

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, October 14, 2014

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, October 14, 2014.

CALL TO ORDER

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

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper delivered the report. As of September 30, 2014, the district has spent \$425,918 in budgeted categories including marine law enforcement overtime pay, artificial reef construction, derelict boat removal and dredging, plus \$105,091 for operating expenses, and \$34,830 in unbudgeted projects. All tax revenues expected for this fiscal year have been received and no more revenue is expected until November, 2014. As of October 8, 2014, net funds available for use by the district totaled \$1,100,562.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Benjamin moved to approve the minutes of the first public hearing held on September 11, 2014, the regular meeting of September 16, 2014, and the final public hearing held September 25, 2014. Commissioner Hennessey seconded the motion and it passed by a unanimous vote.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering delivered the engineering report. He presented three bids Taylor received for the repair and replacement of signage including 39 aids to navigation, 38 dayboards and one danger sign as well as wooden support structures. The lowest bid of \$5,485.00 was submitted by Brance Diversified. The highest bid of \$22,750 was submitted by Yelton Construction.

A motion by Chairman Rippe, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to approve the bid of Brance Diversified in the amount of \$5,485.00 was passed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Craig then shared a letter sent on behalf of the district to the Corps of Engineers regarding the failure of the groin structure, or jetty, at the north side of St. Augustine Inlet. Commissioner Rippe said he had received a note from the local project manager for the Corps commenting that the inlet was in good condition right now except for the constant seeping of sand onto Porpoise Point.

Andy Ames is no longer Beach Manager for St. Johns County after having been moved to another position. Mr. Craig said the county is seeking a replacement with experience in coastal zone management.

The county plans to begin refreshing the berm on the beach at Summer Haven using sand from dredging by FIND in the intracoastal waterway. The Corps of Engineers is beginning to plan for the shore protection project scheduled for 2020. Mr. Craig suggested having a meeting with Corps staff regarding the Inlet Management Plan and the inlet program, in general, and offered to set it up.

In response to questioning by Chairman Rippe, Mr. Craig said some areas of the inlet need dredging now, but that the Corps will not dredge again until money is available. He also explained that the Corps is more willing now than in the past to allow inlet markers to follow natural deep channels where possible. He also said, in response to questions by Commissioner Bliss, that having no groin structure on the north inlet would lead to the collapse of the entire shore in that area. The gradual disappearance of the groin has also contributed to the loss of sand just offshore from the beach and the build-up of a shoal farther out which serves as a wave-break and protects the beach. However, a high-energy storm event could overwhelm this shoal and cause the beach to collapse. Commissioner Hennessey asked if the Corps could extend the groin farther seaward while repairing it. Mr. Craig said extending the groin would probably cause the project to be reclassified as new construction which would then be required to come from a different part of the Corp's budget.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Bliss introduced Chief Bosuns Mate Mike Tomas, USCG, who reported on buoy replacement in the inlet. Chief Tomas said their buoy tender will be removing the temporary Number 6 and replacing it with a permanently lighted buoy which should help with transiting the inlet. He said buoys cannot be repositioned without an environmental assessment and a plan for the entire inlet. This requires an extensive survey ahead of the move, which USCG does not have. Chairman Rippe suggested they use the post-dredging survey done after the recent inlet project. Mr. Craig agreed to send the survey to Chief Tomas.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Regatta of Lights - Dan Floryan.

Dan Floryan appeared for the St. Augustine Yacht Club and requested \$6,500 to help fund the Regatta of Lights. A discussion then ensued regarding the possibility of other sources of funding. Mr. Floryan said funding for the regatta had been cut by the Tourist Development Council and local merchants have never participated in funding it.

A motion by Commissioner Bliss, seconded by Commissioner Dixon, to expend \$6,500 for the Regatta of Lights was passed by a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Captain Eric Hellstrom of the St. Johns County Fire and Rescue announced that the Board's generous assistance to the marine unit in the purchase of two PWCs enabled the county to buy the boats at a cost savings of \$2,400.00, which he presented as a refund check to the Board. He also stated both PWCs carry decals acknowledging the district's assistance, and presented the Board with a commemorative plaque naming all members of the Board.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission reported the existence of a new derelict vessel in waters just south of St. Johns County, and a controversy surrounding a vessel near Crane Boat Ramp. That vessel sank and was refloated. The owner now claims the vessel is no longer derelict. The case is set for trial before County Court Judge Charles "Chuck" Tinlin, who is known to strictly enforce derelict vessel laws in local waters.

He said St. Augustine is rated by the Boaters Advisory Council as having the best mooring field and local regulation scheme of any of the five cities in the FWC pilot program. Commissioner Dixon said the reason is that the City solicited the input of boaters while designing the plan. This made the regulations much more friendly to boaters and cruisers.

Lt. Zukowski said a boater had run into the fishing pier at St. Augustine Shores while operating the vessel at night and that the boat had been totaled. The operator was not found to have been boating under the influence. He also reported a plane crash in a salt marsh in Flagler County which killed the pilot of an experimental aircraft.

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, requested the district print more maps of the inlet, as they are much in demand. Commissioner Benjamin said the district needed a newer version because the old one was done ten years ago and it does not have the mooring fields or the correct names for some marinas.

Mr. Piggott reiterated that the Boaters Advisory Council and FWC staff regard St. Augustine's anchoring pilot program as the best in Florida. Also, the City Marina was chosen as the first Florida Municipal Marina to receive the coveted Clean Marina Award from the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Dixon explained why he was running for Chairman Rippe's seat by saying he believed voting to replace the sitting chairman and vice-chairman without the courtesy of a discussion was wrong and offensive. Commissioner Bliss and Chairman Rippe said they supported the action because it was needed to stimulate change and action by the Board. Chairman Rippe thanked Commissioner Bliss for his many years of service to the district.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Rippe announced the next regular meeting will be held on November 18, 2014 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Rippe adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ken Craig said he will send the port-dredging survey from the recent inlet project to Chief Bosuns Mate Tomas of the USCG.

wk/rg/port/minutes-2014/10-14-14 meeting