



## Town of Surfside

### Surf Club Sand Transfer Project May 6, 2015

#### UPDATE

#### Background

The Surf Club Project (Project) was approved in November, 2013. The Project included excavation of the foundation, which resulted in a significant stockpile of native sand. Consistent with the FDEP Permit # DA-631 and Section 161.053, Florida Statutes, the excavated sand was tested and approved for relocation within the beach system.

The project entailed transferring excavated sand from the Surf Club construction project to other areas on the beach as required by Section 161.053, Florida Statutes. These regulations mandate that beach compatible sand excavated east of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) must be retained within the beach system. These operations are under control and permitting of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

#### Current Status

During April, the Surf Club completed the transfer of excavated sand from their site onto the beach. Due to the sea turtle nesting season, the sand transfer operations needed to be completed by April 30. The Project is now in the off-beach restoration phase including dune re-vegetation.

As the Surf Club sand transfer project nears completion, the Town have received questions regarding the close out activities. These include:

1. **Question:** When will the restoration of the dunes/re-vegetation occur?

**Response:** Coastal Engineering (CE), the project coordinator for the Project, informed the Town that the restoration work will be finalized as follows:

- May 12, 2014 – Began installation of irrigation system
- June 3, 2014 – Dune replanting begins (sea oats, sea grapes and other vegetation)
- June 18, 2014 – Anticipated restoration completion date

Town Staff met with representatives of CE, Surf Club, and FDEP last week to review the final schedule for completion. Restoration of the hard pack and upper walking path is continuing. The ropes of the walking path will be installed as plantings are completed. To ensure proper restoration, the Town required the Surf Club to post a bond to protect Town infrastructure and proper completion of the Project.

2. **Question:** The Project resulted in a “huge” cliff or step down on the easterly edge of the newly placed sand. Will it be sloped or evened out?

**Response:** Now that the transfer of the sand has been completed, the steep easterly edge of the new sand has been sloped/graded. Following consultation with FDEP representatives, the contractor accomplished this last week (see photos).



North view just south of the Community Center



South view just north of the Community Center

3. **Question:** Has the transferred sand been tested?

**Response:** Yes. Prior to the issuance of a permit in 2013, sand samples from the Project site were tested by a FDEP geologist. In April, FDEP initiated another round of testing to ensure that the transferred sand is compliant with the FDEP permit (DA-631). We are awaiting the results.

In response to concerns voiced by residents, the Town initiated independent test of samples of the transferred sand utilizing FDEP protocols and included a toxicology testing component. Results of the testing are expected the week of May 5.

4. **Question:** Will the transferred sand have a negative impact on sea turtle nesting?

**Response:** Representatives from Florida Fish and Wildlife and turtle advocates have monitored the results of the Project and have not voiced objections or concerns. Since the sand has been placed, there has been a nesting by a rare leatherback turtle in the vicinity of 8877 Collins Avenue.



5. **Question:** Debris, including stones and pieces of concrete, are present in the sand. What is going to be done about this?

**Response:** We too have noticed pieces of rock/stones/concrete that should have been prevented by the multiple sifting protocols. The beach has been sifted twice by sand sifting machines and debris has been removed from the sand (sifted area approximately 6-8 inches below sand surface level). We have been informed that it is recommended that two additional siftings/cleanup be scheduled. This is the responsibility of the Surf Club and the two siftings/cleanup of the beach will be scheduled over the next several weeks. An assessment will be made following the second sifting/cleanup to determine if additional action is necessary.

6. **Question:** Will the color of the beach return to its previous white (sugar like appearance)?

**Response:** The color of the transferred sand has lightened since being placed on the beach during March and April. As reported previously, FDEP representative Christian Lambright indicated that prior to the full sand transfer project, a test application of the sand from the Surf Club was previously placed on the beach. She indicates that this “sand has since ‘bleached’ and looks very similar to what was already on the beach”.

While the bleaching of the sand will continue to result in a lighter color, the color of the existing sand (pre-transfer) was reclaimed from the Bahamas whose beaches are known for its white (sugar like appearance). The transferred sand likely will not fully mirror this white, sugar like color.

As FDEP has reported, the recently transferred sand is closer to that of native Florida sand. It is possible that future beach sand renourishment projects will be more of a consistency of Florida native sand which is darker because of higher organic content.

For informational purposes, **Attachment I** contains a summary of previous issues relating to this Project.

Any questions? Please contact me.

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## Town of Surfside Surf Club Sand Transfer Project

### Summary of Previous Issues/Information

The following excerpt from an April 18 Town Manager email, which was sent to many residents, provides a background on the pertinent issues of the sand transfer Project and addresses concerns expressed by residents since Project inception:

I would like to share my experience with beach management issues in the year that I have worked for Surfside. Not only as Manager but as a Surfside resident who lives on the beach, my initial assessment upon arrival in Surfside was that our beaches were in trouble. The bare and rolling contour of the beach system precipitated by the impacts of Hurricane Sandy indicated to me that renourishment of the beach needed to be kept a priority. During my first full week of employment with Surfside, I attended a meeting with the US Army Corps who informed me that no further renourishment projects (the last approved project would be the 2014 Bal Harbour Beach Project) would be undertaken until a Sand Source Study was completed as there was no sand source available within Miami-Dade County for any federally funded projects. Certainly not the news we wanted to hear. Fortunately, the study was recently completed and compatible sand sources were identified; however, the sources were outside of Miami-Dade County. These outside sand sources will be used for our 2015 beach renourishment.

