

19 Apr 2010

Harbor Island Board of Directors
Harbor Island, South Carolina 29920

Re: Environment Stewardship Committee Report

Board members:

I had the pleasure of discussing a number of issues with the Harbor Island community concerning the Natural History of Barrier Islands in general and beach erosion on Harbor Island in specific on 10 April 2010. Timothy Kana, PhD joined me for an audience open forum. Subsequently he has written a letter outlining some potential areas for consideration for our community. These have been discussed by the Environment Stewardship Committee (ESC) and are here with forwarded to you for consideration. (attachment)

Fifty Harbor Island residents attended the Saturday morning program. Two board members were present. Although this was not a formal program of the newly formed Environment Stewardship Committee it was indicative of programs on other topics of environmental interest that the committee intends to produce.

Background: In March the Board forwarded a letter to the ESC written by Mrs. Hoffman concerning beach erosion on Harbor Island for consideration and recommendations. Not feeling sufficiently informed on the subject I sought additional information. I did an extensive literature review, I asked Mrs. Hoffman to provide me with materials she felt were pertinent and I met with her twice to learn her point of view since she has been close to this topic in the past. I also visited the Coastal Science & Engineering office in Columbia and met with Dr. Timothy Kana and his staff since his name was referenced often in the material I had read, since he is often referenced by Mrs. Hoffman and since he designed the groin and renourishment project on Hunting Island. As a result of that visit Dr. Kana accepted my invitation to attend our Harbor Island program.

In my presentation I reported on the development and dynamic nature of barrier islands in general and on beach erosion issues on Harbor in specific. It was my conclusion and Dr. Kana concurred during the question and answer period, that 1. The delta and sand spit of the south end of Harbor Island is the result of a process of shoal By-passing of sand and current around Johnson Creek. 2. That the quantity of sand in that delta far exceeds the quantity of sand supplied to Hunting Island during their nourishment projects and was the result of natural processes often seen around tidal inlets, and 3. That the erosion on Harbor Island was likely due to currents moving around the Johnson Creek Delta as part of the Shoal By-passing process. At the outset of the presentation I made it clear that I was not an expert and that the conclusions presented were those of my own and not those of the committee although as already stated Dr. Kana agreed.

The Saturday program and these impressions were discussed at a scheduled ESC meeting on 13 April 2010. The following recommendations reflect the consensus of those present. Seven of the ten property owners indicating an interest in being on the committee attended. One was excused, one had an unexpected business issue but subsequently endorsed the committee's recommendations and one who has indicated her opposition did not attend. The committee further feels that it is up to the board to decide what actions should be taken, the committee therefore is only making the following recommends with eight supporting, one excused and one opposed.

1. With respect to what action to take with the above referenced letter the Environment Stewardship Committee recommends the board consider the material presented in the Saturday program, concurred with by Dr. Kana and outlined above in making their decision for action.
2. The board further consider whether the HIOA should take any action as recommended by Dr. Kana in his 12 April 2010 letter.

Sincerely,

John R. Fisk, Chair Environment Stewardship Committee