

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, August 15, 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, August 15, 2017.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jerry Dixon called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Jerry Dixon, Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioner Tom Rivers, and Commissioner Chris Way were in attendance. Commissioner Mark Helman was absent. The meeting was also attended by Mike Trudnak 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 July 31, 2017, the District had spent \$314,688 on operating expenses and projects. Funds devoted to budgeted projects totaled \$58,674, and funds spent for non-budgeted projects totaled \$163,924. Tax revenue collected this fiscal year totals \$457,837 and no more is expected until December, 2017. As of July 31, 2017, District accounts held a total of \$2,054,261 of which \$1,587,476 is available for use. Funds of \$306,172 are held by the district for the Summer Haven River restoration project. Of this total, \$218,000 will be spent on currently pending restoration invoices, leaving a balance of \$88,000.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

This item was tabled until the next regular meeting.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He reported that least terns are still nesting on part of the beach at Summer Haven and that work on that area will continue to be delayed until the birds have departed. In response to questions from commissioners, Mr. Trudnak said work remaining consists of dredging around the north bridge and continuing excavation of the area east of the bridge. Sand needed to complete the

beach berm will be stockpiled until FWC clears the area for fill activity. The sandbar beneath and extending west into the IW from the south bridge is not scheduled for excavation because it is not in the work zone covered by the permit. Mr. Trudnak said engineers are not concerned by the sandbar and believe the sand will wash away once river flow resumes.

Ellis Zahra, Friends of the Summer Haven River, said he has received comments from boaters about shallow water near the south bridge at low tide, and asked if this area could be included in the project if the permit were modified. Mr. Trudnak responded that a permit modification would require many months, if not years, and that the work and permit modification could add a significant amount to the budget.

Carl Blow, FIND Commissioner, said his agency has a \$50,000 grant available for local dredging projects such as the restoration, but that the district needs to request the money. Chairman Dixon asked Mr. Trudnak to see that Taylor drafts an appropriate letter for his signature.

Jeff Fox, local fisherman, appeared and said he had measured less than one foot of water beneath the south bridge 45 minute after low tide. Chairman Dixon said the project needs to be completed and the results of the restoration plan evaluated before seeking a permit modification as it may be unnecessary. Contractor for the restoration, Rick Turnbull, said it would be easier to cut a channel through the south sandbar than to dredge the entire bar.

Chairman Dixon said a proposal for dredging the sandbar will be needed before any action can be taken by the board. Mr. Trudnak said Taylor will prepare an estimate of the cost. Commissioner Way said it would be a shame to leave the sandbar after clearing the rest of the river. Chairman Dixon said the bar was the result of the breach during Hurricane Matthew.

Mr. Trudnak said he had no information on Salt Run and asked Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, to report. Mr. Piggott said several weeks remain to complete this year's dredging. He said the spoil material is off-loaded onto trucks at Lighthouse Boat Ramp for deposit in a fill area on Holmes Boulevard. Mr. Trudnak added that the Vilano/South Ponte Vedra permit application remains on hold pending an updated survey of the beach and that the sand recently placed there seems to be stable.

7. **OLD BUSINESS :**

A) **District Projects Reserve**

Chairman Dixon said the District needs to maintain a reserve fund for emergencies, such as clearing shoals from the inlet and asked FIND Commissioner Carl Blow how long a grant from FIND can be held before spending. Carl Blow said grants can be extended up to two (2) years, and longer if requested. Mr. Piggott said the City of St. Augustine will be asking the District for payments for Salt Run dredging, the kayak launch, and the purchase of a police boat in the coming year.

Mr. Blow presented a list of the 2017-2018 grant rankings by FIND in which several St.

Johns County projects placed highly. About 21 million dollars in grants was requested. Of that, FIND will fund 12 million dollars in grants beginning with the highest ranked and continuing until funds are exhausted. He said \$589,000 was available for our county, but only \$504,000 in grants was requested. He urged all agencies in the county to ask for more so that our county's share will be spent here rather than somewhere else in the state. In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Blow said shoreline stabilization of the Summer Haven project would definitely fall within grant guidelines for an extra \$50,000 from FIND. He added that if the south sandbar threatens the integrity of the IW channel, it may be of great interest to FIND.

In response to questions from Commissioners Rivers and Way, Mr. Blow said the use of harbor sand for beach renourishment will require extensive study to determine both the quality and the amount of sand available. He said the Corps of Engineers is studying the use of distant offshore sites, but such sites would be limited by the huge expense of transporting the sand to beaches.

8. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

Cpl. Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, said his agency had recovered a jet ski hull from Moultrie Creek which will be disposed of. The agency took part in sanitation inspections of 36 vessels and issued 4 citations for pumping violations this month. In response to a question from Commissioner Rivers, Cpl. Underwood said the blinking light at the end of the Vilano Beach Boat Ramp jetty is not an official aid to navigation and was probably installed by a boater.

Officer Megan Aswall, FWC, reported there would be no season for red snapper this year in federal waters, but that next year has better prospects.

Wil Smith, St. Johns County Director of Parks and Recreation, said his agency will consider suggestions for FIND grant projects. He said the shoal survey inside the inlet is almost complete, and that his agency plans to wrap all floating docks at public boat ramps with used fire hose. He encouraged the board to seek legislation expanding the District county-wide. Commissioner Rivers said he met with local legislators and there was little support for the concept this year. Chairman Dixon said the timing may be better now because the county is taking on more of the burden for maintenance of local marine facilities. He asked Commissioner Rivers to meet with Linda Ginn and Ellis Zahra to discuss the use of lobbyists to assist in obtaining the legislation. Mr. Smith said there are in excess of 14,000 registered boaters in St. Johns County, most of whom use public boat ramps.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE

12. NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2017 in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room. A public hearing on the budget and millage rate will take place at 5:05 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2017 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2017/Minutes 8-15-17 meeting