

Shore Protection Manager

Greg L. Rudolph
Tel: (252) 393.2663
Fax: (252) 393.6639
rudi@carteretcountygov.org



CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall

June 27, 2011, 2 pm

Attendance.

Commission chair Buck Fugate, Commission Members Larry Baldwin, Robin Comer, Bill Donnelly, Doug Fleming, Jack Goldstein, Tom Hoover, Art Schools, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Members A.B. "Trace" Cooper, Ken Jones, and Ted Lindblad were absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** – Chairman Fugate called the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (April 25, 2011).** – Chairman Fugate asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the April 25th regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. Member Goldstein subsequently motioned the minutes be approved as presented, which was seconded by member Donnelly and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Occupancy Tax and "Beach Fund" Update.** – Secretary Rudolph highlighted the raw occupancy tax collection data from March and April attached to the Commission's agenda packet; and summarized we're having a "good" fiscal year. The collection is up by approximately 7% compared to this same point in time last fiscal year, and barring a disastrous May and June, we should conclude the fiscal year in positive territory – the first time since FY 2007-08. The 2010 calendar year concluded with a plus 2% growth rate, so all of the indices are pointing towards positive growth. Also the condo/cottage sector accounts for roughly 80% of the total collection (hotel/motel is the other), and the condo/cottage sector has been up significantly for the fiscal year, which is help driving the positive collection rate we're experiencing. In conclusion, if we take our opening balance at the beginning of the fiscal year and our current revenue and expenditures; it is estimated that the Beach Fund reserve is at an approximate value of \$10.3 million. Usually, the reserve balance hovers near the same monetary value during the fall and winter, experiences a big spike/surge in the summer, then stabilizes again as the monthly revenues and expenditures balance themselves until the next summer.
- (4) **Project Updates (Master Beach Nourishment Plan and Emerald Isle East).** – Using visual aids (Powerpoint Map), secretary Rudolph summarized that at the April meeting we reviewed/demystified the geophysical exploration elements of the sand search that is being undertaken for the Master Beach Nourishment Plan; (1) side scan = sonar that bounces up off the seafloor surface and the reflectivity provides an image, (2) multibeam = sonar that bounces off the seafloor and is used to precisely determine water depth, and (3) seismic = sonar that actually penetrates the seafloor and reflects back – the resulting image is essentially an "x-ray" of the subsurface. The State's beach compatibility rules dictated that we would have to run the same densely-spaced grid

for our geophysical work in the Offshore Dredged Material Disposal Site (ODMDS) as we would for a native, undisturbed borrow source. This was obviously deemed as “overkill” considering we have good institutional knowledge and a disposal history for the ODMDS, i.e., the disposal site has been in existence for decades and the dredged material placed in the site has been viewed/analyzed several times before. The State’s Division of Coastal Management worked cooperatively with us to develop a rule change that would relax the sampling requirements at the ODMDS, essentially spreading the grid from 1,000 feet to 2,000 feet – both for the geophysical work and coring. The rules have been approved by the Coastal Resources Commission, and should be finalized by the end of the year once public hearings have been conducted and the State’s Rules Review Commission grants approval. This should save us roughly \$400,000.

The secretary transitioned to a discussion of the permit requirements for geophysical exploration, coring, and extraction (requires three respective authorizations) within federal waters (>3 miles offshore), which are under the purview of the Material Management Service (MMS), now known as the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement or “BOEMRE”. Although there is some frustration over the fact that we need all these authorizations for a sand source that was originally dredged out of State waters by the federal government (U.S. Corps of Engineers), our first authorization for the geophysical work should be secured sometime next week. Our potential borrow source Y (located offshore of Emerald Isle) is completely confined to State waters, and our subcontractors can start with the geophysical portion of the work at anytime. Johnny Martin with the engineering firm of Moffatt & Nichol will be at our July or August Beach Commission meeting for a project update and a more detailed discussion of the project schedule – we still have a lot of work to do to fully analyze Bogue Inlet, develop borrow source Y, and prepare all the Programmatic Environmental Impact related documents (NEPA coordination). Accordingly, it will probably be 2.5 years before the Master Plan is completely designed and permitted.

The more pressing beach concern is the Emerald Isle hotspot project, which the Commission may remember has the lowest sand volume along Bogue Banks. Generally, the project is centered between the area of 10th to 20th streets, and originally we were planning to utilize the actively dredged material emanating from the Morehead City Harbor this upcoming winter (2011-12). However, the U.S. Corps of Engineers (Corps) has some reservations and is sensitive to this concept because they don’t want to take sand outside the area of inlet influence (Beaufort Inlet). In accordance with their Interim Operation Plan, no disposal material (sand) will be dumped in the ODMDS anymore but will be placed in the nearshore berm or along the beaches of Ft. Macon and Atlantic Beach. Obviously east Emerald Isle is to the west of these new disposal areas, and has given the Corps reason to pause. Alternatively we decided to pursue a “delta” project utilizing the ODMDS, where the federal government (Corps) would pay for the mobilization of the dredge to maintain the channel, and the County/Emerald Isle/State would pay the additional cost of collecting the material at the ODMDS and placing the material along East Emerald Isle. However as mentioned before, the ODMDS is in federal waters and falls under the jurisdiction of BOEMRE. Thus we have been instructed that we will need an Environmental Assessment for BOEMRE to take sand out of federal waters and a separate federal Environmental Assessment from the Corps that addresses the beach placement efforts. The secretary shared his frustrations with the duplicity involved with preparing two Environmental Assessments for a single <300,000 cubic yard project. However, the borrow source reconnaissance work at the ODMDS associated with the Master Plan will be 100% utilized for the Emerald Isle hot spot project. We will discuss the updated cost involved with the Emerald Isle hot spot project at our next meeting.

- (5) **Public Comment.** – Brian Kramer (Town Manager Pine Knoll Shores) introduced the Town's new summer intern from UNC, Scott Sherrill, and also noted the trials and tribulations that were just summarized (see number (4) above) should underscore the need for the comprehensive Master Plan the Beach Commission is pursuing.

James N. Willis, III from Atlantic Beach took the time to thank the Commission for all the sand that was placed on the beaches of Ft. Macon and Atlantic Beach this past winter. Almost more importantly, Mr. Willis warned the Beach Commission of the sea-level rise "panic" that has been dominating the news – engineers/scientists have been wrong in the past, or embellish the data, and the sea-level news falls into this category. As a matter of fact, some of the local markers are showing almost no sea-level rise, but they will use the specter of sea-level rise against us. Member Baldwin added the County has been very active concerning the Coastal Resources Commission's sea-level rise policy, and to a positive end. The N.C. Division of Emergency Management however is also preparing a study that warrants our attention as it can impact flood insurance rates, financing, zoning, infrastructure development, etc.

- (6) **Other Business.** – None.
- (7) **July 2011 Meeting Date (July 25, 2011 – proposed).** – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting would be held on July 25th at 2:00 pm, Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall.
- (8) **Adjourn.** – Chairman Fugate asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.