

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

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, June 18, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Barry Benjamin 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 Barry Benjamin, Commissioners Jerry Dixon and Jay Bliss were in attendance. Commissioner Chuck Hennessey arrived at 3:25 p.m. Commissioner Herb Rippe was absent. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Steve Schropp of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Elyse Kemper, Secretary-Treasurer, delivered the Treasurer's report. As of May 31, 2013, the District has spent committed funds as follows: \$585 for City Police overtime and \$7,219 for the Summer Haven River permit. Funds available total \$1,713,499 and consist of \$15,630 in State Board of Administration Fund A, \$224,183 in Operating Account and \$1,704,789 in the Money Market Account, less committed funds of \$231,103. Expected tax revenue of \$370,155 has all been collected except for \$813.00. Net funds available for use as of June 14, 2013 totaled \$1,688,096.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Dixon, seconded by Chairman Benjamin, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the May, 21, 2013 regular meeting.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Dr. Schropp delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said the Summer Haven River mitigation plan for least tern habitat will be completed within a week and will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC). The State has a deadline for reviewing the application in July and he expects the permit to be resolved prior to the expiration of that deadline.

OLD BUSINESS NONE

NEW BUSINESS

A. Anastasia State Park Use Agreement - James Bedsole, District Counsel

District Counsel Jim Bedsole reviewed activity since the last meeting regarding plans by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to dredge the inlet navigation channel. Before contractors' bids can be opened, the District will be required, as local sponsor of the inlet, to enter a use agreement with FDEP. The use agreement will grant USACE the privilege of placing dredged sand from the inlet onto the beach at Anastasia State Park. Dr. Schropp and Shelley Trulock, Project Manager for USACE, explained the scope of the work and the usual contractual responsibilities of a local sponsor in a use agreement. Mr. Bedsole provided commissioners with a copy of the use agreement application and requested commissioners to approve Resolution 13-01 authorizing such an agreement. Ms. Trulock provided a map of the areas from which 116,000 cubic yards of sand will be removed. She said the authorized depth of the channel is sixteen feet and that over-depth dredging to eighteen feet is permitted. She said the use agreement must be in place prior to bid opening on July 23, 2013.

Commissioner Dixon asked whether turtle season would interfere with the schedule. Dr. Schropp said the job is not likely to start until the end of turtle nesting season and would not be delayed. He added that certain turtle monitoring would need to take place after the job is finished, but that would occur next year.

A motion by Commissioner Bliss, seconded by Chairman Benjamin, to approve Resolution 13-01 authorizing the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to enter into a Use Agreement with FDEP for Anastasia State Park was unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Commissioner Carl Blow announced the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council (TDC) agreed to donate \$50,000 toward artificial reef construction. He said this will be combined with money pledged by the District for the past two years to move thousands of tons of concrete stored at St. Augustine Airport onto barges for deposit on the Andy King Artificial Reef. Secretary-Treasurer Kemper said a budget amendment will be necessary to release the funds.

Mr. Blow said there are now eighteen thousand tons of concrete from the replacement of three local bridges and that Flagler and Duval counties are cooperating to create a local system of artificial reefs. He said the local economy is hugely benefitted by the use of these reefs by fishermen and divers, and that the existence of a barge facility at the local airport means more concrete will reach reefs.

Commissioner Bliss mentioned that a recent bottom survey had discovered a number of large objects near the inlet which have been determined to be concrete cubes. Mr. Blow said nothing similar to that had been on any artificial reef barge. He explained how the reef permit area is marked with buoys and that deposit of reef material is closely monitored, so there is no opportunity to lose material overboard.

Commissioner Dixon reminded the Board that a FIND meeting is coming soon and that the City of St. Augustine is sending a representative. Commissioner Dixon said he would attend. Mr. Blow said the number of local government grant requests has been low for the last few years because of the lack of local matching funds but that the number is now increasing.

James Manucy, 6381 Pine Circle West, St. Augustine, said he was involved in the deposit of several aircraft frames donated by Grumman years ago for artificial reefs. He said at least one of them had been lost overboard on the way to the reef site. Commissioner Dixon said the new objects were determined by Sheriff's Office divers to be solid concrete blocks.

Lt. Commander Robert Butts, United States Coast Guard, Jacksonville, said the recent survey by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) had located the objects, which are cubes 6 feet on each side. He said the objects are considered a hazard to navigation and will be shown on NOAA charts. The survey revealed the remains of a sunken vessel west of the objects. Commander Butts also reported that a new plan adopted by USCG will have all Intracoastal Waterway bridges closed and locked in position during any event of gale-force winds.

Lt. Gregory Beaver, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office (SJSO), said he commands the Sheriff's marine unit and has a budget of only ten thousand dollars per year. Despite this, the Sheriff intends to keep ten officers and two vessels on the water as much as possible. He appealed to commissioners to reconsider their decision to take all funding for SJSO out of the District's existing line item for overtime pay.

Commissioner Dixon said the District is unable to increase the amount it gives to SJCO because of the District's relatively small income and its growing responsibilities. Treasurer Kemper reminded commissioners that soon, large payments will be due for dredging Salt Run and the San Sebastian River. Lt. Beaver thanked the Board for considering the request.

Sam Adukiewicz, City Marina, responded to a question from Commissioner Dixon that the El Galeon ship will be leaving St. Augustine on Monday, June 24 bound for New York. The City and El Galeon's owners have been discussing keeping the ship in St. Augustine for several months each year, but no agreement has been reached.

Eric Hellstrom, St. Johns County Fire and Rescue (SJFR), reported their activity over the Memorial Day holiday: four vessel assists; five rescues; thirty-four swimmer calls; thirteen

medical calls; and, several hundred other requests for assistance of various types. He reported one of SJFR's personal water craft is permanently out-of-service and that they need \$11,000 to replace it. Chairman Benjamin said the Board had bought two vessels for SJFR last year.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, said the State is reconsidering increasing safety zone signage around area bridges. He said marker buoys are difficult to see in strong currents because they tend to lay down and that larger signs may be placed over bridge fenders to get boaters' attention.

He reported another boat grounded in Matanzas Inlet and that its occupants waded to shore safely. Matanzas Inlet is now impassable at low tide. On May 26, a small boat hit a dock at night in Matanzas Bay killing two boaters and seriously injuring a third. He said small boats tend to avoid the center of the channel because of wakes from larger vessels, and this brings them close to shore structures, like docks.

The sunken derelict Tiger Lily has been measured at two feet below water level at low tide and constitutes a hazard to navigation. The City and FWC are now considering ways to economically remove it. There is also a boat in the Intracoastal north of Comanche Cove which has not been moved as promised by the owner. Charges are to be filed in County Court. Finally, a barge and a sailboat are derelict in the Butler Boat Ramp area and all identifying marks have been removed from the vessels, making it impossible to find the owners.

Wil Smith, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, reported on the reef grant from TDC. St. Johns County will now be marketed as a fishing destination, in addition to other things, and the Ancient City Game Fish Association has agreed to provide map coordinates of offshore fishing spots for publication by the County.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS NONE

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2013, at 3:00 p.m. in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman