



## **Nature & Environment Committee**

### **Minutes for July 16, 2009 Meeting**

#### **Attendees:**

**Chair: Dick Townsend**

**Guy Forchion**

**Gene Tinnie**

**Sam Van Leer**

**Ken Llewellyn**

**Bob Weinreb**

The Nature and Environment committee met July 16, 2009 - 6:15pm

Approvals of past minutes (April 14, 2009 and May 21, 2009) were completed. The committee members reviewed and approved the June 18, 2009 minutes.

The Nature and Environment Committee's agenda consisted of a walking tour of the East and West coastal dune construction and three discussion items.

Chair Townsend made reference to the June 2009 committee meeting that got consumed by discussion and didn't leave enough time to tour the property completely before sunset.

**Discussion Item: Committee Structure** – Chairman Townsend initiated discussion with the desire to have Bob Weinreb join the committee in an official capacity. Weinreb is awaiting the City Manager's judgment on his ability to serve on the committee in an official capacity or to continue ex-officio; he will notify the committee of the outcome.

It was introduced and generally agreed that the committee would have a maximum of nine (9) voting members. During the committee meetings time would be made available for public comment from guests and non-committee members when needed. Committee structure would be discussed further during approaching meetings.

**Discussion Item: Landscape Management Plan** – Chairman Townsend initiated discussion with the creation of a Historic Virginia Key Beach Park landscape management plan; beginning with the development of a strategy for the planting of ceremonial/commemorative trees, the next 5 locations and species type. There was some discussion on if the Trust should allow ceremonial plantings; it was generally understood that the activity would take place.

VKBPT staff – Guy Forchion informed the committee members of his initial research into finding existing landscape plans to use as a model(s) for the creation of the Trust plan.

**Discussion Item: Construction of the Foot Bridge** – VKBPT staff - Guy Forchion gave the committee a briefing on the outcome of a meeting with DERM and the contractor Dynamic regarding the start of construction on the foot bridge. The piles for the bridge are ready to go; the start date was still an issue of concern with the phase of construction taking place on the coastal dune and the state of the access road to the rear of the property. The bridge planking is specified as Green hard wood from South America and will require 60 days for delivery. In the meantime, Dynamic will begin the pile driving phase of the project with the bridge planking taking place with the arrival of the S. America wood.

**6:30 pm the site walking tour took place.**

**Tour discussion items:**

Tinnie - committee consensus - Seaside Mahoe near North restroom should be removed following the creation of a management plan; Seagrass plants by the restroom should be moved and planted differently.

Van Leer – create an exotic, invasive management plan for trees on the property – discussion ensued. Create on-site mitigation rules.

Tinnie – train tunnel beautification; it was suggested to give it a “mountainous appearance” or some other beautification. A “beach dune” look was suggested by Van Leer.

Discussion turned toward the “5 lake area”, public and pedestrian access to the land areas inside of the railroad track, upgrading the train ride experience, upgrading the educational experience of the train ride, providing information and a “museum education experience at the train depot.

Discussion turned to the committee's desire to be better informed and consulted on more elements and plans that would overlap with the nature and environment committee before steps are taken in those areas; red mulch, signage content and language, use organic gardening techniques, be careful when using herbicides, create an exotic removal plan, pay attention and be sensitive to the natural food chain, provide additional signage to control public intrusion into the existing dune areas, re-visit the possibility of employing a naturalist/park ranger. Finally, discussion turned toward the agreed continued need for a landscape management plan and the creation of other environmental policies.

Meeting adjourned 8:45pm. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, September 17, 2009, 6:00pm.