

JEKYLL ISLAND – STATE PARK AUTHORITY
April 18, 2023 – Approved Minutes

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 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. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr.
Mr. Glen Willard
Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks
Mr. Ruel Joyner
Commissioner Mark Williams

Key Staff Present: Jones Hooks, Executive Director
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director
Michelle Kaylor, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center
Dr. Shane Boylan, Georgia Sea Turtle Center Veterinarian
Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer
Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing
Kevin Udell, Senior Sales Manager
Yank Moore, Director of Conservation
Zach Harris, General Counsel
Taylor Davis, Historic Preservationist
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. All Board members were present in-person.

JIA received two online public comments for this meeting:

- Cathy Dillon - Fiber Optic Cable on Jekyll
- Mindy Eagan - Historic District Safety Concerns

Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee

A. Michelle Kaylor, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center (GSTC), presented the department's report. She first introduced the new GSTC Veterinarian, Dr. Shane Boylan. With more than eighteen years of experience in wildlife rehabilitation and veterinary medicine, Boylan spent fourteen years as the veterinarian for the South Carolina Aquarium and most recently worked as a consult veterinarian for SeaWorld in Abu Dhabi. He has also spent six years as an instructor with AquaVet, which offers training in aquatic medicine to biologists, veterinary students, and professionals.

On April 4th, a public sea turtle release was held, and eleven cold stunned patients were released. Over one-thousand guests came to witness the release. Additionally, through collaboration with the Marketing team, this release garnered 67 media placements reaching over 3-million people plus over 40,000 views on social media. Another sea turtle release was

held on April 17th in partnership with the Georgia Aquarium which also resulted in the GSTC continuing the care for three of the Georgia Aquariums turtle patients.

Kaylor also spoke on GSTC admissions and capacity management. March and April have seen a significant increase in admissions from 2022 to 2023. In order to ensure a positive experience for guests, timed entry ticketing will be implemented in May 2023 for GSTC admissions.

- B. Tom Alexander, Director of Historic Resources, presented a report on the Oral History Project. This project was created to capture the memories and recollections of people whose lives have been impacted by Jekyll Island. So far, more than twenty interviews have been conducted, and twenty-nine hours of footage reviewed and edited. These recordings will be used for exhibits and marketing as well as research. This project will be a recurring annual event to record and preserve these stories.

Alexander also updated the Board on the latest Mosaic lobby exhibit. The newest exhibit will focus on the lives of the Morgans, JP, Jack, and Jane to include elements of the Morgans' role in the Club, Jack's connection to the Monopoly board game, Jane's dresser set, and a replica of JP's yacht.

Jones Hooks, Executive Director, highlighted the increase in revenues and the success of engaging programs that have been accomplished under Alexander's leadership.

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 Revenues for the month.

- Revenues were \$2,854,450.
- Expenses were \$2,601,719.
- Net Operating Cash Income was \$252,731.
- Total Traffic Counts were 128,192 vehicles.
- Year to date revenues reported by hotels was \$14.7 million.

- B. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer, presented the request for funding of a new server. After six years of use, the computer server at the Administration building has reached a critical stage and must be replaced. It is at maximum capacity, and JIA's computer support team is no longer able to upgrade the storage or the RAM. The current server hosts multiple virtual servers, including JIA's accounting software, water billing software, and credit card software. A new server will host the DataVision software and all the current virtual servers. The new server will also have more RAM and storage space, which allows JIA room to grow for the next several years.

A motion to recommend approving the funding of \$15,000, to be paid from current year funds, for the purchase of a new Dell PowerEdge R550 server, was made by Dr. Evans and seconded Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Office presented the request for additional funding for the shelving solution at the Convention Center. In May 2022, the Board approved \$45,000 for shelving at the Convention Center. An additional \$12,000 is needed to cover the balance of the cost for installation and fire alarm equipment.

The purpose of the shelving solution is to store lobby furniture, tables, and chairs when not in use. Proper storage can extend the life of the furniture and helps keep the pathways in the storage room open. Finding suitable storage solutions for this project proved challenging given the square footage limitations at the Convention Center. JIA staff received three responsive bids for the new furniture storage shelving solution. The bidder presenting the lowest responsive bid was Panel Built, Incorporated for an amount of \$39,510. JIA has also received quotes for the installation of the shelving unit in the amount of \$12,550 and a quote for the required heat sensors and fire alarm equipment in the amount of \$4,030.44.

A motion to recommend approving the funding of \$12,000, to be paid from current year revenues, to cover the remaining balance for installation of a furniture shelving solution at the Convention Center as well as the required heat sensors and fire alarm equipment was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no public comments.

