

Meeting Minutes - Renourishment 2025 Workshop October 16, 2025

- **Beach Renourishment Project Progress and Updates:** Nicole provided a comprehensive update to John, Brighton, Rene, and Bob Walter on the current status of the beach renourishment project, including progress milestones, contractor performance, and upcoming operational pauses for equipment changes, confirming that the project remains on schedule and within expected parameters.
 - **Project Status and Timeline:** Nicole reported that the beach renourishment project is progressing well, with substantial completion from R-100 to R-109, and that the project remains on target for a November 28th completion date. Survey data indicates that about a quarter of the required sand volume has been placed, and the contractor is maintaining high production rates.
 - **Operational Pause and Equipment Change:** Nicole explained that there will be a planned pause over the weekend to switch out dredges and move the subline to a northern location, with the new dredge expected to begin operations on Monday. This pause was anticipated and is being used to optimize project logistics.
 - **Sand Quality and Contractor Performance:** Nicole confirmed that sand quality is excellent and that the contractor is performing well, with no unanticipated issues or surprises encountered so far in the project.
 - **Safety and Site Access for Photography:** Nicole informed Rene that, pending final approval, they will need to watch a safety video and wear proper PPE before being allowed on site to take photographs for documentation purposes.
- **Community Concerns Regarding Dune Height:** Brighton addressed questions from John and Rene about community feedback, explaining that a small number of property owners have expressed concerns about increased dune heights affecting their views, and outlined the rationale for the changes and the district's approach to communication.
 - **Nature and Scope of Complaints:** Brighton reported receiving approximately five complaints from property owners concerned about the increased height of the dunes, which affects their views of the Gulf. This represents less than 1% of the 455 Gulf-front residences.
 - **Rationale for Dune Height Increase:** Brighton explained that the dunes were constructed with storm protection in mind, using templates that have been in place for decades, and that minimal increases in height are necessary to adapt to rising sea levels and more frequent storms.
 - **Communication Strategy with Property Owners:** Brighton has been addressing concerns by explaining the necessity of the changes and suggesting alternatives such as walkovers to improve accessibility and aesthetics, while emphasizing the district's responsibility to protect the shoreline.
 - **Discussion of Alternatives for Affected Homeowners:** Rene suggested that affected homeowners consider elevating their homes or adding levels to regain views, but John advised focusing communication on the factual scope of changes rather than recommending property modifications.
- **Technical Details of Dune Design Changes:** Nicole responded to questions from John and Rene by clarifying the technical aspects of the dune design, including the specific changes in elevation, regulatory constraints, and the historical context of previous renourishments.

- **Comparison to Previous Renourishments:** Nicole stated that the current dunes are similar in footprint to previous projects, with the main change being an increase in elevation by up to two feet, raising some areas from 8 to 10 feet and others from 10 to 12 feet NAVD.
- **Regulatory and Permitting Constraints:** Nicole and Brighton confirmed that dune heights are regulated by permit, and the current project is built to the maximum allowable elevation under updated FEMA floodplain requirements, which have changed since the 2021 project.
- **Historical Template and Elevation Changes:** Nicole explained that historical templates have been used for decades, and the recent increase to 12 feet in some areas is due to updated floodplain maps, whereas the 2021 project was limited to 10 feet based on the requirements at that time.
- **Clarification of Design Decisions:** Nicole clarified that the board has consistently aimed to build dunes to the maximum permitted height for protection, and that the current increase is a result of regulatory changes rather than a discretionary decision.
- **Pathways, Public Access, and Grant Utilization:** John, Rene, and Brighton discussed the status of beach access pathways, the involvement of the fire district, and the use of grant funds, clarifying decisions regarding wooden walkways, ADA compliance, and infrastructure investments at public access points.
 - **Fire District Access Requirements:** John confirmed that the fire district will be involved in reviewing and approving access path designs at Turner Beach and Andy Rosse parking lots to ensure EMT teams can access the beach, with plans to present detailed specs to relevant stakeholders.
 - **Wooden Walkways and ADA Compliance:** John explained that while wooden walkways were considered, they were found to be costly and potentially limiting for fire district access and ADA compliance, so the idea was deprioritized in favor of more flexible solutions.
 - **Grant Funding Allocation:** John clarified that available grant funds are being used for vegetation and infrastructure such as ropes, bollards, and landscape design at public access points, rather than for wooden walkways.
 - **Infrastructure at Andy Rossi and Public Access:** John stated that the district is responsible for managing the dunes and public access at Andy Rosse, and plans to build out paths with protective infrastructure to prevent dune damage from foot traffic.
- **Sanibel Participation in Permitting and Future Collaboration:** John, Rene, and Brighton discussed the ongoing request from Sanibel to join the district's permitting for additional dredging, outlining the current status, next steps, and the historical context of collaboration between the two communities.
 - **Status of Sanibel's Request:** John stated that the Sanibel request to join the district's permitting is ongoing and not yet ready for a vote, with plans to set up a special meeting once the necessary details and numbers are finalized.
 - **Delegation and Negotiation Process:** Rene and John confirmed that Nicole and Brighton have been delegated to negotiate the terms and infrastructure details with Sanibel, with the goal of presenting a workable agreement to the commissioners.

- **Historical Collaboration Context:** Rene provided background on the history of collaboration with Sanibel, noting that previous decisions to not participate in joint renourishments led to challenges for Sanibel, and expressing hope for renewed cooperation.
 - **Commitment to Support Sanibel:** John emphasized the district's willingness to assist Sanibel and the importance of maintaining a positive, collaborative relationship between the neighboring communities.
- **Meeting Scheduling and Board Engagement:** Brighton, John, and Rene discussed the scheduling of upcoming meetings, the importance of commissioner engagement, and the process for developing the 2026 meeting schedule, emphasizing the need for flexibility and active participation.
 - **Upcoming Meeting Plans:** The group agreed to continue holding workshops during the renourishment project rather than forcing a regular meeting schedule, with the next workshop tentatively planned for the following Thursday.
 - **2026 Schedule Development:** John instructed Brighton to involve all commissioners in the development of the 2026 meeting schedule, taking into account holidays and seasonality to avoid cancellations and ensure better engagement.
 - **Board Engagement and Culture:** Rene stressed the importance of maintaining a culture of active board participation and cautioned against infrequent meetings that could lead to disengagement, while Brighton confirmed that special meetings or workshops can be called as needed.
- **Financial Workshop Planning and Administrative Updates:** Rene requested a financial workshop within the next four weeks to review account structures and operational improvements, while Brighton and Lisa provided updates on administrative accomplishments such as mobile deposits and quarterly reporting.
 - **Financial Workshop Request:** Rene asked for a dedicated workshop to review financials, account consolidation, and operational improvements, with John agreeing to add this to the agenda.
 - **Administrative Accomplishments:** Brighton and Lisa reported successful completion of a mobile deposit and the submission of quarterly reports, noting ongoing efforts to streamline administrative processes.