

Pensacola Beach Advocates
Annual Meeting, October 20, 2014
Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Terry Preston.

PBA board members present included Terry Preston, Liz Hewson, and Dan Smith. Committee members present included Glenn Windham, Maria Weisnicht, Jim Cox, Lois Hausman, and Shelley Johnson.

Terry opened the meeting by giving a synopsis of projects that the PBA has been and is currently involved in to include:

- Worked with Escambia County and beach businesses to pass a noise ordinance on the beach.
- Worked with Escambia County and using the Sea Grant monies to educate residents and visitors about sea turtle lighting and protection of the sea turtles.
- Sponsored an Earth Day event.
- Working with Tourism Board to get one representative from beach on that board.
- Working with Pensacola Beach Chamber on use of Restore Dollars.
- Advocated that reality shows such as Party Down South not be filmed on Pensacola Beach.
- Conducted a survey in regards to issues pertaining to the beach and its residents.
- Represented the residents at the recent LOST meeting hosted by county officials.

Additionally the PBA has funds still set aside for both legal issues and sea turtle education. She asked that if anyone had additional ideas or suggestions on how to appropriately use this money, to please contact the PBA Board.

Rick O'Connor, the University of Florida Sea Grant agent explained his role in connection with Pensacola Beach and Escambia County. As a Sea Grant agent, he is responsible for Coastal Wildlife, Water Quality, and Coastal Literacy. Coastal Wildlife covers wildlife friendly beaches, turtle friendly lighting, stopping fishing line entanglement, and controlling invasive species such as the plant Vitex and marine life such as Lionfish. He reported that the water quality on Pensacola Beach is doing okay, but he has concerns about erosion and living shorelines. The Great Scallop Search program also falls under the water quality umbrella. Coastal Literacy includes 1 day and overnight programs such as Panhandle Outdoors, Eco-Tourism, Seafood at Your Fingertips, and 4H Youth Programs. Rick briefly touched on the seven different kinds of turtles living on Pensacola Beach, not including the sea turtles. There was some discussion in regards to coyotes and snakes.

Maria Weisnicht, Membership Committee chair, stated that the 2014 membership was up to 448 members and she continues to communicate with 1000 residents/leaseholders via email blasts, website, and Facebook. She asked for assistance in gathering and updating her current contacts in order to communicate more efficiently. She also requested that everyone like the PBA Facebook page as it is updated frequently with current information.

Terry introduced the current board. Then nominations were accepted for the 2015 board. Benjamin Stevenson self-nominated and was seconded by Dan Smith; Jack Cerone was nominated by Jim Cox and seconded by Glenn Windham. Both nominations passed.

Jim Cox, Governmental Affairs Committee chair, gave a report in regards to the taxation lawsuit and future implications. To date, improvements on the land are taxable, but the land itself is still in question. Portofino and Beach Club are still challenging the lawsuit. The Florida Legislature is working to pass fee simple title. His committee is encouraging the SRIA to come up with a plan for what happens next if there are no more or significantly reduced lease fees. Jim explained that this committee asked the SRIA not to increase lease fees based on the CPI. Though the SRIA has every right to raise the lease

fees, they have not. Jim reported that the SRIA has set aside \$500,000 for side road improvements. There was some discussion on submerged leases and the consensus was submerged lease fees are handled by the state not the county. Jim concluded his report with noting the amounts of lease fees from residents and commercial lease fees that are paid to the SRIA. Though the two groups have different interests in how the money should be spent, he stressed that it's important we work together as a team going forward and that we establish a point of view before the county takes over. He shared that on the SRIA website is a listing of how lease fees are spent.

Lois Hausman, Beachkeepers (aka Trashy Ladies) Committee, reported that there will not be an Earth Day event in 2015. The Beachkeepers are in need of more volunteers to keep the committee viable. They have one event planned for 2015 and that is the Sea Turtle Baby Shower which will be held on May 17, 2015 in partnership with ECUA, Holiday Inn Express and Margaritaville.

Terry spoke on behalf of the Beachkeepers Committee explaining that the Dunes and Restoration and Critters committees fell under Beachkeepers and both these sub-committees had a successful year. The Critters Committee was the backbone of the SRIA Beach ambassadors and info magnet programs. Terry asked for more volunteers for these committees, especially people who care about the beach, critters and recycling. She emphasized that these are not regulatory committees.

A financial report was given. The PBA has approximately \$32,000 in its account.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

These minutes were prepared and respectfully submitted by Liz Hewson, Secretary.