III. Human Resources Committee

Buster Evans, Chair

No Report

IV. Marketing Committee

- A. Alexa Hawkins, Director of Marketing, presented the department's report.

She reminded the Board of the annual Turtle Crawl to be held on April 29th. So far 1,400 participants have registered for the event which is the largest number of participants the event has ever seen, and that number is expected to grow before the registration deadline. This event serves as the kick-off for sea turtle nesting season which begins on May 1st.

Media highlights include a feature in *AAA Living*, "23 Sustainable Travel Tips for 2023". Through collaboration with the Conservation Department, the goal is to develop a sustainability narrative for Jekyll and become a thought leader in that area.

Hawkins also noted that the Spring/Summer 2023 issue of 31•81, The Magazine of Jekyll Island will be hitting mailboxes in May. The cover shows the resurrection fern, and one fun feature included in the magazine is the "Great Escape" which highlights the art of doing nothing.

- B. Kevin Udell, Senior Sales Manager, presented an update on group sales. Highlights from his report include:

- Group sales revenue for fiscal year (FY) 2022 were \$4,088,365, which shows a significant recovery after FY 2020 and FY 2021, which were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Group diversification can be seen between FY 2017 and FY 2022. Associations are still the largest percentage of groups seen on Jekyll, but weddings have increased to 7% and sporting events have increased from 6% to 19% of all group sales by revenue.
- Through the third quarter, FY 2023 is proving to be the best on record since FY 2019. This is due in large part to groups wanting to return to Jekyll Island each year.

There were no public comments.

V. Legislative Committee

A. Mr. Glen Willard, Legislative Committee Chair, provided a brief summary of action taken during the State 2023 legislative session. Governor Kemp has 40 days to sign these bills or to veto.

- The Fiscal Year 2023 budget was approved.
- The tough on crime Senate Bill 44 was approved.
- TikTok was banned on State owned computing devices through Senate Bill 93.
- Funding for the Jekyll Island Public Safety Facility was approved in the amended FY 2023 budget.

Mr. Willard also highlighted that House Resolution 690 was presented on March 27th in honor of Jones Hooks and his service to Jekyll Island.

There were no public comments.

VI. Committee of the Whole

- A. Yank Moore, Director of Conservation presented RFP #377 for consideration. Release of this RFP is included in the Golf Improvement Plan. RFP #377 seeks evaluation and restoration planning for an area that encompasses approximately 50 acres, including 37 acres of fairway and about 13 acres of existing embedded pine and oak forest patches on Oleander Golf Course. The chosen consultant should also include maintenance plans, maintenance cost estimations, and habitat selections. The consultant may also be asked to assess the feasibility of a wetland restoration, as the JIA works through the next steps of the Golf Improvement Plan.

A motion to recommend approving and releasing RFP #377 for ecological planning and design services was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Zach Harris, General Counsel, presented the request from the Westin management entity to change the management entity name. The JIA Board approved Northview Hotel Group (Northview) as the purchaser of a majority ownership interest in Jekyll Ocean Front Hotel, LLC (JOFH) at its November 15, 2022 meeting. The Board also approved Northview and its affiliate entity, NVHG Westin Jekyll Hotel Operator, LLC, as the hotel management company for JOFH for the Westin Hotel.

Due to circumstances beyond the control of JIA, Northview was compelled to drop the “Westin” name from its management entity and create a new corporate entity to act as the hotel management company for JOFH. The Board’s approval is necessary for the new entity, NVHG Jekyll Hotel Operator, LLC, to operate as the hotel management company.

Dave Curtis, NVHG Jekyll Hotel Operator Representative, was present and further explained the reason for the entity name change. Marriott does not allow the use of “Westin” in the name of any management company. He clarified that there is no change to the personnel nor the name or brand of the hotel.

A motion to recommend approving North View Hotel Group, LLC, and its affiliate entity, NVHG Jekyll Hotel Operator, LLC, as the hotel management company for Jekyll Ocean Front Hotel, LLC, lessee under that ground lease for the Westin Jekyll Island Hotel was made by Mr. Wilkison and seconded by Mr. Krueger. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Zach Harris, General Counsel, provided a brief update on JIA litigation activities which include:
- Four personal injury cases involving Summer Waves:
 - One is being appealed to the court of the Georgia Court of Appeals, following a summary judgment in JIA’s favor.
 - One is pending an order from Glynn County Superior Court.
 - The two other cases are pending and in discovery subject to a motion to dismiss filed by JIA.
 - A personal injury case involving a cycling accident in the Historic District is at the end of discovery and depositions.
 - Two intellectual property cases:
 - One proceeding is before the Trademark Trial and Appeals Board which is an administrative tribunal. This is a written trial with written briefs. The trial briefs close at the end of April, and a decision is expected following the close of those briefs.
 - One involves a foreign company that holds competing Summer Waves trademarks for pool floats and other consumer goods. Litigation is pending in the Southern District of Georgia. JIA received an unfavorable order on a motion to dismiss filed by the other entity. JIA is discussing options for appeal with the litigation counsel.
 - JIA has asserted claims for cybersquatting and deceptive trade practices. This matter is pending in Glynn County Superior Court.
 - A lease dispute with a former JIA lessee is pending in Glynn County Superior Court. Expert depositions are expected in early May.

Harris also provided additional, non-litigation, legal updates.

- Municode is working through JIA’s updated code of ordinances, which is expected to be posted in a searchable format within the next 30 to 60 days.
- Discussions are on-going with Georgia Power regarding the expansion and renovation of their substation site.
- Negotiations are on-going for a commercial lease extension for the ground lease for Villas by the Sea.
- Capital reserve audits will move forward for ground lessees with capital reserve obligations under their lease. A consultant has been acquired to assist with these audits.

- D. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the concept plan for the former Buccaneer property. LNWA Developers LLC has leased the property commonly represented as the Buccaneer Parcel since 2017. Per the terms of their lease, LNWA was to perform and present a market analysis for the parcel before concept plans could be submitted to the JIA Design Review Group (DRG) or the JIA Board. RCLCO was hired to perform the analysis and presented a market research analysis for the leased property at the October 19, 2021, JIA

Board Meeting. This market analysis determined the best and highest use of the 6.892-acre parcel was as a single-family residential planned development. The development is planned to include 25 single-family homes, additional guest parking, a community pool, as well as other features to be delineated during the Schematic Phase of the project.

LNWA Developers presented a preliminary concept in March 2023, which was reviewed by a subcommittee of the DRG and sent back with comments regarding several issues, among them: the density of the site, circulation of vehicles, and turtle lighting requirements. LNWA revised the preliminary Concept to address these issues adequately and resubmitted their concept plan for DRG review on April 7, 2023. The revised concept reduced density, improved circulation, provided safer routing for emergency response, and recognized that future turtle lighting challenges will have to be resolved. With these updates, the DRG passed the Concept with comments that would have to be further addressed during the Schematic Phase of the project.

Dave Curtis, Chairman for Retreat Hotels & Resorts, was present to review a summary of the concept plan with the Board.

A motion to recommend approving the Concept Phase drawings of a planned development to be built by LNWA Developers LLC and Retreat Hotels and Resorts, LLC on the 6.892-acre parcel commonly referred to as The Buccaneer Parcel was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director. Presented an update on replacing the current airport terminal. A new terminal will be constructed on the footprint of the existing terminal as dictated by AIP and FAA rules, be ADA compliant, and will support the ever-increasing popularity of Jekyll Island becoming an aviation destination. JIA's airport architectural and engineering firm POND has designed the new terminal and the design has been released to receive bids through the RFP process.

\$446,379.63 is available in Airport Infrastructure Program (AIP) Funding through a contract with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). This funding will be reimbursed after JIA pays the contractor to rebuild a new airport terminal. There is a matching fund requirement of \$171,154.85, which will be paid by GDOT with funding that was previously returned to GDOT from JIA because of FFA audit issues against using AIG funds for the airport fueling terminal. The audit issue was the responsibility of GDOT. Should construction costs exceed the combined \$617,534.48, JIA would be responsible for the remaining balance.

Jensen presented the terminal design which pulls in mid-century modern (MCM) elements that can be seen in residential homes across Jekyll Island. The proposed terminal will be built on the exact footprint of the existing terminal, but it will be double the square footage with the addition of a second floor.

Taylor Davis, Historic Preservationist, spoke to the historical significance of mid-century modern design on Jekyll Island. The airport is in the middle of a corridor with a unique collection of MCM structures running from north of the Historic District through the end of the residential area of Old Plantation Road. The design presented by POND complements those structures. It doesn't replicate those designs but pulls in elements ensuring the design doesn't detract from the overall architectural value of the corridor and other MCM homes found throughout the island.

