

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 19, 2013**

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 19, 2013.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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**

Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioners Herb Rippe, Jerry Dixon, Chuck Hennessey and Jay Bliss were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Jim Marino of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Secretary-Treasurer's Report was tabled until the next regular meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Chairman Benjamin moved to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2013 regular meeting and Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.**

**ENGINEERING REPORT**

Jim Marino delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He reported the dredging of St. Augustine Inlet was almost complete and that 184,000 cubic yards of sand will have been removed from the federal channel by the end of the project. The entire length

of the channel is now at a minimum depth of 16 feet. All of the sand taken from the inlet has been deposited on the beach of Anastasia State Park between markers R127 and R131A.

He then announced the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has issued the least tern incidental take permit for the Summer Haven River restoration project. He said the Friends of the Summer Haven River organization had received a copy of the permit and that the permit still needed to be signed by the District Chairman. FIND is expected to approve an easement allowing use of the spoil island in the Intracoastal Waterway (IW) in early 2014. Before FDEP can issue the final permit for the restoration project, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must also approve. He said approval is expected by all agencies.

Commissioner Rippe asked about the status of the pending revision of the Inlet Management Plan. He said some of the interested parties in Vilano Beach have raised new concerns about the effects of dredging and the fact none of the sand from the recent channel project went to the north beaches. Mr. Marino said the review of the IMP by FDEP is still pending. Commissioner Dixon said placing sand to the north will be difficult because of the distance and the difficult access to private beaches. Commissioner Hennessey said booster pumps would be needed to pump sand so far and that they would need to be land-based. Commissioner Rippe said the inlet is in better condition now than at any time in the last 20 years.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Discussion regarding District Application for Assistance-Commissioner Hennessey**

Commissioner Hennessey asked that this item be tabled until the next regular meeting in January, 2014. Commissioner Rippe asked how the funding application process outlined in Commissioner Hennessey's proposal meshes with the process used by the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND). Commissioner Dixon said applications for funding from FIND are submitted in March each year and are granted once annually. Applications to the Port District are often of this type but also of the ad hoc variety that may come only when the need arises. Rippe said any process adopted by the District should work for both types of requests, and coincide with FIND's process, as well.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Timing of future officer elections - Commissioner Rippe**

Commissioner Rippe discussed the timing of elections for Board officers. Counsel Jim Bedsole told the Board the District's charter calls for elections after new commissioners are seated, which is every other year.

**B. Discussion regarding National Maritime Heritage - Commissioner Rippe**

Commissioner Rippe discussed the issue of the National Maritime Heritage area designation requested by a local organization. He reminded the Board it had issued a conditional letter of support several years ago which supported the designation if such did not create any new restrictions on development within the area designated. He said he had contacted the leaders of the group and was convinced they intend to abide by the restrictions in the District's conditional letter of support. Commissioner Dixon said the St. Augustine City Commission supports the designation if the conditions proposed by the District are followed. Commissioner Bliss said the District should reiterate its position in another conditional letter of support. A consensus of commissioners directed counsel to draft such a letter and present it for review at the next meeting.

**C. Discussion regarding event fees on public property - Commissioner Dixon**

Commissioner Dixon discussed a recent decision by the City of St. Augustine to charge the expenses of special events to the organizations holding the events. In doing so, the City exempted many events but did not exempt the Regatta of Lights, held by St. Augustine Yacht Club and sponsored by the District. He said the District has given the City a half-million dollars in the past decade and that the Regatta should have received an exemption. The City will vote on the exemption at its next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, reported two boats had been damaged in the recent northeaster when they dragged anchors in Matanzas Bay. One of the vessels sank beneath the Bridge of Lions. Commissioner Bliss mentioned the owner of a boat removed from the San Sebastian River had sued the City in federal court. Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police Department, said the owner's boat had been removed from the water because it leaked fuel.

**On a motion by Commissioner Bliss, seconded by Commissioner Rippe, the Board unanimously voted to cancel the December, 2014 regular meeting.**

Mr. Piggott said FWC is deciding whether to extend St. Augustine's maritime pilot program. He said the City had received a high number of responses to a survey about the mooring regulation program. Commissioner Bliss said the current program ends in July, 2014 and that FWC could extend it by up to three years. Mr. Piggott said the City wants to extend the program. Commissioner Benjamin said the mooring fields and the pilot program have been a benefit to the boating community. Bob Masterson, Pelican Reef Drive, said the mooring fields have been a relief to people like himself who own docks on Matanzas Bay. Commissioner Dixon said the pilot program's rules against anchoring near existing docks has added a good safety factor.

**COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

There were no commissioner comments. However, Mr. Marino said Taylor Engineering’s contract with the District would expire by the next meeting in January, and that he would like some assurance from the Board that it will be renewed. A concensus of commissioners agreed that Taylor will remain as District engineers. Mr. Marino said they would have the renewal agreement ready for consideration at the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Benjamin announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, January 21, 2014.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman