

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, November 19, 2019

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, 2019.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

3. **ROLL CALL**

Chairman Barry Benjamin, Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers, Commissioners Matt Brown, Sandy Flowers and Chris Way were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Mike Trudnak of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

4. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

A motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the agenda was seconded by Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ed Slavin
Merrill Roland

6. **GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS**

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, advised the board the replica ship Santa Maria will be visiting St. Augustine next weekend and will be open for tours. In December, dredging will begin in Salt Run and the entire channel will be dredged. Finally, he said the grant application will be submitted to FIND in March, 2020, for future funding of the Salt Run maintenance dredging. The city is requesting fifty thousand dollars in local match funds for the project. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Piggott explained that the grant cycle for Salt Run dredging is three years at \$150,000 per year from FIND and \$50,000 matching funds per year from the District.

A motion by Commissioner Way to approve the grant of \$50,000 for matching funds for the current FIND grant cycle was seconded by Commissioner Brown and passed unanimously.

Teddy Meyer, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, said the design phase has begun for the Doug Crane Park improvements and construction is scheduled for Summer, 2020. He said the county has a one-million dollar surplus which will probably be reserved for use as matching funds whenever possible, and that the county commission has declined to impose launch fees for boat ramps or for off-beach parking. In response to questions from Commissioner Brown, Mr. Meyer said the county is negotiating with the Treasure Beach dredging contractor to dredge the Butler Boat Ramp before the dredge project is demobilized.

Officer Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, reported that Marker 5 in Salt Run has been hit again and is leaning. He said two buoys in the inlet are also off station and that one is on the beach.

7. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report for activity in the first month of Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The District has spent a total of \$32,048 for operating expenses and district projects. As of October 31, 2019, the District had \$544,486 in funds designated for projects and expenses, and a reserve of \$1,594,905. Tax revenue of \$570,634 is expected by the end of fiscal Year 2019-2020.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Vice-Chairman Rivers to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 15, 2019, was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.

9. ENGINEERING REPORT

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said St. Johns County will be receiving a FEMA grant for the repair of the most recent breach area. He said the county wants to dredge the south end of the Summer Haven River for the sand to repair the breach but the FEMA grant stipulates the least expensive alternative must be employed. He said the cheapest alternative could be trucking the sand in from the mainland rather than dredging, although no decision has been made yet.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A) Request to have a police officer attend meetings

Commander Ashcroft, St. Augustine Beach Police Department, presented his agency's position on the utility of having an officer attend board meetings. He said paying an off-duty officer was the best alternative and would avoid taking his officers off the street. He added that in the future the city will charge the District for police services if they are called upon during a meeting.

A motion by Commissioner Way declining to have an officer at all meetings was seconded by Commissioner Flowers and passed unanimously.

B) Update regarding USACE meeting held on October 18, 2019

Commissioner Flowers reported to the board regarding the meeting she arranged with representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers to review the options, if any, for assistance with the Summer Haven situation. She said they indicated there would be some assistance available for emergency shoreline protection and environmental restoration, and that a question still remains as to whether the county will join in an application for assistance. Mr. Trudnak said he will inquire with county staff.

C) Public works funding for projects

William Tredik, Public Works Director for the City of St. Augustine Beach, presented three projects planned by the city and asked the board for its support with funding. The first is a sidewalk along A Street from A1A Beach Boulevard to the ocean. The second is improvements to Ocean Hammock Park, and the third is a dune walk-over for the east end of 5th Street. Mr. Tredik presented photographs and diagrams of the respective project plans and discussed why each project is necessary. The projects ranged in cost from forty to one-hundred forty thousand dollars. Commissioners were generally supportive of the projects presented, especially the dune walk-overs, but asked Mr. Tredik to come back to the board after other funding sources had been explored.

D) ADA compliance

Commissioner Flowers said she is interested in having board meetings televised live in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. St. Augustine Beach City Manager Max Royale said the city does not televise its meetings but they are “live-streamed” on the internet and that it is possible to watch them in real time with internet access. He said they are video and audio only, and are not closed-captioned.

Chairman Benjamin invited Merrill Roland, a member of the public, to comment. Mr. Roland said no technician is necessary if a camera is placed so as to allow the entire meeting to be viewed at once and that it would be inexpensive. Ed Slavin also spoke in support of the idea.

In response to questions by Vice-Chairman Rivers, Mr. Royale said the city uses technicians to run its system and that they are available for a fee. He said he would return in December with a cost estimate. This item was then tabled until the next meeting.

E) Unsealing letters of interest regarding engineering

Ms. Kemper and Mr. Bedsole explained that three responses were provided to the District’s notice of request for qualifications for engineering services. Ms. Kemper said she will provide commissioners with review copies of each proposal so they can discuss them at the next meeting. Commissioner Way then opened the proposals and handed them back to Ms. Kemper.

11. OLD BUSINESS

A) **May Street**

Commissioner Flowers said the FDOT is willing to lease the District the road-side area at the intersection of May Street and Hospital Creek for one dollar per year and that the City of St. Augustine needs to review the plans. Commissioner Flowers provided a photograph of the area taken a very high tide and it was largely inundated. She estimated the grading would cost in the area of thirty thousand dollars because FDOT wants a much wider driveway to the water. Also, some improvements may be needed for parking. She said she will keep working on it. Commissioner Rivers commented that the ramp seems to get a lot of use as it exists now and that he likes it as it is.

B) **Signage request for Summer Haven River**

Commissioner Flowers voiced her concern, and the concern of residents of Summer Haven, that boats are speeding through the newly-opened portions of the river. She said a sign would cost \$1,300 to purchase, and that it could be placed on the bank of the river. Commissioner Brown said he would like to know the position of FDEP before erecting a speed limit sign. Mr. Trudnak said a permit is needed from FDEP in order to post a regulatory sign.

Commissioner Flowers moved to acquire and post a sign but the motion failed to obtain a second.

C) **Summer Haven insurance claim**

Mr. Bedsole reported to the board on the possibility of pursuing an insurance claim for damages sustained in Hurricane Irma at the Summer Haven restoration project. He said the contractor's insurance company had provided upon request several dozen policies covering the period of 2015 to the present, and that none of the policies produced to date contain provisions for property damage of the kind suffered during Hurricane Irma. He said there was apparently no "all risk" policy as required by the contract for construction and that it was the contractor's responsibility to carry the proper coverage.

Terry Parker, Friends of Summer Haven River, asked about the status of the permit modification and the road repair for the south end of the river. Mr. Trudnak said drawings for the project work will be done within a month, but that getting a permit from USACE will take time. In response to questions from Commissioner Way, Mr. Trudnak said FEMA requires use of the least-cost alternative, which could mean trucking sand to the site instead of dredging the river. He said they will begin first in the overwash area on the west side of the coastal construction control line. Completely dredging out the south end will require waiting up to two years for a USACE permit.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Slavin

13. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Flowers asked about the procedure used to advertise the engineering position. Ms. Kemper explained that the notice was published on the District website and on the St. Augustine Record's website and newspaper. She said firms contacted her from all over the nation and that the same information had been provided to all of them. Commissioner Flowers also asked about a FEMA deadline for damage claims from the most recent hurricane. Mr. Trudnak said the District had no damage to its project and could not make a claim. St. Johns County, however, did have damage from the overwash at Summer Haven and has made a claim.

Vice-Chairman Rivers invited all commissioners to the annual Regatta of Lights on Saturday, December 14, 2019, and reminded the board that Commissioner Brown will be this year's honorary judge.

14. NEXT MEETING:

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

15. ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman