

JICANet Update

Vol XII, #16

Mar 17, 2011

Prior Updates can be found on our website at www.jekyllcitizens.org

Items in this Update

- **JICA Record of Feb 21 JISPA Meeting**
- **Previously Announced Events**

Record of the Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JISPA) Board Meeting of 21 February 2011, in Chalets 7&8 of the Interim Convention Center, as recorded for JICA.

Chairman Bob Krueger brought the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. Board members present were Buddy DeLoach, Mike Hodges, and Sybil Lynn. Laura Lanier, Richard Royal and legal counsel Brooks Stillwell were on conference telephone. DNR Coastal Resources Director Spud Woodward sat in for DNR Commissioner Mark Williams. Also present was Park Authority Executive Director Jones Hooks. The audience numbered about 35 persons.

Chairman Krueger led off the meeting with a statement from the Board regarding the recent suggestion by a Georgia legislator (Ron Stephens of Savannah) that gambling should be allowed on State properties including Jekyll Island State Park, through an Entertainment-Zone amendment to the State Constitution. Krueger stated that the Park Authority does not support any activity in the Park that would degrade the family atmosphere prevalent in the Park. He noted that this includes adult entertainment of several types. He directed further commentary on the gambling suggestion to our local legislators, Representative Alex Atwood and Senator William Ligon.

COMMITTEE SESSIONS; CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Chairman Royal observed that all comments that had been received regarding the January draft of the Park's Conservation Plan are now posted on the Authority website (look under Conservation on <http://www.jekyllisland.com/>). Dr. Terry Norton updated the audience on actions taken on the Plan during February. On 9 February, the Conservation Planning Committee met, along with public representatives Al Tate and Steve Newell (the minutes are posted with the public comments on the Authority website). The Education Subcommittee met on 15 February. The groups worked on the next draft of the Plan. On 7 March, a revised draft Plan will be posted on the Authority website. On 25 March, a public meeting will be held, at which comments can be made regarding the 7 March draft Plan. Written comments on the 7 March draft will be accepted through 1 April. The Planning Committee will meet and consider an update to the 7 March draft at some point following 1 April, and subsequently the Plan will be revised and presented to the JISPA Board at its May or June meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Hodges reported revenue for the month of January of \$782,000, right on the anticipated figure. For the seven months ending in January, total revenues were \$10.008 million, 2% over budget. Total expenditures for January were \$1.1 million, \$8,000 under budget, and for the year to date, \$9.3 million, about \$300,000 under budget. For the first seven months of the fiscal year, the Park Authority had a net cash income of \$701,000, \$454,000 better than budget.

The Georgia Department of Audits has reported on the audit of the Jekyll Island State Park Authority for the previous fiscal year. There were no findings of problems – it was a “clean” audit.

