

JICANet Update

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Prior Updates can be found on our website at

www.jekyllcitizens.org

Item in this Update

- JISPA Sept 26 Board Meeting Record
- JISPA Oct Board Meeting Agenda - Monday, Oct 17

Park Authority (JISPA) Board Meeting of 26 September 2011, in the Morgan Center of the Interim Convention Center, as recorded for JICARecord of the Jekyll Island State

Chairman Bob Krueger brought the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. Board members present were Buddy DeLoach, Mike Hodges, Al Ike, Sybil Lynn, and Richard Royal. Laura Lanier and Mark Williams were on conference telephone. Also present were Park Authority Executive Director Jones Hooks, legal counsel Brooks Stillwell, and Attorney General's Office representative Nancy Gallagher. The audience numbered about 42 persons.

COMMITTEE SESSIONS; CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Chairman Royal introduced Teddy Ivey of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (GSTC). Ivey presented a description of the new "Caretta Cam" portion of the GSTC website, and brought up a live view of "Test", the turtle upon which Caretta Cam is focused. Please see <http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org/carettacam/>. Test was brought into the GSTC with a severely damaged left flipper bound by fishing line; it was necessary to amputate the flipper, but Test is now doing well.

Museum Director John Hunter described the historic Skeet House in the Park. The Skeet House is now being examined for potential restoration as a part of the expansion of focus on historically interesting parts of the Park other than the National Landmark Historic District (e.g. the Wanderer Memorial). The Skeet House is the only building from the Jekyll Island Club era that still exists outside of the present Historic District. It was originally located on a large open field, but that field now contains large oaks that have grown up since the 1930s. The House is located across from the Park's airport terminal building, adjacent to a portion of Old Plantation Road that has been converted to a trail. The building has deteriorated but has not otherwise changed greatly, and was the home of the Jekyll Island Arts Association in the 60s and 70s. It is planned to relocate the Skeet House from the forest to the Historic District, perhaps with outside funding, and put the House to some sort of active, modern use, with panels describing the history of the building. Pier Road is the likely destination of the House. Moving and preserving the House would likely cost about \$50,000 (not including finishing the interior of the building). Potential funding sources have been identified.

Richard Van Iderstyne added another historical note. He, Clayton Porter, and historian and Park resident Tyler Bagwell have been trying now for some time to obtain an original "redbug" (they were used on the Island during the Jekyll Club era). They have now obtained a 1920s version of the redbugs, that was used on Jekyll Island. It is located at the Airport for all to see. Van Iderstyne also

proposed the retention of some of the original Jekyll Club dirt roads, such as the one on which the Skeet House now sits.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Hodges reported that the Park has total cash & equivalents of \$5.2 million, accounts receivable of \$3.5 million, and inventories of \$380,000, making total current assets = \$9.2 million. Fixed assets (primarily land and buildings) come to \$75 million, including \$30 million of construction in process, for total assets of about \$84.5 million. Total liabilities, primarily from bonds payable, come to \$28.9 million, bringing the current fund balance to \$53.6 million.

For the month of August, the net operating cash surplus was \$26,405, about \$117,000 less than budgeted. Expenses were \$86,000 over budget, and enterprise income was \$45,000 less than budget. Hodges was hesitant to call this financial situation a disturbing trend, but called for recognition of a move in the wrong direction. Director Hooks reminded the group that at the last Board meeting, he put into effect a policy of requesting that he be notified of any planned expenditures greater than \$1,000, an action not characteristic for late summer. Particularly disconcerting have been the low revenues for the usually financially robust months of June and July. In part, this is believed due to delaying of convention bookings by groups wanting to use the new Convention Center. However, it is known that overnight bookings were down countywide in Glynn during August. Hooks then showed a graph that showed that the downturn in overnight bookings by conventioners can be expected to be distinctly reversed in 2012. Hooks also presented a graph that showed that the increase in parking fees charged (1.5 years ago, to \$5) has helped mitigate the problem of low overnight-booking revenues. Mark Williams interjected that revenues at parks in Georgia statewide have been trending down. Accounting Director Marjorie Johnson noted that when the gate arm was installed at the Greeting Station in Jekyll Island State Park, persons who had been sliding through the gate without a valid decal were caught, and purchased a new, higher-priced (\$45) decal. Johnson presented graphs that indicated that USA CPAs are not currently optimistic about the near-term prospects for the American economy. Chairman Hodges emphasized the need to be nimble with regard to expense control in the Park.

Legal Associate Chris O'Donnell described the new leasing of a Pier Road shop to Gypsy Glass, which will sell glass art, and offer their premises to customers who wish to make their own piece of artwork. The lease terms will be the same as those formerly held by the previous lessee of the building (the Trading Post). The Gypsy Glass people plan to stay open for longer hours, which is considered desirable by the Park Authority. Ace Music and Art, Inc., will be the lessee, doing business as Gypsy Glass, but the name of the new shop has not been finalized. The Board approved the new lease.

Museum Director Hunter proposed that he seek grant funding from the RTP (Recreational Trails Program, division of the State Parks division of GA DNR). The funds would be used for the causeway bike-trail project. These would be monies in addition to the previously received \$250,000 from the GA DOT TE (Transportation Enhancement) Program. The Board approved Hunter's plan and the associated memorandum of understanding with DOT regarding staying within their guidelines for the project.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Human Resources Director Cornell Harvey announced a Faithful Services Award to Captain Sam Spinelli, who has served 25 years in the Jekyll Fire Department. Captain Spinelli could not be present for medical reasons, and is seeking disability retirement.

Dr. Terry Norton, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, introduced the GSTC's Americorps Intern Program, and asked several of the 2011 interns to come forward. Eleven interns (or "members" as they are internally listed) serve for a full year, and six or more serve for six months, especially on the beach patrol teams. In 2009, the GSTC Americorps Intern Program was recognized as one of the nation's most successful. In the following years, the Program has continued to be recognized for excellence, and currently, funding has been awarded for work by interns in sea-turtle-conservation projects in Costa Rica. Jeannie Miller, GSTC Americorps Program Coordinator introduced the interns who were present, and listed those not present, and the audience gave them a round of applause.

Director Hooks introduced a new staffperson for the Park Authority, Jennifer Frost. Frost will provide training for Authority personnel, and will be pursuing a Master's Degree in Human Resources.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Chairman DeLoach called upon Communications Director Eric Garvey. Garvey began by noting that about 25,000 guests attended the recent Shrimp & Grits Festival, a 34% increase over the 2010 Festival. The Festival had 95 vendors and over 100 volunteers participating, including some from the College of Coastal Georgia, and generated a calculated \$2.2 million economic impact in the local area. During the Festival, the Park's hotels experienced a 94% occupancy rate. The celebrity food judge from Woman's Day Magazine who participated wrote that she congratulated Events Director Beth Burnsed on a great and fun event that she looked forward to attending again next year. Director Hooks interjected that the Festival's bar revenues were \$7,000 greater than last year's.

Media Specialist Erica England provided an update, beginning with the Coca Cola America's Parks Contest, in which Jekyll Island State Park received over 500,000 votes, and came in at fifth place among the nation's most popular parks. England noted that Governor Deal and pro golfer Davis Love supported the Park's high standing, but she gave principal credit for the fine showing by the Park to groups such as the Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island which encouraged voting at rates of hundreds of times per day. At that point, Chairman Krueger invited David and Mindy Egan of the Initiative to come forward, and he presented them with a bow-wrapped trophy of a six pack of Coca Cola bottles. Mindy Egan countered by offering a potion to Garvey's group (who did a lot of voting themselves) for voting withdrawal. Egan recommended the Park Authority's partner's branded Vodka for voting withdrawal experienced in the evening. Egan thanked everyone who voted, for the enjoyable, joint experience of promoting beautiful Jekyll Island State Park.

England reported that an episode of Ocean Mysteries aired on ABC television on 17 September that was about the Georgia Sea Turtle Center and the Georgia Aquarium. The media-clip service used by the Park's Marketing Division reported that the TV episode resulted in large-scale, national publicity for Jekyll Island State Park and the Sea Turtle Center.

The winner of the Dream Wedding giveaway has been chosen. It is a couple from Chattanooga, TN, whose home was destroyed by a tornado last year. The storm caused them to cancel their wedding plans, but now the wedding will go on.

Garvey announced that Events Director Burnsed has completed the requirements for seeking designation as a Certified Meeting Planner. Burnsed will be taking the test for the certification in January, 2012.

Garvey reported that there are now 54 booked convention groups for 2012, 69 bookings for 2013 (the goal had been 70), and 31 bookings for 2014.

David Egan provided anecdotes regarding the Coca Cola favorite-parks contest. Some of his voting group folks sent photos to him, of their voting in the car, on airplanes, during Hurricane Irene in Massachusetts when there was no electrical service, but there was a few minutes of battery power on the computer, etc. The park that won the contest (Oak Park) was in Minot, ND, which had suffered from flooding this year – they got a strong sympathy vote, along with strong celebrity support. The park just ahead of JISP had the support of groups which provided money to voters with the strongest voting records. The park just behind JISP had been scheduled to be closed, so the Los Angeles Times ran several articles encouraging local folks to vote. Egan pointed out that finishing fifth in the list was very impressive when one considers that there were over 1,700 parks competing in the contest. Egan stressed that his voters were located all over the country and even in other countries, and they agreed with him that winning the contest was not the goal – the goal was openly expressing their love for Jekyll Island State Park.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Krueger described the new plan for the southernmost portion of the forthcoming Beach Village alongside the new Convention Center. The original intent of the design of the Village was to reserve the southernmost portion for a potential third lodging facility. However, concerns have been expressed that the original Beach Deck and its associated beach access should remain intact. Over the past year, the Park Authority has monitored use of the Beach Deck access, and found that it continues to be a popular public-visitation site. HHCP and other design personnel have decided to retain the southern Village beach access. The area will be reconstructed in a manner parallel to what was done at Great Dunes Park just north of the new Convention Center. Director Hooks presented a design graphic for the retained beach access

(<http://www.jekyllisland.com/Revitalization/LatestUpdates.aspx>). The access point will have 131 parking spaces, and two public picnic areas like those in Great Dunes Park. Cost of the renewing of the southern beach access is estimated at \$950,000. Mike Hodges asked whether the southern 1.3 acres not used for the retained public-access park could still be used for additional commercial development? Answer: yes it could. The plan for the retained beach access was approved by the Board.

Chairman Krueger announced the second reading of the new Beach Use Ordinance. The Board adopted the new ordinance (<http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/Portals/1/092611%20Beach%20Use%20Ordinance.pdf>).

Georgia DOT has approved an application by the Park Authority for \$104,000 for three contracts for environmental assessment of proposed airport clearing, obstruction lighting, and fencing. Nearly all of the cost of this work will be supported by federal funds. Operations Director Ronny Smith explained that Tier 3 airports (like that of the Park) are eligible to receive \$150,000 per year. GA DOT was scheduled to renew the license for the Park's airport this year, but they decided that obstructions in the form of 150-year-old live oaks would have to be removed. The Park will not remove the trees, but the new assessment project will involve producing regular public-notification materials regarding the obstructions that will not be removed. The Board approved the projects.

Director Hooks announced a proposed amendment of the lease to Landmark Associates for the beachfront full-service hotel in the forthcoming Beach Village. Landmark is still seeking financial commitments needed prior to onset of construction, so it is proposed that the time schedule for the hotel be extended. The proposed deadlines are: A) 31 December 2011 for a funding commitment letter and designation of the franchising brand; B) 28 February 2012 for final design drawings for the hotel; C) 31 March 2012 for closing of the construction loan; D) 20 June 2013 for completion of construction. This would basically move the current schedule out about one year. The Board approved the amendment.

