

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF
ASSISTANCE APPLICATION WORKSHOP

Thursday, February 27, 2014

A workshop of the St. Augustine Port, Waterway & Beach District was held at the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Meeting Room, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, Florida on Thursday, February 27, 2014.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Herb Rippe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America followed.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Rippe and Vice-Chairman Chuck Hennessey were in attendance. Commissioners Barry Benjamin, Jerry Dixon and Jay Bliss were absent. Also present were Jim Bedsole, District Counsel, Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper and Ken Krauter, consultant.

Ken Krauter opened discussion by thanking Vice-Chairman Hennessey for creating the draft application for assistance. Mr. Krauter suggested that the application should be made available to the public on the District's website. He said the advantage in the use of an application is that the Board may revise it each year to reflect changing priorities for the use of District dollars. The process could also indicate early whether cost sharing or revenue sharing is available to amplify the benefit of tax dollars. Other issues could be explained in the application such as exposure to liability and post-project compliance review. Commissioners said they liked the possibility of considering post-project revenue-sharing.

Mr. Krauter reminded commissioners the District has power of eminent domain, is completely tax exempt, and can issue revenue bonds. He said port authorities throughout the nation have entered agreements with private non-governmental organizations for development of port-owned property, such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Toledo, Ohio. The District has authority to build facilities and lease them to the public, thereby creating a revenue flow and possibly creating jobs.

Chairman Rippe said the possibility of cost-sharing or post-project revenue sharing should be explored in the application. He said local economic development should be a high priority for the District and that he wants the District to have a more pro-active approach to doing its business. He said when Luhrs considered which of their plants to close in an economic downturn, they chose the St. Augustine plant because the property was more marketable. No local agency offered any incentive to keep the plant open and save the jobs.

Vice-Chairman Hennessey said the District's application schedule should dovetail with the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) and that he has attempted to accomplish that. Chairman Rippe said representatives from the City of St. Augustine usually need interlocal agreements in March to apply for FIND match funds in June. This means the District's application process has to begin in the Fall of the preceding year. Ms. Kemper added the budget must be set in September each year according to TRIM requirements, but the budget does not need to detail each separate project. Vice-Chairman Hennessey said the applications could all be reviewed and awarded at the same time by a ranking and vote by commissioners.

Chairman Rippe said he believes the District needs one application period which would precede FIND's application period. In this manner, applications to FIND could include commitments from the District for any necessary matching funds. He said starting the application process in October each year would allow the District to know its available funds before receiving applications. Applications can be reviewed for completeness, and then either returned to the applicant for completion, or provided to commissioners for review and evaluation.

Vice-Chairman Hennessey said applications could be filed by December 1 each year, presented at the January meeting, and the final awards made at the February meeting.

Chairman Rippe said he wants a matrix for each project, ranking it according to District priorities. For him, the top priorities would be economic development, inlet management, and expanding the District county-wide. Vice-Chairman Hennessey suggested the application could list District priorities for the coming year as guidance to applicants. Mr. Krauter said applicants should be able to demonstrate how their proposed project fits into the District's charter and goals.

Chairman Rippe said both the county and City of St. Augustine have compliance review procedures to monitor outcomes of projects. For example, the Board has committed over six hundred thousand dollars in the past three years to the City for dredging. Yet, only half that much had actually been spent and the District's budget still reflected the higher amount. No one from the City or the District communicated the correct figure or requested it. Vice-Chairman Hennessey said he would include the requirement for a follow-up review. He also said language referencing water quality and environmental considerations, or any other matters not within the District's purview, will be removed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no members of the public present.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Rippe adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

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