

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF INLET MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHOP

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

The Inlet Management Plan 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 Tuesday, April 9, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Jay Bliss called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Jay Bliss, Herb Rippe and Chuck Hennessey were in attendance. Chairman Jerry Dixon arrived at 3:25 p.m. Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin was absent.

Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering presented information on the Inlet Management Plan (IMP). Three federal projects exist around St. Augustine Inlet with separate funding for each. They are the inlet federal navigation channel, the Intracoastal Waterway navigation channel, and the St. Johns County shore protection project. The St. Augustine Port, Waterway and Beach District (District) is the local sponsor for the St. Augustine Inlet. Funding for the inlet navigation channel is mainly from the federal shallow-draft navigation fund. The Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) is the sponsor for any work in the Intracoastal Waterway (IW) and St. Johns County is the local sponsor for erosion and beach renourishment projects.

The current IMP was adopted in 1998 and has never been revised. The plan calls for the bypassing of suitable sediment to beaches south of the inlet at the rate of 510,000 cubic yards per year. It also calls for improvements to the jetties and monitoring beach conditions.

The draft IMP recently presented by FDEP calls for bypassing 279,000 cubic yards of sand per year with one-third of the total being sent north via hydraulic pumping and truck hauling. The primary borrow site for sand is designated as the south lobe of the ebb shoal with sand also taken from the inlet navigation channel and other sources. He added that funding is now available through Hurricane Sandy relief funds for dredging the entire inlet navigation channel.

Since 2002, the shore protection project has deposited 9 million cubic yards of sand onto St. Augustine Beach. Since 1999, over 600,000 cubic yards of sand has been taken from the IW and the inlet and deposited on the south beaches. The balance of the sand placed on the beach has come from the ebb shoal. Commissioner Rippe said he would like to see the IMP require shore protection sand to come from the inlet channel and Porpoise Point before taking anything from the ebb shoal. He said it costs only 50¢ more per cubic yard to transfer and, in the event sand is sent north, would be much cheaper to transport. Commissioner Hennessey said the ebb shoal is the cheapest source of sand. He said he would like to remove any mention of the “relic” shoal as a sand source to ensure the inlet channel is the initial focus of attention as a borrow site.

Commissioner Dixon said the need for sand on St. Augustine Beach is decreasing while the need for removal of sand from the inlet is increasing. Commissioner Hennessey said the focus of the draft IMP appears to be beach renourishment rather than an inlet management. Mr. Craig said the draft IMP calls for bypassing an average of 279,000 cubic yards per year. Of that, 93,000 would go to north beaches, 186,000 would go to south beaches and an annual borrow limit of 179,000 would be placed on the south lobe of the ebb shoal.

Commissioner Bliss asked what obligation the District has to accomplish sand bypassing. Mr. Craig said there have been lawsuits regarding inlet maintenance that have gone against local agencies where the agency failed to follow the local inlet management plan.

Commissioner Rippe suggested reference to the “relic” shoal should be removed from the draft IMP to deter the use of offshore sand sources. He also suggested working more closely with St. Johns County during any permit process and pre-qualifying the flood shoal as a source of beach-quality sand.

Commissioner Hennessey recalled that the entire length of the inlet channel was not dredged in 2012. Commissioner Rippe said this was because the shore protection permit omits a portion of the inlet channel as a dredge site or sand borrow source. Commissioner Hennessey said the IMP needs to clearly indicate that the entire federal navigation channel at St. Augustine Inlet may be used as a borrow area for shore protection sand.

Commissioner Rippe said the draft IMP requires monitoring of beach erosion and asked Dr. Schropp how much monitoring would cost each year. Dr. Schropp estimated an adequate monitoring program will cost at least \$40,000 per year, if not more. He also mentioned Danielle Irvin said in her address that storing sand on the ebb shoal would be allowed in order to make inlet dredging more cost effective.

Commissioner Bliss said it is important for the Board to relate to FDEP that the District is only the local sponsor of the inlet and is not responsible for the cost of dredging or for any shore protection expense. He said the financial liabilities of these projects are far greater than any ability of the District to pay and that the District was never designed to assume the role FDEP seems to envision for it. Commissioner Rippe agreed saying the language of the IMP should reflect that USACE is accountable for the expense of maintenance of the federal navigation channel at St. Augustine Inlet. Dr. Schropp added that no shore protection funds are available from the State of Florida for navigation projects. He said Taylor Engineering would draft a response letter to FDEP and present it for review at the next regular meeting.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes4-9-13