

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Information for Town Council Meeting on: February 11, 2025

TO: Town Council Members

FROM: Kirk Blouin, Town Manager

VIA: Melissa Ceriale, Shore Protection Board Chairperson
Patricia Strayer, P.E., Town Engineer

RE: Shore Protection Board 2024 Annual Report

DATE: January 23, 2025

The Shore Protection Board (SPB) is currently comprised of six (6) regular members appointed by the Town Council for three-year terms.

A chairperson and vice-chairperson are selected by the members. The 2025 SPB members are as follows:

2025 Shore Protection Board	Position	Current Term Expires
Melissa Ceriale	Chair	2 nd Term – 12/2025
Warren Belmar	Vice Chairperson	Expired 1/2025
Lawrence Kaplan	Regular Member	1 st Term – 12/2027
Peter Matwiczuk	Regular Member	2 nd Term – 12/2027
Ronald Matzner	Regular Member	2 nd Term – 12/2027
James McKelvy	Regular Member	1 st Term – 12/2027
Erick Reickert	Regular Member	2 nd Term – 12/2025
Doug Rogers	Regular Member	Expired 12/2024
Joel Zylstra	Regular Member	1 st Term – 12/2025

Melissa Ceriale, Erick Reickert, and Joel Zylstra are currently serving their final year of a three-year term. Mrs. Ceriale and Mr. Reickert are serving their second consecutive terms. Warren Belmar and Doug Rogers served their final terms in December of 2024. The remaining members' terms will end in December 2027. Peter Matwiczuk and Ronald Matzner will be ineligible for reappointment at that time, as they were reappointed in December 2024 and are serving their second consecutive terms. James McKelvy and Lawrence Kaplan were newly appointed to the board in December 2024 and January 2025, respectively. Mr. Zylstra will be eligible for reappointment in December 2025 and Mr. McKelvy will be eligible in December 2027. SPB members are allowed to serve for two (2) consecutive three-year terms.

The Board met four (4) times during the 2024 calendar year.

2025 Shore Protection Board	Meetings Attended	Jan 25	April 4	May 16	Nov 14
Melissa Ceriale	4	P	P	P	P
Warren Belmar	4	P	P	P	P
Peter Matwiczuk	4	P	P	P	P
Ronald Matzner	4	P	P	P	P
Erick Reickert	4	P	P	P	P
Doug Rogers	3	E	P	P	P
Joel Zylstra	4	P	P	P	P

P = Present
 E = Excused
 U = Unexcused

CURRENT SHORELINE CONDITION

The Town’s proactive on-going coastal management efforts have helped to maintain storm protection along the Town’s 12.2 miles of shoreline. Late October to December brought a few storm events, which is typical for the area during the winter season and end of hurricane season. The shoreline fared well and was not significantly impacted during Hurricanes Helene and Milton, which made landfall on the west coast of Florida on September 26th and October 9th, respectively. Despite minor erosion brought by these storms, the sand that was placed on the beaches in recent projects is not lost. The majority of the sand will move south and then back to the dry beach as the wind and waves shift direction. This is the typical seasonal response to weather patterns during this time of year.

The Town’s Public Works staff and consultants have been monitoring the shoreline closely and will continue to do so providing updates as needed.

2024 COASTAL PROTECTION UPDATES

Sand Transfer Plant

Sand Transfer Plant operations have continued during 2024, with 149,600 cubic yards of sand bypassed under the inlet, from Singer Island to Palm Beach Island for the year (approximately 29,600 cubic yards increase from the previous year). The goal of the Inlet Management Plan for bypassing is 202,000 cubic yards per year, which the plant has not met due to maintenance issues.

During the 2024 year, the Town has engaged design engineers to replace the existing crane, which is in dire need of replacement due to corrosion and wearing on critical components. We are also working to rebuild the valve vault that was lost during Hurricane Nicole in November of 2022. During 2025, we are also hopeful to get our second sand transmission line back in service, which was plugged in 2020 (approximately).

In October of 2024, Town Staff was notified of a jet line water leak. The leak was identified, repaired and recoated without interruptions to the plant.

