

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, January 19, 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, January 19, 2016.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:05 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 Mark Helman, Chuck Hennessey and Tom Rivers were in attendance. 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 December 31, 2015, the district had spent \$5,895 on law enforcement overtime for marine units, \$6,500 for the annual Regatta of Lights, and \$2,828 for repairs to the City of St. Augustine pumpout boat, and \$48,201 in operating expenses. Net funds available at that time were \$1,709,574. The district has received \$335,930 in tax income this year with \$84,584 expected. Ms. Kemper reported \$150,000 in funds were transferred from the operating account to the money market account to increase interest income.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chairman Benjamin moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2015 regular meeting, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivers. The motion passed unanimously.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said the application for the permit for South Ponte Vedra/Vilano Beach project was submitted on December 31, 2015, and was posted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on January 5, 2016. The next step will be the issuance by FDEP of written requests for additional information, probably by early February.

In response to questions by Commissioner Helman at the last meeting, Mr. Craig gathered some information regarding the anchoring system used for channel markers in St. Augustine Inlet. He said the anchors are either cast iron or concrete and that the size of the anchor is mainly dependent upon the size of vessel which can be used to launch and retrieve them. Commissioner Helman questioned why the inlet markers seem to drift off station so often. Mr. Craig said the anchors may not be of sufficient size and weight to prevent movement.

Mr. Craig said Taylor Engineering is revising plans for the Summer Haven River restoration project to allow greater flexibility in the extent of dredging and the placement of sand on the beach. He added that the firm which did the bathymetric survey of the restoration area is owed almost forty thousand dollars and has not been paid. Chairman Dixon said he was aware of the problem but it was his understanding legislative grant funds would soon be available because the distribution agreement between the district and FDEP was nearly complete. Mr. Bedsole said the agreement should be presented by FDEP to the district for review within the week. He also explained the contract will specify reimbursement of the district for funds spent on the project. This will require that district funds be paid prior to reimbursement by FDEP from the legislative grant. In response to questions by Commissioner Hennessey, Mr. Bedsole said the time required for reimbursement by FDEP is unknown at this point.

Mr. Craig then said dredge and fill operations are now referred to by the Army Corps of Engineers as "regional sediment management" and that St. Augustine Inlet is often cited by the Corps as an example of successful regional sediment management. This is because the need for inlet dredging is complemented by the immediate use of the sand for local beach renourishment.

OLD BUSINESS:

A) Port of Call Grant Request - Catherine Rogers and Sandy Flowers

Catherine Rogers and Sandy Flowers appeared on their own behalf as the operators of the cruiser's shuttle service known as Port of Call. Ms. Flowers said they made a formal grant request to the district after being advised to do so by officials at the City of St. Augustine. She said Publix grocery stores had considered and finally rejected Port of Call's request for a \$9,400 grant to furnish half their budget. Chairman Dixon said he liked the service and all the commissioners agreed that the service was worthwhile and helpful to cruisers and local businesses. However, funding a bus or shuttle service is outside of the district's statutory purpose as stated in its charter. Commissioner Helman said he believes St. Augustine should provide money for the service from the budget of the City Marina. Sam Adukiewicz, City Marina director, said the city could not provide money because it was not included in the budget for this year.

In response to questions by Vice-Chairman Benjamin and Chairman Dixon, Mr. Bedsole said funding a bus or taxi service appeared to be very remote from the purposes outlined in the district's charter. He said the district could lawfully support Port of Call only by purchasing advertising. In response to questions from Mr. Bedsole, Ms. Flowers said most advertisers are paying about a hundred dollars a month for ads on the Port of Call shuttle bus. In response to a request from Commissioner Rivers, port consultant Ken Krauter said he

interpreted the district's charter to require a finding of need before the port could purchase advertising. Vice-Chairman Benjamin said he thinks the City of St. Augustine should be supporting the shuttle.

Commissioner Hennessey moved to deny the grant request by Port of Call. Vice-Chairman Benjamin seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Wil Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation for St. Johns County, suggested Port of Call work with the City of St. Augustine on its on-going mobility study. He added that the Tourist Development Council may be receptive to a grant request because it supports tourism.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Adukiewicz continued by explaining Taylor Engineering is progressing with the city's grant application to FIND for marker pilings for the shoal south of the City Marina. Chairman Dixon said the city's mooring field is often nearly full and the city has to decide whether to set aside space for transient vessels if it wants to encourage marine tourism. Mr. Adukiewicz said St. Augustine is getting bigger vessels that are sometimes too large for the mooring field or draw too much water. He said a better source of information for current inlet conditions is needed to encourage more captains to bring their boats through St. Augustine Inlet.

Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police Department, said two vessels broke their moorings during high winds last month. One left the area under its own power after hitting the Bridge of Lions. The other went aground south of downtown on the west side of the bay. That vessel's owner is being sought. He said the city spends very little for derelict vessel removal compared to a few years ago and that the advent of the mooring fields created a huge change. More than a hundred derelict vessels have been removed since the program began.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), said the owner of the derelict vessel at Crane Park will go to trial in March and that the owner had refused all efforts by FWC to resolve the issue amicably. Another sailboat remains beached in the Intracoastal Waterway near Marineland. Its owner is due to appear in court in March but may avoid court by removing the vessel.

Lt. Zukowski said a chronic enforcement problem for FWC is the absence of or damage to buoys near area bridges. He said the courts are reluctant to penalize offenders if speed zones are not clearly marked. He said he hopes FWC will soon be able to install permanent signage on the bridges that has been planned for more than a year. He also recounted the recent death of a paddle boarder offshore from head trauma during bad weather and high seas. He stressed the importance of having a safety companion when on the water.

Right whale calving season is continuing and boaters are reminded to maintain idle speed within 500 yards of cows with calves. In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Lt.

Zukowski said shrimpers are unlimited in how close to shore they may operate, but are restricted to only two five hundred square foot nets within one mile of shore. Farther than one-mile offshore, any size nets may be used. No shrimper may fish closer than three miles to shore at night.

Wil Smith reported the county will soon begin soliciting bids for the deposit of an additional 25,000 tons of concrete on the Andy King artificial reef. This year, the concrete will be moved directly from storage at the airport to the forty acre reef site. He said the reef is now home to large numbers of grouper, snapper and flounder.

In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Smith said the renovation of the Vilano Fishing Pier will begin in February. The pier will be closed for eight months for the project. Some of the improvements will include the addition of electrical wiring to the pier and to the Vilano Floating Dock which is attached to the pier.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 16, 2016 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

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

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman