

## **Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):**

### **Report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering the design, construction, and management of a proposed residential development on the former Buccaneer Hotel Site**

**Date of EAP Committee meeting:** 08/11/2023

#### **EAP Committee members present:**

Yank Moore, Director of Conservation, JIA  
Noel Jensen, Deputy Executive Director, JIA  
Cliff Gawron, Director of Landscape and Planning, JIA  
Dan Quinn, Natural Resources Manager, JIA  
Maureen Lennon, Jekyll Island Resident  
Courtney Reich, Coastal Director, Georgia Conservancy  
Mac Jefferies, Jekyll Realty  
Jason Lee, Program Manager, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

#### **Project under consideration**

The current lessee of the former Buccaneer Hotel site has a proposal through the JIA Design Review Process to plan and build a residential community including a total of 25 single-family units. The concept for this project was approved by the JIA BOD in April of 2023 and the Schematic Design was approved at the August 2023 meeting. Some matters already discussed with the development team through the JIA design-review process are touched-upon again here simply for emphasis and documentation within the context of the EAP.

#### **Assessment**

The EAP Committee finds that this project poses no irreconcilable conflicts with the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan. Conditions of the committee's favorable assessment of this project follow. *Requirements* are essential to the committee's support and are backed up by language in the Jekyll Island Code of Ordinances or outlined as priorities in the Conservation Plan. *Recommendations* are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments in the property. Most points pertain to design and construction, but some points pertain to long-term management of the property through the HOA or vacation rental companies. Note that this review does not absolve or supersede any other regulatory, permitting, or mitigation requirements imposed by the JIA, Glynn County, or the State of Georgia. JIA staff stand ready to consult with the project team regarding the implementation of any points presented in this report. The findings articulated in this report should not be construed as reflective of the position of any institution or organization that the non-JIA participants may be affiliated with.

## ***Requirements***

### **❖ *Stormwater Management***

- Under the new revisions to the code of ordinance adopted earlier in 2022 by the JIA BOD, a Stormwater Management Plan for any “redevelopment that includes the creation, addition or replacement of 5,000 square feet or more of impervious cover or that involves other land development activity of one acre or more,” must be submitted.
- In addition to the requirements outlined for the Stormwater Management Plan, a statement, and calculations, from a coastal engineer, must show that the project, all related activities, and parking must meet the standards defined in the Coastal Stormwater Supplement of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual.
- The committee tasks the ownership group to think creatively in the design to avoid connection to the island stormwater system. Bioretention, pervious paving, directed downspouts, and sloped hardscape elements has been an effective tool in combination with native planting at other establishments on Jekyll.

### **❖ *Lighting***

- As usual, lighting plans must comply with the Jekyll Island Beach Lighting Ordinance (in effect May 1 – October 31 each year) and be reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, wildlife conservation section, prior to installation. DNR Wildlife Biologist [Mark Dodd](#), is the point of contact for this review, and the JIA requests to be copied on all communications. We advise addressing this requirement early in the project timeline. Expect to meet ordinance compliance standards on all units, community structures, and associated landscape elements.
- Any construction-related lighting must also comply with this ordinance.
- Note that interior spaces, if visible to the exterior are subject to the lighting ordinance requirements, similar to exterior lighting. A stronger tint, automatically closing blinds, or other window treatments can help alleviate the burden on renters.
- The committee recommends that the HOA (or similar covenant) be the point of contact for Beach Lighting-related issues, violations, and inquiries to streamline communication throughout the community.

### **❖ *Trees***

- Trees are a significant component of the nature of this site and the large, mature, Heritage and Historic live oaks specifically, should be saved at all costs. The committee requires the use of low vertical profile materials with pervious construction within the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) of any live oak tree rated Fair to Good condition by a third-party certified arborist.
- Any activities that compromise the integrity of the trees within their CRZ or by removing main or structural limbs will require mitigation.

- Trees with activities within the CRZ that have the potential to compromise the integrity of the trees will need to be entered into an aftercare agreement that has routine health checks performed by a certified arborist.
  - It is recommended by the committee to provide pre-treatment to any trees that are subject to compaction or construction activities within the CRZ or beneath the dripline of the mature trees. There are two options that the committee suggests; **1)** an 8” layer of dead leaves or coarse wood chips should be installed within the entire tree protection area with care taken that no chips or leaves are piled directly at the root crown or base of trunk of each tree. A sufficient layer of mulch should be maintained throughout the entire duration of the construction process as this will add micronutrients and help preserve moisture levels, **2)** Hydro-jetting services provided by a certified arborist have been shown to benefit the long-term health of oak trees and will lower the cost of aftercare treatment.
- All Live Oak Trees must have a semi-permanent fence, such as chain-link, installed 1-foot outside of the CRZ, that must remain in place throughout the entire construction process. If this impedes construction activities in any way, an on-site meeting can be arranged to discuss options. Mitigation will be required as stated above if this term is not met.
  - All non-live oak trees that are being saved and over 2” must have at least a temporary barrier, such as orange construction fence, installed 1-foot outside of the CRZ of each tree or clump of trees. This must also remain in-place throughout the entire construction process and maintained to ensure the trees behind it are protected.

### ❖ *General Landscaping*

- Access to the dune field behind each property should be prevented by implementing a community design element, instead of leaving it up to the individual homeowners. This will ensure the protection of this sensitive habitat.
- The vegetated buffer between the proposed development and Beachview Drive will be critical to this site blending into the character of Jekyll Island. The committee requires the existing roadside apron to be removed near the end of construction and planted with a dense community of native trees and shrubs.
- The committee sees the potential of this site to design its landscaping in a way that is complementary to the adjacent natural areas. The use of native species could enhance the look of the development while reducing the necessity of irrigation.

### ❖ *Water Conservation*

- This committee does not support the addition of irrigation wells to this site. Instead, it is required that each lot add individual irrigation meters to be tied into the public water supply.

- We strongly advise that any irrigation systems should also be equipped with rain gauges to conserve water when precipitation is sufficient to meet plant demand.
- Voluntary compliance with the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010, which restricts outdoor watering to hours between 4 p.m. and 10 a.m., is strongly encouraged.

#### ❖ ***Dune Encroachment and Beach Access***

- The leased parcel is adjacent to an active and dynamic sand dune system. This development is proposed with structures adjacent to the GaDNR Shore Protection Act (SPA) jurisdictional line with portions of the sub-leased lots encompassing jurisdictional areas. Based on observable conditions, the committee anticipates further dune encroachment within these lots is possible. Under the SPA and the guidelines set in the Conservation Plan, homeowners will be limited in activities within jurisdictional areas and cannot interrupt the sand-sharing system.
- The committee sees these conditions as creating complex challenges for the developer and future homeowners if the homes remain located adjacent to the SPA line or conditions facilitate greater sand dune encroachment. The committee encourages design elements and lot configurations to allow natural dune migration. The committee also notes that under JIA ordinances, destruction of the natural landscape or the dune system will require restoration in consultation with JIA design review staff.

#### ❖ ***Historic Resources***

- The archeologist from the Jekyll Island Historic Resources Department must be contacted and provided access to the site where new soil is being disturbed. For this project that includes but is not limited to excavation for the pool.

#### ❖ ***Waste Management***

- Any outdoor trash and recycling receptacles, including the compactors, must prevent access by raccoons, feral cats, or other animals. This measure will keep the property cleaner and safer for guests and homeowners.

#### ❖ ***Construction-site cleanliness and noise***

- During construction, any debris that escapes the boundaries of the site (carried by the wind or in stormwater runoff) should be routinely cleaned up and must not remain beyond the completion of construction.
- Any stormwater conveyances leading off-site must be left free of any debris or sediment following construction. All conveyances must comply with post-construction runoff standards.
- Stormwater management and erosion control BMPs must be in place in accordance with all county and state regulatory requirements throughout the project.

- A single, designed and properly maintained construction entrance with silt fence and an appropriately sized stone apron is required to prevent sediment and construction debris from reaching Beachview Drive.
- Throughout construction, the project must comply with all applicable local noise ordinances.

## ***Recommendations***

### ***❖ Bird-friendly Glass***

- 52 of 78 of the Wildlife Priority Species identified in the 2020 Jekyll Island Conservation Plan are birds requiring special conservation attention. Window collisions are increasingly recognized as a major threat to birds locally and globally, especially to migratory passerines. Considering this as well as the proximity of high-quality bird habitat both on and adjacent to the property, this committee recommends that windows on the proposed houses be “bird safe” or “bird friendly” glass or glass treatment where appropriate. As architectural elements are designed, priority areas for window treatment will become more apparent.
- There are several window companies that manufacture bird-safe window products at a similar cost to traditional windows. A post-manufacture product is also available to apply to windows and has been utilized on Jekyll Island at the Camp Jekyll Learning Center.
- More information about the issue and bird-safe glass is available here.  
<https://abcbirds.org/from-california-to-florida-a-push-to-make-windows-safer-for-birds/>. The Jekyll Island Authority Conservation staff, and our partners at Georgia Audubon, stand ready to offer further consultation and facilitation toward the satisfaction of this recommendation.

### ***❖ Sustainability and Renewable Energy***

- The committee strongly encourages exploring possibilities with prospective renewable energy consultants, contractors, or partners, to evaluate the potential value proposition of including a renewable energy component in your development.
- Renewable options are far more attractive than they were as recently as 5 to 10 years ago. The committee believes that this site could be an ideal candidate for behind the meter (BTM) solar energy potentially providing near and long-term reductions in costs to the homeowners. Please give this and/or other renewable energy options full consideration.
- When selecting building materials, please strive for any recyclable elements that are likely to be replaced within the lifetime of the structure, such as interior design features.