

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

April 12, 2022 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and via teleconference.

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

Members Absent: Commissioner Mark Williams

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Zachary Harris, General Counsel
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing & Communications
Nicki Thomas, Education Program Manager
Davide Zailo, Georgia Sea Turtle Center Research Program Manager
Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability
Maria Humphery, Lease Manager
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

Glynn County Commissioner Sammy Tostenson, various members of the public, JIA staff, and press were also present.

Newly appointed Chairman of the Board, Mr. Dale Atkins called the committee session to order at 9:30 a.m. and a quorum was confirmed with members attending in person and via teleconference. Mr. Tollison joined the call at 9:33 a.m., and Mr. Wilkinson arrived at 9:39 a.m.

Mr. Tollison left the meeting at 10:15 a.m., Mr. Gross left at 11:02 a.m., and Ms. Burch-Meeks left at 11:44 a.m.

There was one public comment received online for this meeting:

- Mark Mounsey – Golf Restructuring

Chairman Atkins announced that he would be stepping down as the Chair of the Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee, and he appointed Glen Willard as Committee Chair. Mr. Willard proceeded to open the Historic Preservation/Conservation committee.

I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

A. Nicki Thomas, Education Program Manager with the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (GSTC), shared a few programing highlights and milestones for the GSTC Education Department during 2021.

- There were 132,107 visitors in 2021, a 18% increase from the previous record year of 2018.
- Over 1,600 daily presentations were given to general admission guests.
- 3,000 additional students and adults were educated through field trips, tours, outreach, and eco-programs.

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

April 12, 2022 – Approved Minutes

- Fifty-four “Virtual Field Trip” sessions were held in 2021, educating approximately 1,500 students.
- A video of a turtle nest hatching on Jekyll Island reached 46,000 viewers, a record for the GSTC social media channels.
- There were 151 “Adopt-a-Nest” adoptions, which more than doubled the prior year’s record sales.
- 400 guests participated in Evening Turtle Walks, during which fourteen nesting females were encounters.
- 100 guests participated in Sunrise Turtle Walks, with about 38% of those participants encountering hatchlings.

Thomas discussed the impact these experiences have on guests, creating stewards for Jekyll Island, and she closed with the following reminders for upcoming events:

- April 30, 2022: Turtle Crawl and Shell-E-Brate
- June through August 2022: Evening and Sunrise Turtle Walks
- 2023: Sea Turtle Camp returns

- B. Davide Zailo, Georgia Sea Turtle Center Research Program Manager, provided an update on the Terrapin Conservation and Causeway Management program. He noted that the major threat facing Diamondback Terrapins is road mortality. GSTC partnered with Animex Wildlife Management Solutions to test the effectiveness of fencing in reducing terrapin mortality. Based on fourteen years of road mortality data, a 1,000-foot area of the Jekyll Causeway was selected for the project test site. A high-density plastic fencing has been installed along with educational signage informing visitors of the conservation effort. The GSTC team will monitor the site daily to determine the effectiveness of the fencing between late April and August, and the findings will be shared with Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Georgia Department of Transportation to inform management strategies for the species across the region.
- C. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation and Sustainability, presented Request of Information (RFI) #246. This RFI would serve as an information gathering tool regarding renewable energy components such as what the market looks like, what opportunities are available, along with any potential risks. The goal of the RFI is to strengthen Jekyll’s position related to potential renewable energy projects in the future.

A motion to recommend approving and issuing RFI #246 for Renewable Energy Procurement, pending additional legal review was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

II. Finance Committee

- A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair summarized the March Financials including an overview of Revenues, Expenses, Net Operating Cash, Traffic Statistics, and Hotel Statistics.
- Revenues were \$2,831,676
 - Expenses were \$2,268,759.
 - Net Operating Cash Income was \$562,917.
 - Total Traffic Counts were 126,968 vehicles.

- Hotel Revenues were reported at \$6.7 million with a 73.2% Occupancy Rate.

B. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, commented on the current difficulties seen nationwide with employee recruitment and retention. To help address these issues within the Authority, she requested a pay increase for JIA employees to include: a \$5,000 annual salary increase to begin April 22nd and a one-time payment up to \$4,300 based on length of service for full-time employees as well as an hourly pay increase up to \$2.41 per hour and a one-time payment up to \$1,500 based on number of hours worked for part-time employees.

Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, explained that funding for the one-time payments and pay increases for May and June will be funded out of current year income, and pay increases for the following year would be included in the FY23 budget.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, supported this request noting that this pay increase is similar to the \$5000 pay increase Governor Kemp approved for state employees, which as an Authority, JIA employees were not eligible to receive. He also reminded everyone that during the pandemic, almost every JIA employee was furloughed, and he believes this is an appropriate use of extra funds in the personnel budget.

A motion to recommend approving the pay increases and one-time payment for JIA Employees as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Wilkinson and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

III. Human Resources Committee

A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, announced the retirement of Stanley Vidrine who is retiring after twenty-one years of full-time service with the JIA.

Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, commented on Mr. Vidrine's dedication to keeping the Jekyll Island Causeway and beaches clean from litter during his time with JIA. He also noted that Stanley holds the record for the number of terrapin reports on the causeway called into the GSTC.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, commented that Stanley always did his job with a smile, and he wished Stanley luck in his retirement.

There were no public comments.

IV. Marketing Committee

A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing & Communications, provided an update highlighting the following items:

- There are currently several 75th Anniversary brand campaign billboards promoting Jekyll Island on display.
- An ad promoting the Convention Center was printed in a new publication *GaBiz*. The intended reach of this publication is the Georgia business community.
 - Board members were provided a copy of this publication.
- A recent social media giveaway for a limited addition Faith Chapel's Tiffany Window inspired Island Treasure resulted in substantial growth in the Mosaic Facebook audience

and the Jekyll Island Instagram audience over just five days, with 3,246 individuals participating in the giveaway.

- *The Color Purple* film production resulted in approximately \$600,000 in economic impact across Jekyll Island including hotels, restaurants, parking fees, and JIA leases.
- Another production that filmed on Driftwood Beach in March 2021, *The In Between* was recently released via Paramount, and the Jekyll Island State Park Authority is thanked in the ending credits, as that is now a contract requirement for films shot on Jekyll Island.

There were no public comments.

V. Legislative Committee

No report.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Zach Harris, General Counsel, provided a litigation update. Current pending litigation includes three personal injury cases and two cases pertaining to intellectual property disputes.
- B. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the request for ratification of 2010 Lease Agreement Form. He provided background information noting that on January 26, 2010, the JIA Board approved a residential lease extension policy. At the time 627 leases were eligible for extension, and 614 persons signed the new leases with updated terms and incentives by the December 31, 2010 deadline. For those who chose not to sign during the 2010 period, the Board adopted a standard form lease.

In response to a request from a lessee to revisit the terms of the lease, specifically the rent on the standard form lease, Harris recommended that the Board ratify the terms of the standard 2010 form to reiterate that those terms will still apply to any lessee or any assignee currently under the old lease who chooses to switch over to the 2010 standard lease.

A motion to recommend ratifying the 2010 Lease Agreement Form as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager, presented a proposal for a rental agreement with The Purple Turtle Signature Store, LLC. The agreement will be for the property located at 101 Old Plantation Road, commonly referred to as the Infirmary building and formerly known as Furness Cottage. The annual rental rate for the agreement will be \$43,542. The owners of the store will be Dougals, Vicki, and Michaela Craven, and the premises shall be used by the tenant solely as a retail clothing store selling Lilly Pulitzer and Sugartown Worldwide, LLC or parent company Oxford Industries, Inc. related brand items.

