

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, April 15, 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, April 15, 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 Chuck Hennessey, Jerry Dixon and Jay Bliss were in attendance. Commissioner Barry Benjamin arrived at 3:55 p.m. 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 report. She noted that a reimbursement has been received from the City of St. Augustine in the amount of \$1,000.00 of the funds given by the District for dredging the Davis Shores boat basin. In this fiscal year, \$29,832 has been spent of all committed funds, plus \$74,498 in operating expenses through March 31, 2014. Net funds available are \$1,569,218 and tax revenues of \$27,778 are still expected.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jay Bliss moved to approve the minutes of the workshop meeting of February 27, 2014, and the regular meeting of March 18, 2014. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hennessey and was passed unanimously.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering delivered the engineering report. He said the Army Corps of Engineers had formally released its easement from the spoil island to be used as a nesting

site for least terns in the Summer Haven River restoration. He said the continuation of the hearing on the Clements challenge to the issuance of the indirect take permit by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will take place on April 28, 2014. He said the Corps will issue its own permit for the restoration very shortly.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion regarding Port priorities and projects.

Commissioner Rippe said he had listed all the commissioners' input on priorities from the last meeting and asked commissioners to rate these items in order of importance. Commissioner Dixon said he wants lighted red markers in the inlet as aids to navigation but that the District should not pay for them as it is the responsibility of the Coast Guard. Commissioner Bliss agreed saying the Board should send a letter to USCG requesting the lights but should not volunteer to pay for them.

Commissioner Dixon said the Board needs to have a closer relationship with the County on engineering issues like beach renourishment and the recent erosion problems in north beach. Commissioner Rippe said the Board needs to regularly engage with County engineers on these issues in order to promote sharing of information. He said someone with an engineering background needs to be in regular contact with them. Commissioner Bliss suggested Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering talk to the County each month and report to the Board. Ken Craig said he talks to County engineers often.

On a motion by Commissioner Bliss, seconded by Commissioner Hennessey, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Taylor Engineering as District liaison to St. Johns County's engineers.

Commissioners then discussed the possibility of expanding the District to include all of St. Johns County. Commissioner Rippe suggested putting together a presentation and approaching local legislators with the idea. Consultant Ken Krauter said the Board needs to develop relationships with its local representatives first, then begin to work on the presentation of the concept and schedule time with them to discuss District issues. Commissioner Rippe asked Commissioners to send him their ideas on this topic and he would compile them for discussion at a regular meeting.

Commissioner Rippe then asked when Salt Run dredging will begin again. Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, said dredging is scheduled to commence within a week from the north end to the "dog leg" a width of fifty feet and a depth of eleven feet. Commissioner Rippe asked Mr. Piggott to obtain a copy of the pre-construction survey for the District files and Mr. Piggott said he would do so. Ken Craig said he could get one for the next meeting.

Commissioner Benjamin arrived at 3:55 p.m.

Commissioner Bliss said the tidal flow in the San Sebastian River is so vigorous that it needs very little dredging. Commissioner Dixon said FIND helps pay for the San Sebastian and that several years ago, St. Augustine Marina was experiencing problems with shoaling near their docks. Commissioner Bliss said no commercial fishing boat has ever complained to

him about shoaling. Commissioner Benjamin said the larger commercial boats always wait for high tide before traversing the San Sebastian because of a shallow area between Rivers Edge Marina and Marine Supply Company.

Commissioner Dixon said FIND would pay for a greater share of the San Sebastian dredging if a public access existed on the river. A discussion took place among commissioners about the topic at the end of which Commissioner Rippe volunteered to find a realtor to assist the Board in locating a possible public access. Commissioner Dixon then discussed various areas, including land under the 312 bridge. He said he would check on that parcel and report back to the Board.

On the topic of economic development, Commissioner Dixon questioned whether cruise ships might be invited to stop in St. Augustine. Mr. Piggott said small cruise ships already stop at the City Marina 12 to 15 times a year. He said the owners of El Galeon may build a similar vessel for permanent display in St. Augustine. Commissioner Dixon said the services and proximity to downtown offered by the mooring fields, water taxi and pump-out service are unmatched anywhere in Florida. Mr. Piggott said the City is considering the addition of an elevated sidewalk from the area of the Santa Maria Restaurant to the bridge of Lions. He also said the Lighthouse Foundation intends to build a launch for traditional wooden boats near the Lighthouse Boat Ramp. Commissioner Benjamin said that powerboat racing and an annual Hobie Cat regatta used to bring a lot of visitors to the area. Ken Krauter said the Marine Industry Association of Northeast Florida is very active here.

B. Port spending request application process-Commissioner Hennessey.

Commissioner Hennessey said the application for assistance is in a form acceptable for use by the public and that he would like the Board's permission to post it on the District's website. He said the application does not preclude emergency requests for assistance but will enable the Board to use a structured review for funding requests and will assist commissioners by providing documentation for each request. Commissioners agreed the application should be posted and Commissioner Hennessey said he would see that it was.

NEW BUSINESS

A. SJCFR application for funding - Captain Eric Hellstrom.

Captain Eric Hellstrom of the St. Johns County Marine Rescue Service presented an analysis of services provided by his officers last year. He said his unit deals with swimmers, aquatic rescues and boating incidents. In 2013, they responded to 7,201 calls for assistance including 177 medical emergencies, 482 marine rescues and 85 trauma events. The service employs 105 firefighters and 60 lifeguards, and has 13 vehicles to service the 1.1 million people who visit St. Johns County beaches each year. He said the Coast Guard requires 1-1/2 hours to get a vessel to a marine emergency, but that his officers can respond in minutes with jet skis and rubber boats. Currently, they need two more jet skis to keep their response time within an acceptable range. He said their budget comes from beach access fees. A consensus of commissioners agreed the request was very worthy of consideration and asked Captain Hellstrom to bring the request back for further consideration at the next meeting, and he agreed to do so.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Ginn , 9051 Gene Johnson Road, thanked commissioners for their continuing support with the Summer Haven River restoration. She said blockage of the river has had massive effects on Matanzas Inlet and that local legislators need to know that as well as the key role the District has played in the Summer Haven River restoration and the placement of artificial reefs.

Commander Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police Department, reported the Blessing of the Fleet went very well this year. Boaters and regulatory agencies assisting on the water cooperated to create a trouble-free event. He said St. Augustine will host a total of 480 events in the coming year.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

None.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Rippe announced the next regular meeting will be held on May20, 2014 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

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

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Commissioner Rippe asked Commissioners to send him their ideas on the topic of District expansion. He will compile their ideas for further discussion at a regular meeting.
2. Jim Piggott from the City of St. Augustine will obtain a copy of the pre-construction survey of the Salt Run dredging schedule and provide it to the Commissioners.
3. Chairman Rippe will find a realtor to assist the Board in locating possible public access to the San Sebastian River.

4. Commissioner Dixon will get information on the parcel of land under the 312 bridge as a possible public access location and will report back to the Board.
5. Commissioner Hennessey will arrange to have the application for assistance posted on the District's website.
6. Officer Eric Hellstrom of St. Johns County Marine Rescue will bring his request for funding to the next regular meeting for further consideration by the Board.

wk/rg/port/minutes-2014/4-15-14 meeting