

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY  
September 20, 2022 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, September 20, 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  
Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks  
Commissioner Mark Williams  
Mr. Glen Willard (via Teleconference)  
Mr. Ruel Joyner (via Teleconference)

Members Absent: Mr. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director  
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director  
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer  
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources  
Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources  
Davide Zailo, GSTC Research Program Manager  
Jamie Gamby, GSTC Rehabilitation Technician II  
Scott Turner, Director of Golf  
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing  
Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager  
Anna Trapp, Executive Assistant

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

Chairman Atkins called the committee session to order at 9:31 a.m. Roll was called for members attending in person and via teleconference. All members were present except for Mr. Wilkinson. Mr. Joyner dropped off the call at 10:55 a.m.

JIA received four online public comments for this meeting.

- Breanna Ondich – Hybrid Online Live Streaming
- Mindy Egan – Mural & Historic District Tours
- Steve Smith – Jekyll Island Golf
- Cheryl Peavyhouse – Senior Living Community

### **Special Introduction**

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, introduced the new Post Commander for Jekyll Island GSP Post 35, Sergeant Brandon Smith.

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

A. Davide Zailo, GSTC Research Program Manager, and Jamie Gamby, GSTC Rehabilitation Technician II, presented a summary for the Diamondback Terrapin 2022 nesting season highlighting the following points:

- Terrapin season typically runs from April to July. There were 393 terrapin encounters during the 2022 season, and 74% of terrapins encountered were saved.
- There were 127 citizen interaction reports and 25 JIA personnel reports for the season.

- 156 eggs hatched from the 203 that were incubated. 110 hatchlings were released, 25 transferred to Zoo Atlanta, and 20 remain at the GSTC.
- There was even a set of twins hatched in the GSTC incubators.
- Out of the 15 rehab patients, 8 were successfully rehabbed and released, and two remain in rehab.
- The fence installed earlier in the year to assist in tracking and monitoring terrapins, proved successful. 132 terrapins were encountered along the fence, which made up 33% of all season encounters. More importantly, the fence assisted in decreasing the expected road mortality for terrapins by 95%.

B. Richard Chewning, Director of the Camp Jekyll 4-H Center, discussed the bird conservation partnership at Camp Jekyll. Georgia Audubon reached out to JIA to determine if there were any buildings that may benefit from installing bird film dots on the windows. The Learning Center at Camp Jekyll was identified as a prime location for the film application. This special film allows bird to detect the window glass, which prevents the birds from striking the glass during flight and, ultimately, reduces the mortality rate of the birds. Chewning thanked Georgia Audubon and the JIA Conservation Department for the collaborative project, and he noted that not a single bird has struck their windows since the film was installed.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, added that Camp Jekyll is making a successful comeback post-pandemic, and Chewning confirmed that they anticipate the number of campers returning to their pre-pandemic number of 10,000 for FY23. Hooks also highlighted the Environmental Education Program which makes up 64% of the Camp Jekyll visitors.

There were no public comments.

## **II. Finance Committee**

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

- Revenues were \$3,882,202.
- Expenses were \$2,712,208.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$1,169,994.
- Total Traffic Counts were 102,929 vehicles.
- Year-to-date Revenues reported by hotels were \$51 million.

B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, presented a request to establish a bank account with Wells Fargo. The JIA staff is in the process of changing merchant processing services from Bank of America to the state contract with Wells Fargo. One of the services that Wells Fargo offers is an online bill pay service in which customers can view and pay their invoices online, either by check, card, or by ACH payment. To set up the service, JIA first needs to establish a bank account at Wells Fargo to fund the payment of the merchant service charges. Authorized JIA staff members will be able to make electronic requests of the Financial Institution for the transfer of funds or money between accounts maintained by JIA at Wells Fargo and Ameris Bank.

A motion to recommend opening a bank account with Wells Fargo and establishing Jones Hooks, Noel Jensen, and Jenna Johnson as authorized representatives of the account was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Joyner. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

### **III. Human Resources Committee**

- A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, introduced the new Director of Golf, Scott Turner. Mr. Turner is a graduate of the Citadel, where he played collegiate golf. He is currently a PGA Class A member, and most recently, he joined the JIA from the Darlington Country Club in South Carolina.

Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, further noted that the search for a new Director of Golf was a nationwide search, receiving applications from as far away as Iowa. He added that Turner has focused on ensuring a welcoming environment in the golf shop and improving customer service.

- B. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, formally introduced and welcomed Tabitha Mayers, the new General Manager for the Convention Center. He noted that Mayers’s enthusiasm has been evident from the start, and he anticipates continued excellence.

There were no public comments.

### **IV. Marketing Committee**

- A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing, presented the report from the Marketing Department, highlighting the following items:
- Recent media coverage included:
    - *Money Ink* listed Jekyll on their “20 Places Similar to Cape Cod”.
    - *Explore Georgia* highlighted the new mural in Beach Village in their list of “Cool Murals and More Curious Public Art in Georgia”.
    - Jekyll Island was mentioned in a question on *Jeopardy*.
  - State data shows that due to inflation concerns and rising gas prices, travelers may choose destinations closer to home, but they are still planning to travel during the next 12 months. JIA is continuing to market and promote fall events with this in mind.
  - Upcoming autumn events include:
    - Paulk Cup Classic: October 26<sup>th</sup> through 28<sup>th</sup>
    - Shrimp and Grits Festival: November 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>
    - Holly Jolly Jekyll: November 25<sup>th</sup> through January 8<sup>th</sup>
  - A commemorative collection of 31•81 articles is being produced in honor of JIA’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

There were no public comments.

### **V. Legislative Committee**

No report.

### **VI. Committee of the Whole**

- A. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented an update on the status of the Mercer Medical Facility on Jekyll Island. He began by introducing Dr. Jean Sumner, Dean of the Mercer School of Medicine, and Ben West, Executive Director of Finance and Administration for Mercer School of Medicine.

Dr. Sumner spoke to the mission of Mercer to better all areas of Georgia by finding and training young physicians to serve and provide care to all Georgians, especially those in rural areas, stating her appreciation for the opportunity to partner with the JIA and to become an asset to Glynn County.

Hooks then presented the proposed lease for consideration. The terms of the lease closely reflect those presented in the memorandum of agreement approved at the August Board meeting.

- Rent will be abated for the first three years to \$10 per year, and full rent will commence at the start of year four.
- The base rent will be \$18 per square foot. The percentage rent is 3% over a breakpoint of \$113,350 month. The common area maintenance (CAM) charges would be capped at \$1.50 per square foot for the first year of implementation. There are no CAM charges in Beach Village at this time, but it is being considered for all future leases in the Village with appropriate notice to the lessees.
- JIA will obtain plans for the cost of the buildout not to exceed \$35,000. JIA will build out premises at a cost not to exceed \$300,000 and acquire FFE according to clinical requirements from Mercer at a cost not to exceed \$450,000. JIA will retain ownership of acquired FFE.
- The clinic will be open seven days a week during peak season (May-August) and five days per week during the off-season (September–April).

A motion to recommend approving the lease with Mercer Medical LLC, pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the proposed Golf Improvement Plan. Over the past six years, several studies and recommendations have been made from various consultants. A group of nineteen JIA staff members have spent the past several months reviewing those studies to create the proposed Golf Improvement Plan. Hooks noted that the copy of the Plan before the Board is a proof copy, and that the final copy will contain a few minor edits. Sections of the plan include:

- Project Chronology & Summary: Illustrates the findings of various studies and consultant recommendations from 2017 to 2022.
- History of Golf on Jekyll: Discusses the historical and archeological significance of the courses on Jekyll.
- Phasing Schedule for Restructuring/Redesigning Courses: Includes five phases for golf course improvements.
  - Phase 1: Redesign of Pine Lakes to be completed by Clyde Johnston Designs, Inc., who completed a restoration of the course in 2002.
  - Phase 2: Restoration of Great Dunes course. Obtaining design and construction plans to combine nine holes of Great Dunes with nine holes of Oleander to create an 18-hole golf course.
  - Phase 3: Construction of the 18-hole Great Dunes/Oleander course.
  - Phase 4: Reevaluation of golf operations and options for Indian Mound. This will be an overall re-evaluation for up to two years following the completion of Phase 3.

