

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, February 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, February 19, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

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

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper reported that as of January 31, 2013, only \$585 of the \$8,000 committed to St. Augustine Police Department overtime pay has been spent. Only \$2,776 of the \$15,000. committed to the St. Johns County Sheriff's office has been spent. Of \$40,000 budgeted for permitting the Summer Haven River Project, only \$4,170.00 has been spent. Net funds available for use by the District now total \$1,742,850. Of expected tax revenue of \$370,155, we have received \$313,304. As of February 15, 2013, net funds available equal \$1,733,710.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Commissioner Jay Bliss, seconded by Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2013 regular meeting, was unanimously passed.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Dr. Steve Schropp delivered the report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Dr. Schropp said Taylor would be submitting responses to requests by FDEP for additional information this week and that this should complete this phase of the application for the permit for the Summer Haven River restoration project. In Salt Run, a new “No Wake” sign was installed. Also, the U.S. Coast Guard has reported marker no. 10 and a jetty marker are gone and he has talked to Chairman Dixon about replacing them.

Last month, Dr. Srinivas was here to talk about the draft IMP and the Board agreed to have FDEP representatives come to the regular March meeting. Chairman Dixon said they want to send four representatives to the March meeting. Also, they want all the other interested parties and agencies to be here for the meeting, if possible. Commissioner Rippe said he has a list of attendees from the previous workshop on the IMP and will give it to the Secretary so everyone will receive an invitation.

In response to a question by Commissioner Bliss regarding possible action by the Board at the next meeting, Dr. Schropp said no action items should be planned as FDEP representatives will be looking for input on the final draft of the IMP, and will not be seeking approval of it, yet.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Avid Design Group - Website Proposal.

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper introduced Tom Reed and Jennifer Reed of Avid Design Group regarding the District’s website. She said the contract with Vivid Media expired and she would like to use a local agency to rework the website. Mr. and Mrs. Reed explained their proposal for the site which involves totally rebuilding it to offer more data to users and to the District, to add links to weather and other marine resources, and to make navigation of the site easier and more appealing to users.

Commissioner Rippe asked whether they had any information on activity at the current site and none was available. He said the data now shown on the site should stay but that it needed a new theme or vision for the future. In response to questions by Commissioner Bliss, the presenters said the new site could be operational within two to three weeks in a modernized format making it much more of a public resource. Commissioners Bliss and Benjamin volunteered to work with Avid Design to develop the new site.

Commissioner Bliss moved to accept the proposal for the internet website presented by Avid Design Group. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benjamin and passed by a unanimous vote.

B. Salt Run & San Sebastian River Dredge 2014 - Jim Piggott.

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, explained two new contracts needed from the District to provide proof of matching funds for the City's upcoming applications for grants from FIND. The two grants are for dredging in the San Sebastian River and Salt Run. The San Sebastian River project, if approved, will be shared on a cost-basis of \$420,000 with FIND paying 50% and the District paying 50%, or \$210,000. Salt Run, if approved, will be shared 75/25 on a cost-basis of \$280,000, making the District's share \$70,000 or a total of \$280,000 for both projects.

Commissioner Rippe said he appreciated that the projects are funded on a cost-sharing basis with another agency, but did not like the fact he had no information in his agenda package about the projects. Commissioner Benjamin said he was comfortable with the request because this was a long-term commitment begun by the District and the City years ago. Chairman Dixon said the San Sebastian has not been dredged in decades and the District has a permit in hand. He said Salt Run has been the main priority but that the District's intention had always been to dredge the San Sebastian as funds became available. Commissioner Rippe said he perceives the District as having no strategy or priorities for its spending. Chairman Dixon said the Board should have a process like FIND where grants are considered together annually and priorities are set at that time.

Commissioner Benjamin said the Board knew about the planned work on the San Sebastian two years ago and that dredging should be the Board's top priority. Commissioner Bliss said the San Sebastian does a good job of scouring itself and that is why it has been so long without dredging.

District Counsel Jim Bedsole said contract language needs to be adjusted and brought up to date, but that if the Board agrees on the amounts, he can complete the contracts quickly and have them executed.

Commissioner Bliss said he would like documentation on each step of the process and would appreciate having documentation every time the Board is asked to approve a funding request. In response to questions by Commissioner Rippe, Mr. Piggott explained the dredging will begin at the King Street bridge and move down the river from there as funding is made available.

