

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, July 18, 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, July 18, 2017.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin 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

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 June 30, 2017, the District had spent a total of \$270,310 for budgeted projects and operating expenses, leaving about 1.6 million dollars on deposit in District accounts. About seven thousand dollars remains in the account for the Summer Haven River restoration project. Requests for more funds from FDEP have been pending since May. Of budgeted tax revenue, all of this year's tax money has been collected and no more is expected until November, 2017.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on June 20, 2017, was seconded by Commissioner Helman and passed unanimously.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Mr. Craig began by referencing the recent approval by St. Johns County of an agreement with the District for the county to formally assume sponsorship of the permit application process for Vilano-South Ponte Vedra Beach renourishment. He said the process may be re-started or

terminated and a new application begun. Either way, the information needed for the application is largely complete already. In response to a question by Commissioner Helman, Mr. Craig said a contractor had been tasked to repair a leaning sign piling in Salt Run. Mr. Craig said he had drafted a letter for Chairman Dixon's signature asking FWC to impose a temporary no-wake zone in the Summer Haven River in order to prevent damage to the banks of the new channel and to promote plant growth in the area.

Chairman Dixon arrived at 3:20 p.m.

He then addressed issues in the Summer Haven River restoration project pointed out by a letter from FDEP. These included questions about the qualifications of the shorebird monitoring specialist used in the project, a small area of sediment placed on the beach which was allegedly not beach quality, a claim the sea turtle monitor had reported improper equipment activity in the monitored area, and a turbidity issue. All of these have been retracted by FDEP or resolved by the contractor and none remain pending. In response to questions by Commissioner Helman, Mr. Craig said almost three weeks of activity remain before the project will be complete. The resumption of work still awaits the departure of several pairs of least terns from one area of the project site.

7. **OLD BUSINESS** : NONE

8. **NEW BUSINESS**:

A) **Reimbursement of Costs for Repair of Old A1A.**

Chairman Dixon discussed the letter he sent to the county administrator asking the county to request money from FEMA to reimburse the expense to the District of \$352,000 to repair the breach in Old A1A caused by Hurricane Matthew. He said the work was done at the request of the county and because the failure of the county's roadbed endangered the Summer Haven River restoration project.

Ellis Zahra, Friends of Summer Haven River, said three ways exist to obtain reimbursement. First is the purpose of Chairman Dixon's letter, which is to have the county apply to FEMA. Second is to ask FDEP for emergency relief funds, which it possesses. The final option is to ask for more legislative grants to cover the shortfall in restoration funds created by the expense.

Chairman Dixon said both the city and the county hired consultants to handle their FEMA claims and that he feels the best chance for reimbursement is through the county.

In response to a question by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Craig said only two active nests are left on the beach and the project can be completed in less than a month when the birds are gone. Mr. Zahra added that there are no eggs or fledglings in the remaining nests and that the mitigation site is still full of birds.

B) 2017-2018 Millage Rate.

Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper led a discussion with the board regarding the upcoming public hearing dates for budget and millage discussions. She explained the board needed to adopt a tentative millage rate today for use in advertising, and cautioned that the chosen tentative rate may be lowered after today but cannot be raised. The choices are using last year's rate, using the "rolled back" rate which will bring in last year's same revenue, or using a different rate altogether. She said using last year's rate will bring increased revenue because assessed property values have increased over last year and that it will have to be advertised as a tax "increase" even though the tax rate will remain the same.

A motion by Vice-Chairman Benjamin to use last year's rate of 0.0638 mils as the tentative tax rate was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously by a roll-call vote of 5-0.

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services for the City of St. Augustine, reported the dredging of the Dolphin Drive boat basin is finished and that the City will be sending an invoice to Ms. Kemper. The contractor has moved to Salt Run and will be removing dock debris from Salt Run while dredging. Mr. Piggott requested \$50,000 local matching funds for dredging Salt Run next year contingent upon a grant from FIND for the other \$150,000 needed.

Corporal Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, reported personnel spent 148 hours on the water last month, responded to 55 service calls, performed 5 vessel inspections, issued 23 warnings and one citation, worked 2 accidents, and discovered a new derelict vessel. He said the unit also conducted helicopter hoist training with the Coast Guard, assisted in the investigation of a plane crash, and continued the life jacket loaner program funded by Sea Tow. Corporal Underwood also responded to many questions from the board about local waters.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, said his agency has received many calls reporting dogs at the least tern nesting site on the beach at Summer Haven. He said dogs and wild animals are common in the area and that they usually are gone by the time his officers arrive. He said FWC had stopped six boats over July 4 weekend for possible impaired boating and that one boater had been arrested. FWC is finding boaters now commonly use a designated driver when in groups, but control of the boat's passengers is sometimes still an issue. He said group law enforcement operations, like coordinating boat traffic during the fireworks, has been made easier by the ability to communicate with all agencies by radio.

Lt. Zukowski regrettably informed the board of a fatal boating accident last week when a woman riding on the bow of a boat fell off and was killed by the boat's propeller when it ran over her. Last year, a passenger in another boat lost his leg after the same type of accident. Commissioner Way said he took a swimmer out of the channel at the Crescent Beach Bridge after the man jumped into fast-moving water and was swept away. His wife, who remained in their anchored boat, had no idea what had happened and could not operate the boat. Lt. Zukowski said the increase in boating during the Summer always results in more accidents,

usually minor. He also reported the crash of a general aviation aircraft in the marsh near the Flagler County line.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Helman asked Mr. Craig whether the District should write a letter to the Corps of Engineers requesting they improve the groin structure at the inlet. Mr. Craig said the Corps has been studying the problem and that simple encouragement of their efforts would be sufficient. Chairman Dixon then asked Mr. Craig about the possible use of the inner harbor as a sand source for beaches. Mr. Craig said sand bars tend to have beach-quality sand. He also said a survey of the bay would be needed before it will be possible to calculate how much sand could be sourced from the bay.

12. NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on August 15, 2017 in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2017/Minutes 7-18-17 meeting