

JICANet Update

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Last Day for Bagpiper at the Club Hotel

This afternoon at 4:00 pm is your last chance to catch Scottish bagpiper Tim Akins as he heralds the season at the Club Hotel. Beginning at Crane Cottage, he plays traditional airs and holiday favorites and parades toward the Riverfront Veranda. A crowd gathers along the way to enjoy his music and admire his tartan regalia. As dusk approaches, he advances to the banks of the Jekyll River for a last salute. All are invited and admission is free.

Record of JISPA Dec 14 Meeting

Record of the Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JISPA) Board Meeting of 14 December 2009, in the Convention Center, as recorded for JICA

Chairman Bob Krueger brought the meeting to order at 9:34 AM. Board members present were Buddy DeLoach, Mike Hodges, Sybil Lynn, Ben Porter, and Richard Royal. Chris Clark and legal counsel Denise Whiting-Pack were on conference phone. Also present was Park Authority Executive Director Jones Hooks. The audience numbered about 40 persons.

COMMITTEE SESSIONS; CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Chairman Royal reminded listeners that at the November Board meeting, the first reading of an amendment to the Park's Design Guidelines had been read (see http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/design_guidelines_naming_amendment.pdf). The purpose of the amendment is to provide for clear naming of Park sites (e.g., avoidance of duplication). The Conservation Committee approved the amendment as an action item for the Board's voting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Hodges provided preliminary figures for Park finances (State auditors have been keeping the Park's financial personnel busy). Revenues for November were

\$924,000, \$42,000 less than anticipated. Year-to-date total revenues are about \$7.5 million (\$142,000 over budget, but \$129,000 less than at this point in the previous fiscal year). Expenditures for November were \$1,147,000, about \$3,000 over budget. Year-to-date expenditures are \$6,490,000, \$383,000 under budget. Net operating income was -\$224,000 for November; year-to-date net operating income is \$1,005,000, \$125,000 over budget, and \$646,000 better than last fiscal year at this point.

Chairman Hodges presented an amendment to the lease held by Jekyll Landmark Associates (JLA; the Club Hotel owners/operators). The amendment adds to their lease the Morgan Tennis Court convention facility. It is anticipated that JLA will invest at least \$1.5 million in the new Morgan facility. In consideration of this investment, the basis for the JLA lease fee will be dropped from 3.5% of gross revenues to 3.0% for 10 years, after which the percentage will return to 3.5%. The termination date of the JLA lease is extended from 2049 to 2089. The Finance Committee approved this amendment.

Chairman Hodges announced a series of business points to be passed to attorneys for inclusion in a lease-extension offer to the residents of Jekyll Island State Park. Copies of the list of business points were passed out to interested persons in the audience. Hodges read the list to the audience. [NB: the business points are essentially as described in JICANet Vol. 10, No. 68, 19 Nov 09; see also JICANet Vol. 10, No. 66, and JICANet Vol. 10, No. 70. These can be found on the JICA website at <http://www.jekyllcitizens.org/>] The Finance Committee approved the business points.

Frank Mirasola inquired about the potential legal approval of the lease-extension offer? Answer: the lease-extension document will now be developed in conjunction with the State Attorney General's office; it will then be brought to the Authority Board, and there will be opportunity for public comments and questions.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Chairman Porter described the special day during the previous week, when the Park Authority started moving dirt instead of just talking about it [NB: he was referring to the planting of a cabbage palm, as the start of the production of the forthcoming Great Dunes Park, just north of the Convention Center]. He felt that this planting was a sign that the revitalization of the Park is truly underway, and that the media and the public had responded with a very good acceptance of the Authority's plans for the Park.

Communications Director Eric Garvey described the extensive media coverage that the Marketing Department had obtained for the launching of Great Dunes Park. Garvey also reported that 3,300 folks had attended the Park's tree-lighting ceremony, at which the attendees enjoyed hayrides, pictures with Santa, arts & crafts, musical entertainment, and a fireworks finale. Garvey thanked the residential community for their volunteer assistance with the event, and with planning for this and other events. He thanked the Jekyll Island Garden Club for the ribbons used to decorate the tree; these ribbons were of a tartan that represents the Grant family, one of the Jekyll Club members during the 1800s.

