

Public Meeting Summary Notes

Shell Key North Pass and Grand Canal Feasibility Study

April 30, 2019 6:00-7:30 p.m., Tampa Bay Watch

The notes provided herein summarize the agenda items covered including questions and comments by attendees and responses by Aptim Environmental and Infrastructure, LLC (APTIM), and/or the County. This information is being provided for general documentation purposes and is not intended to be a comprehensive account of all the details or verbatim discussions from the meeting.

Meeting Agenda Items

1. County Administrator Comments
2. Introduction of APTIM & County Staff
3. Study Objectives & Scope
4. Background & History
5. Field Assessment
6. Coastal Processes Overview
7. Overall Progress & Schedule
8. Next Steps
9. Q&A Session

County Administrator Comments

County Administrator Barry Burton opened the meeting at 6 p.m. by announcing the meeting's goals and emphasizing the importance of listening, learning, and understanding the concerns of the public. He turned the meeting over to the County's consultant, APTIM, to provide a status report on their ongoing feasibility study.

Introduction of APTIM & County Staff (Slide 4)

Tom Pierro, PE, D.CE, introduced himself followed by self-introductions by Tara Brenner, PE, PG, and Beau Suthard, PG, who represent the APTIM project team. Mr. Pierro also recognized the County staff present in the room.

Mr. Pierro began by identifying the primary concern being the closing of the north pass between Shell Key and Collany Key. Mr. Pierro noted that the APTIM team was holding this stakeholder meeting to provide an update on the study's progress, and more importantly, to receive input from the community on their issues and concerns before continuing with the feasibility analysis work. He then provided an overview of the agenda, general knowledge of Shell Key Preserve, study objectives and scope of work, primary study area, literature reviewed, and some background and history about the Shell Key area (Slides 5-10).

A series of historical aerial photos from 1951-2018 (Slides 10-48) were shown. These slides illustrated sand migration patterns through time. Mr. Pierro said by 1994, the area had changed dramatically compared to conditions from 1951-1975. By 1998, the Pass-a-Grille south channel had become blocked. The two most dominant passes were Pass-a-Grille Inlet and Bunces Pass, both with shoals that developed offshore. This left a considerable volume of sand offshore available to further build Shell Key. The western portion of Shell Key expanded and ridges along the northern “hump” of Shell Key formed showing how the sand migrated northward from the northwestern shoreline of Shell Key and then eastward towards Collany Key. Eventually, a breach formed along the western shoreline of Shell Key from Hurricane Irma.

Ms. Brenner then described shoreline changes over time along northern Shell Key and the field assessment work (Slides 49-50) that included a site visit on March 4, 2019.

Finally, APTIM’s presentation concluded by covering an overview of coastal processes, the progress to date and schedule, and the next steps of the feasibility study (Slides 51-53).

Q&A Session (Q = Question, R = Response, C = Comment without Response)

1. Q – How long until the Grand Canal closes?
R – That remains an unknown. Coarse shell was observed along the northern edge of the sand spit along the south side of the Grand Canal channel, which may be an indication that fine sand is being jetted westward out into the Pass-a-Grille inlet leaving coarse shell material behind.
2. Q – The (ebb) shoal at southern end of Pass-a-Grille Beach is growing. Will that help or hurt?
R – That can’t be determined at this time.
3. Q – Is Irma Pass closing?
R – Passes that open and close from storms indicate that such passes are inherently unstable.
4. C – Slip #4 in the Grand Canal is filling in with sand. Will the in-filling of sand work its way northward along the eastern side of the Grand Canal?
5. Q - Have other similar issues been reviewed to see how they were resolved? For example, a) a circa 1950s lawsuit between Dade County and Coral Springs about the filling-in of sand interfering with private property waterway access rights, b) Marco Island shoaling and resultant lawsuit involving General Development.
R – APTIM is not aware of those cases.
6. Q – A meeting was held about two years ago at Tampa Bay Watch that was attended by David Jolly, officials from Pinellas County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the State to discuss the closing of the north pass of Shell Key. The USACE made it clear that they only maintain commercial channels and have no jurisdiction in keeping private channels open. So who is going to take care of this?
R – At this point, the County is taking the lead on developing conceptual plans to determine what is feasible, what can be permitted, and what is affordable.
7. Q – What are the engineers’ plans at this time? I am not interested in a bunch of meetings. It is easier to comment with something to review.

- R – Plans have not been developed. Today’s meeting is for getting public input before conceptual plans are developed.
8. Q - Who is paying for this study?
R – Pinellas County.
9. Q – You have been collecting data for years. Data collection is fine, but we need action. When will something be done?
R – The data collected are being evaluated. No timeline for action exists yet. This feasibility study is a step to determine what will help resolve the concerns, what can be permitted, and what it will cost.
10. Q – What are the major issues or risks that may occur with regard to the Grand Canal and former north pass of Shell Key?
R – Shell Key is in a state of flux and is still evolving. At some point, it could reach a stable state. A sand management plan could be developed and implemented.
11. Q – Is Pass-a-Grille inlet going to close?
R – It is unlikely Pass-a-Grille Inlet will close.
12. Q – What is the greatest risk, Grand Canal or Shell Key North Pass?
R – The system is still evolving; it is not yet stable.
13. Q – Is APTIM looking at Shell Key independently of the Gulf of Mexico? Concentrating on just Shell Key is not sufficient. Will a larger geographical scale be assessed?
R – APTIM will look into including a larger geographical scale as deemed appropriate for the purposes of this feasibility study.
14. Q – Have any solutions been developed to prevent the Grand Canal from closing in?
R – The next step in this study will be to develop conceptual plans that could address the potential for Grand Canal closing in.
15. C – The only solution is to remove the sand from northern Shell Key, not from Egmont Shoal. And then use the sand for beach nourishment. The County Property Appraiser voluntarily dropped property values on Oceanview Drive by 24%. Water quality at the north end stinks at times.
R – The County is here to find a solution and we are committed to moving forward.
16. Q – Has APTIM addressed a similar problem?
R – Yes. Every situation and issue is different. Solutions in other locations have included dredging, sand management, coastal structures, and developing inlet management plans.
17. Q – Over the last 36 months, the Grand Canal is getting narrower and anxiety is growing. Have you noticed if the currents are changing? Is the County committed to keeping the Grand Canal open?
R – APTIM has not assessed if the currents are changing.
R – The County can’t commit yet to opening the canal but is committing to move forward with the process.
18. C – Since St. Petersburg annexed a portion of Tierra Verde, they are profiting from Gulf access via the Grand Canal.
19. C – The Grand Canal is changing rapidly, and the shoal is a good place to park boats, which could become a problem like previously occurred at Shell Key.
20. C – I have not noticed the Grand Canal currents changing, but the channel is getting narrower. The channel marker appears to be moving almost on a daily basis.
21. C – The shoal blocking the former north pass of Shell Key is moving northward toward the Grand Canal.

22. Q – Who owns the new beach near the Grand Canal next to Collany Key?
R – The State may be the owner (County currently checking with the State to confirm).
23. Q – Is that State here? What is their role?
R – No one responded.
24. Q – Is the Grand Canal within one year of closing?
25. Q – I just moved to Tierra Verde six months ago. The realtor said nothing. How long until we fix the problem?
R – The County is working towards developing alternatives by fall 2019.
26. Q – Why can't a maintenance dredging permit be issued quickly?
R (from audience) - TVCA Board member said: APTIM has the privately funded study showing sand from beach nourishment moving north to south. Permits are difficult to obtain quickly.
R – APTIM said the study will be reviewed. There is a 2018 study by Dr. Wang of USF that indicated only a small amount of sand may be coming south from nourishments. Can't guarantee permit timing. The first step is this ongoing feasibility study.
27. C – It took 18 months to get the permit in 2011 to dredge the north pass to Shell Key.
28. C – The State said a permit was not needed to reopen the old north pass. A committee hired Bob Weisberg (USF College of Marine Science Professor) to do a private study. The result was that sand was coming from the north. The County said it is not a problem and that shoaling is part of natural processes and that Mother Nature is doing her thing. The County is putting millions of tons of sand to the north and it is coming south and that is messing with Mother Nature.
29. C – The term permanent solution has been mentioned numerous times. A 10 to 20-year time frame may be more appropriate. Things are always changing.
30. Q – Sand is going two ways. What is happening south at Bunces Pass?
R – A similar situation is occurring. The ebb shoal of Bunces Pass has grown and is moving landward and is about to meld to the North Beach of Fort De Soto Park. This process has occurred previously on 20-30 year intervals.
31. Q – Can an underground pipe on the north end of Shell Key, versus a pass, keep water flowing and improve circulation?
R – Engineers often use an under-road culvert to connect two water bodies that would otherwise be cutoff by the road, but they are generally limited to interior waterways.
32. C – A permanent solution is not going to work. The County will lose our trust. We can't let the Grand Canal close. Nothing else will satisfy the community. The County has to commit to periodic maintenance dredging on a 5, 10, or 15-year cycle, whatever is necessary.
33. Q – Has the City of St. Petersburg been involved?
R – No. In the future they will be.
34. C – Has the County considered what would happen to the tax base if the Grand Canal closed?
35. Q – Sand should be used for any renourishment project. Has the County asked USACE to assess using the sand for renourishment?
R – Yes, the County has requested USACE consider using the sand accumulated on the north side of Shell Key for nourishment projects.
36. C – The County needs a comprehensive beach management plan to address this problem.