- Phase 5: Based on the analyses and recommendations made during Phase 4, a contractor will be obtained to design alternatives recommended and approved by the JIA Board.
- Conservation Opportunity: A 50-acre wildlife corridor is recommended for the proposed eliminated nine holes of Oleander. An RFP for the design of this corridor will be presented to the Board for consideration in 2023.
- Greenspace Ordinance Proposal: This proposed ordinance would protect 93% of the existing land area allocated to golf on Jekyll and define and establish certain permitted and conditional uses and activities within the greenspace preservation overlay. It would prevent housing in general and commercial developments within the overlay area.
- Low Impact Development Opportunities: 26.3 acres are recommended for limited development use. Potential development could include a golf lodge, a senior living community, and a retail/dining area. Inspiration boards are included in the plan as recommended directions, but RFPs would be issued for the design and development of these areas.
- Funding: Includes specific options for funding the proposed plan, including borrowing money through a bond. JIA funds have already been allocated to begin work on Pine Lakes and redesign of Great Dunes/Oleander.
- Recommended Schedule: Provides a summary of the anticipated timeline and strategic action items that are included at the end of each section of the Plan.
- Notes for the Future: Provides insight on how to avoid pitfalls moving forward, focusing on maintenance as an ongoing item in the budget to avoid deferred maintenance.

A motion to recommend approving and adopting the Golf Improvement Plan as an on-going guideline for golf course improvements was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the contract for Pine Lakes Golf Course improvements for consideration. In 2002 Clyde Johnston designed a remodel of Pine Lakes, and per common practice, JIA would like to re-hire Clyde Johnston Design, Inc. to continue work on the course. Johnston has already completed a ride through of the course with Aaron Saunders, Director of Golf Course Maintenance, and has made recommendations for each hole. Johnston's services for design, bidding administration for construction, and regular site visits will cost \$63,500. These funds are already allocated, and no new fundings is needed at this time.

A motion to recommend awarding the contract for renovation design and construction administration services for Pine Lakes Golf Course to Clyde Johnson Designs, Inc., as recommended by staff was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion carried unanimously.

Zach Harris, General Counsel, was absent due to being summoned for jury duty. Therefore, Hooks presented the First Reading of the Proposed Greenspace Ordinance. The purpose of this article is to provide for the creation, preservation, and maintenance of certain open spaces, including golf courses and related facilities and other unimproved areas on Jekyll Island as green spaces for low impact recreational activities, wildlife habitats, and natural resource conservation areas. It is the intent of the Authority to permit and encourage

recreation, education, natural resource conservation uses, and related activities within this area, while discouraging commercial and residential development that tends to distract from those uses and activities.

C. Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager, presented the lease with Larry's Giant Subs for consideration. He noted that the Beach Village leases have been re-written by Zach Harris, General Counsel. The new leases are a more sophisticated version of the old lease. The presented lease is for the vacant space at 41 Main Street, Suite 101. The tenant, Steve Sharpe, would open a Larry's Giant Subs restaurant in the leased space. The initial term will be 3 years with two options to renew for 3-year terms, for a total of nine year. Additional highlights of the lease include:

- Base rent of \$18 per square foot per month
- Percentage rent of 3% rent over breakpoint of \$40,000 per month
- Tenant to furnish utilities
- Tenant to build out premises per approved plans
- Abatement of Base Rent to 50% during buildout period – ends the earlier of date open for business or January 1, 2023
- Tenant to pay security deposit equaling two months base rent
- JIA has the right to charge CAM, capped at \$1.50 per square foot for first year CAM is implemented

A motion to recommend approving the lease with Seaside Food Company, Inc., pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance, was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Ms. Burch-Meeks. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Maria Humphrey, Lease Manager, presented the lease with Caroline's Gift and Flowers for consideration. The tenants will be Donald and Caroline Naysmith, who currently operate the flower shop in the Village. Their lease expired, and the presented lease reflects the new lease terms developed for Beach Village tenants including:

