



Agenda Item: Review Of The Seaweed Emergency Relocation Program (Elizabeth Schneider, 10 Minutes)

Background: In March of 2017, the Park Board was awarded a US Corps of Army Engineers permit to operate heavy equipment in federal waters for the purpose of removing seaweed.

In June of 2019, the Park Board of Trustees voted to create an HOA/POA Seaweed Emergency Relocation Program as a stopgap to provide emergency seaweed relocation services in the event of an emergency inundation that could have lasting impacts on the Island's tourism economy.

In recognition that the Park Board is the only local entity with the authority to relocate seaweed along Galveston Island, the Park Board of Trustees has approved a program to work directly with communities that will undertake emergency seaweed relocation services. Home and Property Owner Associations (HOA/POA) are required to register annually and pay a retainer fee that corresponds with the linear footage of the beachfront property (\$5,000 to \$10,000). A \$250.00 administrative setup fee is deducted from the initial deposit. The Park Board refunds all remaining retainer fees at the end of the year.

On February 22, 2022, the Park Board of Trustees discussed the renewal of the Seaweed Permit as it relates specifically to the continued inclusion of non-Park Board managed properties as well as the continuation of the HOA/POA Seaweed Emergency Relocation Program. The Board requested at that meeting that the discussion be taken before the Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee (BMAC), and that they provide a recommendation to the Board on how best to proceed. The Board met on March 22, 2022, and with the recommendation of BMAC members, the Trustees voted unanimously to approve expanding the geographic limitations of the federal seaweed relocation permit to include those areas included in our current permit.

With the continuation of the program, the Seaweed Emergency Relocation Program application opened on Feb. 1st, 2023. Communication of registration will be sent to points of contact for the HOA/POA's monthly, reminding them of the annual registration and deadlines. The Park Board has implemented a deadline of May 1, 2023 for HOA/POA's to register and submit their retainer fee.

Any HOA/POA that chooses not to register before the May 1st, 2023, will have the option to apply in 2024.

Staff Recommendation: n/a

Funding Source (if applicable): n/a