

LETTERS TO EDITOR

What would beach permit allow?

To the Editor:

PERMIT. One of several on-line definitions for "permit" listed in the Merriam Webster Dictionary reads, *to authorize*. In my mind, authorize appears to be a verb of stronger action, it seems to carry a heavier cachet than permit.

For example, compare these two statements:

- The JIA has requested a general permit to facilitate more efficient and effective management of the Jekyll Island beachfront-shoreline

- The JIA has requested *authority* to facilitate more efficient and effective management of the Jekyll Island beachfront-shoreline

Hmm! Sounds different eh? It has the same meaning, doesn't it? However it sounds more forceful, seems to be more demanding. It makes you wonder.

Why would the JIA want to take on more responsibility? Possibly the CRD involves too much red tape and

slows down the approval process. Sometimes, delays are critical and fast action is required. Did the Permit request indicate there are problems with the current process? That doesn't appear to be the case. Besides, it would not be smart to criticize the CRD if you're suggesting they give you some of their authority.

One of the powers the permit request seeks is authority to deal with Unauthorized Structure Removal. This is interesting, because as a matter of record, several such structures exist on the beach front dunes north from the Holiday Inn to the Cottages at Jekyll Island complex. Assuming these "Rube Goldberg" homemade crossovers are unacceptable, why have they been there for years, unmolested?

If the JIA is unable to fulfill the authority it already possesses, why should the CRD cede additional responsibility?

The answer is, it should not. The

permit request for additional authority should not be approved. The agency with the necessary staffing, expertise and track record of accomplishment must be allowed to continue its leadership.

The GADNR/CRD made the correct decision by tabling the Permit Request. This may be an excellent opportunity to bring the interested parties together under the aegis of the CRD to determine if problems exist with the current process and how it can be "tweaked" if necessary without a precedent setting extension of authority to another agency.

Perhaps representatives from the JIA, CRD Staff, IPJI, JICA and an at-large representative (Riverkeeper, 100 Mile or Center for a Sustainable Coast) should be convened in an open hearing to examine the request and provide input as necessary.

Franklin G. Mirasola
Jekyll Island Resident

Don't rubberstamp JIA

To the Editor:

The recent hearing concerning the JIA's request for a special, general permit exempting them from the provisions of the Shore Protection Act when they decide to do some work in the jurisdictional area along the shore, illustrated why environmental oversight is necessary in protecting our coast.

Although I could only watch the taped version of the proceedings, it was clear to me that the JIA spokesperson failed to make a case the permit was needed and fumbled answers to some simple questions the DNR board asked. The JIA's Director of Conservation was forced to admit he had no ready list of projects that would justify such a permit and that the JIA had never established a Beach Management Working Group as required in the island's 2011 conservation plan. Moreover, an environmental attorney from SELC testified that if issued, such a permit would violate

the Shore Protection Act as written in the Georgia code, and a board member agreed with her interpretation. The JIA provided no legal argument for its request.

While I applaud the Shore Protection Committee's refusal to rubberstamp this application, I believe they should go beyond their act of tabling it and deny it outright in their next meeting. The Shore Protection Act is a landmark piece of good environmental legislation and should not be subverted in order to save the JIA and other entities some paperwork. Its provisions specifying the details that must be submitted by applicants seeking a permit for a proposed project have been in place for 40 years. They should not be subverted or ignored by any applicant, least of all by a state agency entrusted with the care of a priceless public resource.

Diane Shearer
Tucker, Ga.

OBITUARY

Mamie Krewer

Mamie Mae Mercer Krewer, 94, passed away peacefully on May 3, 2017, with her children by her side on St. Simons Island.

She was born in Omega, Ga., where she grew up with her parents and seven brothers and sisters. She graduated from Norman Park High School and went on to attend Georgia Baptist School of Nursing in Atlanta. While in nursing school, she graduated number one in the class of 1944 and received the prestigious Loving Cup Award. She served her country as a registered nurse in the United States Navy where she met her husband of 57 years, Joseph William Krewer. She continued to work as a nurse throughout her life.

Mamie was also a loving mother to four children. She and Joe lived in many different areas of the

United States, eventually settling on Jekyll Island in 1968. She was a member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Brunswick and enjoyed volunteering at St. Vincent DePaul Society Thrift Store.

Mamie was a wonderful homemaker, believed in the power of education, and she lived her life with the highest level of integrity. She loved to walk on the beach and had a good sense of humor. Mamie always greeted you with a smile and was happy to see you. For the last few years she lived at Marsh's Edge on St. Simons Island where she was very attached to many of the residents and caregivers. The kindness and loving care she received there will always be appreciated. Consistent with her life, she generously donated her body to science at the Medical College of Georgia.

Mamie was a kind and loving grandmother, mother, wife, sister, and daughter. She is survived by her sisters, Rubye (Oliver) Maxwell, Reba Sumner and her sister-in-law Sandra Mercer, and also by her children and their spouses, Katherine Bailey, Joseph (Patty) Krewer, Gerard (Eva) Krewer and Virginia (Jerry) Wilson. She loved her five grandchildren and three step-grandchildren as well as four great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph, her sisters, Mary Whatley, Mildred Willis and Frankie Asbell and her brothers, Eugene Mercer and Milton Mercer.

A memorial service will be held at Andersonville National Cemetery, where her husband is also buried, at a date to be determined in the future.

Jekyll's Golden Islander, May 11, 2017

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LETTER TO EDITOR

JIA's beach management permit application raises questions

To the Editor:

On April 28, the DNR's Shore Protection Committee (SPC) reviewed a request from the Jekyll Island Authority for a beach management general permit (BMGP) to use as a tool "to facilitate more efficient and effective management" of Jekyll's beachfront and dynamic dune fields. After receiving a large number of complaints about how the proposed BMGP would, in effect, exempt the JIA from the permitting process required by Georgia's Shore Protection Act, and after listening to statements made at the April 28 meeting by representatives from four local conservation organizations along with an attorney from the Southern Environmental Law Center, the SPC decided to table the Authority's troubled permit application.

Having attended that meeting and spoken with a number of people who have objected to the JIA's permit proposal, I would like to point out the main deficiencies of the JIA's permit application and to recommend that the Authority reconsider how to achieve the goals it hoped to accomplish through the

proposed permit:

- The Shore Protection Act (SPA) does not include a provision for a permit that would enable an applicant to conduct unspecified activities at unspecified sites within the SPA's jurisdictional area the JIA. Put simply, the Authority's BMGP is at odds with the law.

- There is no planning framework for the beach stewardship activities the JIA says it wants to conduct. The framework needed was to have been provided by a comprehensive Beach Management Plan, the development of which is listed in the 2011 Jekyll Island Conservation Plan as a top priority. By substituting for a publicly-vetted beach management plan an open-ended permit as a management tool, the proposed permit violates the Authority's own Conservation Plan.

- The BMGP was crafted by the JIA's Conservation Director and endorsed by the Authority's board without any public input, violating national standards for public land planning and, ironically, ignoring the "public engagement" opportunities cited in the BMGP application.

- The BMGP does not provide a

mechanism for public input regarding a permitted activity *after* it takes place. Allowing the JIA to serve as judge and jury in evaluating the impact of its own beach stewardship activities negates accountability, limits objective analysis of permitted activities, and could result in questionable beach management projects and practices.

- The JIA claims that the SPA's regulatory process limits the Authority's ability to undertake small-scale projects, such as those necessitated by "unanticipated environmental developments." However, the permitting process for various small-scale maintenance projects was simplified by legislation enacted in 2013 that allows a simple "letter of permission" to be issued by the DNR in lieu of adherence to the formal permitting process. For example, last year the JIA received a single letter of permission to repair hurricane damage at multiple dune crossovers within the SPA's jurisdictional

- The application's statement that "*the permit would only apply to actions carried out by the JIA on non-leased land*" does not rule out the

use of the BMGP to benefit a private enterprise operating on non-leased land. In that regard, recall the JIA's sanctioning the Westin hotel's use of an ATV towing a flatbed trailer on the beach from Great Dunes Park to the Westin in order to provide on-the-beach delivery of amenities to the hotel's customers.

- The SPA has been in force since 1979, during which time all applicants seeking to conduct activities within the Act's jurisdictional area have been required to follow the prescribed permitting standards. Why, after all that time, are those standards no longer acceptable to the JIA? What has changed that would remotely justify the Authority's need for an exemption from the SPA's permitting process?

- Lastly, as pointed out in a recent staff editorial in the *Golden Isles News*, "if Jekyll Island is given a permit, what is to stop other barrier islands from pursuing the same? When those dominoes begin to fall, the Shore Protection Committee could suddenly find itself with its hands effectively tied behind its back, unable to properly monitor development and other activities

along Georgia's coast." Clearly, if the JIA were to be granted an exemption from the SPA's standard permitting process, a dangerous precedent would be set.

The questions of legality, transparency, accountability, and necessity surrounding the JIA's proposed beach management general permit, and the troubling precedent that would be set if the BMGP were to be approved, led me to conclude that the Authority should abandon its pursuit of a broad-based beach management permit. If the JIA wants to explore ways to legally streamline compliance with the SPA permitting process when dealing with beach-related concerns, it should do so as part of the comprehensive, publicly-vetted Beach Management Plan called for by the 2011 Jekyll Island Conservation Plan. Since the CP is overdue for its 5-year update, now would be an appropriate time to begin that endeavor.

**Mindy Egan, Co-Director
Initiative to Protect
Jekyll Island State Park**

win, lose & DREW

