

JEKYLL ISLAND-STATE PARK AUTHORITY
October 19, 2021 – Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and via teleconference.

Members Present: Mr. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr., Chairman
Mr. Bill Gross, Secretary/Treasurer
Dr. Buster Evans
Mr. Dale Atkins
Mr. Bob Krueger, Vice Chairman via Teleconference
Commissioner Mark Williams via Teleconference
Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks via Teleconference
Mr. Glen Willard via Teleconference

Members Absent: Mr. Trip Tollison

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications
Michelle Kaylor, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center
Lauren Pacheco, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Program Manager
Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability
Joseph Colbert, Conservation Wildlife Manager
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

Various members of the public, JIA staff, and press were also present.

Chairman Wilkinson called the committee session to order at 9:33 a.m., and the roll was called for members attending in person and those attending via teleconference. Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks joined the meeting via teleconference at 9:50 AM.

There was one public comment received online for this meeting. A copy of the full comment was given to each Board member and becomes part of the permanent record.

- Craig Patterson - Master Plan Update

I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

A. Michelle Kaylor, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, opened the AmeriCorps Members update. She noted that over the past twelve years, through the AmeriCorps program, JIA has welcomed over two hundred and ninety-eight members from thirty-nine states. Those members have served over 423,000 hours to support the JIA and the Georgia Sea Turtle Center Program. Kaylor then introduced Lauren Pacheco, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Program Manager, who announced this year's AmeriCorps Members as follows:

<u>Conservation</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Husbandry</u>	<u>Research</u>	
Morgan Pierce	Kelsey Abernathy	Meredyth Albright	Hannah Imhoff	William Hicks
Charlotte Bernhard	Ainsley Bright	George Bancoft	Mackenzie Kerr	Elizabeth Sutton
Audrey Naughton	Jessica Nee	Claire Bolster	Claire Temple	
	Garrett Moretta	MacKenna Butler		

B. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability, introduced Joseph Colbert, Conservation Wildlife Manager. Carswell noted that Colbert is a Marine Corps Veteran, a former JIA AmeriCorps volunteer, and a former Tillman Scholar Recipient. Colbert has led

JIA's efforts to learn more about the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (EDBs) population on Jekyll Island over the past ten years.

Colbert provided an overview of the novel long-term ecological research monitoring program, that began in 2011. The team has collected over 7,300 unique locations on forty-eight individual EDBs. These snakes are tracked through inserted radio transmitters, and telemetry equipment is used to find them in the wild. Colbert noted the threats of habitat loss and human persecution and the importance of biodiversity on Jekyll. The Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake is a predator and umbrella species. By researching and managing these rattlesnakes, the Conservation team can manage other species that fall under the EDBs in the food pyramid.

Colbert discussed the unique genetics of the rattlesnakes on Jekyll, which are different than the snakes on the mainland. He believes the population for the entire island is 100 adults or less and noted that these rattlesnakes typically avoid developed areas, as they prefer the coverage offered in the undeveloped areas of the island with dense vegetation. Additionally, he noted that the Conservation Team is in the process of publishing several papers on their groundbreaking research. This data will assist not only JIA, but other wildlife agencies with management plans.

Colbert thanked JIA senior leadership and the Board for their support that has allowed their program to thrive.

There were no public comments.

II. Finance Committee

A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair summarized the September Financials including an overview of Revenues, Expenses, Net Operating Cash, Traffic Statistics, and Hotel Statistics.

- Revenues were \$2,749,038.
- Expenses were \$1,978,719.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$770,319.
- Total Traffic Counts were 106,768 vehicles.
- Hotel Revenues were reported at \$4.6 million with a 59.3% Occupancy Rate.

B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, provided the following updates:

- Due to corrections submitted by the Marriott Courtyard/Residence Inn property, there were updates made to hotel revenue numbers for June, July, and August. The results for the year-to-date numbers included: hotel revenues changing from \$43.76 million to \$43.78 million, the occupancy rate changing from 70.3% to 69.7%, the revenue per available room changing from \$150.40 to \$149.86, and the average daily rate changing from \$213.83 to \$215.16. These numbers are reflected in the September report.
- As part of JIA's succession planning, Candler Bennett was hired as the Accounting Director. He joins JIA after working with the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts for six years. His first day with JIA was October 1, 2021.