Garvey showed a map in the Georgia State Travel Guide that will now have Jekyll Island State Park marked as a destination. He reported that he has launched a marketing

campaign with southernliving.com that will highlight Jekyll hotels as vacation destinations. The campaign will run for six months, and more than 5 million impressions have been secured for this campaign.

Garvey reported that the Marketing Department is continuing its popular photo contest on FaceBook. He has seen an increase in viewing of the Jekyll FaceBook pages. He also reported that the Jekyll Island Club Hotel was designated the number 1 retreat spot for a holiday by grandparents.com. This website with Jekyll information was probably viewed by 1 million internet surfers. For the next several months, the Marketing Department will concentrate on event planning. Included in the planning will be some new events, such as a redfish fishing tournament, a right-whale Earthday event, a new sponsorship of the Birding and Nature Festival (the Coastal Georgia Audubon Society has decided not to produce the event in 2010), and an event for the University of Georgia Alumni Association to follow the Georgia/Florida football game (JISPA Marketing will partner with UGA Alumni outreach on this promotion).

Chairman Porter asked Garvey to comment on his "It's All Good" campaign. Garvey responded that public reception has been wonderful, and the campaign will greatly benefit the Island as it transitions through the demolition/rebuilding of the convention centers. It also has worked very well in conjunction with use of new images presented to outbound traffic.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Krueger called for authorization from the Board for termination of the private-partnership contract with Linger Longer Communities, with mutual consent of the contracting parties. The authorization was approved.

The first reading of the proposed new Park Tree Ordinance was announced (see <http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/Ordinances/TREE%20ORDINANCE_draft_12_09.pdf>). Director Hooks explained that the Park has been operating under a draft Tree Ordinance since 1999, without revisions or official adoption. Changes proposed now are new tree-protection guidelines for application during construction, mitigation requirements for replacement trees (will now include use of cabbage palms), special requirements for replacement of specimen trees, guidelines for removal of mature trees, minimal tree density calculation per acre rather than per lot, and the option of contribution to a tree bank (to pay for planting of new native trees on public land or for care of native trees). Appeals would flow to a panel composed of JISPA staff, members of JICA, a representative of the Jekyll Island Garden Club, and the local County Agricultural Extension Agent.

Landscape Superintendent Cliff Gawron observed that the changes were based on his experience over nine years with the draft Tree Ordinance, and his experience helping design landscaping at hotels that were being renovated. The most pertinent experience was probably that with the new Hampton Inn site and the old Buccaneer site, where he worked with Arboguard, a professional tree-conservation company. At these sites, the possibility of moving mature trees was broached, so he wanted to incorporate this experience into the new Tree Ordinance. Hooks noted that JISPA Project Manager Jim Broadwell had reviewed the new Ordinance, and was supportive.

Chairman Krueger moved to the proposed new Sign Ordinance (see <http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/Ordinances/SignOrdinance_first_reading.pdf>). Director Hooks explained that the Authority desires to have an ordinance in place prior to development of any sign clutter. The goal is good visuals and a nice appearance in the Park, while taking into consideration the need for adequate signage for businesses and event advertising. Signs will be required to serve as integral architectural features of sites. Museum Director John Hunter and Senior Facilities Director Ronny Smith have been involved in the preparation of the draft ordinance. No sign in the Park will be allowed to stand taller than 8 feet.

Smith added the following sign requirements from the draft ordinance: no signs may be illuminated internally (lighting must come from an outside source); large signs must be ground signs (not on poles); no exposed neon will be allowed; size of signs atop buildings will be limited; number of signs in windows will be limited. Hooks complimented Smith and his staff for their work in studying sign ordinances in communities that have appropriate signage.

Chairman Krueger introduced a third ordinance for first reading, the Residential Home Occupation Ordinance (see <http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/Ordinances/RESIDENTIAL%20HOME%20OCCUPATION%20ORDINANCE_10_09.pdf>). Director Hooks explained that this ordinance would control the use of Park residences for operation of a business. The following are examples of businesses that would be prohibited: no sales of motor vehicles, no medical or dental clinics, no restaurants, no funeral homes; no beauty shops with more than one customer per hour.