Lake Worth Inlet Maintenance Dredging

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) awarded the FY25 Maintenance Dredging of Palm Beach Harbor on November 22, 2024, to Weeks Marine, Inc. Up to 251,000 cubic yards of material may be dredged from the Palm Beach Harbor entrance channel and settling basins and placed on the Town of Palm Beach shoreline between Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) R-monuments R-76 to R-80 in Reaches 1 and 2. USACE issued Notice to Proceed (NTP) to the contractor on December 5, 2024. Based on preliminary information provided by the contractor, the contractor can begin dredging Palm Beach Harbor's entrance channel sometime in March, 2025; however, that timeline is subject to approval of various Government-required submittals and plans. The contractor's proposed dredging equipment is currently working on a project in Florida and will mobilize to Palm Beach County following completion of that work in February. The contractor estimates up to five weeks to complete the work following approval of the required submittals.

Reach 2 Sand Forepassing

The Town selected Sea and Shoreline, LLC to provide excavation and truck hauling services associated with the USACE Inlet Maintenance Dredging project and the Phipps Ocean Park Beach Nourishment project. Sea and Shoreline will transport stockpiled sand from the USACE dredging project and will excavate sand from between R-monuments R-76 to R-78 in Reach 1 to rebuild dunes in Reach 2 between R-81 and R-83. Trucks will use Palmo Way for beach access. These activities are anticipated to start in February, potentially overlapping with the USACE activities in order to decrease ongoing construction activities on the northern portion of the Town.

Mid-Town Beach Nourishment

USACE had approved and received full funding for a Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Act (FCCE) project for the Mid-Town Beach Federal Nourishment Project in the Town of Palm Beach to replace sand lost from Hurricane Nicole. USACE Headquarters had determined that the project cannot be designed or constructed due to the Town of Palm Beach's inability to acquire 100% of the required perpetual easements. Based on meetings with General Spellmon, Chief of Engineers, the Jacksonville District was directed to move forward with a re-evaluation report to eliminate the northern 11 properties that have refused to provide a perpetual easement. Staff is working to secure easements that were identified by USACE as non-compliant. Three of these easements are within the Breakers property and three others are represented by the same attorney representing the Breakers. The Breakers and their attorney informed staff that a perpetual easement that includes public use is unacceptable to them.

Over the past 2 years, the State of Florida's federal legislature has been working to comply with the newly enforced requirement for 100% perpetual easements within the Federal project envelope. The Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA) has been signed by the President of the United States and has implications on this project. Based on staff's conversation with USACE Jacksonville District staff, the language in WRDA has significant implications for the implementation of the Mid-Town Project. Below are the implications that the Jacksonville District believe are a result of the new WRDA language.

1. The project may be implemented with temporary easements.
2. The sand placed on any property that provides a temporary easement instead of the perpetual easement will be at 100% non-federal sponsor's cost (the Town).
3. The project is required to be the same as the project built in 2020, which includes the 11 properties at the northern boundary of the project.
4. This provision is only for any construction within the next two years. All projects after the two year extension will be required to have 100% perpetual easements which include public use.

Staff met with General Hibner, District Commander of the South Atlantic Division of USACE (SAD) and Dr. McAllister, senior ranking civilian of the SAD on December 17th. At that meeting, staff was informed that SAD disagrees with the Jacksonville District's implications and believes the WRDA language is very confusing. Also, prior to implementing the new WRDA language, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works is required to provide guidance to USACE for implementation. In the past, guidance on WRDA language has not been provided in a timely manner.

SAD has committed to reviewing the present path forward and the implications of the WRDA language and will provide guidance on the path forward for the present FCCE project.

The easements required for the Breakers properties and the Lauder properties are directly linked to a project that the Breakers has initiated construction on. This project is known as the Mid-Town Headland Area Erosion Control Project. The permittees are: The Breakers Palm Beach, Inc., Flagler Drive Holdings, LLC, and South Ocean Boulevard, LLC. These entities represent five of the necessary easements for the long-term implementation of the federally authorized USACE Mid-Town Beach Nourishment Project. The Town has received notice from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), that they have issued a permit to the permittees of this project, and they are required to get an easement from the Town for the Clarke Beach property within one year of project construction. At this time, staff would not recommend agreeing to an easement without first getting the necessary perpetual easements from the five properties associated with the Town's Mid-Town Beach Nourishment project. Lastly, the Mid-Town Headland Area Erosion Control Project is dependent on sand being placed on the beach north of the Breakers as part of the federally authorized project. FDEP is adamant that nourishment of the beach in this area happens because of their dependence on Federal projects to the North's migration of sand, which reduces the State's funding to this Mid-Town Headland Area Erosion Control project.