Chairman Dixon said the District obtained the permit for the San Sebastian River project years ago but never funded it because dredging Salt Run was a priority and no funds remained. Commissioner Hennessey said it may help if the District focuses on one project at a time to control extra mobilization costs. He said this could be done by creating a mission and goals system.

In response to questions from Commissioner Rippe, Mr. Piggott said FIND requires a copy of the City's permit and FIND's own application forms in order to apply for grants. Commissioner Rippe said he would like to review the entire package filed by the City. Dr. Schropp said all dredging projects are defined by the terms of the applicable permits, including the San Sebastian River project, the only variable being how far this year's grant will advance the project. Commissioner Hennessey said a brief history of the project would

have been helpful. In response to a question by Commissioner Bliss, Mr. Piggott said the deadline for the grant application is March 31, 2013.

On a motion by Commissioner Rippe, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, the Board unanimously approved the request for \$210,000 matching funds for the San Sebastian River project contingent upon the approval by the Florida Inland Navigation District for an additional \$210,000 in matching funds from that agency.

On a motion by Commissioner Rippe, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, the Board unanimously approved the request for \$70,000 matching funds for the Salt Run project contingent upon the approval by the Florida Inland Navigation District of an additional \$210,000 in matching funds from that agency.

On another matter, Mr. Piggott said they City advertised for bids for the Dolphin Drive basin and received two bids, one for \$73,000 and one for \$170,000. He reminded the Board they previously approved \$35,750 for that job based on an estimate by F & A Marine. He said the City is not requesting any money at this time. Also, the material for the new breakwater at the City Marina has arrived.

Consultant, Ken Krauter spoke at the request of Chairman Dixon to address issues raised pertaining to the Board's process in meetings. He said when decisions are made by the Board without adequate information, the Board may not be meeting its fiduciary obligations or the terms of its charter. He said individual decisions must be guided by a strategic plan or roadmap, and must occur within a transaction where the Board is informed and acts on information and analysis.

Commissioner Hennessey said he likes FIND's example of requiring project proposals to be presented one time each year. Mr. Krauter said a false sense of urgency may motivate the Board to make decisions impulsively rather than with the requisite time for study and review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commander Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police Department, appeared and stated the St. Augustine Police Department was not asking for funding of any kind from the Board at this time. In response to questions from Commissioner Rippe, Fricke explained the payment for replacing the outboard motor on the police boat was rejected by Homeland Security because it was supposed to have listed "Customs and Boarder Patrol" as payee. Other than that detail, however, the job was moving ahead.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission commented that FWC has been receiving inquiries about whether shell-fishing will be restored in the Summer Haven River. He said he believes this is because the public shell-fishing beds in Salt Run have been depleted by overuse due to the destruction of the beds in the Summer Haven River.

Linda Ginn, Friends of Summer Haven River, discussed the requirement by FWC that a tern nesting habitat of several acres be provided in the plan for restoration. She said this year there were three acres of habitat for seven individual birds, but that FWC wants to require

eleven acres. She said most of the birds have moved to Fort Matanzas but that vegetation is taking over the nest area there. She said the least tern is listed as a species of least concern and that the largest nesting colony is on the roof of the Winn Dixie store in St. Augustine.

Dr. Schropp said information going to FDEP this week says three acres is adequate for the few birds likely to remain at the restoration site. Mrs. Ginn added that blockage of the river has created new shoals at Matanzas Inlet and is contributing to an increase in boating safety hazards there. Lt. Zukowski went on to say derelict vessel Tiger Lily is ready to be removed and that the court hearing on removal of the steel barge aground south of Matanzas Inlet has been continued until March. He said there have been no accidents since the last meeting although one live-aboard boat burned to the waterline because of an electrical fire.

Mark Helman, Conch House Marina, said there is a submerged piling near the south jetty which is a hazard, in his opinion. He said the response of the City fire boat to the fire previously mentioned was slowed by a malfunction with the boat lift used to launch it.

Tim Mason, resident of St. Augustine Beach, discussed the de-funding of the weather buoy 40 miles offshore by NOAA. He suggested the District Chairman write a letter to officials at NOAA in Washington, D.C. to ask for continued funding of the buoy's operation. He said it provides data at a cost of about \$70,000 per year.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Rippe asked Dr. Schropp if there were issues with the draft IMP. Dr. Schropp said funding is the main problem because the document indicates the District and the Army Corps of Engineers will fund inlet maintenance and repair, but no funds are available. Commissioner Benjamin added he has an issue with much of the terminology in the draft because it is ambiguous or imprecise.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

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