

West Galveston Island Property Owners Association

January 25, 2025

0900 Call to Order – Craig Vance

0902 Recap of December Board Meeting

Our founder Jerry Mohn announced his resignation from the board. Craig Vance was nominated as the new president of WGIPOA.

0905 Introduction of Board Members

The WGIPOA meeting was held on January 25, 2024, at Marriott Courtyard on the Seawall. The meeting was called to order by Craig Vance, President. A quorum was established with the attendance of Craig Vance – Terramar; Chris Lauer – Bermuda Beach; Guy Sullaway – Pointe West; Sarah Hawkes – Sportsman’s Road; Doug Little – Pirate’s Beach and Lafitte’s Cove; Julie Greenwell – Sea Isle; Rosemarie Gonzalez – Acapulco Village; Peggy Zahler – Spanish Grant Beach; and Joe Trum – Dunes of West Beach.

0907 Introduction of Elected Officials and Corporate Sponsors

Brie Little from State Representative Mayes Middleton’s office. She mentioned that Representative Middleton is working on filing a bill to restructure TWIA to move them closer to the coast and restructure their cost structure. Mayor Craig Brown, City Manager Brian Maxwell, and out district representative Marie Robb were in attendance. Our corporate sponsors are Wellby Financial and House Doctors of Galveston.

0912 Approve October 19th and December 31st minutes and financials.

Moved by Peggy and seconded by Rosemarie.

0910 West End Police Report - Lt. Sean Miguez.

Mardi Gras is on its way here. GPD is tracking plans social media for senior skip day (March 7th), parades, parties, and Jeep Weekend. No pop-up events are planned.

The access to San Luis Pass has been blocked off the sand road onto the beach and a parking area was installed. This has cut back the party issues on the beach.

If you see something, say something. For issues that affect your immediate safety, please call 911. For all non-emergency issues, please call the non-emergency phone line right away at **409-765-3702**. Please call GPD prior to reaching out to Marie Robb. Getting the right information to the right people quickly is the best way to address your issues.

0924 State of the City Update - Mayor Craig Brown and City Manager Brian Maxwell

Dr. Brown is currently serving his third and last term as mayor. Winter Storm Enzo came through very quickly and dropped 2” of snow. This led to snow plows scraping roads and consequently

removing lane divider markers. In events like Winter Storm Enzo, you can receive notices from the City by signing up for “island alerts” (updates) on www.galvestontx.gov.

Financially the City is doing fairly well. The City has one of the lowest tax rates in Galveston County. This does deplete the amount of money coming into the City. This is offset by alternative revenue sources such as tariffs levied on the Port as well as Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT).

There are some City Charter changes coming forward. There is movement that the City will be redistricted into 4 districts (currently 6) with 3 at large members (currently 1, the Mayor). There are also discussions of updating the comprehensive (COMP) plan. The COMP plan is a 10-year city master plan or road map. There will be councils set up for the charter and COMP plan.

The Port of Galveston is currently the hottest cruise terminal location in the US. The Port has been very successful and while they provide a lot of revenue to the City, we don't want to stifle their growth. The Port is looking to dock the Battleship Texas near the cruise terminals (Pier 15) or near the Mosquito Fleet (Pier 17).

The City is in negotiations with the Port of Houston to work together to bring larger projects into the area. These plans include a lot of infrastructure work on Pelican Island. Plans are underway to rebuild Pelican Island bridge. The old bridge will stay in place until the new bridge is operational. Once the bridge is in place, there is a potential for an economic explosion of expansion on Pelican Island. The plan is for the Port to be mixed use for cruise, cargo, and public green spaces. This expansion will most likely trigger large scale road expansion and flyover projects to manage traffic.

There will most likely be a move for affordable housing projects. This may include working with suburbs and providing transportation from those suburbs onto the island. This keeps our tax rates down and helps the people and communities that these plans would serve. There are allusions of private industry being part of the solution.

Drainage is an ongoing task. Flooding will continue to be an issue on the streets, but there are projects in place to manage the disruptions caused by flooding.

Short-term rentals and the enforcement of rules associated with these locations is still a hot button issue. The Mayor suggests that they will start to self regulate their own size because they are not receiving the income that was initially thought they would receive.

Tourism is continuing to rise. There will be both fireworks and drone shows. Tourism that is geared toward drinking events will be declining. There is a rise of “high-quality” tourism such as eco-, medical-, sports-, and nature-tourism. This is primarily pushed by safety concerns and preventing terrorist attacks.

Mardi Gras will have some small changes in the future. While we can't stop all negative events from occurring, we can make changes to manage and minimize these negative cases.

GPD has one of the highest pay rates in Galveston County. They also are understaffed (19 members down) and having to run a lot of overtime. Our new Sheriff is proposing some innovative ideas that may make some splashes soon.

The City of Galveston has a Parks Board. It is appointed by the City and is a “vendor” of the City. There are discussions of looking into cost structuring of some of the programs.

Additional discussions of coyotes with the extinct red wolf DNA are ongoing. There are more animals on the island, and this leads back to growth of natural habitat. The discussions now include game management and relocation.

1020 District 6 Happenings – City Council Member Marie Robb

Marie just received notice that we are receiving support for state representatives for ongoing Port expansion activities, specifically rebuilding the Pelican Island bridge. The projected timeline to start is the end of 2027 or early 2028. ThePort has already received a grant for an engineering design of the flyover exit from I-45 heading over Harborside to the cruise terminals.

Drainage projects continue on the West End and ditches continuing to be connected.

During this legislative period, Marie is looking to connect neighborhoods not connected to City sewer connected to the City sewer system.

Road review and repair projects are ongoing. 8% of the city taxes are set aside for road maintenance activities.

Centerpoint was on the island and prepared to respond to issues associated with Winter Storm Enzo. In addition, they are continuing to upgrade the poles running power throughout the West End.

Atmos is still working to run lines to certain places on the island. The first priority is neighborhoods east of Jamaica Beach. GasForTheWestEnd.com

Marie is working with AT&T to increase the amount of fiberoptic lines in our neighborhoods.

There are discussions for the City to take over HOT tax collection and money appropriation. There would be a unified call center [(409) 797-4630] and taxes could be taken care of by the planning division.

If you have any questions or concerns, please text Marie Robb at (409) 256-4518 or email at Marie@MarieRobb.com, and she will answer and/or forward the issues to the appropriate agencies.

1052 Chris Lauer – BMAC Report

There was a BMAC meeting on November 1, 2024.

The tourism economy is directly linked to the health concerns of beaches and the quality of the associated waters. Research is ongoing to determine perceptions in the Galveston area. These perceptions can then be addressed physically and emotionally to ease negative perceptions and help to enhance the quality of the beach environments. This will help to guide local and state officials with decision making along the coast to lead toward clean and resilient beaches.

Insights from this season include watching water and wind impact areas, not where the eye of the storm “cone” will make landfall. Impacted areas can be many miles from the center of the eye of the storm. Storm surges and wind damage (including tornados) are increased on the right

(dirty) side of the storm. The impacts to Galveston were more closely related to a tropical storm (sustained winds of 50-60 mph). While there was damage, the hurricane did not remove roofs from houses like you would expect from a Category 1 hurricane. Public perception of safety can be based on lack of experience and being dismissive of science based on this perception. It makes sense to observe impacts in your “neighborhood”. The neighborhood of Galveston includes coastal communities within 100 miles in either direction.

Sheryl Rozier discussed the implementation of new ideas along the beaches.

- Keeping San Luis Pass cleaner which can be helped with the Beach Ambassador programs and island cleanup weekends.
- Bring back “Let’s Talk Trash” round table discussion or programs.
- Learning discussion for dune building on top of the Coastal Texas Resiliency Plan. A way to get the patchwork of projects to support one another.

1057 Communications Update – Gull Sullaway

Please visit and share the WGIPOA Facebook page. All submittals are reviewed prior to posting. In addition, if there is anything that you’d like to share on this page, please send your recommendations to the WGIPOA Board.

1100 Adjournment

The next WGIPOA meeting will be on February 22, 2025 at the Courtyard Marriott on the Seawall.