

BIG C

Barrier Islands Governmental Council

*Belleair Beach
Belleair Shore
Clearwater
Indian Rocks Beach
Indian Shores
Madeira Beach*



*North Redington Beach
Redington Beach
Redington Shores
St. Pete Beach
Treasure Island*

OFFICERS

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Meeting Minutes **August 26, 2015**

Present: Belleair Beach
Belleair Shore
Clearwater
Indian Rocks Beach
Indian Shores
Madeira Beach
North Redington Beach
Redington Beach
Redington Shores
St. Pete Beach
Treasure Island

Councilmember Wanda Schwerer
Mayor Bob Schmidt
Mayor George N. Cretekos
Commissioner Terry Hamilton-Wollin
Councilor Bill Smith
Mayor Travis Palladeno
Mayor Bill Queen
Mayor Nick Simons
Mayor Bert Adams
Mayor Maria Lowe
Mayor Robert Minning

Guest Speaker:
Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater

Katie Marvin

Guests Present:
The Ash Group
Beaches Newsletter
City of Clearwater
City of Clearwater
City of Clearwater
City of Clearwater
Clearwater Gas
Clearwater Gas
State of Florida Department of Transportation
State of Florida Senate District 22 Aide
State of Florida House District 69 Aide
City of Indian Rocks Beach
City of Indian Rocks Beach
Town of Indian Shores

Randy Hoskinson
Bob Griffin
Councilmember Hoyt Hamilton
Bill Horne
Jill Silverboard
Rod Irwin
Chuck Warrington
Kristi C. Pettit
Bob Esposito
Vanessa Thompson
Colleen Hartman
Mayor R.B. Johnson
Commissioner Joanne Kennedy
Vice Mayor Patrick Soranno

"ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKING FOR YOU"

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Town of Indian Shores	Councilor Diantha Schear
Town of Indian Shores	Councilor Mike Petrucci
Pinellas County MPO	Sarah Ward
Pinellas County MPO/PPC	Sandra Cuddington
Town of Redington Shores	Vice Mayor Lee Holmes
Town of Redington Shores	Commissioner John D. Branch
Sand Key Civic Association	Al Zimmerman
Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce	Doug Izzo
Tampa Bay Newspapers	Bob McClure
Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater	Rhonda Sanborn
City of Clearwater	Patricia O. Sullivan

BIG C President Robert Minning called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. at the Clearwater Sailing Center, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, welcoming comments by Clearwater Mayor George Cretekos, and Roll Call.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

3 - Approval of Agenda

Mayor Queen moved to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

4 - Approval of Minutes – July 29, 2015 meeting.

Councilor Smith moved to approve the minutes of the regular BIG C (Barrier Islands Governmental Council) meeting of July 29, 2015, as submitted to each member. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

5 - Approval of Treasurer's Reports for July 2015.

BIG C Secretary/Treasurer Travis Palladeno reviewed the July 2015 Treasurer's Report; the balance was \$2,072.67.

Mayor Queen moved to accept the July 2015 Treasurer's Report. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

6 - Correspondence: None.

7 - New Business:

7a. Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Marketing Initiative

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater Senior Advertising Manager Katie Marvin reported that tourism contributed more than \$17 billion to the local economy and employed 91,600 during the past 5 years. She discussed the agency's seasonal campaigns in key markets, local marketing efforts, giveaways, the website, and agency presence on social media,

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In response to questions, Ms. Marvin said the agency tracked social media, web traffic, web visitor interests, surveys, and campaign entries when determining the success of its campaigns. She said tour operators have expressed concerns re low inventory levels. She said the agency does not track visitors staying in short-term rentals. She said south County beaches and downtown St. Petersburg need additional rooms.

It was suggested the agency offer vacations to the two recent female Army Ranger School graduates.

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater and the Pinellas County CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau) were complimented re the success of their efforts. It was noted that resident tax rates on the beaches were low because of tourism.

Discussion ensued. It was commented that beach communities should retain their character by adopting design guidelines, tourism needs to pay for infrastructure used by visitors, and marketing campaigns should be expanded to advertise more about the County than tourism. Plans for additional hotel rooms in several beach municipalities were reviewed. Concern was expressed that adding hotel rooms would further aggravate area traffic; beach roads have insufficient capacity to meet current tourist levels. It was stated that marketing efforts to attract additional tourists may negatively impact residents as visitors are forced to seek illegal short-term accommodations in condominiums and neighborhoods. It was reported one municipality hired additional staff to monitor short-term rentals. It was felt tourist accommodations should be limited to areas zoned for tourism and commercial uses and residential neighborhoods should not be degraded to support tourism. It was questioned how beach municipalities can best prepare residents to appreciate the benefits of increased tourism when local roads are clogged and cannot be expanded.

Sarah Ward, with the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization), said a top agency priority relates to high season beach access by visitors and residents. Support was expressed for expanding public transportation to ease traffic woes.

Rhonda Sanborn, with Pinellas County CVB, said the County consistently had double digit increases in tourism during each of the last 5 years; visitors love this destination. She supported a discussion re type of place residents want to live, work, and play and expressed concern that future beach development not imitate Miami.

To avoid adverse impacts on neighborhoods, opposition was expressed to any legislative action that would loosen zoning rules and increase short-term rentals outside tourist districts.

Consensus was to add this topic to a future BIG C agenda.

8 - Old Business:

Sandra Cuddington, of Pinellas MPO, said the MPO's spreadsheet for the Gulf Boulevard Beautification Program was updated each time a municipality submitted its intent to construct a project or request reimbursement. She said the program was nearing the end of its first \$14 million set aside. She requested that each municipality working on a project, send a letter of intent, describing the project and estimated costs, including projects to underground utilities being done in conjunction with Duke Energy.

Ms. Cuddington will email the MPO spreadsheet and her request to BIG C President Minning who will forward the information to BIG C members.

9 – Legislative Update:

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Colleen Hartman, Aide to Florida State Representative Kathleen Peters, had nothing new to report; redistricting maps most likely will go to the courts for remedy.

Vanessa Thompson, Aide to Florida State Senator Jeff Brandes, said a court hearing had occurred yesterday.

10 – City Events:

Mayor Travis Palladeno said Madeira Beach's 44th Annual LOOP Billfish Tournament weigh in is on August 29.

Mayor Maria Lowe said St. Pete Beach is hosting an ethics training session on September 22; many sidewalks in Pass-a-Grille were under construction; road milling in Pass-a-Grille would occur this fall.

Commissioner Terry Hamilton-Wollin said a 7-story Holiday Inn with waterpark is planned in Indian Rocks Beach; Crabby Bills is hosting a memorial for the fallen pier on August 29; Walsingham Road/Gulf Boulevard intersection construction begins after Labor Day; annual Safety Day is on September 12.

Councilor Bill Smith said Indian Shores' beautification project is underway; a new City logo is being designed; the open air market starts in October. He said the FSBPA (Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association) conference begins September 23.

Mayor George Cretekos said the Clearwater Threshers made the playoffs; Clearwater's second adopted service dog, Century, is being trained.

Mayor Robert Minning said a topping out party on August 28 at the new Edgewater Hotel in Treasure Island will celebrate completion of the hotel's 5th floor.

11 - Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

September 30, 2015 BIG C meeting at
City of Indian Rocks Beach Civic Auditorium,
1507 Bay Palm Boulevard



President Mayor Bob Minning
Barrier Islands Governmental Council