

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**Tuesday, April 17, 2012**

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 17, 2012.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jerry Dixon 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 Jerry Dixon, Commissioners Herb Rippe, Jay Bliss and Barry Benjamin, were in attendance. Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers was absent. The meeting was also attended by District Counsel Jim Bedsole, Dr. Steve Schropp of Taylor Engineering, Secretary-Treasurer, Elyse Kemper.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer's Report was delivered by Elyse Kemper. Additional funds have been transferred out of Fund B to Fund A, leaving approximately \$6,000.00 that can be used. Fund B has \$39,000.00 that cannot be used. Expected tax revenues total approximately \$368,000, of which \$332,000 has been received, leaving a balance of expected income of \$36,000. As of April 11, 2012, total available funds less committed but unspent funds left a net balance of \$1,711,595 available for use.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Jay Bliss moved to approve the minutes for the March 20, 2012 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Barry Benjamin. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.**

## **ENGINEERING REPORT**

Dr. Steve Schropp delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Salt Run Marker #1 has not been installed, but should be completed by the end of this week. Progress is being made on the Summer Haven River restoration permit application and drawings. They have continued to work with Linda and Jay Ginn on getting the information required to complete the application.

Commissioner Rippe asked if Dr. Schropp had heard anything further on the studies of the St. Augustine Inlet. Dr. Schropp said nothing had happened since the last meeting.

Linda Ginn, 9051 Gene Johnson Road, read an excerpt from Cross Creek Cookery by Marjorie Kinan Rawlings, taken from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Florida reading test. The passage discussed the quality of the oysters found in the Summer Haven River and other memorable details of life on the river. She also distributed to the Board letters from State Representative Proctor, Congressman Sterns and the Summer Haven Turtle Patrol, all in support of the Summer Haven River restoration.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Up-date on Dolphin Drive Dredging - Tim Ford.**

Tim Ford addressed the Board and said the contractor he had contacted at the Board's request had calculated 2,600 cubic yards of mostly sand would need to be removed from the basin at a cost of \$56,000.00. In response to questions from Commissioners Benjamin and Bliss, Mr. Ford explained the shallowest portion at the basin's mouth had only 6 inches of water at low tide. He proposed to return the basin channel to its previous depth of 4 feet at low tide. Mr. Ford said he understood the prior permit allows up to 9 feet of depth for the mouth of the basin and that the permit is perpetual. Dr. Schropp said it was unlikely the permit is perpetual and that maintenance dredging is exempted from the requirement for a current survey of bottom conditions. Commissioner Benjamin asked Mr. Ford to obtain a copy of the permit now in effect and provide it to Dr. Schropp for review and report at the next meeting. Mr. Ford agreed to do so.

### **B. USACE - Payment for Salt Run Feasibility Study-Chairman Dixon.**

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow said Chairman Dixon had given him a copy of the USACE letter of February 28, 2012 regarding money it claims is owed for a feasibility study of Salt Run that was terminated prior to completion more than 10 years ago. He said the study began because of interest in having Salt Run declared a federal navigation channel. The cost of the study was to be split equally between the USACE and the District but the study was never completed because the newly-enacted Coastal Barrier Protection Act prohibited expenditure of federal funds for development of the area. The District finished the study with help from FIND and the City of St. Augustine.

Two years later, USACE delivered a check to the District for \$49,000 without explanation. In fact, the check represented a partial refund of the funds paid to USACE for the study.

Commissioner Blow said the District should be given credit for in-kind payment of all amounts due. Dr. Schropp said USACE had provided him a worksheet showing how it arrived at the requested figure and that he would provide it at the next meeting.

