

Captiva Erosion Prevention District Workshop Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2026

Time: 1:03 p.m.

Location: Virtual Workshop Meeting

Commissioners Present:

- Rene Miville

Commissioners Absent:

- Bob Walter, Chair
- Bernie Dupre, Treasurer/Secretary
- Tim McGowan, Vice Chair
- John Wade

Staff Present:

- Brighton Heard, General Manager
- Lisa Batchelor, Office Manager

Presenters / Consultants Present:

- Leigh Gevelinger, Coastal Vista Design
- Rose Gilson, Coastal Vista Design
- Douglas Mann, APTIM

Members of the Public / Others Present:

- Gregg Fergus
- David Mintz
- Susie Henry

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The workshop was called to order at approximately 1:03 p.m. Roll was taken informally, and it was noted during the workshop that Commissioner Miville was the only CEPD Commissioner present. Commissioners Walter, Dupre, McGowan, and Wade were not present.

2. Agenda Review

No changes to the agenda were made.

3. Workshop Topic: Coastal Vista Design Dune Vegetation Presentation

Leigh Gevelinger of Coastal Vista Design introduced the firm and stated that Coastal Vista had been contracted by CEPD to evaluate vegetation enhancements for the dune and the recently completed beach renourishment project. Ms. Gevelinger explained that the presentation would address project extents, concept design, planting approach, and next steps/action items.

Ms. Gevelinger reviewed the project area, explaining that the contracted extent runs from the S-curve near Jensen's on the Beach on the south end of the Village area to the Alison Hagerup

Beach public parking area on the north end. She noted that Coastal Vista had initially focused on four public beach access points: Alison Hagerup Beach, Laika Lane, Wightman Lane, and Andy Rosse Lane.

Ms. Gevelinger explained the role of dune vegetation in stabilizing sand, noting that sea oats and other dune plants establish root systems that help hold sand in place, reduce wind-driven sand movement, and support a more resilient dune structure over time. She described a healthy dune profile as generally including pioneer species on the foredune, herbaceous and groundcover plantings along the dune crest and mid-dune area, and shrub-form plantings on the back dune where appropriate.

Coastal Vista reviewed recent photographs from Alison Hagerup Beach showing that the sea oats planted following the renourishment have already begun to grow in and establish. Ms. Gevelinger noted that some plant dieback and gaps are expected in new dune plantings, particularly when plantings are installed near the end of the rainy season, but stated that the observed growth was a positive sign.

Ms. Gevelinger presented the concept for Alison Hagerup Beach, describing proposed planting zones that could include back dune shrubs such as sea grape and Jamaica caper, coastal strand and herbaceous species such as sea lavender, seaside purslane, and sea oxeye daisy, and foredune pioneer species such as bitter panic grass, railroad vine, beach morning glory, and additional sea oats. She emphasized that the proposed plant palette is native and intended to be compatible with FDEP dune planting requirements.

Ms. Gevelinger also reviewed the concept for Laika Lane, explaining that a similar approach could be applied to Wightman Lane and Andy Rosse Lane. She described the concept as a planting matrix that would work around existing surviving sea oats and fill gaps with additional species to increase plant diversity and root structure while preserving public access and maintaining low plantings near the pathway edges where appropriate.

4. Discussion: Scope, Island-Wide Applicability, and Design Fee

Commissioner Miville asked who had negotiated the contract and why the scope was limited to the Village area rather than the entire island. Ms. Gevelinger stated that Coastal Vista had been approached by former Chair John Wade and that the firm had been contracted to review the area from the S-curve near Jensen's to Alison Hagerup Beach.

Commissioner Miville expressed concern from a taxpayer and fiduciary perspective that the work was not being performed island-wide. Ms. Gevelinger explained that, although the contracted scope is limited to the Village area, the principles being discussed could be applied elsewhere on the island. She further clarified that the approximately \$25,000 design fee relates to the full Village-area design scope, not only the public access concepts shown during the workshop.

Mr. Mann commented that the District may wish to move incrementally by using public access points or demonstration areas first, then seeking additional property owner participation and applying lessons learned to other areas. He cautioned that attempting to advance four miles of dune vegetation improvements all at once may create resistance among property owners with concerns about views or individual preferences.

5. Discussion: Purpose of the Design and Sensitive Areas

Gregg Fergus asked whether the goal of the design was to maximize dune protection or to create a budget-efficient planting plan. Ms. Gevelinger responded that the primary intent was to help keep sand in place and provide additional dune structure through vegetation, while also developing a sense of potential costs and implementation options.

Mr. Fergus stated that certain areas, including Andy Rosse Lane and the S-curve near Jensen's, appear to be especially vulnerable and should be prioritized for protection. He stated that, in public areas, view concerns should not override the need to protect the Village.

Ms. Gevelinger agreed that the S-curve and Andy Rosse Lane are sensitive areas. She stated, however, that the S-curve may require a broader engineering or resiliency solution beyond vegetation alone, because Coastal Vista's current scope is limited to vegetation and does not include moving sand, adding sand, adding cap rock, or designing structural improvements.

