

Minutes
Pensacola Beach Advocates Annual Membership Meeting
October 21, 2013

The 2013 Annual Membership Meeting of the Pensacola Beach Advocates convened at 5:40 pm on October 21st, at the Beach Community Church. The meeting was presided over by Terry Preston, President. 113 people were in attendance. A quorum was established.

PBA had a total of 348 paid memberships (households) for 2013. As of this meeting, PBA has collected 55 memberships for 2014. Members were notified that dues paid after September 1st will be applied to the following calendar year (2014).

Ms. Preston introduced the current Board members, Ray Ascherfeld, Jim Cox, Benjamin Stevenson and J.J. Waters. Also introduced were Maria Weisnicht, Membership/Communications Chair and Glenn Windham, Treasurer.

Ms. Preston also recognized Jim Cox and Ray Ascherfeld for their service and contributions to the Pensacola Beach Advocates. A donation was made in their names to the Pensacola Beach Elementary school Partners in Education program.

The four candidates for the three open Board positions were introduced and allowed to speak briefly about their Board qualifications and goals. Candidate Karen Sindel was not present. Members filled out ballots, and the following were elected.

Liz Hewson
Dan Smith
J J Waters

J. J. Waters updated the members on Beachkeepers' activities, including the 2013 Earth Day Island Style, the successful PBA push to get a Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance passed, and efforts to get projects like dune crossovers and beach nourishment funded out of BP RESTORE monies.

Benjamin Stevenson discussed the proposed changes to the PBA By-laws to allow anyone who embraces the PBA objectives to join as a voting member, but to continue to restrict leadership positions (Board members and officers) to Beach residents, leaseholders or business owners. The motion (as amended by adding two "or"s for clarification) passed with a high majority of members voting for the change. A copy of the new approved bylaws is available on the PBA website.

Attorney Danny Kepner updated the members on the status of the ad-valorem tax litigation. Oral arguments were made before the Florida Supreme Court on November 6th, 2012. The Supreme Court has yet to rule on the case, and they are under no legal time constraint to do so in any set amount of time. For 2013, the tax bills will be issued about November 1st, and we will again need to file a lawsuit on behalf of all plaintiffs to challenge the taxes. There is enough money in the tax escrow fund to pay for

the 2013 lawsuit filing. New leaseholders should contact Danny Kepner's office at 850-434-2411 to be included in future lawsuits. Kepner also said that should the leaseholders prevail in the lawsuit, the court would order a refund to those who have paid taxes. Commissioner Grover Robinson did say that the Board of County Commissioners would address the matter of "dual taxation" – leases and tax payments once the case is decided. He credited the PBA leadership for seeking remedies (through fee simple title legislation) through the BCC and our federal legislators.

Grover Robinson updated the members on the BP oil spill litigation and the possible benefits to Escambia County. There are three "buckets" of BP monies, one for the states (restricted to ecological projects), One for the Consortium of 23 coastal Counties from Texas to Florida (Grover Chairs this Committee), and one for direct payment to Counties for them to allocate as they see fit for ecological, or economic projects. Tammy Bohannon, SRIA Board member, is Grover's representative on the 9 person Committee what is currently developing the criteria for distribution of the Escambia County portion of the funds, which could be over \$100 million. Tammy Bohannon said interested parties could get more information online at www.myescambia.com/restore/docs.

Richard Papantonio and Michelle Kurtz updated the members on a grass roots organization that is trying to convert the current federal system for wind and flood insurance to a "Coastal Band" of all the Gulf and Atlantic coastal counties to pool insurance risk. . Their goal is to bring coastal residents together to combat inequitable and exorbitant insurance rates. In the meantime, current flood insurance rates are scheduled to increase, but no one knows by how much. For more information on this project visit www.insurethecoast.com.

During the open forum, Beach residents Bob and Monica Kellner presented a rendering and concept to improve Park West. The concept included a small boardwalk at the western end of the parking lot, a sunset viewing area, landscaping and feature amenities to transform the current parking lot into a more park-like setting. The proposed cost is under \$300,000 and could be completed in three phases. PBA members conceptually support the concept. The next step is to bring the request to the SRIA Committee meeting, November 20.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.