A motion to recommend approving the contract with GDOT for the construction of the Jekyll Island Airport Terminal which includes acceptance of \$446,379.63 and the matching funds of \$171,144.85 to be used to replace the airport terminal, pending additional legal review was made by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

- F. Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, presented the Operations Update highlighting on-going and planned construction projects, which have a total expenditure of more than \$27 million. He highlighted a few of the projects:
- An additional restroom will be added at the Beach Village.
 - The construction of a Public Works office will allow each department and staff to operate more effectively.
 - SPLOST 2022 projects include fishing pier renovations, sanitary sewer evaluation and repairs, and resurfacing the bike path at Driftwood Beach. JIA should begin seeing funds from the County in the coming months.

The breakdown of the funding for these projects include:

- \$3.1 million will come from SPLOST.
- \$6.5 million is unfunded or undesignated.
- \$10.5 million is State funded.
- \$7 million is JIA funded.

- G. Jones Hooks, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director's report which included the following highlights:
- Draft agreements with LiveOak Fiber are being developed, and LiveOak will begin engineering on Jekyll Island this summer. A handout with information from LiveOak Fiber was available to the public.
 - Progress continues at the Mercer Medical Clinic site, and it is on schedule to turn over to Mercer Medical School at the end of June. JIA is still working to secure funding through the Department of Community Affairs Innovation Grant.
 - JIA staff met with Glynn County Commissioners Tostensen, Sweat, and Clark as well as County Manager Bill Fallon and County Attorney Aaron Mumford. A summary of the 2022 Selig Center Economic Impact Study was shared with the Commissioners to emphasize Jekyll's impact on Glynn County.
 - Dining options on Jekyll Island have become a concern for guests. Some restaurants have not provided acceptable service, or their hours of operation have been inconsistent. JIA has met with several restaurant lessee representatives, and Marketing has updated hours of operation on the Jekyll Island website. Additional restaurant opportunities will and should be looked at moving forward.
 - The Jekyll Island Foundation Chair, Hollis Linginfelter provided a letter requesting each JIA Board Member to show their support for the Foundation, especially as the Foundation explores campaign options to finance the expansion of the GSTC.
 - The State Historic Preservation Office advised JIA to wait until the direction of the Great Dunes Golf Course restoration is finalized before applying for historic designation.
 - The Walter J. Travis Society has already provided two letters supporting the restoration of Great Dunes Golf Course to its historical design.
 - A Wall Street Journal article "This Southern Town Was Growing So Fast, It Passed a Ban on Growth", which addresses concerns about capacity in Lake Wylie, South Carolina was presented as part of the Disappointing Destination series.
 - The May 23rd Board Meeting will be the fourth Tuesday instead of third.
 - The June 1st Called Budget Meeting will be a remote meeting for Board members.

H. Dale Atkins presented the Chairman’s Comments. He thanked all the Board members for their in-person attendance, and he thanked the JIA staff for their continued dedication.

There were no public comments.

The Chairman continued directly into the JIA Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting
April 18, 2023

The Board Meeting was called to order at 11:11 a.m., and all members were present in-person.

Action Items

1. Mr. Krueger moved to accept the minutes of the March 21, 2023 Board Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Willard. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the funding of \$15,000, to be paid from current year funds, for the purchase of a new Dell PowerEdge R550 server carried by unanimous approval.
3. The recommendation from the Finance Committee to approve the funding of \$12,000, to be paid from current year revenues, to cover the remaining balance for installation of a furniture shelving solution at the Convention Center as well as the required heat sensors and fire alarm equipment carried by unanimous approval.
4. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to release RFP #377 for ecological planning and design services carried by unanimous approval.
5. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve North View Hotel Group, LLC, and its affiliate entity, NVHG Jekyll Hotel Operator, LLC, as the hotel management company for Jekyll Ocean Front Hotel, LLC, lessee under that ground lease for the Westin Jekyll Island Hotel carried by unanimous approval.
6. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the Concept Phase drawings of a planned development to be built by LNWA Developers LLC and Retreat Hotels and Resorts, LLC on the 6.892-acre parcel commonly referred to as The Buccaneer Parcel carried by unanimous approval.
7. The recommendation from the Committee of the Whole to approve the contract with GDOT for the construction of the Jekyll Island Airport Terminal which includes acceptance of \$446,379.63, pending additional legal review carried by unanimous approval.

A motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel was made at 11:20 a.m. by Mr. Joyner and seconded by Mr. Willard. The motion carried by unanimous approval.

Board members adjourned the executive session at 1:04 p.m.

The motion to adjourn the Board Meeting was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Mr. Joyner. There was no objection to the motion and the meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.