Phipps Ocean Park Beach Renourishment and Reaches 8 & 9 Dune Restoration

The Phipps Ocean Park Nourishment project is actively placing 750,000 cubic yards of sand on the beach north of Lake Worth Beach. The same truck hauling contract with Sea and Shoreline, LLC in Reaches 1 and 2, will also be hauling sand north of Phipps Ocean Park to Sloan's Curve, between R-116 and R-119, and south to Reaches 8 and 9, between R-129 and R-138, for dune restoration. Town Council approved an agreement with Lake Worth Beach to utilize the south access of the Lake Worth Beach as an access for hauling sand to Reaches 8 and 9. The Lake Worth Beach City Commission approved the agreement at their December 3rd Commission meeting. Subsequently, Lake Worth Beach has rescinded this approval. Town staff is proceeding with alternative means to deliver sand to Reaches 8 and 9.

Reach 8

Staff and consultants are working to secure permits from the USACE and FDEP for beach nourishment in Reach 8 between R-128 and R-135. FDEP notified our team that our application package was deemed complete on December 13, 2024. The final submittal of information requested from FDEP was provided prior to that on December 4, 2024, which started a 90-day timeclock to draft the permit. After these 90 days, FDEP will deliver their Notice of Intent to issue a Joint Coastal Permit, which will include a Public Notice requirement and draft permit language. USACE's permit is pending FDEP's issuance of the Joint Coastal Permit. USACE's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is complete and is pending a Record of Decision after the FDEP permit is issued. Absent any formal objections following the Public Notice, the FDEP permit is expected to be issued in March 2025. Staff will coordinate with FDEP in the future for potentially adding this project to the Beach Management Agreement (BMA). FDEP has recommended modification of the BMA after the project is constructed, although there is no requirement that the project has to be built in order for it to be included. The BMA is updated every 5 years, and the last update was in 2021. Therefore, the BMA is expected to be reviewed and renewed in 2026.

Groin Rehabilitation

Town-wide groin rehabilitation is authorized by the FDEP in the BMA. The Town is also pursuing a time extension of the existing USACE permit for the rehabilitation and replacement of existing groins between Reaches 2 through 6. The Town is currently working with upland private property owners on a case-by-case basis to repair and replace groins. The Town has offered to act as the environmental regulatory umbrella permit holder on the basis that private property owners obtain individual Sovereign Submerged Lands Leases from FDEP for groins fronting their property and hire firms/contractors to do the design and construction at their own cost. The Town is currently working with the Blossom Way property to replace four groins with this approach.

Sand Search

Staff have received two (2) Beach Management Funding Assistance Grants from the FDEP for a sand search and to delineate borrow areas for future nourishment events. Currently, Applied Technology & Management (ATM) is conducting field work for the sand search investigation. Preliminary sites for additional investigations have been identified and will be evaluated further based on field investigations.

Monitoring

Biological, physical, sea turtle nesting, and shorebird monitoring work continued, as required by the State's Beach Management Agreement (BMA) and/or Federal permits, as previously approved by Town Council.

2024 SHORE PROTECTION BOARD ACTIONS

A major goal of the Board for 2024 was to increase communications with the residents about the importance of our coastal program, and to provide notices and information on current projects. Major strides were taken in this aspect this year, as described below.

- The Town engaged The Firefly Group, a public relations and marketing firm, as part of the Coastal Protection Engineering (CPE) team to develop a communication action plan and assist with developing visual materials for coastal projects. Informational signage was created for the Phipps Ocean Park Nourishment project. Staff distributed flyers to condo managers within the Phipps project vicinity, signs were installed at beach access points at Phipps Ocean Park, and weekly project updates and project information is posted on the Town's newly updated coastal website. Signs are currently in development for the inlet dredging and sand forepassing projects in Reaches 1 and 2.
- The Town worked closely with the City of Lake Worth Beach staff to produce an interlocal agreement for hauling sand through the City's beach access at Lake Worth Beach. After rescinding their approval of the interlocal agreement in December, it is evident that engagement with neighboring municipalities is still needed, including sharing knowledge on the historical success of beach nourishment projects.
- Consultants from ATM and Woods Hole Group presented at the November 21, 2024, Citizens Association meeting. Presentations included an informational overview of the Town's beach nourishment projects and comparison of conditions between 1990 and 2024, and a description of the ongoing vulnerability assessment update. The meeting was held at the South Fire Station and was well attended.

cc: H. Paul Brazil, P.E., Director of Public Works
Patricia Strayer, P.E., Town Engineer