37. C – The sand moving south from Pass-a-Grille beach needs to be looked at. It should be a variable in the feasibility study.
38. Q – Will flow in Grand Canal keep it open?
R – Passes try to stay open when there is a balance between flow and dimensions. We do not know yet if the Grand Canal is stable.
39. Q – Residents want the County to keep the Grand Canal open. The County needs an emergency plan in case the canal closes. Will the County develop such a plan?
R – The County cannot commit to something without the needed data to make an informed decision. The study APTIM is doing will help the County understand what it will take to keep the Grand Canal open.
40. C – The south end of Pass-a-Grille should be included in the study. That is the sand source.
41. C – Studying Shell Key by itself is irrelevant. The whole focus and study priority should be getting a permit. That is the solution.
42. Q – Both studies (assumed to be referring to the dual inlet study by Dr. Ping Wang, and the report by Dr. Bob Weisberg) show the beaches are causing the problem. Can continued sand placement on the beaches be allowed without considering the impact on us?
R – Beach nourishment is heavily regulated by the State.
43. C – The problem needs to be identified. Part of the problem is sand moving south. The study should be expanded much further north. Sand in Shell Key is a symptom of the problem.
44. C – Beaches are getting all the benefits from nourishments. Sand at Shell Key does not provide any benefits.

The meeting adjourned at about 7:25 p.m. with a closing statement from Barry Burton. He thanked everyone for their attendance and comments, and said once a plan is developed, funding will be the next issue to be addressed.

Written Comments Received on Comment Cards

(Comments from comment cards are summarized (paraphrased) below)

Card 1 – County needs to commit to keeping Grand Canal open and provide a short-term plan/mitigation and a long-term plan. State must also be involved and commit to keeping the Grand Canal open.

Card 2 – Please consider land access so locals can legally cross the beach west of downtown Tierra Verde.

Card 3 – Consider the economic impact if the Grand Canal closes. Property values and tax revenues decrease. Commercial marina impacted with additional lost revenues.

Card 4 – I have led citizen effort to fix the sand migrations problem. Call me for a full discussion of the issues.

Card 5 – Our boat slip is filling in. It is the first of five slips that are filling in. What can we do to get the sand out of our slips?

Card 6 – If sand nourishment from Pass-a-Grille is creating unwanted sand filling the Grand Canal, then it is a reasonable solution that some of the tourist tax from commercial enterprises be used to finance sand removal from the Grand Canal.

Card 7 – I have owned my property for ~ 10 years. The Grand Canal is filling in. This is a major risk to Tierra Verde residents, the marina's, and other businesses. If the Grand Canal closes, the County will lose a lot of tax revenue. I would think the County would be more aggressive in finding a solution.

Card 8 – This study has been going on for a few years. When will we see action? Will the State change laws to allow the beach replenishment material be taken from Shell Key?

Card 9 – Irma Pass has really cleaned up the water quality of Shell Key Preserve. There is clear water and lots of wildlife. We need a short-term solution to keep the Grand Canal open. We can also create a more long-term solution to keep the Grand Canal open. Re-opening the Shell Key pass is not an option as it has naturally closed three times.

Card 10 – A comment was made that the area just below the north pass was stagnant with odors indicating poor water flow. I have been fishing on a kayak several times. The water is fresh and there is plenty of fish. One day alone I caught 19 fish including grouper, trout, redfish, ladyfish, sheepshead, etc. It is not true that the water is stagnant.

Card 11 – Please put an aerial photo of the sequence of the changes as well as the project plans and timeline on a website for viewing.

Card 12 – 1) Thank you. The attention to this issue much appreciated. 2) Please schedule the fall meeting after October 1 to accommodate those of us who are not year-around residents. 3) Please review past litigation on other similar issues in Florida like the Marco Island example mentioned in the meeting. 4) Please formulate recommendations for Pinellas County to act on. 5) Pinellas County – you need to act!