The determination of "beach compatible sand" and permitting are the responsibility of FDEP. As Christian Lambright (FDEP) indicated in a previous email that "the sand that is currently being placed

on the beach has underwent testing by our department geologist, Dr. Jennifer Coor, prior to the issuance of any permits. Dr. Coor then qualifies this sand as being 'beach compatible' or 'non-compatible'." Therefore, FDEP would not issue a permit for a sand transfer project until it makes a determination that the sand being transferred is "beach compatible sand".

As a point of information, when the Town was constructing the new Community Center it was the intent of the Town to place the excavated sand within our beach system and substantial staff effort was devoted in an attempt to make this happen. The former Town Manager personally took excavated sand samples to Tallahassee FDEP. Also, in addition to the current Project of the Surf Club, there was previously a smaller scale sand transfer project in the northern portion of the Town. I recently learned that the Building Department has a sample of the sand from that Project and to the naked eye it appears to be darker than the samples for the Surf Club project.

The current project is nearing completion. Could I suggest a course of action to follow would be to let the project be completed which would include: 1. Since the project is in the final stages, let the project applicant complete the project which would include finalizing the sand transfer; rolling/grading the place sand; and restoring the dunes and replanting vegetation; 2. Await the results of the concurrent

testing that is currently being done (Christian indicated that she took samples last week and the FDEP is testing to determine if the placed sand is in fact "beach compliant"; and the Town Commission has authorized staff to move forward with a similar independent testing per FDEP protocol); 3. When the project and testing are complete, let's all look at the results and determine if additional efforts/action is necessary.

I have worked with the State of Florida on beach issues for almost 30 years. My experience with FDEP leads me to believe that this agency will take the necessary steps to ensure that this project is completed properly and within their guidelines. Further, the staff of FDEP have gone above and beyond to assist our residents and Town Staff on this project. I'm sure you agree that the efforts of Christian Lambright and Celora Jackson have been outstanding.

Also, I have spoken with representatives of the Surf Club regarding the issues and concerns raised by our residents. They have pledged that they will make every effort to complete the project with the approved guidelines and will work with the Town to bring this project to a successful and satisfactory conclusion.

Finally, I would like to share with you the below information that I previously prepared in response to issues brought forward by concerned residents:

1. **Why Didn't the Town Object to FDEP Issuing the Permit?** Even though the Town does not issue the permit for a sand transfer project, a number of residents questioned why the Town didn't object. Having been involved in a number of oceanfront development projects over the years, State Law requires that no material excavated seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) shall be removed landward of said line provided that the excavated material is beach quality sand. Christian Lambright of FDEP has indicated that the sand being placed on the beach has been tested as to meeting the requirements of beach compatibility prior to the permit being issued. As appoint of information, there have been numerous of these sand transfer projects permitted in our immediate area including the Saxony in Miami Beach; Aqualina, Portia and Jade Ocean in Sunny Isles; and Oceania in Bal Harbour. The municipalities involved did not object due to the requirements of State law and benefits of adding sand to our rapidly eroding beaches in Miami-Dade. Some have even encouraged these types of sand transfers.
2. **Color of Sand:** As I indicated during our meetings, we too were concerned about the color when we first saw it applied to the beaches. Christian Lambright of FDEP responded last week to the inquiries regarding the color of sand. Christian indicated that prior to the full sand transfer project, a test application of the sand from the Surf Club was previously placed on the beach. She indicates that this "sand has since 'bleached' and looks very similar to what was already on the beach". While I understand full well your concerns, I believe the sand that has been placed has lightened several shades over past weeks and based on the input of FDEP experts will continue to lighten. I encourage you to visit the other sand transfer projects in Miami-Dade listed above and see the color compatibility of the sand--some projects just several months old.
3. **Damage to Dune/Paths Near the Surf Club:** The FDEP permit allowed the Surf Club to remove the dune vegetation and excavate a portion of the dune behind their property to undertake the transfer project. We share your concern about the negative impacts of a project of this scope. Prior to commencing work, the Town required the Surf Club to post a multi-million dollar bond in order to ensure proper restoration.

4. **Future Beach Renourishment Project:** As we discussed in our initial meeting, Surfside beaches are next in line for a 2015 renourishment project. Our project could have started earlier but there was a hold on beach renourishment projects in Miami-Dade in order to conduct a sand source study to locate sand for future County Beach projects. While the specific location of the sand for our renourishment project has not been determined, it will come from outside of Miami-Dade. The permitting agencies (US Army Corps and the FDEP) will assure beach sand compatibility.
  
5. **Benefit to Developers at the Expense of Residents:** I feel I need to comment on the several statements I received stating that since the Town didn't object to the project, the developer was benefitting to the detriment of the residents and the beaches. Even though the developer would have faced fines if the company removed beach compatible sand from east of the CCCL, the cost of simply excavating the sand and placing it in a borrow pit/storage area would have been less costly than the current operation of sifting the sand; dealing with environmental regulations; restoring dunes/vegetation, etc. Also, the developer likely could have sold the excavated material. I do understand these statements as residents are passionate about our beaches. The initial view of the darker appearing sand and disruption to the dunes/vegetation/paths clearly lead to this view. I'm not sure anything I can add will dispel this belief by some residents.