A motion to recommend approving the Rental Agreement with The Purple Turtle Signature Store, LLC, pending additional legal review was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, provided an update on the 2022 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). He explained that the JIA hired a firm to conduct a sales tax analysis to determine estimated tax revenue generated by Jekyll Island, since this is not something that the Georgia Department of Revenue tracks. The report prepared by KB Advisory Group analyzes the potential amount of sales taxes that could be generated from

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

April 12, 2022 – Approved Minutes

Jekyll Island should voters in Glynn County approve the future use of a SPLOST. The analysis is based on the level of taxable sales activities which Jekyll Island generated in 202 and includes a projection of potential SPLOST revenues over a five-year period, beginning in 2023. A few findings of the analysis include:

- Jekyll Island generated a projected \$168 million in taxable sales in 2021.
- Jekyll Island is projected to generate \$12 million in SPLOST revenue over five years (2023-2027).
- Jekyll Island generated an estimate \$7.5 million in sales taxes to the State of Georgia in 2021.

The report has also been shared with the Glynn County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Sammy Tostenson commented on the intended future distribution of SPLOST revenue. He noted that as an authority, JIA historically receives a portion of the surplus, but since Jekyll Island has recently become part of Glynn County's District 1, Tostenson would like to provide additional funds from his District's budget to enhance planned projects on Jekyll.

Hooks reminded the Board that the following projects are the suggested SPLOST projects for Jekyll Island, totaling approximately \$3.1 million:

- Fishing pier renovations
- Bike path completion to the guest information center
- Design and permitting for Driftwood Beach bike path renovations, or JIA will cover the design portion, and potential SPLOST funds would be used for construction
- Sanitary sewer line repairs

E. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, introduced Richard Singer from the National Golf Foundation (NGF), who has been assisting with analyzing Jekyll Island Golf since 2016. JIA invited Singer back to provide an update to the 2017 strategic review of the Jekyll Island Golf Club (JIGC).

Richard Singer, National Golf Foundation, explained that through re-evaluating the 2017 NGF report, reviewing the Vincent Golf Design "Jekyll Island Authority Golf Master Plan", meeting with JIA officials and golf staff, financial analyses, and conducting an extensive market analysis, NGF was able to recommend seven guiding principles for Golf Improvement Planning:

1. The Jekyll Island Golf Course needs to be enhanced and modernized.
2. A full complement of 63 holes is not ideal for JIGC.
3. Retaining all 18 holes of the current Oleander golf course is likely not sustainable.
4. Any plan to enhance golf at JIGC will include the Great Dunes course.
5. The buildings that support the JIGC golf operation need to be improved and expanded.
6. Any plan to improve JIGC will have to be completed in phases, with strategic pauses between each major project to re-evaluate the plan.
7. Some changes in operation are needed to maximize the potential of this property

Singer also provided a five-phase Golf Improvement Plan Structure:

1. Pine Lakes Upgrade – Improve basic features and infrastructure while the course remains open and operating (subject to occasional closures).
2. Oleander / Great Dunes Combination and Enhancement – Create a new 18-hole course using 9 holes of Oleander and merging with 9 holes of Great Dunes to create one unique 18-hole championship golf course. This program has several implications.

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY

April 12, 2022 – Approved Minutes

3. Structures Upgrade – This phase will address changes to structures that support the golf facility operation – most notably clubhouse and maintenance facility.
4. New Indian Mound Program – After pause and re-evaluation, a key decision for JIA with action contingent on performance of JIGC on 36 holes during Phase 2. IM could become: (1) a full 18-hole enhancement; or (2) some kind of “short” course (possibly only 9 holes).
5. Comprehensive Pine Lakes Enhancement/Renovation – This phase will likely be at least 5+ years in the future and include a more comprehensive upgrade to irrigation and golf features (greens, tees, fairways, shaping, etc.) on the Pine Lakes GC.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, reminded the Board and audience that a public session with Mr. Singer will immediately follow the Board meeting to allow for the public to ask questions or make comments. Additionally, a public comment portal will be available online for two weeks, and any comments received will be shared with NGF for their review before finalizing their report.

- F. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented Resolution #R-2022-2 to express appreciation to Joe Wilkinson and his time as Chairman of the Board. Hooks read the resolution into the record which thanked Mr. Wilkinson for his support and commitment to the Jekyll Island Authority.