Chairman Krueger announced recommendations from the staff regarding the Park's parking fee. Director Hooks reported that staff has been studying other Georgia State Parks' parking fees, comparing traffic counts and types of parking permits used. It is recommended that two plans be put in operation: a 3-day-pass plan (for the price of two days); and a 7-day-pass plan (for the price of six days). A new bus fee would be put in place: \$10 for a bus with 15 or more passengers (school buses would be exempt). The annual fee would be raised to \$50. Multiple daily passes could be purchased and distributed at ten passes for the price of nine. These changes in the parking fee would take effect on 1 July 2010. Chairman Krueger referred these recommendations to the Finance Committee for further review.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Hooks provided scheduling information. For Great Dunes Park, equipment mobilization will begin in December, 2009, with construction beginning in January. Southern Wilderness of Edison, Georgia, will do the work. Ronny Smith will be in charge of the transition of the Shopping Center merchants into temporary facilities. The intent of individual merchants to move to the transitional site was expected to be signaled during December. The move will not have to be made until September, 2010. The currently favored potential transitional-retail site is the parking area on the beach side of Great Dunes Golf Course (aka, the northernmost beach parking lot). Construction on the temporary convention facility at the Morgan Tennis Center is scheduled to begin in January and be completed in June, 2010. A problem has turned up at the gas-station

site: the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority has notified JISPA that some soil samples from the gas-station site were contaminated, so environmental remediation will be required. Tetra Tech will do the environmental assessment within two weeks, and provide a recommendation for necessary clean-up. Richard Royal commented that Tetra Tech will likely first drill wells for determination of whether ground water has been contaminated.

Regarding the new Park entryway, a grant proposal has been submitted to the Federal Economic Development Administration to help fund the project (see <http://www.jekyllislandauthority.org/Jekyll_Entry_Road2009.pdf>). Grants are awarded by this agency almost monthly. It is still planned to open the new Convention Center in the spring of 2012; the existing Convention Center is scheduled to close on 1 August 2010. The Authority's major focus now is securing adequate hotel rooms for the new Convention Center. A meeting has been scheduled to better define the hotels, etc., to be included in the Beach Village (the former Linger Longer town center), so that marketing of construction projects to private entrepreneurs can get started. It is hoped that a showcase program can be offered to highlight the private opportunities on 21 and 22 January.

Director Hooks reported that the new Verizon mobile-phone tower will not be operational until January, because some of the antennas now installed were faulty, and will have to be reordered.

Hooks announced that about \$18,000 was raised by the Park's United Way campaign, and both JISPA staff and Park residents participated in the campaign. Phyllis Gaska was the principal organizer, and she deserves a lot of credit.

Regarding the pro-forma ten-year lease renewals, there remains one property that may not get the proper paperwork done by the 31 December 2009 deadline. This problem property has been difficult to deal with, because of transactions taking place by its ownership.

The GSFIC has notified Ronny Smith that \$45,000 has been targeted for use by the Park Authority for additional ADA-compliance work.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Krueger remarked that he was very pleased that the Governor chose to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for Great Dunes Park, because it showed his commitment to Jekyll Island and the work that the Authority Board is doing. Krueger was also delighted to have had a preview of the new Hampton Inn; he felt that it would soon be a real plus to the Park.

Chairman Krueger recognized Spud Woodward as the new Director of DNR's Coastal Resources Division. Krueger added that Woodward and Ben Porter are special friends. Porter provided his opinion that Georgia DNR staffers are not just civil servants – they are dedicated to their work as protectors of Georgia's natural environments. Porter recognized Woodward's 25 years of exceptional service to DNR and his varied and broad experience. Porter described Woodward as an outdoorsman, a realist, an

environmentalist, a conservationist, and a good guy besides. Woodward jokingly denied having written a speech for Porter. Woodward remarked that he has fond memories of many boating experiences on the water with Porter. He stated that he is fortunate to have inherited a strong partnership between DNR/CRD and the JISPA, and that he looks forward to making the partnership even stronger. He referred to controversy surrounding the Island, but noted that we all know what we want the Park to be like – a mixture of profitability and conservation is possible. Woodward observed that many joint projects have been accomplished, including the new boat ramp behind Tidelands Nature Center, and that CRD has a really good working relationship with Director Hooks and Project Manager Jim Broadwell. He assured the Board that his staff would be available whenever the Park Authority needs to call for advice on matters related to permitting, or review of the Park's Conservation Plan. Woodward looked forward to advocating the eventual establishment of a multipurpose education/outreach center located in the vicinity of Tidelands Nature Center, and potential reconnection of Latham Creek using federal funds and local match (NB: Latham Creek was unintentionally dammed when the Jekyll causeway was built, and some believe that this change in marsh-creek flow is causing excessive siltation in the Jekyll Creek portion of the Inland Waterway). Krueger reiterated that the DNR/JISPA partnership has been fruitful, and that he expects it to grow and improve under Woodward's leadership.