Director Hooks also announced a proposed lengthening of the lease agreement for the two vacant beachfront sites leased by Trammell Crow (the former Buccaneer and Georgia Coast Inn sites). The proposed extension, and the subletting agreement, would be along the same lines as the lease for the Landmark Associates Beach Village hotel. Deadlines for Trammell Crow would be: A) 30 November 2013 for schematic design documents for the lots; B) 30 March 2014 for a written development proposal; (C) 30 September 2015 for hotel-design documents. Failure to produce the required documents by these dates could result in termination of the lot leases on 31 December 2015. During the extension period, Trammell Crow would pay the current lease rate (\$330,000 per year) plus a positive inflation index. Hooks felt that the resulting staggered schedule for hotel construction would enable better absorption of conventioner bookings. The Board approved the amendments.

Director Hooks reported that construction of the new Convention Center and related infrastructure are 65% complete. Winding Road (developer of the Center's adjacent retail area) is dependent upon the EB5 (foreign investment) Program. The application for EB5 funding now has a caseworker and a file number, and Winding Road is seeking to reduce the minimum EB5 foreign investment from one million to five hundred thousand dollars. A preliminary decision is expected within the next 60 days. Phelps Development (developer of the mid-priced hotel in the Beach Village) is conducting final design reviews with Hyatt. The new Hyatt will have 135 keys, and the financial commitment is expected by 15 October. Construction on the new entry corridor (involving movement of the greeting station out to the Welcome Center) should be under way by November, with completion by spring, 2012.

Hooks introduced the new Park coffee-table book, "Jekyll Island. The Nearest Faraway Place". The photos used were taken in the Park by amateur photographers, and were selected by a panel of experts. Over 1,000 photos and fifty poems were submitted; 200 photos and 6 poems were published in the 144-page book. Each sale of the coffee-table book includes a \$4 contribution to the Jekyll Island Foundation. The book is available at all JISPA retail outlets, and at the Park bookstore and Amazon.com.

The Park's Conservation Plan has received final editing, and is available on the Park's website (<<http://www.jekyllisland.com/Conservation.aspx>>).

Special sales tax monies for Jekyll Island State Park from Glynn County have been reduced in quantity, because of decreases in sales in the County, and increases in costs of the high-priority projects (e.g. planning and constructing a new jail). Jekyll project monies have been reduced to \$1.8 million from \$3 million. The Park Authority will attempt to do as much of the project work as possible with the reduced sums.

Hooks commended the Kevin Udell's convention sales team for their work during August. The team booked an average of one group of conventioners per day during the month.

Hooks announced that the GA DNR recently inspected the Park's water-pollution-control plant, and found it to be in excellent working order, releasing high quality effluent.

The Park Authority has begun working with the Fanning Institute on procedures to be used in developing the next update of the Park's Master Plan. The format of the procedure is expected to be released within the next two weeks.

Licenses for rental of residences in the Park now number 314.

Hooks reported that Clay Mobley has been appointed as the new Coastal Director for the Georgia Conservancy, and he has been named to the Park Authority Chairman's Advisory Forum.

Hooks displayed a promotional card that has been approved by Governor Deal for use by the Park's Marketing Division. On the card, the Governor encourages Georgia business groups to use Jekyll Island State Park as a venue for their conventions.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Krueger thanked the folks who submitted photographs for the Park's coffee table book. He complimented the attractiveness of the book. Krueger thanked the voters for the Park in the Coca Cola favorite-parks contest, and challenged those voters to invite their contacts to visit the Park.

Mindy Egan complimented the plans for the park area in the southernmost portion of the forthcoming Beach Village ("absolutely beautiful"). She believed that this park area will enhance the whole Convention Center area, and that all visitors will enjoy it.

Gloria Zocchi wondered about the fate of the current Beach Deck? Answer: it will be demolished and replaced with renewed, but not dissimilar facilities.

Chairman Krueger adjourned the meeting at 11:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Steven Y. Newell, Jekyll Island Citizens Association; produced after transcribing from a digital voice recorder.

JISPA Board Meeting Agenda - Monday Oct 17

This will be a conference call meeting held in the JIA Administration Conference Room, 100 James Rd. The call will start at 9:30 am.

Finance Committee - September Financials

Committee of the Whole - Chairman's Comments

No other Committee reports are scheduled to be given.

--- and that's the news from Jekyll Island where history lives, nature abounds and the beautiful fall season is upon us!!! -- Jim Reed, JICANet Editor

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