On another topic, Commissioner Rippe asked Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, to talk about plans for the tallship Bounty. Mr. Piggott said the ship is scheduled to be here April 23 through April 30 and that suitable gangways for visitors had been located in Jacksonville. In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Piggott explained the design for the breakwater at the City Marina. He also reported a problem with the contractor when their barge sank beside the Bridge of Lions. Efforts are underway to refloat the barge.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Economic Impact of Artificial Reefs - Carl Blow and Wil Smith.**

Wil Smith and Carl Blow made a presentation previously given the Tourist Development Council (TDC) on the history and economic impact of the 40 artificial reefs (AR) in or near St. Johns County. The first reefs were installed in the 1960's by the Ancient City Gamefish Association and consisted of cars, sunken vessels, aircraft, buses and just about anything else that was large enough to create bottom features. In 1990, regulations began to require government sponsors for reef construction and materials changed to mainly concrete beams and pipes.

Mr. Blow said studies have shown that public support for AR construction is very high, even among those who do not use them. Each dollar spent on ARs yields hundreds in return through use by fishermen, divers and tournament organizers. No public agency in the county except the District has ever provided financial support for ARs. The St. Augustine Airport Authority has provided free storage however, and twenty thousand tons of bridge concrete at the airport await deposit offshore. Mr. Smith added the plan is to involve TDC and other agencies in funding and to advertise ARs more aggressively.

Commissioner Rippe asked Mr. Smith about the status of the Vilano floating dock. Mr. Smith said the contractor is waiting for the prefabricated dock sections to arrive. The contractor says the dock will be completed within a week of delivery of all the sections.

### **B. St. Augustine Maritime Heritage Foundation - Jay Bliss.**

Commissioner Bliss introduced Ray Jaeger of the St. Augustine Maritime Heritage Foundation. Mr. Jaeger said the non-profit organization promotes education about St. Augustine's marine heritage through the construction of traditional wooden vessels. The organization is also promoting the use of water taxis as a means of mass transit to downtown St. Augustine. He said the mission of their group parallels that of the District and that they would appreciate any monetary support the District would offer.

In response to a question by Commissioners Rippe and Benjamin, District Counsel Jim Bedsole said the donation of tax funds to an organization such as this had been previously reviewed in Attorney General Opinion No. 2009-27. In it, the Attorney General concluded

such donations are outside of the authority of the Board to lawfully grant. Commissioner Bliss said he believed the Board has lawful authority to fund this type of organization. Commissioner Rippe suggested to Mr. Jaeger that his organization seek funds from an agency which was not restricted by law from doing so, such as the TDC. Mr. Jaeger thanked the Board for their consideration of his request.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), reported the Blessing of the Fleet went well and that there were no mishaps due solely to pilot error, as occurred last year. He said the new speed zone signs have been installed on local bridges and that they are considerably smaller than was requested, although still very noticeable. There were only two boating accidents last month. One involved a boat which hit the wake of a passing yacht and tossed two people overboard causing minor injuries. More recently, a couple had to be rescued from the ocean after their boat broke down and swamped in the inlet. Chairman Dixon complemented Lt. Zukowski for the way FWC handled the Blessing of the Fleet activities this year.

Officer Steve Fricke, SAPD, declared St. Augustine Harbor to be a “derelict vessel-free zone.” He said the only derelict vessel is scheduled to be removed this week from the Crane Park area south of S.R. 312. He added that boat burglaries have increased this month.

Carl Blow said St. Augustine is the only municipality in Florida which has received permission to implement its harbor management ordinance. Other cities have had difficulties because they failed to consult FWC during development and are now finding their ordinances difficult to administer. In response to questioning by Commissioner Rippe, Mr. Blow said the inlet dredging project is on schedule and that FIND will start dredging the flood shoal and the Intracoastal Waterway next. He reminded the Board to monitor for any spillage of dredge material in Salt Run during dredging. He said the contractor is now required to conduct a pre and post construction survey of Salt Run to assure no sand is deposited there.

### **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Chairman Dixon said the conversion of a shrimp trawler for the anniversary festivities of St. Augustine’s 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary is taking place at St. Augustine Marine on Riberia Street and the work is progressing well. He encouraged all to drive by and view the progress.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman announced the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 15, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. in the same location.

### **ADJOURN:**

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman

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