Director Hooks described the current financial situation at the now-closed Jekyll Oceanfront Resort. Hooks and Accounting Director Marjorie Johnson have met with Bob Foster, the attorney for the owner. Foster arranged meetings with First Guarantee Bank of Jacksonville, FL, the bank now in control of the Resort. The bank has paid-off many of the outstanding debts of the resort, and has retained a real-estate broker, which has received two offers for the resort’s leasehold. Counsel Stillwell noted that the Park Authority has not declared the lease to be in default, since the bank is paying the resort’s bills. Should the bank find a buyer, the Authority will need to review the qualifications of the prospective new owner. Not all single parties with reservations which had been made at the resort have been contacted (the Park Authority does not currently have the contact information), a situation which may cause problems in the coming months. Mike Hodges inquired about the fate of parties who had purchased condominiums at the resort? Answer (Brooks Stillwell): in all likelihood, they are protected with regard to their interests in their units, but the operator of the common areas depends on the outcome of purchase, foreclosure, or lease-default procedures.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Chairman Lynn announced that Cliff Gawron has been promoted to Director of Landscape Planning, and Harry Kicklighter will retire as of 1 March, after 30 years of service.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Marketing Director Eric Garvey clarified that all groups which had been scheduled for meeting space/lodging at the Jekyll Oceanfront have had their reservations transferred to other Jekyll accommodations. Garvey noted that the news coverage of Jekyll Island State Park revitalization/demolition/construction might be leading to some discouraging of visitation. He hired a consulting firm to review the news stories of 2010. It was found that 63% were overwhelmingly positive regarding the Park as a destination, and 2% painted the destination negatively. It was recommended that more emphasis be put on the recent and forthcoming accomplishments making the Park even more attractive for convention and family-tourist visitation. To date, 66 convention groups have been contracted to come to the new Park Convention Center in 2012, and 44 groups have also booked for 2013. These contracts represent 30% of the marketing staff’s goal; it is expected that the sales pace will accelerate once the retail “flags” of the Center’s Beach Village are announced. A new hire for marketing to Atlanta groups is being sought, to be based in Atlanta; this person will be paid by way of commissions, depending on extent of sales. A final candidate has been identified, and may start within two weeks. Another contract employee has also been added, with the responsibility for sports marketing. Lacrosse events are currently being targeted. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center kiosk in Atlanta is being moved to the second floor of the Sloppy Floyd Building, a high-traffic area; this move will be tied to a visitation-promotion for State government workers. Chairman DeLoach requested that the Marketing Committee of the Board be present for the March meeting, so that they can lunch together and discuss the new 18-month marketing plan that will be presented at the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Robert Abberger, a Senior Managing Director for Trammell Crow (TC), presented TC’s position regarding their leasehold where the Buccaneer and Georgia Coast Inn had been. Abberger stated that he and his staff have worked diligently with Director Hooks to find an acceptable set of lease amendments that would permit TC to develop its leaseholds to everyone’s satisfaction. Abberger has also overseen an extensive feasibility study to present to TC’s board, regarding the possibilities for development in Jekyll Island State Park (note that TC also owns the Oceanside leasehold). TC has been using all profits from Oceanside to fund improvements to that hotel, and prepare it for the new business to come with the new Convention Center. TC remains very

enamored with its vacant south-Island parcels, and feels that they are ideal for development of high-end accommodations (hotel plus another form of rental units; low density, not high density, and no structured parking). TC feels that it must wait until it can clearly see momentum in the marketplace, before it gets started with new hospitality development. TC also feels that it must know the nature of its competition on the Island, especially in the new Beach Village. Until TC is certain of the identities (scope, scale, timing) of the Village's hotels, they cannot plan the differentiation of their future hotels in their south-Island lots. TC cannot work with its financial underwriters until they can build a case for the readiness of Jekyll Island for new hotel development, and the market has not yet provided the signal for which TC is looking.

Chairman Krueger asked for more information regarding the work that TC has done at Oceanside? Answer: the amenities were attacked first (pool, pool deck, etc.) and then the restaurant was remodeled. Now room quality is being targeted, wing-by-wing, room-by-room, and next structural improvements will be made, to permit a "double-loaded wing" in anticipation of greater convention business. Mike Hodges wondered whether funds beyond the Oceanside profits have been used to make improvements at Oceanside? Answer: in a prior year, about \$1 million of non-Oceanside funds were used for that purpose, but currently only Oceanside cash flow is being used (about \$0.5 million per year). Full redevelopment (demolition and rebuilding) on the Oceanside leasehold will not take place until the properties on the south-Island lots are completed (possibly 5 years from now).

Lupita McClenning, Director of Planning and Government Services for the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC), provided an update to the work that the CRC is doing for the Park Authority on the input resulting from the Authority's Request for Information regarding the forthcoming update to the Park's Master Plan. Number of responses received by the 27 August 2010 deadline was 122, containing 415 comments, which the CRC categorized into 43 topics. The most common comment dealt with redevelopment, and called for maintaining the family atmosphere and quaint charm of Jekyll Island State Park. Other areas within this topic were environmental conservation, design standards, beach access, and affordable accommodations. The next most common comment dealt with the 65/35 law, prohibiting development of 65% of the Park's uplands. A key topic here was understanding what is and what is not developed – better definitions are needed. The third most common comment dealt with affordability of accommodations; the concern was that developers should provide visitation facilities that citizens of ordinary income could afford. The fourth set of comments dealt with maintaining beach access, and protection of the dune environment. The fifth category was height limit of buildings; comments stated that heights of buildings should be at or below the current 64-foot limit. Public involvement in the updating of the Master Plan was mentioned frequently by respondents. Of utmost importance was that the public should sense that their comments are being heard.

Regarding the goals of the 1996 and 2004 updates to the Jekyll Island State Park Master Plan, the CRC was impressed with the number of goals that have been reached. Examples include restructuring of the residential leases, and progress in revitalization that has not restricted public access to the Park's beaches. The CRC advocates the following steps to be set as goals in the new Master Plan: develop strong partnerships with Georgia DNR Coastal Resources Division, the Georgia DNR Coastal Non-Point Program (especially the Coastal Stormwater Supplement group), the Georgia DNR Environmental Protection Division, the University of Georgia Marine Extension Center (especially the group advising on native-plant landscaping), and the Georgia Conservancy. The CRC also recommends taking a close look at the nearly complete State Water Plan, at the CRC's 20-year Climate Change initiative, and at the 10-county Coastal Regional Master Plan. The CRC advises further discussion regarding the current height limitations in the Park's Design Guidelines, in order that the Park develop its own sense of place. The CRC advocates working with the Georgia Conservancy to put 65% of the Park's uplands into a Conservation Easement.

The CRC believes that public engagement in the process of updating of the Master Plan is important for the public to be convinced that it is getting good value from government. For public involvement, the CRC advises that the JISPA use NCI Charette to arrive at an acceptable Plan Update. Early stages of the charette process would involve education, explaining the progress made since the 1996 and 2004 Plans, and describing the new Conservation Plan. Prior to the actual charette, the CRC would do several months of preparatory research and planning. This would be followed by the charette, a 3-day gathering of stakeholders at which all of the potential proposed updates to the Plan are fully explained and discussed. Each day the CRC and invited sets of stakeholders work together all day, and in the evening they have a public meeting to go over the day's conclusions. The next morning, the working document of the Plan is revised according to the previous day's findings. Following the charette, the CRC will undertake product refinement, which will yield the Master Plan Update in about 3 months. The final document should contain shared agreements for clear and achievable goals, a map to the Park's future drawn up through a very public process.

Mike Hodges asked whether the CRC believes that the JISPA has not done enough in the past to involve the public? Answer: the Master Plan RFI was a good start, but the involvement of the public should continue from there. Director Hooks added that the totality of the public responses to the RFI will be sent to each Board member, so that the public's desires can be made more clear. McClenning added that the Plan Updating could be done without the charette, but using the charette approach can involve all stakeholders and relevant experts in one brief operation. Chairman Krueger inquired about the extent of public input to be sought – will it be local, or from across the State? Answer: all of the stakeholders who consider Jekyll Island State Park a special destination should have input or at least be aware of the charette process.

A first reading was announced for a new Satellite Dish Ordinance. The new ordinance will be placed on the Park Authority website for review. Attractiveness and compliance with setback requirements will be addressed. A copy of the draft can be viewed at:

<http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/ImportantPostings/Ordinances.aspx>

Director Hooks remarked that construction on the new entry corridor to the Park is expected to begin this summer. Georgia Power is now moving power cables underground in the area of the new Convention Center, and this process is to be expanded to other parts of the Park.

The fencing around the dune-rebuilding site where the X-men filming took place is being left in place for now to protect the newly replanted dunes, and to retain sand during heavy winds. Environmental Services, Inc. is performing the rebuilding, with input from Cliff Gawron's landscape group. After the dune restoration is complete (after April), the bike path and benches will be restored to their original locations. Residential-rental licenses now number 278, about half of the residences in the Park. A new golf-cart lease has now been signed. DNR is placing a small, solar-powered radio-frequency detector at the outflow of Ski-Rixen Pond, so that fish tagged with injected radiotags can be monitored for movement. MMI will soon be overseeing a series of changes to be made at Blackbeard's Restaurant, which will change its name to Fins Seafood on the Beach.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Krueger offered copies of the Park Authority's Annual Report to the audience, and remarked that he was glad to see a lot of recent visitation activity in the Park.

