

Meeting of the Environmental Resources Advisory Board held in the Town Hall Chambers on Wednesday, February 23, 2000 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting was attended by Town Manager Dunham, Town Clerk Hancsak and the following members: Chairman Aaskov, Tom Horton, Barbara Souther and Jerry Lower.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Aaskov.

The minutes of the January 19, 2000 could not be adopted due to the lack of a quorum.

### III. DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER'S CONTACTS REGARDING THE TOWN'S ORDINANCE ON SEAGRAPES

The meeting commenced with Mrs. Souther and Mr. Horton distributing correspondence from Robert Baron and notes taken from a conversation with Paul Davis, PBCty DERM. Mr. Horton stated that he had volunteered to speak with Mr. Davis who is familiar with the town and has lived in the area for many years. Mr. Davis advised that the county did not have any regulations regarding vegetation on the beach and the summary provided contains Mr. Davis' personal views and also an attachment of DEP regulations.

Mr. Horton advised that some of Mr. Davis' comments included: approval by DEP prior to any changes made to our code; recommending limited hedging but no replacement; and utilizing salt/beach tolerant vegetation such as, seagrape, saw palmetto, bay cedar, golden creeper, sea lavender, native scavola, necklace pod or yucca. Mr. Davis also stated that the bigger the tree than the bigger the roots and added that he disagreed that seagrapes were not natural to the area, citing the Hammock Park where seagrapes predominate on the crest of the dune. He also commented that he would not recommend removing all the seagrapes and replacing with sea oats partly because the seagrapes assisting retaining the sand during blustery winds or storms. He used Old Ocean Blvd. following Hurricane Irene as an example of areas where a lot of sand had blown onto the street. Chairman Aaskov commented that salt brush was compatible with seagrapes.

Regarding trimming the seagrapes, Mr. Davis felt that understory trimming defeats any retention of the sand, excessive windowing or hedging will cause more salt/wind damage inland and canopy reduction can provide an unaesthetic look, however, it lets in more light so more vines could thrive and lastly isolated canopied trees topple easier. Mr. Davis had stated that the old county regulations supported limited view windows and understory trimming provided that some trees grew tall as a trade off. Mr. Davis stated that the town may wish to relax its proportions, however, he did not recommend all hedging.

Concerning the DEP guidelines with turtles, Mr. Davis advised that dune vegetation is extremely important for nesting and added that the turtles like tall, dark dune silhouettes and the DEP is very strict in this regard.

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Mr. Horton expressed some concern that the town currently was not compatible with the DEP regulations. Town Clerk Hancsak advised the members that at the time the dune ordinance was revised and approved a DEP representative for our area was present and was satisfied with the verbiage and further permitted the town to have jurisdiction regarding the vegetation.

Chairman Aaskov stated that he had spoken with representatives from DEP and he got the impression that they had a lot of opinions, however, they don't routinely inspect sites. He added that the state has not changed their regulations since 1987 and there are no current proposals to may any changes.

Mrs. Souther stated that Mr. Baron had another point of view in that he felt seagrapes were a minor component of the dune area. She added that he felt that the dune was controlled by the forces of nature. Mrs. Souther mentioned that the higher seagrapes sustained more damage during storms. Town Manager Dunham stated that the seagrapes on the dunes were less effected than those in other areas. Chairman Aaskov remarked that seagrapes did not require much irrigation due to a shallow root system.

Mr. Horton stated that obviously Mr. Davis and Mr. Baron had differing views concerning seagrapes. He stated that he did not agree with the last paragraph on the first page of Mr. Baron's letter and felt it was only his opinion. Chairman Aaskov agreed.

Chairman Aaskov stated that he felt the vegetation should only be regulated within 60' of a street light. Town Manager Dunham reminded the board that the town and county could lose funding if any issues negatively impact the turtles. Concerning the lighting, Mr. Horton stated that the town should monitor the lights more closely. Mr. Dunham advised that the town is currently working with the county and added that Director Hillery cooperates with them fully. Chairman Aaskov questioned whether anyone patrols the beach at night to ensure that the lighting complies to which he was advised that the police in addition to DERM patrol the beach at different times.

Mr. Horton inquired if any other single family or multi-family residents have complained about the seagrape regulations to which he was advised that they really had not.

Mrs. Souther stated that part of Portofino's concern with the seagrapes was that when they were originally planted they were only clustered, however, now they have grown taller and more dense. Mr. Lower stated that the removal of the exotics along with initial irrigation probably escalated the growth.

Town Clerk Hancsak advised that Section 26-109 (g)(3) mentioned that the planting of substitute plant materials which are native or beneficial to the dune may be permitted with the approval of the Town Commission. She also mentioned that the DEP guidelines states that trimming of seagrapes to heights less than 6' will not be exempt from the permitting process – it does not state a permit could not be obtained.

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Chairman Aaskov advised the board that no action could formally be taken since there was not a quorum, however, it is believed that individuals may possibly request to change the vegetation through a permit request by both the state and town. Town Manager Dunham advised that he would review the ordinance with staff .

Concerning the entrance signs, Town Manager Dunham mentioned that he would be seeking a 50/50 monetary split because of a Palm Beach County Thoroughfare Beautification Grant. He added that it would be necessary to hire a landscape architect and have a plan in place prior the grant application. When asked if the signs were completed Mr. Dunham advised that Bright Image Signs has started the permitting process with the appropriate agencies.

Mr. Horton suggested the possibility of requesting or hiring presenters to discuss various items or lecture sessions for the benefit of all residents on different topics. The other members felt this was a good idea.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Attest By:

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Town Clerk