Card 13 – Oceanview water is much more stagnant than ever. Lived here 24 years.

Card 14 – Not only is the water more stagnant between Oceanview and Sawyer Key, but the fish population has dropped dramatically. When kayaking I used to see fish all the time, but now there are times I don't see any at all!

Card 15 – 1) Will future hurricanes dramatically alter Shell Key North / Grand Canal based on past hurricanes? 2) Can we reopen Shell Key North drainage as it was years ago when Shell Key was a true island separate from "Collany Key." 3) Would a (tide) flow-through pipe at the north end of Grand Canal flush the sand?

Card 16 – My wife and I, as well as several friends, have net with sales people at Collany Point Condo units. One of their selling points is beachfront access. That access is Shell Island and the closure of the north pass. Have the Collany Point owners influenced the County in not addressing this issue which would deny them a selling point?

Card 17 – Keep us posted!

Card 18 – I have seen most of the sand come in the last 18 months. There are three more jetties in the north pass that caught the sand and closed it. This has created beachfront for Sunset Point. Rick Scott has designated beach property to wet sand as belonging to the property owners. All on purpose for the Sunset Point condos.

Card 19 – 1) Please do not reopen North Pass to Shell Key. This would threaten our property's natural barrier leaving (it) vulnerable to storm surge and erosion. 2) The feasibility study must include sand at the southern tip of Pass-s-Grille flowing down from northern beaches rejuvenation project. 3) Grand Canal needs to be dredged soon to prevent complete sand filling. 4) Irma Pass (is) becoming wider – nourishing the ecosystem of Shell Key.

Card 20 (emailed) – I have lived on the Grand Canal since 1985 when we built our home. We have always boated especially when our children were growing up. We would go to Shell Island and remember when there were multiple passes through it. I firmly believe the beach renourishment has caused all or most of the issues. A common-sense approach would be to use the sand for those projects and keep the channel open while engineers come up with other solutions. I did not care for the County's non-guarantee to step up to the plate that would keep it open.

Emailed Comments Received by Pinellas County

(The emailed comments below were received through May 10, 2019)

From:
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2019 5:27 PM
To: Harji, Rahim <rhharji@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Subject: Thank You for 4/30/19 Meeting in Tierra Verde

Mr. Harji;

Thank you for the meeting held in Tierra Verde on 4/30/19 to discuss impacts from shoaling. Pls extend my appreciation to Mr. Burton in your office.

We just moved to Pinellas County, and found the meeting very informative. We look forward to your next meeting later this fall.

Generally, it is wise to understand problems before proceeding with solutions while weighing impacts.

As new residents, we have been hearing opinions and concerns from many neighbors.

To help me better understand the current approach, I would appreciate that you Pls share Aptim's work plan to conduct their work.

Feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance.

Thank you,

From:
Sent: Friday, May 3, 2019 2:46 PM
To: Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Subject: Shell Key/Grand Canal

The entire economy of Tierra Verde is based on boating and access to the homes and marina on the Grand Canal is essential.

Thank you for doing whatever can be done to keep this canal open.

From:

Sent: Friday, May 3, 2019 4:31:28 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

To: Watershed

Subject: Shell Key/ Grand Canal

My concerns are as follows:

1. The problem of sand buildup has been increasing dramatically since 2013. The access to/from the Grand Canal has been significantly impacted. I understand that it takes time to study and implement corrective action. When will corrective action take place?
2. Who is taking responsibility to implement corrective action. It seems to me that Pinellas County, State of FL and Corp of Engineers on a Federal level, must take immediate corrective action. I am tired of getting updates with no schedule to implement corrective action.
3. There were many creative solutions that could have been implemented before the Colony Key development started. The problem of sand buildup and impacts to navigation to/from the Grand Canal needs immediate corrective action.

I look forward to your response to these comments.

Sent from my iPhone

From:

Sent: Friday, May 3, 2019 4:58 PM

To: Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>

Subject: Shell Key Passage/Grand Canal Channel Blockage

To whom it may concern:

As a homeowner on Terra Verde for the past 32 years, I am very concerned about the issues with the channel. As a sailboater it is now becoming near impossible to come down the Grand Canal and get into the main Channel because of the silting.

The problems that are helping happening on Westshore with erosion of the sea grass and sea life are of great ecological concerns. I think it is imperative that this channel be reopened.