There were no public comments.

III. Human Resources Committee

A. Jenna Johnson, Human Resources Director, announced the retirement of Dennis Powell who has served the Water/Wastewater Department for ten years. Alan Thurston, Water/Wastewater Superintendent, thanked Dennis for being a dedicated employee and wished him the best in retirement.

There were no public comments.

IV. Marketing Committee

- A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications, presented the Marketing Department Report. Her report focused on events planned for October including:
- The Paulk Cup Classic scheduled for October 27th through 29th. This event honors Georgia Golf legend Johnny Paulk and his lasting impact on the game of golf on Jekyll Island. This second annual tournament proudly benefits the Jekyll Island Foundation and supports the island he so fondly cared for.
 - The Macabre Tales Ghost Tours take place through the month of October at Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum. These seasonal tours provide after dark look at the supernatural side of Jekyll Island.
 - On October 16th, approximately 150 cast and crew members filmed on Driftwood Beach for a Disney/Searchlight production called “The Menu”. Hawkins also provided an overview of JIA’s process for reviewing film applications. This process includes evaluating several factors such as: wildlife impact, visitor impact, economic impact, and JIA resources needed.

Hawkins ended her presentation with an overview of the 75th anniversary celebration of Jekyll Island State Park. Jekyll Island was established as a state park by the state of Georgia in 1947, and a yearlong celebration, recognizing the island and its impact to the state of Georgia and the citizens of Georgia for the past 75 years, is planned for 2022. The kick-off event will be the Seventy Fifth Soirée, an evening of dinner, dancing, and one-of-a-kind entertainment, on January 28, 2022. Additional events and activities planned throughout the year include: a Beach Village block party, a Georgia Sandman Sculpture, branded signage and wall murals, new programming at Mosaic, limited-edition merchandise, and much more.

There were no public comments.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Jones Hooks prefaced the marketing analysis report by providing a bit of context and history. The Buccaneer Parcel lease was purchased by Trammell Crow in 2005, and Leon N. Weiner & Associates (LNWA) purchased the lease from them in 2015. In 2017, a ground lease was revised and restated with LNWA. That revision included a requirement that the lessee would be required to retain a consultant in the hospitality field, subject to the lessor’s (JIA) approval, to conduct a marketing study analysis relating to the permitted use of the premises what would be presented to the JIA Board for consideration. Hooks introduced Dave Curtis, Co-Managing Partner with LNWA. Mr. Curtis noted that he has been involved in several projects on Jekyll since 1985, and that he and his team are committed and devoted to developing the Buccaneer Parcel and making it special for Jekyll Island. He then introduced Karl Pischke, Vice President of RCLCO Real Estate Consulting.

Mr. Pischke presented a Market Research Report on the Buccaneer Site. The objectives and key components of this analysis included: Subject Site Assessment, Residential Supply and Demand Analysis, Hospitality Supply and Demand Analysis, Additional Considerations (Capacity, Environment, Stakeholders), and Conclusions and Recommendations. The key recommendations were as follows:

- Market fundamentals, including competitive supply research and projected demand analyses, indicate that residential product is likely to be the most appropriate land use at the subject site, and is more suited for development when compared to traditional hospitality uses.
- Along with the favorable market dynamics, residential development is also likely to best meet the needs of the various stakeholders, government entities, carrying capacity considerations, and environmental concerns for Jekyll Island.

- The ultimate organization of these residential units could take multiple shapes or draw from multiple residential product typologies. However, sales pace at recently developed communities on Jekyll Island indicate that market demand is likely strongest for single-family detached or attached product.
- The development of residential uses sold to private owners, with the potential for use within a rental pool, could act as an important compromise which benefits from the strong market fundamentals associated with residential product, while also providing additional capacity for the convention center during peak season.

B. Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel, introduced the consultants from Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC), Glenn Coyne and Courtney Reich, who JIA has partnered with to undertake the on-going Code Revision Project.

