

Shore Protection Manager

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## CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall

August 23, 2010, 2 pm

### Attendance.

Commission chair Buck Fugate, Commission Members A.B. "Trace" Cooper, William Donnelly (vice chair), Jack Goldstein, Tom Hoover, Richard Hunt, Ken Jones, Ted Lindblad, Dr. Antonio Rodriguez, Art Schools, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Member Doug Fleming was absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** –Chairman Fugate called the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (July 26, 2010).** – Chairman Fugate asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the July 26<sup>th</sup> regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. With no remarks to this effect voiced by the Beach Commission, member Hoover motioned the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by member Jones and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Occupancy Tax and "Beach Fund" Update.** – Secretary Rudolph directed the Commission to the agenda materials and summarized that the totals for last fiscal year (FY 2009-10) are now complete with the June occupancy tax collection report in hand. The tax was down by -4% compared to the year prior (FY 2008-09), which was down -7% compared to the year before that (FY 2007-08). Thus the tax was indeed down this past year but not as severely as the year prior, and our budget estimate for revenue in FY 2009-10 was -2% (actual is -4%). Interestingly, if one takes a further look at the occupancy tax collections by sector (hotel/motel vs. condo/cottage); they were both down by almost the exact same percentage, which makes any correlation to the effect that hotels are losing rooms, while condos are gaining rooms, etc., etc. very difficult to make. Essentially everything is therefore just "down" according to our occupancy tax receipts. The secretary concluded that the estimated reserve balance at the end of the fiscal year is \$9.2 million. Member Donnelly subsequently asked if anyone knew if the number of tourists visiting the area were significantly down or up. Secretary Rudolph replied that the occupancy tax is just a proxy for visitation, and there is not a firm source that actually accounts for visitors. For instance, the occupancy tax is subject to the effects of lowering and raising room rates, which in theory could provide a different occupancy tax collection from year to year despite having the same amount of rooms rented.
- (4) **Public Comment.** – Dennison Breese, with Coastal Coanda Research disseminated a paper regarding the hydrology of the coastal zone and continued a dialogue with the Beach Commission concerning potential relationships between groundwater and beach erosion, and further asked to start pursuing a permit to start dewatering the water table aquifer, which should decrease erosion along Bogue Banks. Member Schools asked Mr. Breese if this technology was being used

elsewhere. Mr. Breese responded that the technology is being used around the world and in three locations in the U.S. but there are copyright issues that have shut these beach dewatering projects down. Member Dr. Rodriguez suggested that Mr. Breese come back to the Beach Commission with evidence that groundwater is major source of beach erosion along Bogue Banks, and to relate groundwater effects to discrete areas of stability and/or erosion along the island. If these data can be presented, then this might be something the Commission could address. Member Hoover and Schools agreed that a problem has to be identified first before it can be addressed. Chairman Fugate concluded that he doesn't foresee the Commission applying for a permit to dewater the beach in the future because for one; the Commission is in the middle of trying to permit a Master Plan for nourishment for the island and working with dredged material management issues at the Morehead City Harbor, and two; the complications that would arise from trying to permit a completely new technology in North Carolina would be problematic to say the least.

- (5) **Other Business.** – Member Jones disclosed that coincidentally he met the Captain of the U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender, the *Blackberry*, subsequent to last month's Beach Commission meeting where we had a lengthy discussion with Chief Rob Lepere concerning Bogue Inlet dredging. An offer has been extended to the Beach Commission to go out on the *Blackberry* and Member Jones asked the Commission for a head count for the boat trip that will likely take place as or in lieu of our monthly Beach Commission meeting for September (the 27<sup>th</sup>). The Commission replied, looks forward to the excursion, and thanked member Jones for his efforts to schedule/coordinate the trip on the *Blackberry*.
- (6) **September 2010 Meeting Date (September 27, 2010 – proposed).** – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting would be held on September 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm, either at Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall or aboard the *Blackberry* (see (5) Other Business above).
- (8) **Closed Session Pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 for the Permitted Purpose of Preventing the Disclosure of Information that is Privileged or Confidential.**
- (9) **Adjourn.** – Chairman Fugate asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.