I realize that there are several developers that do not want this to happen, since they want to have beachfront property, but I think the ecology and the sea life are more important than real estate prices.

Pinellas County spends Millions each year renourishing beaches. I think it is time that we reopened this Channel and took care of our marine life. We the taxpayers are entitled to enjoy are shorelines and the marine life as much as the tourist.

Further, the longer this Shoal is allowed to continue, the more access coyotes, predators and humans will have to Shell Key. Therefore doing further harm to nesting Birds and depleting their environment .

Therefore, as a Pinellas County taxpayer and as a resident of Terra Verde; I would request that the County, the Corps of Engineers, Etc., rectify this problem sooner rather than later.

From:**Sent:** Saturday, May 4, 2019 7:17 AM**To:** Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>**Subject:** Shell key /Grand canal

Dear Sir,

unfortunately I have been unable to attend the last subject meeting, being out of town pretty often.

Still, my friends and myself are very interested in the progress of one) sand movements, and two) what measures are/will be taken to cap the to-be-awaited invasion of both,citizens and tourists during the holiday seasons.

My observations including last year were divided: the extreme had been dozens of boaters anchoring at the sand bank, and having grill parties ashore including a lengthy and noisy entertainment program.

Lastly, I'd appreciate any aerial photos of the current structure of the sand bank sent to me.

I'll forward those to my friends and ask them to preserve what mother nature has given back to Ft DeSoto Natural Preserve and Tierra Verde.

Sincerely

From:**Sent:** Monday, May 06, 2019 1:48 PM**To:****Cc:** Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>; Kathleen Peters <kathleenpeters6@icloud.com>**Subject:** Re: Shell Key/Grand Canal

Well said!

On Mon, May 6, 2019 wrote:

I live at and have been there for 20 years watching the sand migration.

The study by Ping Wang is extremely flawed. He makes theories and conclusions about the sand migration that just aren't supported by facts.

For 20 years I have watched the Northwest winds of cold fronts in December, January, February, and March blow waves and sand into the pass. I have walked the beach during the cold fronts and actually witnessed the sand moving to the east along Shell Key into the Grand Canal on the south side.

It is so obvious that **St. Pete Beach loses sand and Shell Key/ Grand Canal gains sand** every winter. I don't need to pay "experts" tens of thousands of dollars to tell me what they "think" is going on.

I understand government enough to know that you can't make decisions based on my observations. But there are experts that agree with my observations as long as the county isn't hiring them to protect the county from liability.

A boat captain said to me "I know what the problem is. That jetty at the south side of Pass-a-grille needs to be extended out about 200 yards to stop the sand from coming around the corner from the beaches."

So the simple solution to the Grand Canal problem is a jetty extended at Pass-a-grille and then do the beach re-nourishment projects using all the sand that came from the St. Pete Beach.

By the way, the jetty would likely reduce loss of sand from St. Pete Beach.

My other great concern is water quality and boating access to the residents of Oceanview Drive. When I moved in 20 years ago the pass was over 100 foot wide and 15 to 20 feet deep. Because of the sand migration the pass closed, even after we all spent a great deal of money dredging it. Opening a channel to the new Irma Pass or connecting our channel to the south to Bunces Pass would be solutions.

The county has not been helpful to us to this point and it is very disappointing. The county is quick to blame "Mother Nature" but is is not "Mother Nature". The sand came from St. Pete Beach.

Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 8:51 PM
To: Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Cc: Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Subject: Shell Key and the Grand Canal

My husband and I attended a meeting at Tampa Bay watch on this issue on April 30. We have owned a condo on Pinellas Bayway for 18 years. Until three or four years ago I kayaked through to Tampa Bay watch. Previously we took the boat through to Tampa Bay watch. Everyone on the grand Canal is on edge and very seriously concerned. This has been studied; looked at ;kicked around but we all know one thing for sure is that you need to begin by removing the sand from Shell Key and the Irma inlet By changing state rules and guidelines and reuse it to reclaim the County beaches north toward Clearwater.

We are aware that this latest study will not be concluded until October. However, as you study, please work concurrently to: 1) line up funding sources and 2) work to change current law So the state allows you reuse the sand instead of continuing to take it from Egmont As is currently done per state rules. We are eager to see action !!!!!... even though We know how important the study is.

We are all watching the situation worsen before our eyes.

Ps. I have looked for an email address for the county administrator. Most counties had one but when I tried Pinella County.org/admin it said it was invalid If you know of that email address, please reply to me so I may tell our county administrator about the interest in resolution f this issue

From:
Sent: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 9:59 AM
To: Levy, Kelli H <klevy@co.pinellas.fl.us>; Harji, Rahim <rharji@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Cc: Javed, Addie <ajaved@co.pinellas.fl.us>
Subject: FW: Shell Key Grand Canal Sand Migration Meeting Recap

FYI here is what we sent to our residents yesterday afternoon.
Thanks Kelli for the clarification and I will check with you Friday after APTIM has given you their update for additional information before the Monday meeting.
I plan to elaborate on the Army Corps using our sand possibility and emphasize the State involvement as well.

From:
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2019 4:08 PM
To:
Subject: Shell Key Grand Canal Sand Migration Meeting Recap

To All TVCA Members

Shell Key Grand Canal Sand Migration Meeting Recap

The meeting on April 30th at TBW was well attended by interested residents concerned about the sand accumulation at Shell Key and the Grand Canal.

Pinellas County previously conducted a study of Bunces Pass and Pass a Grill Pass done by Dr Ping Wang. Here is a link to that study.

Dr Ping Wang Study Presentation

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment/coastalMngmt/pdfs/inlet-mgmt-study.pdf>

In January Pinellas County retained APTIM to review all current and previous studies, including the Grand Canal, and they are in the middle of that study now. Here is a link to that study.

Current APTIM Study link

http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment/coastalmngmt/shell_key.htm

As you can see Task #1, #2, and #3 mostly involve assembling all previous information and monitoring efforts and continuing monitoring activity. It has been determined that the Grand Canal is considered to be Sovereign Submerged Lands, which are under the jurisdiction of the state. More information about what that determination means can be found here: <https://floridadep.gov/water/submerged-lands-environmental-resources-coordination/content/sovereign-submerged-lands-ssl>

Here is the description of the intent of the April 30th meeting from the study parameters on the county website.

Stakeholder Meeting #1 to present knowledge base and gain public input – As part of the alternatives analysis, APTIM will attend a meeting with project stakeholders. The goal of this meeting will be to develop an understanding of the concerns of the local residents and waterway users with regard to SKNP (Shell Key North Pass) and Grand Canal. In particular, waterfront residents adjacent to the Preserve will be invited to participate in order to gain a better understanding of the pass dynamics and extent of dependence on the pass for boating access to open waters. The previous dredging project will be reviewed for feedback on perceived performance and potential concepts for alternatives will be discussed in such a manner to seek a balance between the project need, environmental issues, regulatory limitations, and inherent coastal processes.

The April 30th meeting, rather than being a report on where things are and any conclusions was almost completely APTIM asking residents in attendance for their input, questions, viewpoints, and concerns. Mr. Barry Burton, Pinellas County Administrator, Kathleen Peters, Pinellas County Commissioner, and

most other Pinellas County Environmental Management Department Staff were in attendance and attempted to answer from the county perspective. Many residents asked questions and gave feedback and input and Dr Bob Weisberg, USF Professor of Oceanography, offered some perspective and provided both APTIM and the County with a copy of a privately authored report that he completed. Dr Weisberg believes the sand accumulation is linked to beach renourishment efforts on our northern beaches. APTIM will be considering this report and information in addition to its own research and monitoring efforts.

As you can see in the Current APTIM Study link there will be another Stakeholder meeting prior to the study recommendations being released in October 2019, this year. Before any remedial steps or dredging could be performed permits would be needed from various governmental bodies and completion of this study is a required step before any such permitting could be accomplished. You can still ask questions, express your concerns and share your observations online.

Send your comments to watershed@pinellascounty.org . Please put Shell Key/Grand Canal in the subject line.

The TVCA Board of Directors and the TVCA Shell Key Grand Canal Sand Committee continue to stay in close contact with all entities and parties and the Chairman of that committee, Peter Logli, gives a report on any recent developments every month at the Board Meetings which are open to all members of the association. Members can access the minutes from previous board meetings and reports via the TVCA website. The next TVCA Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors is Monday May 13th at 6pm at the TVCA offices upstairs from the TD Bank.

From:

Sent: Wednesday, May 8, 2019 1:54 PM

To: Harji, Rahim <rharij@co.pinellas.fl.us>; Levy, Kelli H <klevy@co.pinellas.fl.us>

Cc: Javed, Addie <ajaved@co.pinellas.fl.us>

Subject: Shell Key--Resident e mail sent

Here is an e mail sent to Kathleen Peters and Jeff Brandes from one of our residents. I wanted you to be aware of this and share it with APTIM as additional feedback. I will send you another e mail shortly about a meeting request.

Thanks

From:

Sent: Wednesday, May 08, 2019 12:25 PM

To: kpeters@pinellascounty.org; brandes.jeff.web@flsenate.gov

Cc:

Subject: Shell Key

Kathleen,

I wanted to personally thank you for helping put together the Shell Key Tampa Bay Watch meeting last week. When we first met in late 2016 I had the opportunity as a TVCA board member to bring the Shelly Key canal closure to your attention. If you recall we first met to discuss the injustice of the submerged

land lease fees for Florida condo residents. Thanks to your understanding of the issue and your legislative efforts in Tallahassee we have put that issue behind us.

However, if you recall during that meeting we also visited the Sterling Condominium at the foot of the Grand Canal and observed the one boat slip that had been totally filled with sand due to the closure of the North Shell Key channel in 2015. Several TVCA board members including myself even met with Jeff Brandes about the community’s concern.

Today, three more slips have succumb to the sand migration at the Sterling. This is an alarming rate of change and you can understand the frustration Grand Canal residents have towards the state and county’s inaction on this matter. The last thing the community wanted to hear last week is our tax dollars being wasted on another study to learn what most of us who have lived on the Grand Canal for more than 30 years already know. ***Without re-opening the North Shell Key channel this problem will not be solved and will only get worse.***

We have been re-nourishing our Pinellas beaches for decades starting back in 1969. I have lived on the Grand Canal since 1986. As I mentioned at the meeting I was able to navigate and anchor my sailboat with a 5 foot keel through the North Shell Key channel until the early 2000s despite these major re-nourishment projects. Below is the history of these projects:

Date	Volume (cubic yards)	Sand Source	Location	Length
1969	790,000	Offshore borrow area	R132-R141	1.8 mi
1971	75,000	O'Brien's Lagoon	R131-R132	0.2 mi
1972	155,000	Blind Pass	R140-R141	0.2 mi
1976	380,000	Offshore borrow area	R135-R142	1.4 mi
1978	50,000	Blind Pass	Southern Treasure Island	
1981	70,000	John's Pass	R127-R130	0.6 mi
1983	220,000	Blind Pass	R138-R142	0.8 mi
1986	550,000	Blind Pass & Pass-a-Grille Channel	R129-R141	2.4 mi
1991	56,000	John's Pass	R127-R129	0.4 mi
1996	51,300	Egmont Channel Shoal	R138-R141	0.4 mi
2000	350,000	John's Pass	R127-R129 and R136-R141	1.6 mi
2004	225,000	Pass-a-Grille Channel	R136-R141	1 mi
2006	110,000	Egmont Channel Shoal	R127-R129 and R136-R141	1.6 mi
2009	225,000	John's Pass	R127-R129 and R136-R141	1.6 mi

History of the Upham Beach (north Long Key) segment of the Pinellas County Shore Protection Project				
Date	Volume (cubic yards)	Sand Source	Location	Length
1980	254,000	Blind Pass	R144-146	0.4 mi
1986	98,000	Pass-a-Grille Channel	R144-146	0.4 mi
1991	230,000	Blind Pass	R144-146	0.4 mi
1996	253,000	Egmont Channel Shoal	R144-146	0.4 mi
2000	281,000	Blind Pass	R144-146	0.4 mi
2004	408,000	Pass-a-Grille Channel	R144-148	0.7 mi
2006	90,000	Egmont Channel Shoal	R144-146	0.4 mi
2009	200,000	Blind Pass	R144-148	0.7 mi

History of the Pass-a-Grille Beach (south Long Key) segment of the Pinellas County SPP				
Date	Volume (cubic yards)	Sand Source	Location	Length
1986	73,000	Pass-a-Grille Channel	R160-R165	1 mi
1991	100,000	Blind Pass	R160-R165	1 mi
2004	95,000	Pass-a-Grille Channel	R160-R165	1 mi

What is important to understand is even with all this re-nourishment activity on the beaches north of Shell Key, we never had a sand migration issue in the Grand Canal until the county allowed the North Shell Key channel to close in 2015. Soon after the South Shell Key channel closed as well.

What we have not heard much discussion on is the dredging activity that also took place in key passes north of Tierra Verde during these beach re-nourishment projects (see below).

History of federal dredging at Blind Pass		History of federal dredging at John's Pass	
Date	Volume (cubic yards)	Date	Volume (cubic yards)
1969	108,000	1966	77,650
1972	<155,000	1979	80,000
1975	75,000	1981	70,000
1976	<550,000	1983	80,000
1978	50,000	1991	56,000
1980	143,000	2000	390,000
1983	220,000	2009	375,000
1986	75,000		
1991	325,000		
2000	250,000		
2009	200,000		

As we have already learned from the studies, maintaining these key channels helps assure nature's ecological status quo. What was lacking in the state and county's overall plan was an understanding of the

importance of the North and South Shell Key channels being part of these dredging projects. It is the county who has messed with mother nature and as stewards of Shell Key preserve have the ultimate responsibility to restore what nature originally gave us.

I am not an oceanic expert and can only rely on personal experience and observations to explain our sand migration issue and offer a logical solution to fix the problem based solely on historical fact.

Kathleen, thanks again for your support. You have certainly been an advocate for the Tierra Verde community and it is much appreciated. Hope this feedback helps.

From:

Sent: Friday, May 10, 2019 9:35 PM

To: ron.desantis@eog.myflorida.com

Cc: Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@co.pinellas.fl.us>; brandes.jeff.web@flsenate.gov; Burton, Barry <bburton@co.pinellas.fl.us>; Watershed <Watershed@co.pinellas.fl.us>

Subject: Budget line item 1695-c

Dear Governor DeSantis,

My husband and I have owned a condo on the Grand Canyon on Tierra Verde for the past 18 years. After we both retired, we became Florida residents. In the past four or five years we have watched Shell key joined to the mainland. After attending a meeting about Shell Key, I understood that it was kind of an environmental disaster. Shell Key was a nesting bird sanctuary . We were told that many of the nesting birds were killed by coyotes that previously were not able to get on to Shell Key along with 25,000 turtle eggs that were ravaged by coyotes. In addition to that, the Grand Canal has a marina that is used by many many people in the surrounding area. It *has been* a boaters paradise. Boating is being threatened by the migration of sand from replenished beaches from Clearwater to Saint Pete Beach. More beach replenishment is to begin in the fall. Currently sand has to come from Egmont Key per state rules. The State needs to change that. We understand the need to promote tourism and replenish the beaches but please understand that we would appreciate them taking their sand back and keeping the grand canal open.

We are imploring you to approve this budget item!!!

The completion of the “study” will guide how the project is approached.

Please feel free to contact me at

Letter Received by Pinellas County

Shell Key North Pass and Grand Canal Information Meeting

Name: [REDACTED]

Date: April 30, 2019

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments: [REDACTED]

Thank you for meeting with us. I'm sure you sense the frustration, mostly because this has been going on several years and it seems that nothing is happening. Please help us get to maintenance mode before it is too late. My husband and I spent many years restoring our 1979 sailboat (with a 6'6" draft), and we chose Tierra Verde to live (in 2008) because access was clear, and the channel was deep enough. Extreme erosion is expected at the beach, but not in a long-established channel/canal. The comments from the 2 county representatives at the meeting were disheartening. I went home more afraid.

I know that the movement of sand and water is part of nature, but I also know that the speed in which this is happening is due to the beach re-nourishment north of us. The beaches have to be maintained for state tourism, however the Federal, State and County governments have to work together to look at the whole picture – the consequences they are causing downstream. Is this halfway approach allowed in any other environmental remediation?

The permit process should start today for the simple dredging of the channel. In the longer term, have we looked at a Pass-A-Grille jetty? A rock jetty from the Pass-A-Grille shore to the Pass-A-Grille Gulf side entrance marker, on the north side of the channel would stop the sand from flowing south. The sand collected could easily be gathered for the re-nourishment on the north beaches. Millions of dollars are spent on the beach re-nourishments. The jetty will be costly but over time would be offset by the savings related to the nearby sand supply. People love jetty's!

One gentleman in the meeting mentioned the fact that the beaches are taken care of due to the bed taxes they contribute. A few others mentioned that the birds and the turtles are going to start nesting on the sands before we do anything. Others mentioned that dredging an existing channel does not cause a permitting problem. Many mentioned that we have been talking about this for years now, and still no plan. All of these things are true and when you put them all together, you have to wonder who is looking out for us.

We look forward to the next meeting and hope we can start the maintenance dredging very soon!

Thank you again!