

# Dare County Waterways Commission

## Minutes

Monday, September 13, 2021

7:00 PM (Virtual Meeting)

### Call to Order

**Roll Call:** Steve Coulter, Ernie Foster, Natalie Kavanagh, Michael Flynn, KP Scott

**Acceptance of Minutes:** August 9, 2021

- KP Scott made a motion to approve the minutes. Michael Flynn seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Welcome:** Chairman Steve Coulter

- Steve Coulter thanked everyone for attending.

### **Public Comment**

- No public comment

### **New Business**

### **USCG Report**

- The Coast Guard is working on shortening chains on certain buoys that may be impeding the channel. Coast Guard is ready if a new channel is found and needs to be marked. John Ahlen with the Coast Guard brought up that they are working on getting rid of unnecessary lights, specifically the Hatteras Light on the beach south of Station. No one has indicated they use it for navigation, but John wanted to check with the Commission on their thoughts. Catherine Peele with the Ferry Division commented that she will check with their Captains to determine if they use the light. KP Scott stated that he was looking at it right now, and that the light is so dim that boaters could not see it from a distance. Steve commented that he does not use it. KP said maybe some commercial boats may use it. Ernie Foster thought it would be a good idea to check with the small commercial boats. John said this would not be a quick process and would be awhile before the Coast Guard took anything down. Steve asked about Oregon Inlet. John said it was looking pretty good. The Coast Guard will be moving buoys on Wednesday, specifically 15 and 22. They may put a 16A in the narrow channel near 17 to mark the shoal. Steve said there needs to be another aid to navigation, in the long span once crossing the Bar going towards South Ferry Channel, where during large swells it is hard to see the green buoy. Ernie and KP agreed. The Coast Guard will take a look at that area.
- John Matuska of Station Hatteras said the recent swell has caused shoaling and the Coast Guard will not cross the Bar 3 hours before and after low tide. The Coast Guard ran it

multiple times during the weekend and during low tide they were dredging bottom the whole time with the 47. Steve, KP, and Ernie thanked the Coast Guard for sitting out on the Bar during the recent hurricane swell to make sure boats were able to get in and out safely.

## **Corps Report**

- Brennan Dooley with USACE stated that the Corps had received the \$1,000,000 from the County and DEQ for the upcoming fiscal year. The Merritt is tentatively scheduled to be at South Ferry Channel in October. Jeremy Smith with the Corps confirmed the Merritt will be there for two weeks starting October 1<sup>ST</sup> and will also dredge Rollinson Channel from the 15<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup>. Steve asked if they will be dredging in the current channel or another route. Jeremy expected the current route to be dredged during the October event. Steve Coulter commented that boaters have looked around different areas. An alternate route to the north may be outside the permitted dredge box. There is another area north of 4sf, that does have a shoal at the end of it, but does have more natural flow than the current channel. Hopefully the Corps can survey that area soon to determine if that is an option. Referring to the most recent survey, Steve summarized routes that have been looked at by local mariners. Jeremy stated he will talk with the surveyor to discuss depths in the area north of 4sf.
- Steve asked about the Rollinson Realignment. Todd said they provided a draft of the Environmental Assessment, but it has not yet gone out for public review. Jeremy confirmed the Corps Office of Counsel is currently reviewing it before going out for public review. Steve asked about the MOA. Brennan confirmed that the Corps had received the initiation letter from DEQ and the Corps has everything they need to move forward.

## **NCDOT FERRY Report**

- Cat from the Ferry Division stated the Manteo is in the shipyard until December. The Stumpy Point dredge project has been completed and if needed the emergency ferry could operate in Stumpy Point and Rodanthe. The marine maintenance crew is working on dolphins at the South Dock to replace those. The passenger ferry finished running on 9/6. The Ferry Division is waiting on official budget from the Senate and House and therefore is operating on a continuation budget. The ferry will return to offseason schedule tomorrow. Ernie asked where we are with putting in pilings for the dredge at South Dock. Barton Grover and Cat confirmed that this work would occur early next year after the Manteo was out of the shipyard and able to dredge South Dock. Barton will reach back out to DOT to determine an exact timeline for contracting and work.
- Brian Doliber has not received the Sloop Channel permit as of today, but the permit is done and is down in Wilmington for signatures.

## **Old Business**

- Ken Willson with Coastal Protection Engineering presented a Navigation Project Update on South Ferry Channel. This presentation included information and maps of historical channels dredged, dredging corridor, cubic yards dredged per event, previous surveys, and the length of time channels remained open between dredge events. For a copy of the presentation, please contact Barton Grover, Grants & Waterways Administrator, at [barton.grover@darenc.com](mailto:barton.grover@darenc.com).

- Ken stated the southern route has tended to remain open for longer and the Corps prefers the straighter routes rather than routes with a dogleg left like the current South Ferry Channel. Steve commented that going northwest of 4sf would be a straighter route. Ken said that there may not be enough water in that area moving the shoals and any route in that area would possibly create a dry shoal if the Merritt is sidecasting. Steve said that is why it is important to get the Murden or Currituck in there to remove the material. Ken asked the Corps if there is an opportunity to get the Murden into South Ferry Channel. At this time, the Corps could not confirm they could get the Murden into South Ferry Channel before it went into dry dock in October. The Corps didn't feel comfortable with the southern route due to the length of the shoal that would need to be dredged. There was concern with the existing channel that the Merritt could not sidecast for two weeks without creating a dry shoal and therefore being forced to stop by the agencies. Steve said that the Murden needs to get in there to remove material so that the channel can be dredged as wide and deep as it is supposed to be. A new survey will be needed of the route northwest of 4sf for the Corps to determine if the western route can be successfully dredged.
- KP and Steve said the shoaling has gotten worse since the last survey and KP indicated he will no longer be able to operate his head boat through the South Ferry Channel in a week. KP recommended a survey be done and the Waterways Commission have a special meeting after receiving the survey to see if the western route is feasible. Natalie agreed.

**Administrative Business**

- Current Budget
  - Non-Federal Funds with Corps for SFC: \$1,000,035
  - President's Budget FY2022 for Rollinson Channel: \$30,000
  - Dare County FY2022 Budget: \$250,000 (\$0 remaining)

**Board Member Business**

- Michael Flynn updated the Board that the abandoned and derelict vessel removal project has begun.

**Adjournment**

- KP made the motion to adjourn, Natalie seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting is October 11, 2021 at 7:00pm. The meeting will be virtual.

Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Barton Grover  
 Grants & Waterways Administrator

APPROVED By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Steve Coulter, Board Chair  
 Dare County Waterways Commission