- Base rent of \$18 per square foot per month
- Percentage rent of 3% rent over breakpoint of \$19,775 per month
- JIA has the right to charge CAM, capped at \$1.50 per square foot for first year CAM is implemented

A motion to recommend approving the lease with Cardon Enterprises, LLC., pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance, was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, provided an update on the State Contract with EZ-Go Golf Carts. JIA intends to renew the lease with EZ-Go Golf Carts, which will allow them to begin production on golf carts to be received by July of 2023. The number of golf carts will remain the same but with improved GPS and a new color. A vote was not required, since this is a state contract, but it will be up for consideration once the lease documents are received from Wells Fargo.

F. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, provided the Operations Update highlighting the following items:

- Offices for public works employees are being updated which will allow the department's staff to be in one area.

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- Pond Engineering has provided the final scope for the airport terminal and is awaiting final approval from GDOT.
- JIA is working with the Webber Group to produce a proposal for the GSTC expansion.
- The billboards at the end of Highways 17 and 520 are in the process of being replaced.
- The RFP for the Public Safety Complex is out for bidders to respond to.
- Bike path rehabilitation was delayed due to supply chain issues, but the 23 miles of bike paths should be completed by the end of October 2022.
- The Jekyll Island Campground's move away from permitting extended guest stays has resulted in higher revenues, allowing more Georgians and other visitors the opportunity camp on Jekyll.
- Campground expansion is moving forward with the construction of new bathrooms.
- The total revenue from airport fuel in FY 2022 totaled \$31,774.52, which will be used for general upkeep of the airport and potential funding matches on future airport projects.

G. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director's report highlighting the following items:

- The Selig Center is conducting an updated Economic Impact Study for Jekyll Island.
- The GSTC continues to partner and collaborate with numerous colleges and universities across the country.
- The concept for the causeway bike path has been approved by GDOT. This path will extend from the Guest Information Center to the end of the Jekyll Causeway.

H. Mr. Atkins presented the Chairman's Comments. He thanked Dr. Sumner and Mercer for their partnership. He also thanked JIA staff for their hard work on the Golf Improvement Plan.

There were six public comments:

- Al Tate expressed his concern about the Golf Improvement Plan and potential over capacity on Jekyll Island.
- Alice Keyes with 100 Miles spoke on the organization's concerns of developmental density on Jekyll. She also thanked the Board for the proposed Greenspace Ordinance and offered recommendations to further strengthen the ordinance.
- Beverly Hopkins expressed gratitude for the opening of Larry's Giant Subs, and she inquired about the status of the lease for the Infirmary.
- Cheryl Peavyhouse discussed her concerns about including a senior living community in the Golf Improvement Plan.
- Charles McMillan with Georgia Conservancy celebrated the Greenspace Ordinance and the Golf Improvement Plan. He thanked the JIA Board and Staff for consistently advocating for the ecological corridor on Jekyll.
- Jim Reed inquired about alternatives for promoting golf on Jekyll, and he expressed concern about including limited development in the Golf Improvement Plan. He supported the proposed updates to Pine Lakes and the plan to avoid deferred maintenance.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

**The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting**  
**September 20, 2022**

The Board Meeting was called to order at 11:34 a.m., and all members were present either in-person or via teleconference, except for Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Joyner who were absent.

**Action Items**

1. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the August 16, 2022 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Evans. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to open a bank account with Wells Fargo as presented by staff carried by unanimous approval.
3. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the lease with Mercer Medical, LLC., pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance, carried by unanimous approval.
4. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve and adopt the Golf Improvement Plan as an on-going guideline for golf course improvements carried by unanimous approval.
5. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to award the contract for renovation design and construction administration services for Pine Lakes Golf Course to Clyde Johnston Inc., carried by unanimous approval.
6. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the lease with Seaside Food Company, Inc. pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance, carried by unanimous approval.
7. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the lease with Cardon Enterprises, LLC. pending additional legal review and tenant acceptance, carried by unanimous approval.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Ms. Burch-Meeks. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.