

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 21, 2017

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 21, 2017.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ROLL CALL

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioner Tom Rivers, Commissioner Mark Helman and Commissioner Chris Way were in attendance. Chairman Jerry Dixon was absent. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

4. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report. As of January 31, 2018, the District has spent a total of \$71,654 including \$57,825 in operating expenses. The special account for the Summer Haven River restoration now contains \$579,000. Net funds available now total \$1,710,998, and additional tax revenues of \$53,663 are expected.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the regular meeting in January, 2017 was tabled until the regular meeting of March 21, 2017.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He thanked Commissioner Helman for assisting with the visiting students from the United States Naval Academy who were sampling bottom sand from the bay for possible use in a bathymetric measurement study.

Mike Trudnak reported work has begun on the least tern mitigation area for the Summer Haven River restoration and that some geotubes had been removed from the river to allow for the USACE Matanzas/Intracoastal Waterway periodic maintenance project.

Mr. Trudnak then presented Change Order No. 3 to the construction contract for the restoration project, involving changes to the costs of dredging the shoal at the mouth of the Summer Haven River, a change in the cost of geotubes, and removal of turtles on the mitigation site.

A motion by Vice-Chairman Benjamin to approve Change Order Number 3 was seconded by Commissioner Way and unanimously approved.

Mr. Trudnak then told commissioners that avian predator control required by the Summer Haven River restoration project permit as imposed by FWC and FDEP will cost \$30,000. In response to questioning, commissioners were told avian predator control consists of removing predatory birds which would potentially take terns, eggs and hatchlings. The cost includes monitoring all other mitigation site conditions such as the electric fence and auditory bird calls twice a week during nesting season.

A motion by Commissioner Helman to approve up to \$40,000 for avian predator control on the least tern mitigation site was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed by a vote of 3 to 1.

7. **OLD BUSINESS : NONE**

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Off-Shore Focus - Joe Kistil TISIRI**

Joe Kistil made a presentation to commissioners regarding the benefits of an advertising campaign for the underwater diving and fishing sites offshore from St. Johns County, particularly artificial reefs. He said 8 billion dollars per year is spent in Florida for fishing and diving and that other counties are ahead of St. Johns County in investing in, and profiting from, these activities. His organization, TISIRI, promotes reef and diving sites and has published a guide of northeast Florida sites, which he shared with commissioners.

Commissioners had many questions about the presentation and asked for opinions from their consultant, their attorney, and FIND Commissioner Carl Blow. Mr. Blow said he agrees advertising brings in more business but said the urgent need now is to find funding to get the concrete already in storage moved offshore. He said 13,000 tons is stored on St. Augustine Airport property and needs to be used, but funds are scarce.

Commissioner Way questioned whether building artificial reefs offshore was actually within the purview of the District's charter. Vice-Chairman Benjamin said he would review the information provided and advised Mr. Kistil to return for the next board meeting for comments.

9. **GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:**

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, announced to commissioners that the three interlocal agreements the board approved last month to apply for FIND grants are completed and have

been delivered to the District Secretary for signing. He said they will be sent to FIND as a part of the city's grant applications.

Eric Hellstrom, St. Johns County Fire and Rescue, reported that construction of the Vilano Ramp boat lift has hit a serious snag. Core tests have shown the soil in the basin's bottom is very unsuitable for a foundation and will require extending deep pilings to support the structure. He said the money donated to the project by the District has not been spent and they are seeking more funding elsewhere to cope with the doubling of the project's costs. For now, their boats are stored at open slips in Commanche Cove.

Officer Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, reported on the activities of the SJSO Marine Unit during the past month. He said deputies spent 120 man-hours on the water conducting patrols, issuing citations, and conducting inspections. He said the temporary no-wake zone at Summer Haven has been extended until March 1, 2017.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, reported difficulties in enforcing speed zones around local bridges because of the lack of permanent signage. He said the buoys and signs in use now are a problem because signs are small and boaters run over the buoys. Ticketing boaters in these conditions is often felt to be unfair because signs may be hard to see or non-existent.

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow said the county has asked FIND to shift its placement area west to help repair damage to Old A1A near the breach at Summer Haven. FIND has also received a proposal from their contractor of \$300,000 for shifting the placement of sand from Anastasia State Park to the beaches north of St. Augustine Inlet. FIND has approved both expenses which total \$419,000.

The issue still to be resolved in the North Beaches work is the necessity for dozens of temporary construction easements to route pipes north from the inlet to destination areas for sand. Mr. Blow said the county's real estate department is in charge of obtaining the easements. He said most of this sand will come from the flood shoal in Matanzas Bay. He added dredging of the ebb shoal for sand may no longer be available. USACE is now studying distant offshore sites while the bay is filling up with sand. Ken Craig said the first step is to complete a survey of the bay bottom.

Linda Chambliss, South Ponte Vedra/Vilano Beach Association, thanked the board for their support in getting emergency sand distributions shifted onto beaches north of the inlet. In response, Chairman Dixon told Mrs. Chambliss all credit should go to FIND Commissioner Blow. Commissioner Blow said the dredge should reach St. Augustine in about 2 months when Matanzas Inlet/IW project is completed.

Chairman Dixon arrived at 4:00 p.m.

In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Ken Craig said the resources needed to fill the breach at Old A1A in Summer Haven, including the sand and the expense, were still within the budget set out in the restoration design. He said the cost still seemed to be within the total allocated for the restoration, not including post-project monitoring.

Linda Ginn, Friends of the Summer Haven River, said her organization wants the money spent on the breach repair reimbursed to the District by the county so as to insure the project has a cushion of funds for contingencies. Chairman Dixon agreed and said the District should pursue the matter.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

11. **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE**

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on March 21, 2017 in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2017/Minutes 1-17-17 meeting