6. Discussion: Maintenance Responsibilities

David Mintz asked what ongoing maintenance would be required for the proposed plantings and whether maintenance would be the responsibility of CEPD, homeowners associations, or private property owners. Ms. Gevelinger responded that maintenance needs would generally be limited, especially for grasses and groundcovers, which do not typically require regular trimming.

Ms. Gevelinger explained that woody shrubs such as sea grape may require some maintenance depending on the final design, location, and desired form. She stated that responsibility for maintenance would need to be determined by CEPD, but that similar vegetation on private property is often maintained by the property owner or association.

Mr. Mintz stated that his concern was less about maintenance cost and more about understanding the expected time, effort, and practical responsibilities associated with maintaining the plantings. Ms. Gevelinger reiterated that, aside from limited maintenance of woody shrubs, maintenance would likely be minimal.

7. Discussion: Plant Selection and Dune Stabilization

Commissioner Miville asked which plants provide the best value for holding sand in place. Ms. Gevelinger stated that sea oats are one of the most effective dune stabilization plants because their roots can extend six to eight feet below the sand and they can grow up through additional sand accumulation once established.

Discussion followed regarding natural recruitment of dune plants, including railroad vine, seaside purslane, and seashore marsh elder. Ms. Gevelinger explained that many of these species can recruit naturally over time, but that the newly placed renourishment sand does not yet contain a mature seed source. She stated that establishing additional plant material now may help accelerate future recruitment and dune stabilization.

8. Discussion: Alison Hagerup Area, Historic Cottage, and Potential Deferral

Susie Henry commented on the Alison Hagerup Beach area and identified concerns related to the adjacent historic cottage, parking lot reconstruction, retaining wall configuration, access/egress,

and potential storm surge impacts. She requested that any further consideration of Alison Hagerup improvements be tabled until those property-specific concerns can be addressed with the Commission.

Ms. Henry stated that, in her view, additional dune strengthening at Alison Hagerup may need to be considered in relation to the adjacent structure and surrounding site conditions. The comments were received as part of the workshop discussion, and no formal action was taken.

9. Discussion: Opinion of Probable Cost, Procurement, and Funding

Ms. Gevelinger discussed the opinions of probable cost prepared for the Alison Hagerup and Laika Lane concepts. She explained that the costs were high-level opinions based on standard costs and experience with local contractors, not formal bids or estimates. She further explained that the concepts currently reflect a broader planting approach that includes the front dune, dune crest, and back dune, and that costs could be reduced by scaling back quantities or focusing on specific planting zones.

Commissioner Miville questioned the plant unit costs shown in the opinion of probable cost, stating that the numbers appeared significantly higher than wholesale plant pricing. Ms. Gevelinger clarified that the figures were not wholesale plant prices and included an installation component and other project delivery considerations. She explained that a formal bid process could be structured to request wholesale plant pricing, separate labor pricing, warranties, or other cost breakdowns.

Discussion followed regarding potential funding sources. Ms. Gevelinger stated that Coastal Vista could look into possible grant sources. Mr. Heard stated that he had spoken with FDEP regarding Local Government Funding Request grant eligibility and that dune planting may potentially be eligible at the same reimbursement rate if included in the appropriate request. Mr. Heard also noted that he had applied for a \$500,000 appropriation request through the District's lobbyist for dune biodiversification. Discussion also referenced Tourist Development Council funding as a possible annual source for planting improvements.

10. Direction Given / Next Steps

The following direction and next steps were discussed during the workshop:

- Coastal Vista will continue refining the dune vegetation concepts based on feedback received during the workshop.
- Coastal Vista will consider options for scaling the concepts, including focusing on back dune and/or foredune plantings, reducing planting quantities, and preserving view corridors where appropriate.
- Coastal Vista will provide or identify potential grant and funding sources that may be available for dune vegetation improvements.
- Staff will continue evaluating potential FDEP, TDC, state appropriation, and other funding sources for dune biodiversification and stabilization work.

- The District may consider whether certain vulnerable public areas, including Andy Rosse Lane and the S-curve near Jensen's, require additional resiliency or engineering evaluation beyond vegetation alone.
- Further discussion may be needed before moving forward with any Alison Hagerup improvements due to property-specific concerns raised during the workshop.

11. Public Comment

Public and stakeholder comments were received throughout the workshop as part of the discussion. Comments included questions and concerns regarding project scope, island-wide applicability, maintenance responsibility, vulnerable public access areas, plant pricing, cost estimating assumptions, potential funding sources, and the Alison Hagerup area.

12. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Miville reiterated concerns regarding the limited Village-area scope, the importance of treating taxpayer funds carefully, and the need to evaluate planting costs carefully before implementation. No other Commissioners were present to provide comments.

13. Adjournment

As this was a workshop meeting, no motion to adjourn was required. The workshop was concluded at approximately 2:10 p.m.