Chairman Krueger expressed the Board's appreciation to John and Mary Waters for their 35 years of providing pharmacy services to the Park residents and visitors [NB: the Jekyll Island Pharmacy is closing its doors at the end of December]. An extended standing ovation followed.

Chairman Krueger recognized John and Shelley Allison for their donation of a Honda ATV to the Jekyll Island Fire Department for use as a beach-rescue vehicle. The Allisons made the donation following Shelley's recent medical emergency on the beach. Krueger expressed relief that Shelley is now fine, and stated that their donation is greatly appreciated.

Lucien DeBacker complimented the Board and John Hunter for quickly responding to his notice to the Board that Goodyear Cottage had developed extensive mildew spots on its exterior. It has now been fully cleaned. DeBacker also proposed that a discounted parking fee be charged for second vehicles of Park residents.

Sandy Cerrato requested an update on the properties leased to Trammell Crow (the former Buccaneer and Georgia Coast Inn sites). Krueger replied that Trammell Crow has promised to deliver a new plan for the sites in spring 2010. Their project has suffered delay because of the slow economy. Cerrato suggested that had the properties been leased to the Jekyll Club Hotel entrepreneurs, there would already be a hotel there. Krueger responded that he wasn't so sure about that.

Pat Overholt reminded everyone that the sort of retail stores now in the Park's Shopping Center are very important to the Park's operation. Overholt wondered who would be responsible for guaranteeing the current Shopping Center merchants space in the new Beach Village retail area (e.g., the IGA and Maxwell's, indispensable types of store for the Park's visitors)? Answer: there is no guarantee to any particular merchant. Ronny Smith is the contact person for the retail merchants with regard to the transition period

from the current Shopping Center to the new Beach Village shopping area. Overholt stated that she is aware that our current merchants will be in the transitional, trailer-park shopping area, but she wanted to know whether they would be in the new Beach Village shopping area? Answer: we first have to see if they want to be in the new shopping area; no further specific answers can now be given. Overholt asserted that boutiques may be nice, but that the types of merchants that the Park now has are absolutely needed.

Onnalee Willnow added to the recognition of John and Mary Waters – they went out of their way to help greatly with finding the correct medications when Willnow was ill. Pat Overholt described the impact of the Waters' leaving by stating "what a loss!".

Frank Mirasola asked whether mobile signs (including political signs on sides of vehicles, and merchants' vehicles with large signs) had been considered in preparing the Sign Ordinance? Answer: yes. Mirasola also referred to the right-whale Earth Day event (see Marketing Committee above) and drew attention to the new sculpture of a right whale calf that has been installed at Tidelands Nature Center – he urged the audience to go to Tidelands and view the sculpture.

Neb Kendrick inquired about the effective date of the new license fee to be charged to residents who rent their homes (he needed to know, because it may be necessary to pass along the fee to prospective renters)? Answer: the fee will go into effect when it is enacted into an ordinance; there is no date now scheduled. Kendrick remarked that any new fees could cause rental-price increases, which may make it more difficult for families to use the Park's rental homes as they traditionally have done. Kendrick was concerned that the Park's residents have next-to-no influence over the Park's governance. Krueger replied that there are many avenues through which the public can have input into the Park Authority's actions, including commenting at Board meetings.

Chairman Krueger wished a Happy Holiday to the audience, and adjourned the meeting at 10:55 AM.

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

Reminders of Previously Announced Events

- Arts Association January exhibit featuring photographer Carla Cook Smith and wood carver Earnest Shaver opens in Goodyear Cottage Jan 4 with artists' reception Sunday, Jan 10 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. As usual, admission to the exhibit and reception is free.
- Arts Association January program featuring pop and folk music group "Three of Us" at the Convention Center, Tuesday Jan 5 at 7:30 pm.

---and that's the news from Jekyll Island where history lives, nature abounds and we're wishing one and all a very Merry Christmas!! Darrell Davidson, Interim JICANet Editor

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members and interested parties. To subscribe or unsubscribe send an email to jicanet@jekyllicitizens.org.