

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY  
November 16, 2021 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, November 16, 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

Members Absent: Mr. Trip Tollison  
Mr. Glen Ward

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director  
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director  
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer  
Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel  
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability  
Maria Humphrey, Lease 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 9:32 a.m. Roll was called for members attending in person and those attending via teleconference. Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks joined the meeting via teleconference at 10:09 AM.

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

- Mindy Egan – Development and the Master Plan
- Susan Inman, Coastal Advocate with One Hundred Miles – Master Plan Update Revisions

### **I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee**

A. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability, introduced Jared Teutch, Executive Director of Georgia Audubon. Teutch introduced Georgia Audubon as a statewide nonprofit organization, dedicated to building places where birds and people thrive. He noted that their main areas of focus include conservation, restoration, education, and community engagement. He then introduced Gabe Andrlé, Georgia Audubon's Habitat Conservation Program Manager. Andrlé elaborated on Georgia Audubon's Habitat Program and their project on Jekyll Island. He explained that the funding for this project will come from a Five Star grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project will begin with a targeted herbicide application to kill the non-native turf grass which will be replaced with other plants such as pink muhly grass and native wildflowers. The purpose of the project is to create a beach prairie habitat on Jekyll along the bike path east of Beachview Drive, which will benefit not only many species of birds but other wildlife such as reptiles, amphibians, and pollinators as well.

B. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability, provided a Conservation Update. Highlights of his presentation included:

- The recent “King Tide” event, during which Jekyll saw record high tides which caused wave splash over the revetment into the sand berm.
- The first survey two years post construction the Revetment showed that the peak elevation has not dropped.
- The successful Ranger led “Gatorolgy” program has increased its participants by 67% since 2019.

There were no public comments.

## **II. Finance Committee**

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

- Revenues were \$2,598,995
- Expenses were \$2,102,254.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$496,741.
- Total Traffic Counts were 114,883 vehicles.
- Hotel Revenues were reported at \$5.4million with a 67.3% Occupancy Rate.

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 Holly Jolly Jekyll which consists of six weeks of holiday events and activities beginning on Friday, November 26<sup>th</sup> starting with the lighting of the *Great Tree*. Seasonal events continue through January 2, 2022 including:

- Peppermint Land at Jekyll Island Mini Golf
- Holly Jolly Light Tours at Mosaic, plus self-guided tours
- Holly Jolly Trading Post at Skeet House, the official retail shop.
- Santa sightings around the island

Additional scheduled events include:

- The Cold-Stunned Plunge on November 27<sup>th</sup>, a new event with proceeds supporting the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.
- The Holly Jolly Jekyll Light Parade on December 4<sup>th</sup>
- Holiday Big Truck Roundup at Great Dunes Beach Park on December 4<sup>th</sup>
- Fireworks at Great Dunes Beach Park on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>
- Drive-In Movie: Frosty the Snowman on December 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

Hawkins ended her presentation by reminding everyone that [www.Jekyllisland.com/holiday](http://www.Jekyllisland.com/holiday) is the official site for all things Holly Jolly.

There were no public comments.

**VI. Committee of the Whole**

- A. Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager, presented the lease renewals for three locations on Pier Road: Something for Everyone, Just by Hand, and Cotton & Copper. The term for each lease begins January 1, 2022 and ends December 21, 2023.

A motion to recommend approval of the Pier Road Lease Renewals was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel, presented the first amendment to the Verizon Lease for the communications tower located at 2 Stable Road. She noted that the original lease was effective July 17th, 2009, and Verizon Wireless now wishes to sublease out a portion of their tower to AT&T, which is allowed pursuant to the Lease. As part of this process, Verizon and the JIA have agreed to amend Verizon's Lease Agreement to modify various provisions that needed updating and strengthening.

A motion to recommend approval of the Amendment to the Lease with Verizon Wireless at 206 Stable Road was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel, called on Leigh Askew Elkins with Carl Vinson Institute of Government to present revisions made to the 2021 Master Plan Update. Elkins noted that these revisions were made following a Public Hearing held on October 14, 2021 during which a summary presentation of the Master Plan Update was given. There were approximately 75 attendees, 3 of which provided in-person comments. Forty-three additional comments were received through an online comment portal, which closed on October 18, 2021. These comments were submitted to the JIA Board and Oversight Committee.

Elkins continued by summarizing the Master Plan Update Revisions and Clarifications as follows:

- Additional Appendix that pulls out each recommendation into a bulleted “to do” list.
- Clarification that as a five-year plan, there are no short- or long-term goals, all recommendations should be addressed over the next five years.
- The inclusion of a cover letter to recognize and reiterate the importance of managing capacity.
- Recommendation that a process be developed to provide for public input should the redevelopment of Developed land change the use of that land.
- Addition of a section on Land Use to further clarify how land is categorized (based on recommendations of task forces that informed the 2014 plan) and addition of the maps from the 2014 plan that highlight those changes. Several “to-do” list items were also added to this Land Use section to assist with managing the carrying capacity of the island.

Cruthirds noted that the red-line version of the 2021 Master Plan revisions was submitted to the Legislative Oversight Committee and other statutorily required state entities on October 25, 2021. She requested that the Board ratify that submission.

A motion to recommend ratification of the Submission of the Revised Proposed Master Plan Update sent to Georgia State Officials on October 25, 2021 was made by Mr. Gross and Seconded by Dr. Evans. Roll was called and the motion carried by unanimous consent.

- D. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, provided an Operations Update focusing predominantly on the Campground Expansion noting the following points:
- A Tree Survey with Shupe Surveying Company was recently completed, and in-house tree inventory continues.
  - Drawings for the expansion are being adjusted as needed to avoid interfering with significant trees and clusters of trees.
  - Proposed Yurt Site Concept Drawing was provided.
  - The relocation of the entrance will improve safety.
  - Four new bathrooms will be built which include ADA compliant showers.
  - Timeline of Construction:
    - January 2022: Final EAP Release and Tree Inventory/Survey Completion
    - February 2022: Begin Bathhouse Construction, Begin Selective Clearing, and Install Infrastructure
    - March 2022: Finalize Store Drawings
    - May 2022: Begin Store Construction, Complete Infrastructure, Begin RV Pads, and Begin Pervious/Asphalt Paving
    - July 2022: Begin Yurt Construction

Additionally, Jensen thanked Roads and Grounds, Facilities, and all other employees who have put in an extraordinary effort to ensure the lights on Jekyll are nothing short of spectacular through creating and building hundred of unique ornaments.

- E. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, Presented the Executive Director's Report. He discussed the following points:
- The Proposed Board Meeting Schedule for 2022 and the JIA Holidays for 2022
  - Golf Course Master Plan
    - The Golf Course Archeological Study is still on-going, and the final results of that study are expected during the first quarter of 2022.
    - Hooks referenced the Golf Digest Article, "The Revival of These Muny Courses is an Inspiration for Public Golf".
    - The JIA Landscaping Crew received a letter from the City of Brunswick thanking the team for their assistance in renovating Queen Square in Downtown Brunswick.
    - No responsive submissions were received for the Amphitheater Project RFP by the November 12<sup>th</sup> deadline. This RFP will be revised and brought before the Board at a later date.
    - Verizon received approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to raise the height of a temporary tower located on the south end of the island.
- F. Mr. Wilkinson presented the Chairman Comments and thanked the JIA Staff for their efforts and dedicated service.

Mr. Wilkinson opened the floor to public comments. There were two public comments made during the meeting:

- Jim McKenna, President of the Jekyll Island Citizen Association (JICA), provided a copy of a letter that JICA submitted to the Legislative Oversight Committee expressing the association's concerns regarding overdevelopment of Jekyll Island.
- Mindy Egan spoke on the historic precedents regarding land use on Jekyll Island.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

**The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting**  
**November 16, 2021**

The roll was called at 10:45 a.m., and all members were present either in-person or via teleconference except for Mr. Trip Tollison and Mr. Glen Willard, who were absent.

**Action Items**

1. Mr. Gross moved to accept the minutes of the October 19, 2021 board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krueger. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Pier Road Lease Renewals carried by unanimous consent.
3. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Amendment to the Lease with Verizon Wireless at 206 Stable Road carried by unanimous consent.
4. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to Ratify the Submission of the Revised Proposed Master Plan Update sent to Georgia State Officials on October 25, 2021 carried by unanimous consent.

There were no public comments.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krueger and was seconded by Dr. Evans. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.