

Shore Protection Manager

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CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall

August 25, 2008, 2 pm

Attendance.

Commission Chair Buck Fugate, Vice-Chair William Donnelly, Commission Members Pete Allen, A.B. "Trace" Cooper, Jack Goldstein, Tom Hoover, Art Schools, Jim Stephenson, Jim Willis, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Members Joan Lamson and Ted Lindblad were absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** – Chairman Fugate called the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (July 28, 2008).** – Chairman Fugate asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the July 28rd regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. With no comments forthcoming from the Commission, member Donnelly motioned the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by member Goldstein and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Public Comment.** – None.
- (4) **Other Business.** – Member Willis mentioned the nodal point near the Ft. Macon groin; where it is commonly believed that waves from the east recurve all the way around the ebb delta at Beaufort Inlet and push currents back to the east into the inlet. However the deep nature of the dredged channel at Beaufort Inlet may allow waves to move directly through the inlet and by-pass the ebb delta and thereby push currents towards the west. This can be seen at times at the Ft. Macon groin where sand piles up on the east side of the structure, again hinting that westward currents are at play. This should be something engineers and geologists consider when evaluating Beaufort Inlet.

Chairman Fugate briefly mentioned that the Commission's new occupancy tax committee met and the group agreed that rather than making a more unilateral-type decision, the committee will meet with occupancy tax collectors to reach a consensus/agreement on some of the changes that the Beach Commission may be interested in pursuing. The chairman concluded the committee will continue working, and have the issues reconciled for the full Beach Commission's consideration before the end of the year.

Also in other business, the chairman disclosed that several persons in the community have approached him wondering what the Beach Committee's opinion was concerning oil & natural gas exploration along the State's Outer Continental Shelf. The County Board of Commissioners (CBOC) passed a resolution last week in favor of oil & natural gas exploration, and member Schools, in his capacity as Tourism Development Authority chair, has another draft resolution

concerning this very same topic. These resolutions were subsequently distributed to the Beach Commission members in attendance, and the chairman opened the floor for comments.

Member Donnelly asked how far from the coast do we think the bulk of exploration would take place. Member Allen replied that it appears 35 to 55 miles offshore is the appropriate number (right near the continental slope/shelf break). Member Hoover asked what the chairman was looking for from the Beach Commission since the CBOC already passed a resolution and the Beach Commission is a County advisory committee. Member Allen added the County's resolution does not out-rightly support drilling, but encourages an assessment of the resource and to have information at everyone's disposal. Member Willis mentioned the word "exploration" should really be replaced with "survey", and additionally, the Commission needs to be concerned with subsidence issues associated with extracting petroleum out of the ground. We should push for a free sand clause if subsidence does occur. Chairman Fugate mentioned that as member Allen referenced in an earlier comment; at some point in time the U.S. is going to run out of petroleum and the government will declare the situation a national emergency. If (or when) this series of events occur, then exploration and extraction will be coming to North Carolina regardless. Therefore, we should be proactive and ensure environmental safeguards are in place sooner rather than later.

Member Stephenson commented that we are the Carteret County Beach Commission tackling a highly charged political topic emanating from the Nation's Capitol, and that may not be appropriate. Likewise, the CBOC have already passed a resolution concerning oil & natural gas exploration for the citizens of the County and for their Commissions/Committees, and if the CBOC wanted advice from the Beach Commission, it would have been logical to do so before passing a resolution. Also, some of our colleagues including the Brunswick Beaches Consortium, American Shore & Beach Preservation Association, and the N.C. Beach, Inlet, & Waterway Association, do not have positions in favor of drilling. Their general stance is that if drilling does occur, then the revenues should be used for beaches; and that might be an appropriate position for the Beach Commission to take. Member Stephenson added that to take a position to just drill is ridiculous. Member Schools replied that no resolution presented today approves drilling, but rather to investigate the issue. Member Stephenson disagreed and the meaning is quite clear to give the green light to drilling. Chairman Fugate interjected that the Beach Commission is an advisory board to the CBOC, and there are some issues concerning outer continental shelf petroleum exploration and exploitation that are within the Beach Commission's purview, and may require some input by this body. Member Allen added that very little has been done in this arena for the last three to four decades and the CBOC's resolution was to get the citizenry to think about the ramifications (good and bad) of oil & natural gas exploration.

Member Donnelly mentioned the CBOC resolution is "safe" because it does support exploration, not necessarily drilling (exploitation), and a nod from the Beach Commission to the CBOC that they are on the right track would be appropriate. Member Cooper added that drilling 50 miles offshore probably is not within the Beach Commission's sphere of influence, and oil & natural gas are diminishing resources, and therefore society will need more components for a comprehensive energy policy. Again, these more macroscopic issues may not suite the Beach Commission's role. Member Hoover stated the Beach Commission should be looking to support the County. Secretary Rudolph quickly mentioned that the Beach Commission, rather than passing a separate resolution, could prepare a letter highlighting aspects of the oil & natural gas issue that

are relevant to the Beach Commission – namely, environmental safeguards and revenue sharing. Member Goldstein subsequently made a motion for the Beach Commission to go on record supporting the resolution the CBOC passed last week. The motion was seconded by member Hoover and the floor was opened for discussion.

Member Stephenson first recited a resolution passed by the Dare County Tourism Board of Directors and approved by municipalities in opposition of oil & natural gas exploration. Member Cooper added that to do something supportive of the County, the Beach Commission should probably prepare a letter emphasizing the aspects that impact the beach – other issues such as jobs, economic growth, reducing the price of gasoline, etc. are well outside the purview. Chairman Fugate replied that the letter could endorse the CBOC resolution contingent upon receiving adequate funding for beach nourishment and environmental safeguards. Member Schools agreed and member Goldstein added the Beach Commission should do everything they can to get their name associated with beach nourishment funding. The motion on the floor to support the CBOC resolution was called for a vote and passed 4 (Donnelly, Goldstein, Hoover, and Schools) to 2 (Cooper and Stephenson). Members Allen and Willis abstained. Chairman Fugate asked to ensure that the intent of the Beach Commission was to send a letter to the CBOC a letter of support with caveats to ensure funding for beach nourishment and environmental safeguards, not to pass a separate resolution. The Commission agreed by consensus.

- (5) **September 2008 Meeting Date (September 22, 2008 – proposed)**. – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting scheduled for September 2008 would be held on the 22nd of the month at 2:00 pm.
- (6) **Adjourn.** – Chairman Fugate asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.