Reich and Coyne provided an update on the process that GMC has utilized to update JIA's Code. This included sharing public feedback as well as the results of the online survey. Reich explained that GMC's purpose is to do the following:

- Prepare an updated code for residential and commercial areas on Jekyll Island
- Look at administrative procedures to determine what is working and not working for staff and their use with enforcement as well as addressing new technology uses.
- Address the list of Key Issues (based on public input, JIA Staff experience, and GMC review of Code)

Coyne noted that GMC plans to streamline the current code and make it more user friendly when addressing the key issues including: building codes, design review guidelines, animal control, historic preservation, protection of natural resources, residential regulations, commercial and business regulations, accessory and temporary uses, streets and right-of-way, and the administrative chapter.

He then discussed the comments received during the public input session held on July 15, 2021 and via the online survey, which was open August 23, 2021 through September 3, 2021. He ended the presentation by summarizing the project schedule. The next steps include finalizing the Draft Code Revisions with JIA Staff before the official first and second readings of the code are presented to the JIA Board for consideration.

C. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented an Emergency and Disaster Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Brunswick and Glynn County for approval. Jensen explained that Glynn County Board of Commissioners established the Glynn Unified Command to serve as Command & Control for Emergency Services during the McMichael/Bryan trial(s). As a part of the process, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) intends to have several outside agencies prepared and potentially standing by to provide Emergency Services within Glynn County and the City of Brunswick, if necessary.

A motion to recommend approval of the Emergency and Disaster Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Brunswick and Glynn County as presented by staff was made by Mr. Atkins and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the request to ratify the letter sent from Hooks to Christopher Channel, Board of Elections Supervisor, on October 7, 2021, regarding the proposed redistricting maps. As an alternative to Jekyll Island being included in the "island" district as it currently is with St. Simons and Sea Island, the letter encourages the Board of Elections and the County Commissioners to consider that Jekyll Island be included in County District 1, grouping Jekyll with Exit-29.

A motion to recommend ratification of the letter sent to Glynn County Board of Elections and Commissioners regarding redistricting maps as presented by staff was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Brian O'Neal, Director of Retail Operations, began his update by discussing the challenges that the Retail Department has faced over the past year including product shortages, increase cost in merchandise and shipping, employee shortages, and unplanned massive increase in sales. O'Neal then summarized several retail shop accomplishments for 2021 as follows:

- The Georgia Sea Turtle Center gift shop was \$329K over budget at a 31% increase.
- The Jekyll Island Campground Gift Shop was \$52K over budget at a 63% increase.
- Life is Good was \$201K over budget at a 59% increase.
- The Guest Information Gift Shop finished with \$391,000, a 25% increase over last year.
- The Golf Pro Shop had a 59% increase in sales over 2020.
- Remember When produced \$82,000, which was a 47% increase from 2020.
- Summer Waves missed their all-time sales record by only \$1400, producing \$144,000.

O'Neal noted that overall, retail added \$1.1 million in sales over the COVID 2020 year, but the better comparison is the \$700,000 increase that retail put over the perfect year of 2019.

F. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, Presented the Executive Director's Report. He discussed the following points:

- State Officials and the Legislative Oversight Committee Members were notified of Master Plan Update, and a public hearing for Master Plan Update was held on October 14, 2021.
- Communications with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) regarding concerns about the Jekyll Island Causeway Entrance after a recent paving of Highway 17, which were quickly resolved.
- The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will hold their Annual Meeting and Golf Championship on Jekyll Island on December 12th through 14th.
- Recent Project Updates
 - Replacement of playground equipment near the mini-golf area
 - Crossover Repair at Corsair Beach
 - Chichota Ruins and Captain Wyllly pond landscaping
 - Bike path replacement on Captain Wyllly Rd
 - Replacement of mini-golf turf

G. Mr. Wilkinson presented the Chairman Comments and thanked the JIA Staff for their efforts.

Mr. Wilkinson opened the floor to public comments. There was one public comment made during the meeting:

- Mindy Egan expressed concern over the handling of redevelopment of development areas.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting
October 19, 2021

The roll was called at 11:35 a.m., and all members were present either in-person or via teleconference except for Mr. Trip Tollison, who was absent.

Action Items

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1. Dr. Evans moved to accept the minutes of the September 21, 2021 board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atkins. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Emergency and Disaster Mutual Aid Agreement with the City of Brunswick and Glynn County carried by unanimous consent.
3. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to ratify the letter sent to Glynn County Board of Elections and Commissioners regarding redistricting maps carried by unanimous consent.

There were no public comments.

The motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Evans and was seconded by Mr. Atkins. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.