

Modeling Approved for T-Groins Only

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

Longboat Key Town commissioners agreed to spend about \$40,000 on a survey that will offer evidence of the effect planned T-head groins will have on the Gulf-side beach.

The survey method, named DELFT 3D, will not consider permeable groins as commissioners decided at last Thursday's Workshop meeting.

The DELFT 3D modeling system was proposed as a way to ensure that the five proposed T-head groins at the Islander Condominiums would not adversely affect the beaches adjacent to the north and south of the Islander. Coastal Planning and Engineering (CPE, the company managing the Town's beach renourishment project) proposed that the Town use T-head groins along the beach at the Islander where there is a significant beach erosion problem due to the fact that it protrudes farther into the Gulf of Mexico than any other area of beach on Longboat Key. Not all of the adjacent property owners along the beach believe however, that T-head groins are the best answer to the problem, and in fact may actually make their beaches erode more. Among these individuals are Dr. Murf Klauber, an owner of The Colony Beach and Tennis Resort.

At the Workshop, Town Manager Bruce St. Denis and Public Works Director Juan Florensa both advised the Town Commission that it is possible for the company who performs the DELFT 3D modeling to run a model of a permeable groin. However, they noted, the company said they cannot do models on specific types of perme-

able groins, such as a Kingpile or a Makepiece groin. Florensa also told the Commission that the company "can only predict with a certain amount of accuracy, but it is not certain what percentage of accuracy the model would depict."

Town Mayor Ron Johnson replied, "I don't know if the permeable groin modeling will be specific enough. And even then, it's hypothetical, which is useless. I move we go ahead with the modeling that we would already do on the T-heads."

St. Denis pointed out to Johnson that he has heard a lot from the different constituents around the Islander vicinity regarding the possible effects of the T-groins on their beaches.

Johnson informed Florensa and St. Denis that the Commission does not wish to proceed with the modeling of the permeable groins.

It was at the previous Dec. 5 Commission meeting that Commissioner Bob Dawson requested the Town also perform the permeable groin modeling. He said it would give the Town something to compare: the impact of T-groins versus the permeable groin. Otherwise, Dawson stated, the Town would be spending money to substantiate something it has already decided; T-head groins. Dawson stated, "I think if you only determine the effects of one type of groin, we're missing the ballgame. I don't think doing this process halfway is the answer, if you're going to spend the money, it's better to find out if the permeable groins are a more effective solution to beach erosion, or if T-groins work as well."

The DELFT 3D device belongs to a company in

Holland and uses three-dimensional computer imaging to show the up-drift and down-drift along the beaches surrounding and including the area of the T-groins. St. Denis said that the imaging would also show erosion patterns, as well as where the up-drift and down-drift would impact under differing wave conditions on the beaches surrounding the Islander.

At the previous Commission meeting St. Denis said, "The Delft 3D process will offer the latest scientific model to see the effect T-head groins would have on the beach and erosion. It's state of the art. It's expensive, but the information is worth it. For the Town to spend the money," St. Denis added, he wants to "go to that level. It's the best that we can do." The cost will be approximately \$40,000.

Commissioner George Spoll added that "The modeling process is now available that can give a clearer picture of the behavior of the shoreline after it's put into place. This may reassure residents that the groins may not harm the shoreline. Previous modeling techniques are based on data from the past, rather than the process. What the engineers have said to us that this is the opportunity to use a company that have been successful elsewhere."

Commissioner Joan Webster believes the extra scientific validation would provide "an insurance policy" for the Town. The scientific modeling would offer evidence that the Town investigated the possible outcome of the proposed T-head groins in the event that any businesses were to be adversely affected by the T-groins and pursues litigation.

Rough Weather Delays Reef Project

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

The Town artificial reef project, which was originally scheduled to be finished by mid-December, has been delayed due to rough winter waters. According to Public Works Director Juan Florensa, "The contractor cannot place rocks when the water has rough, high seas, like it does now in the winter months. The project was also delayed a couple of times also when the hurricanes passed through the Gulf of Mexico and also caused unfavorable wave conditions."

Florensa says the Town has asked for an official timeline for the reef project, but the contractor, Kelly Brothers Construction Company, has not yet submitted one. The project will be delayed, but it is not known how long at this time.

The state asked the Town of Longboat Key to create an artificial reef to mitigate the beach renourishment project. The Town is using the boulders stored at Quickpointe Nature Preserve to place the artificial reef, which is located less than a mile offshore, midway up the key. The cost to the Town is \$553,500 and is being done by Kelly Brothers Construction Company out of Fort Myers.

