

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

The regular meeting 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 Tuesday, November 18, 2014.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Jerry Dixon, Barry Benjamin, Tom Rivers, Mark Helman and Chuck Hennessey were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering, Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper and District Counsel Jim Bedsole.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper discussed various items in the District's budget of committed and non-committed funds, including a fund of \$109,985 available for undefined marine projects and \$6,500 set aside for the annual Regatta of Lights. Funds available as of October 31, 2014 consisted of the Florida State Board of Administration Fund A, \$17,846, the operating account, \$156,322, and the money market account containing \$1,550,388. Total funds available less all committed funds yielded net available funds of \$1,461,841. Total taxes collected in this fiscal year are \$7,742 and an additional \$386,548 is expected.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Dixon moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 14, 2014. Commissioner Benjamin seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering delivered the engineering report. He announced the Army Corps of Engineers had issued the permit for the Summer Haven River restoration project. He said it all looks good with the exception of a typographical error in the allowable project work period. This error has already been acknowledged. The actual work period allowed by the permit is November 1 through April 30 each year of the permit.

Salt Run dredging is ready to proceed next week according to a map displayed by Mr. Craig. The contractor, Brance Diversified, has agreed to replace the marker signs in the channel as the work progresses. Mr. Craig said the target depth for the project is ten feet at mean low water, but that the job is being phased so the channel is deepened each year as money is made available. He said certain areas of Salt Run have a soft bottom which tends to fill in somewhat from year to year, reversing the effect of dredging.

Linda Ginn, Friends of Summer Haven River, said a celebration was in order as the Corps of Engineers permit is the final permit needed before work could begin on the restoration of the river. Commissioner Rivers congratulated Mrs. Ginn on the success of the permit process and commended her for her work and the work of her organization.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers

Vice-Chairman Benjamin began this item by nominating Commissioner Jerry Dixon for Chairman. Commissioner Rivers seconded the nomination and it was unanimously approved.

Chairman Dixon then nominated Commissioner Barry Benjamin for Vice-Chairman. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Helman and it was unanimously approved.

B. FIND update - Carl Blow

Carl Blow, St. Johns County's Florida Inland Navigation District Commissioner, delivered a report to the Board. He said FIND receives about twenty-five million dollars per year in tax revenues from the counties it services and spends about half of that giving grants to local governments to improve public access to the Intracoastal Waterway. The remainder of FIND's available funds are dedicated to dredging the ICW, the total cost of which dredging is shared by the federal government on a basis of 30 to 50 percent. He said St. Johns County projects have ranked very well, historically. As an example, in 2014, \$495,000 was spent in the county on the Vilano Pier, dredging Salt Run, and boat ramp maintenance. He said without the matching funds provided by the District, many projects would be impossible.

He said in 2015, the grant application deadline will be March 15, and that the only new application will be the St. Johns County Airport Authority which is planning to rebuild its seaplane basin for barges.

Commissioner Blow said a better barge facility at the airport will assure continued use of Grumman's facility for military aircraft production and will have a huge cumulative

economic effect. Chairman Dixon said that with a better basin, barges will be able to load artificial reef material at the airport instead of transporting to Jacksonville for loading. This would lessen transport costs and stretch artificial reef dollars.

In response to questions by Commissioner Helman, Commissioner Blow said each presenter is given five minutes and each FIND commissioner scores each project. The scores are tabulated by staff and the projects are funded until the money runs out. He added that FIND has an interest in keeping Salt Run dredged because it needs to pipe sand from the flood shoal to the beach every three to five years.

C. Discussion regarding map update - Commissioners

Elyse Kemper discussed the expense in producing the 2005 version of the aerial map of the inlet and bay. She said the University of Florida Sea Grant was paid about \$25,000 and the printer was paid about \$15,000. Commissioners discussed the map and the concensus of the Board was that the Sea Grant office should be contacted to determine the cost of updating the map.

D. Discussion regarding allocating budget amounts for special projects - Commissioners

Chairman Dixon asked FIND Commissioner Blow to brief the Board on plans for artificial reef construction in the next year. Commissioner Blow said St. Johns County is seeking more concrete this year for the Andy King reef and that the contractor now wants to load material from the Luhrs site on the San Sebastian River. He said the county will also be getting money from the Tourist Development Council and that a donation of \$25,000 from the District would be a huge assist. Ten thousand tons of concrete is now stockpiled at the airport awaiting deposit offshore. This amount will last several years.

In response to questioning by Commissioner Helman, Mr. Blow said one barge of concrete is about 900 tons and costs approximately \$70,000 to move offshore and deposit on the 40 acre site of the Andy King reef.

Chairman Dixon said a problem has arisen with the FDEP revision of the Inlet Management Plan. The plan calls for the deposit of one-third of the sand from inlet dredging onto beaches north of the inlet, but no permit exists for such placement. Current renourishment projects all deposit on beaches to the south because that is where their permits direct the sand be sent. He said if the issue remains unresolved until a project is begun, then it will be too late.

Commissioners then discussed issues regarding the collapse of the groin or "jetty" on the north side of the inlet. Chairman Dixon said acres of sand have accumulated in the inlet in the past decades because the groin no longer protects the inlet from the southward migration of beach sand. Commissioner Hennessey said techniques for building or repairing such structures have completely changed since this one was built. Ken Craig said he would contact ACOE to arrange a meeting in the near future about how to repair the groin. He added the inlet is too wide for the amount of water passing through it each day and this results in a continuing deposit of sand on Porpoise Point.

In response to questions by Commissioner Helman, Commissioner Hennessey said the IMP has broad goals for the placement of dredge sand north of the inlet but offers no authorization for any of that activity. Mr. Craig said DEP's numbers were taken from the sand budget developed by the Corps of Engineers and that no determination of placement areas is necessarily permanent. Commissioner Blow said DEP ignored all of the District's concerns and wants their own plan instead. He added that the IMP should have provided for the deposit of sand on the ebb shoal in emergencies requiring the use of a hopper dredge because huge amounts of time and money are wasted transferring to distant dump areas.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commander Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police Department, announced there are no derelict vessels within the Port District boundaries at this time and that, since beginning the program, 105 vessels have been removed from local waters. Only Lee and Manatee Counties have similar programs. He said the City's budget for this work is completely depleted and that fifteen thousand dollars will be needed in the coming year. He also said the amount budgeted by the District to assist the City with overtime pay for marine officers is sufficient.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said his agency focuses on environmental safety and public safety when evaluating derelicts. Their recent efforts to take violators to court have worked well and compliance is increasing. Several vessels in the area are suffering from neglect to the extent some have sunken or broken loose and drifted, but none represent a hazard to public safety at this time.

Consultant Ken Krauter welcomed Commissioners Helman and Rivers to the Board and offered to prepare updates to the District Handbook.

Ellis Zahra, Friends of Summer Haven River, thanked Tom Rivers for his early support of the restoration project. He said the next phase will be obtaining funding for plans and specifications. Taylor Engineering has estimated the cost of planning to be in the 75-100 thousand dollar range. They plan to seek funding from FIND, FDEP, FWC and private grants and wish to channel funds through an account operated by the District as permittee for the project.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Rivers said he was pleased to be back on the Board and is looking forward to working together for the next four years. Commissioner Helman said he was excited to be on the Board and looks forward to learning how the District functions. Chairman Dixon welcomed everyone and said he was pleased that someone from the marine industry had become a commissioner. He also noted that Commissioner Rivers has lived on Porpoise Point for more than thirty years.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting will be held on December 16, 2014 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Commissioners agreed that the Florida Sea Grant office would be contacted to determine the cost of updating the aerial map of the inlet and bay.
2. Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering said he would contact ACOE to arrange a meeting in the near future about how to repair the groin or “jetty” on the north side of the inlet.

wk/rg/port/minutes-2014/11-18-14 meeting