Nancy Reed pointed out that golf carts are being operated on the Park's roadways by younger-than-legal kids, and worried that someone will be injured through this practice.

Sandy Cerrato observed that the dog ordinance regarding beach usage is being ignored by some folks, and then asked about the identity of the Coastal Regional Commission? Answer: The CRC is one of several regional commissions. It is a public entity that works on local projects, and the Park Authority has requested that the CRC handle the updating process for the Park's Master Plan.

Bonnie Newell asked about AT&T; the company is telling potential new customers that their cable capacity is now full, so that new internet customers cannot be accommodated. Will this situation change? Answer: the internet service provided by Comcast is likely to be better than one can obtain through AT&T.

Joe Malbasa stated that he enjoyed the presentation by Lupita McClenning of the CRC. He noted that when the city of Darien updated its Master Plan, they used a procedure similar to the charette process planned by the CRC. He also complimented the Authority on the plan to reinvigorate the dunes at the old X-Men movie site.

Norm Haft asked whether there were deadlines in place for Trammell Crow with regard to their potential presentation of plans for their south-island, beachfront lots? Answer: yes, one deadline comes in six months, and then there may be an extension provided for another six months.

Mindy Egan noted that she found Lupita McClenning's report very interesting and thought-provoking. She wondered whether, after the charette and product-refining stages of the CRC's work, would the Authority Board take over the updating process for the Master Plan? Answer: The Board expects to take the portions of the CRC's refined product that they deem appropriate and use it to update the Park's Master Plan. Egan persisted – does the Board still need to approve the actions proposed by the CRC to handle the updating process? Answer: the Board expects to have the CRC work on the updating as described, but the final decision on this point depends on the cost that will be identified in the CRC's final proposal to the Board.

Chairman Krueger adjourned the meeting at 11:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Steven Y. Newell, Jekyll Island Citizens Association

Previously Announced Events

Jekyll Singers Concert, Monday, Mar 21

The Jekyll Island Arts Association will present a concert by the Jekyll Singers at 7:30 p.m. at the Morgan Center in the Historic District. The concert will feature "On With The Show" a collage of Broadway show tunes. Come and support our singers. The concert is free.

Jl Conservation Plan Third Draft

The latest Jekyll Island Conservation Plan Draft is available on-line at <http://tinyurl.com/JekyllConservation>. A public meeting to discuss the plan will be held on Friday, Mar 25 in Magnolia Hall in the Historic District Convention Campus. The hours will be 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Public input to the draft plan and any follow up comments to the public meeting will be accepted until April 1. JICA encourages all interested parties to provide their input to this plan that will shape the future on Jekyll Island.

Volunteers Needed for U.S. Kids Tournament, Friday-Sunday, Mar 25-27

Volunteers are still needed as we host over 350 kid golfers from all over the world at our U.S. Kids Golf Tournament March 25th. The Jekyll Island Golf Club is in need of volunteers for this event which offers a great opportunity for golf lovers in the area to be a part of a U.S. Kids Golf Foundation tournament! If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Maggie Taylor at [912.635.4190](tel:912.635.4190)

Jl Presbyterian Church Recital, Mar 19

The popular Schaberg Family instrumental recital will be presented on Saturday, March 19, 2011, at 3:00 in the Jekyll Presbyterian Community Church on Riverview Drive. The program features a variety of music for flute, horn, violin and piano in different combinations, including pieces by W. Ten Have, Vittorio Monti, Carl Bohm, Josephine Trott, Robert Schumann, Carl Maria von Weber, and Michael McLean. The public is invited to attend and admission is free.

--- and that's the news from Jekyll Island where history lives, nature abounds and it appears spring has finally sprung!!! -- Jim Reed, JICANet Editor

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