development Mgr., Pinellas County
Jerry Knight	Vice Mayor, N. Redington Beach
Frank Yurasko	Redington Beach
Joan Herndon	Vice Mayor, Indian Shores

Carol Irelan	Counselor, Indian Shores
Bill Smith	Counselor, Indian Shores
Marsha Grantham	Town Clerk, Indian Shores
Nancy McCollum	City Manager, Belleair Beach
Bob Macpherson	Reporter, Tampa Bay News
Renee White	Reporter, Barrier Island Gazette
Nick Fritsch	Chairman Beach Committee, Sand Key Civic
Jeff Baker	Progress Energy
George Gonzalez	Candidate, State House 54, Madeira Beach
Mike Maximo	Community Service Director, Madeira Beach
Doris Burns	Senator Jones Officer
Nicole Elko	Pinellas County
Teri McMaster	City Clerk, St. Pete Beach

3. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robertson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Simon. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Approval of Minutes of April 2008

A motion was made by Mayor Robertson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Armstrong. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Approval of Treasurer's Reports of April 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Queen to accept the Treasurer's Report presented by Mr. Cretekos. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simons. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. New Business:

A. Carol Everhart, Board of Directors – Citizen's Insurance Insurance Policies and Mitigation

Ms. Everhart discussed ways in which residents can save on their homeowner's insurance. She reported on the legislative changes this year regarding property insurance. She noted that the assessment process changed this year and that will benefit property owners.

She reported that currently, we are in a "pay later plan" and in the event of severe storm damage there is the possibility of an assessment. She discussed making buildings stronger with updated roofs and other mitigation efforts that can save on insurance.

She suggested meetings with homeowners and businesses to get the word out about what can be done to reduce property insurance rates.

She answered questions asked by the various attendees.

She thanked Representative Frishe and Senator Jones for their actions in the latest legislative session. She said that she contacted them and they reacted to the needs expressed regarding property insurance.

7. Miscellaneous

A. Legislative Update

Senator Jones gave a legislative update to the Council. He discussed the effects of Amendment 1 on the State Budget. He said there were huge budget cuts in the State this year.

Senator Jones thanked the BIGC and the Florida Beaches and Shores Preservation Association for educating people regarding beach re-nourishment. He stated that without beaches, there would be no businesses in Pinellas County.

He urged the BIGC to keep their membership in the Florida Beaches and Shores Preservation Association as they are great advocates on beach related issues.

Senator Jones also noted that the light rail program that was planned from Tampa to Orlando was eliminated from the budget.

Representative Frishe discussed the “highest and best use” policy of property tax assessment. He stated that major steps were taken to address the issues associated with that policy.

He noted that a major step was taken by legislature regarding pedestrian cross walks. If a pedestrian steps into the crosswalk, all vehicle traffic must stop. It is now a moving violation if drivers don't come to a complete stop.

Representative Frishe discussed changes regarding custodial issues. This should reduce the amount of litigation on these issues. The focus will be on what is best for the child instead of parents fighting through litigation.

He made comments about the budget cuts and projects that have been delayed. He urged citizens and elected officials to contact him to provide input.

7. B. Beach Update.

Nichol Elko, Pinellas County, gave an update on the status of the beaches. She noted that Calladesi Beach has been ranked as #1 in the State and hopefully that will bring more tourists to our beaches.

She noted that turtle nesting season is nearing. She asked the BIGC to ask residents to comply with the lighting restrictions on the beach. She discussed the need for beach vegetation and said that they would assess vegetation needs for each city if requested.

She reported on the status of beach re-nourishment in Pinellas County. She discussed issues regarding borrow areas that have increased the cost of re-nourishment.

Ms. Elko reported on the T-Groin Experimental Project at Upham Beach.

7. C. Discussion on future directions for the BIG-C.

General discussion was held regarding the purpose of the BIG-C. Questions were asked about whether the BIG-C is a clearing house of information or it is an advocacy group or something in between.

Discussion was held regarding the extension of the bed tax to fund a new baseball stadium. Each member reported the status of their discussions with their city regarding this issue. Most members reported that their city is 100% opposed to the extension of the tax to fund that project. Some stated that they haven't had formal discussions with their elected bodies, but would report back when that has occurred.

It was noted that the Mr. Marquis stated that he has had no opposition to the project. The next Pinellas County Commission meeting is June 10 at 9:00am. It was suggested that the BIG-C representatives from each City be in attendance to voice their opposition.

President Lawrence asked the Council to consider whether the BIG-C should be more proactive on advocacy issues that the members agree to as being important to the Council or, should they support each other as beach friends.

Mayor Cretekos stated that he thought it would be inappropriate to support candidates. He said candidates could come in and speak to the BIG-C, but that the BIG-C should not endorse candidates.

Discussion was held regarding having a united voice and being pro-active on beach related issues. It was determined that the Council will only advocate issues that the entire Council is in agreement with.

President Lawrence invited members to present speakers and issues to be discussed at future meetings.

The next meeting will be at Treasure Island on June 25, 2008.

8. **Adjournment.** Being no further business to come before the BIG-C, the meeting adjourned at 10:30am.