

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, June 21, 2016

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, June 21, 2016.

CALL TO ORDER

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

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report to the Board. As of May 31, 2016, the District has spent a total of \$311,192 in committed funds, operating expenses and non-committed funds. Of the non-committed funds, \$117,910 was for the Summer Haven River restoration and will be reimbursed to the District by DEP. As of that date, net available District funds totaled \$1,853,507, with no more revenue expected for the balance of the fiscal year.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

At Mr. Bedsole's request, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He reported on a meeting held with officials from the Department of Environmental Protection, FIND, the Port District, St. Johns County, and representatives of the South Ponte Vedra-Vilano Beach Property Owners Association regarding the objection now pending on the harbor/ICW dredging project by FIND and ACOE. Mr. Craig said the discussion at the meeting centered on the contention by property owners that any project transporting sand near the inlet should be required to delegate a portion of that sand to the north beaches pursuant to the revised Inlet Management Plan.

Chairman Dixon commented that when the revised IMP was under consideration, the Port asked FDEP for a number of items to be included in the new IMP. He said FDEP then produced the revised IMP and completely ignored the Port board's input. He said representatives from FDEP at the meeting had little comprehension of the practical financial realities and limitations of the Port and that the Port and FIND are doing everything possible to comply with the IMP at the present time. He added that no transfer of sand to the north beaches will be possible without a permit. He said substantial differences exist between the St. Augustine Beach renourishment program with public beaches, and the private beach issues north of the inlet, such as equipment access and threats to Highway A1A.

Carl Blow, St. Johns County's representative to FIND, said he understood the north beach owners' position to be they believe removing sand from the ebb shoal is causing their beaches to erode and they oppose taking any sand from there during the 2017 beach renourishment cycle for St. Augustine Beach. He said he and Chairman Dixon suggested that the flood shoal inside the inlet could be a significant source of beach sand for the north beaches and could contain as much as two hundred thousand cubic yards of useable sand. Besides a permit, easements affording access to the north beaches will be needed from property owners. St. Johns County would be a more appropriate sponsor for the north beaches permit because it already has an extensive real estate staff capable of planning and obtaining the necessary access rights.

Linda Chambliss, representing the north beaches association, said the reason the old IMP was revised was to make it comply with State statutes, and that permanent easements are not necessary for the north beaches, only temporary ones. Mrs. Chambliss cited a beach erosion study as evidence that erosion occurs twelve to eighteen months after the ebb shoal is dredged and stops two to five years after dredging. She said that since the IMP was revised in 2012, the north beaches should have been getting sand from inlet dredge projects. She thanked the board for all of their assistance to date and said she does not want work on the permit to stop because the availability of funds is unpredictable and they will get no sand without a permit. She said she agrees with Chairman Dixon and FIND Commissioner Blow that St. Johns County should sponsor the permit.

Chairman Dixon said sand is available from inside the inlet now, and would not require dredging the ebb shoal. Mr. Blow said a permit to dredge the flood shoal for sand for the north beaches could mean more federal dollars may be available and perhaps a FIND grant, as well. He said representatives from the Corps of Engineers are studying offshore donor sites but that federal funds to place the sand on local beaches may not be available.

Chairman Dixon said the issue of the north "jetty", or groin, was mentioned during the meeting. Mr. Craig said the groin leaks a lot of sand and no longer functions to protect the inlet from sand movement.

Mr. Craig then discussed a grant request for the Summer Haven River restoration project he presented with Linda and Jay Ginn at a recent FIND meeting in Cocoa, Florida. They asked for fifty thousand dollars. Mr. Blow said there is 12.5 million dollars available for grants this year and 18 million in grant requests. He said the grant requests will be individually rated

by each FIND board member and ranked accordingly. Grants are not awarded to projects which lack permits, and water management districts and FDEP are requesting grants this year in addition to all the usual applicants.

Mr. Craig said most of the plans and specifications for the restoration have been submitted to DEP as well as the initial round of invoices for reimbursement. He and Mr. Bedsole reported on a telephone conference they had with officials from FDEP, the Department of Financial Services, and Ellis Zahra on June 15, 2016, regarding the 2.9 million dollars being advanced to the Port District for the project. Mr. Bedsole said DFS and DEP will be providing an amendment to the Port's current disbursement agreement with DEP which will allow the State to advance funds to the Port instead of reimbursing the Port for funds expended. He said Mr. Craig answered their questions regarding the construction schedule and that State officials were satisfied the funding mechanism would be a success.

Mr. Craig advised that Marker 4 is missing from Salt Run and that he is arranging for replacement. He said the marker was hit by a vessel and had broken off and drifted away.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, said the El Galeon will return to St. Augustine for the Christmas Holidays and will then leave for a two-year tour of the Pacific. He said the ship is in the Great Lakes now and will visit Puerto Rico before coming here.

The city has asked FDOT to extend the Bridge of Lions scheduled openings from the current 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., to 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. to avoid traffic disruptions. After scheduled opening hours, the bridge opens on demand which has caused traffic delays downtown. In response to questions by Commissioner Rivers, Mr. Piggott said DOT pays for the electricity used by the Bridge of Lions.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, said the owner of the vessel that hit Marker 4 reported the collision and filed an accident report with FWC. He said FWC advised the owner he may be contacted by the Port regarding repair costs for the marker.

He reported several derelict vessels including one at Crane Park which is scheduled for recovery and disposal, one at Anastasia State Park which is going to court, one at Butler Boat Ramp which has broken its moorings and is sometimes a hazard to navigation, and one small boat on South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Wil Smith, St. Johns County, said the county has retained a contractor to deploy more concrete on the Andy King artificial reef and that it should begin soon. The county has applied to FIND for a grant to dredge the Butler Boat Ramp and the Vilano Ramp needs annual dredging to maintain depth. He said more money for the Vilano Ramp should be available soon because of the multi-agency boat lift being built there.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on July 19, 2016 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2016/Minutes 6-21-16 meeting