A motion to recommend Adoption of Resolution #R-2022-2 in Appreciation of Joe Wilkinson, Former Chairman was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

- G. Dale Atkins, Chairman, presented the Chairman’s Comments. He thanked Mr. Wilkinson for his service as chairman, and he spoke to how honored he is to be the current Chairman of the Board.

- H. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director’s Report. He discussed the following points:

- The Amphitheater Market Analysis is in the final stages of contract negotiations with the consulting firm, DLR Group.
- Holiday Inn Resort has a new General Manager, Sylvia Wardzala
- The Budget Meeting for the Fiscal Year 2023 budget will be a remote meeting scheduled for June 2, 2022.
- The Ordinance Revision process continues. The first two chapters have been released online to the public for review. Additional chapters will be released through early May. The first reading is planned for the May 17th Board meeting.
- The RFP released for the airport terminal did not receive any responsive bid packages by the stated deadline, so GDOT has recommended that the project administrators with POND, JIA’s airport engineer, post the project for re-bid immediately.
- A copy of a 1971 *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article highlighting tourism rates on Jekyll was provided to Board members. The article mentions a July 1, 1972 target deadline implemented by Governor Jimmy Carter for “Jekyll to be completely self-sustaining” as well as noting more than 2.7 million persons visited Jekyll the previous year, and that tourism had increased approximately 15% each year for the five previous years.

Mr. Atkins opened the floor to public comments.

There were nine public comments:

- Ron Clay expressed concern for the rising hotel room rates on Jekyll Island and the proposed changes to the Jekyll Island Golf Course.
- Aaron Carone noted that he felt there was a loophole in the Master Plan for recreational area land use, and he suggested that loophole be closed to avoid future development on recreational areas, such as the golf course.
- Susan Middleton expressed concerns about what would happen to the back-nine holes of Oleander if a golf course improvement plan was implemented. She reiterated that current recreational areas should only be redeveloped into other recreational uses.
- Beverly Hopkins thanked JIA staff for their efforts to keep the mini-golf courses and playgrounds in good condition. She also asked if there was a possibility of an analysis of how capacity increases impact public safety on Jekyll Island.
- Jim Sherry expressed his concern with the proposed changes to the Jekyll Island Golf Club, noting potential cost increases to golfers wouldn't fit with the "average Georgian theme".
- Jon Stevenson suggested a survey be completed to assess the opinion of golfers on Jekyll Island to determine what they think of the current amenities. He also inquired about the revenue impact that golfers have at other businesses, such as hotels and restaurants.
- Craig Patterson thanked the JIA staff for their efforts to keep the residents updated on changes through the JIA website.
- Hettie Backes expressed concern about potential rising costs to golfers on Jekyll and encouraged looking into other sources of revenue for the golf course.
- Al Tate voiced his concern with over-capacity on Jekyll Island and encouraged the Board to think of additional ways to raise revenue without increasing development, such as finding multi-uses for the golf course.

After a five-minute break, the Chairman continued into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting
April 12, 2022

A quorum was confirmed at 11:55 a.m. The following Board Members were physically present: Dale Atkins, Bob Krueger, Joseph Wilkinson, Jr., Buster Evans, and Glen Willard. There were no Board Members participating via teleconference.

Action Items

1. Mr. Kruger moved to accept the minutes of the March 15, 2022 board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. The recommendation from the Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee to approve and issue RFI #246 for Renewable Energy Procurement, pending additional legal review carried by unanimous approval.
3. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the pay increases and one-time payment for JIA Employees carried by unanimous approval.
4. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to ratify the 2010 Lease Agreement Form carried by unanimous approval.
5. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the rental agreement with The Purple Turtle Signature Store, LLC, pending additional legal review carried by unanimous approval.
6. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to adopt the Resolution #R-2022-2 in Appreciation of Joe Wilkinson, Former Chairman carried by unanimous approval.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krueger and was seconded by Mr. Willard. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.