

Brief History of Sandbridge Civic League and the City Coordination Regarding: Public Beach Sand Fence Installation Guidelines

In 2009 City staff met with members of the Civic League and attended a Sandbridge Civic League meeting to discuss with ocean front property owners the concerns associated with improper installation and maintenance of sand fence along the oceanfront and to receive feedback from the community. At the meeting many residents expressed a desire to use sand fencing in an effort to establish dunes of sufficient height to minimize problems associated with windblown sand. Others in attendance expressed concern that the proliferation of sand fencing hindered access to and full use of the recreational beach area.

The recreational beach easement agreement clearly prohibits the installation of sand fence or any other encroachment onto the recreational beach easement (other than 5' for access stairs and toe protection at bulkheads). The reasons for this restriction are several. First, to prevent any encumbrances on the beach that would prohibit or discourage full use of the recreational beach easement by the public. Secondly, to minimize conflicts that sand fence installation and artificial dune creation may pose to beach re-nourishment construction activities. Lastly, to avoid maintenance conflicts and potential safety hazards caused by the placement of unauthorized structures on the public portion of the beach.

Given the expressed desire of the community to utilize sand fencing as a means to control windblown sand, City staff drafted a set of guidelines that would allow the installation of sand fences for this purpose while preserving the intent of the easement agreement in regards to encroachments and public access.

These guidelines were drafted in consultation with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The guidelines establish sand fence installation criteria for length, spacing and orientation. A copy of the guidelines is located at the following link:

<http://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/public-works/coastal/Pages/Public-Beach-Sand-Fence-Installation-Guidelines.aspx>

Since the mid 1990's the City's partnership with the community for the Sandbridge Beach Restoration project has been extremely successful with homeowners having responsibility for compliance with the conditions of the recreational beach and construction easement and the City focusing on management and stewardship.

The goal of Guidelines is to provide a framework that will allow for modest installation of sand fencing to control problems associated with windblown sand while maintaining compliance with the City's Project Cooperative Agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers and preserving public access and use of the recreational beach easement.