According to Florensa, when there is dredging of beaches, the sand that is placed for the beach spreads into the water as well, covering any coral reefs, or other rocks that support small marine life. To sustain the ecosystem, an artificial reef had to be put into place where there is only sand, to make sure the smaller marine plants and animals can survive, and the larger fish will then have the smaller fish to eat.

When completed, the reef will cover one and a half acres, and be put into place less than a mile offshore around the Gulfside Road area. The boulders were delivered by truck from Fort Myers, and are unloaded and stored at Quickpointe. More than 200 tons of rock-per-day get placed by front-end loader onto a barge that brings the boulders to the location offshore where they are then placed into the Gulf.

The rocks get deposited into the Gulf within three feet of each other, and Louis Baker, job foreman, said, "the rocks do not sink into the sand, but rather rest on top of the sand to form a durable reef." An on-site diver monitors the situation to ensure that the placement of the rocks will meet the requirements for the Town's engineers.

Land Acquisition Placed on March Ballot

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

Mayor Ron Johnson moved to place a \$20 million Land Acquisition plan on the March 14 ballot. "The money to purchase the land would be placed in a bond, and it would sit on a shelf. We authorize a certain amount of money, and you don't have to spend it all at once, you can draw it out as it is needed," said Terry Sullivan, Town finance director.

Vice-mayor Joan Webster said, "We need to act now, before the price goes up." Johnson agreed and pointed out that, "As the community builds out, and up, we're going to miss out on the opportunity."

Town Manager Bruce St. Denis explained the main three uses regarding how the Town will use the land purchased. The first need is for beach construction access and staging for future renourishment projects. The second need is for canal dredging, and the third need is for debris management after a hurricane. It was noted that in some cases land that would be acquired for debris management could also be used for canal dredging. Similarly, land acquired for beach renourishment projects could also be used for debris management.

A summary of the land uses and potential costs were

provided at the meeting by Public Works Director Juan Florensa and Realtor Andrew Vac. For beach construction/access the minimum area needed is three acres if the lots are able to be purchased as one acre on the north beach, one acre on mid-key beach, and one acre on the south beach, or the Town could purchase a 1.5 acre lot on the mid-key beach alone. The availability for any beach parcels is zero acres, and the cost to buy the two possibilities are \$5 to \$7 million.

For the canal dredging needs, the Town needs one acre on the north end of the Key, one acre on the mid section of the Key, and two acres on the south end of the key. The total need would be four acres, and the available acreage is currently 3.3 acres. The cost to purchase four acres in these areas is about \$5.6 to \$9.6 million.

For storm debris removal, the amount of acreage needed to store the debris changes depending on the category of hurricane. The range is two to five acres in the event of a Category One hurricane, to 64-188 acres in the event of a Category five hurricane. The current available acreage is only 3.65 to 5.15 acres. The cost to acquire this much land could also range from \$4.2 million to \$25 million.

Town Moves Forward with SUV Purchases

Melissa Reid
Staff Writer

At Thursday's Town workshop, all commissioners except Bob Dawson and George Spoll were in favor of Town Manager Bruce St. Denis' proposal to purchase more SUVs for the Town, as a way to achieve hurricane preparedness. St. Denis asked for direction again from the Town Commission over which way they thought would be best: fuel economy for the short term, or long term preparedness for hurricane recovery efforts.

St. Denis noted that new SUVs would be purchased for the Police Chief and Fire Chief, since they currently drive Crown Victorias, and their participation in the hurricane recovery efforts would be necessary. Commissioner Joan Webster agreed that the Town has a responsibility to ensure hurricane preparedness. Webster also said, "The Town may be hammered now for spending extra money, but I'm for the policy of being prepared, but not extravagant."

Commissioner Lee Rothenberg concurred, "It's mainly for insurance. If we have a storm problem, it's an insurance policy. We're going to need the best of everything

we have, unless there's a study that says we're going to save a ton of money."

St. Denis said that Terry Sullivan, Town finance director, could do a study to determine cost benefits for more economical vehicles, but that he just wanted to know which direction the commission wanted to go in: "economy or preparedness."

Mayor Ron Johnson concluded that "I believe the Town Manager is doing the right thing. I move forward with what he's doing for hurricane preparedness. Now that the dealers are having trouble moving the bigger SUVs, they are selling them for less, so we will be able to save some money on buying them."

Despite the move forward, Spoll and Dawson were still not in favor of the purchase of more SUVs. Dawson said, "I don't think we can afford to keep all of these SUVs. It's not financially prudent to keep all of these vehicles."

Spoll felt he had made his point but mentioned, "It was never my goal to micromanage the Town's vehicles. But we can't live only for the five days (of hurricane recovery), when there's the other 360 days of the year."