

Dare County Waterways Commission

Minutes

Monday, February 14, 2022

7:00 PM (Virtual Meeting)

Call to Order

Roll Call: Steve Coulter, Natalie Kavanagh, Michael Flynn, Danny Couch, Kermit Skinner, KP Scott

Acceptance of Minutes: January 10, 2021

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

Welcome: Chairman Steve Coulter

- Steve thanked everyone for attending.

Public Comment

- Brian Patteson thanked everyone on the Commission for their work to preserve navigation in Hatteras and looked forward to the County getting the new hopper dredge. This is the third consecutive winter he has had to abandon running charters in Hatteras because of shoaling. The last couple years the Corps has done a minimal amount of dredging during the winter and it is not enough to maintain the channel. It was frustrating for the Merritt to be working down here for a week or so in Hatteras Inlet for the Ferry Division, but not working in South Ferry Channel. Brian also hoped the realignment was finalized soon.

New Business

USCG Report

- Greg Kennerley reported the Coast Guard re-marked South Ferry Channel and are waiting for the dredge to return. They will be down to move 17, 19, and 18 and adding a 18A. John Matuska stated the entrance is getting worse. They are barely getting their small boats through due to 3ft depth. After the plane crash, they were unable to go out with the 47 at Hatteras Inlet, so had to go out at Ocracoke Inlet. The last day the 47 was able to get through South Ferry Channel was late January. These are the worst conditions of an inlet he has seen in his time at the Coast Guard.

Corps Report

- Jeremy Smith reported the Merritt is at Rudee Inlet until roughly the 20th then repairing a bent rudder in Manns Harbor. Repairs are anticipated to be completed at the end of February. Inlet conditions around the State are all in similar shape and they can't get to all of them as quick

as they would like. The Corps will be discussing with the Coast Guard what would be prioritized between Oregon Inlet and South Ferry Channel. Greg Kennerley responded to Jeremy that as of now the Coast Guard priority is South Ferry Channel.

- Brennan Dooley commented the MOA is now fully executed. Steve said to those at the meeting that the MOA had expired on the 7th of January, but is now in effect.
- Brennan said his understanding is the Corps is still working through comments from the resource agencies. Jeremy stated DEQ had a deadline of today to respond and NMFS had a deadline of the 28th. KP asked what the concerns were. Jeremy and Brennan responded that they were related to Barney Slough and time of year dredging. Steve commented that Barney Slough has not been much of an issue and has not been dredged for 5 years, so why would it be a concern. Brennan said the Corps is asking for anytime dredging in a place they have never dredged, so that is why the agencies have an issue. KP asked if there is any chance this realignment doesn't happen, because he is getting those questions. Jeremy said he has high confidence it will happen, most likely by May.

NCDOT Ferry Report

- No report from the Ferry Division.
- Steve said there is a bucket and barge operation in Sloop Channel that is not a Ferry Division or Dare County operation, but is a Division 1 DOT operation. The material is then transported to the highway on Ocracoke. He does not have any information beyond that. Barton responded he will reach out to DOT for more information.
- Barton reported he is in contact with DOT, EJE, and the Corps about the design of South Dock.

Old Business

- None

Administrative Business

- Current Budget
 - Non-Federal Funds with Corps for SFC: \$446,000
 - Infrastructure Bill for Rollinson Channel: \$1,430,000
 - President's Budget FY2022 for Rollinson Channel: \$30,000
 - Dare County FY2022 Budget: \$250,000 (\$0 remaining)
- MOA/Permit Status
 - MOA- Expires 01/2022
 - CAMA – Expires 12/2024
 - Department of the Army Permit – Expires 03/2027
- Barton informed the Commission that the pilot house was installed on the Miss Katie. Expected vessel launch on April 1st and scheduled delivery May 24th, 2022.

- Steve reported that the letter of support for the FLAP grant application by the Ferry Division was submitted. The Ferry Division was requesting funds for improvements at the Hatteras and Ocracoke ferry docks.
- Steve asked Barton to speak about the infrastructure funds recently awarded to the Army Corps for projects in Dare County. Barton stated \$1.43 million for dredge plant in Rollinson Channel, once realignment occurs those funds will be able to be used in South Ferry Channel and the rest of the Hatteras Inlet complex. \$2.58 million for Stumpy Point pipeline dredging. \$6.4 million for a pipeline dredge between Wanchese and Oregon Inlet and Avon Harbor received \$1.6 million, which could be a pipeline or bucket and barge operation. We are currently looking for a site for dredged materials from Avon. Permits need to be in place by June of this year.
- Michael Flynn reported that the Park Service will be performing an onsite assessment of the interdunal road between Ramp 44 and south beach to determine if that will be an appropriate placement site. Barton reported that sediment samples had already been collected in Avon Harbor and channel during the Avon beach nourishment project. Steve said the Park Service has their sediment management plan in place, which will allow for mutually beneficial use of dredged material. He appreciated that the Park Service had been forward thinking in identifying future projects over the next 20 years.
- Ken reported the DCM permit was issued for the Miss Katie to operate in South Ferry Channel and he expects the Miss Katie will be authorized by the Corps soon.

Board Member Business

- Steve said we need year around maintenance of the channel. We will be out fishing again the beginning of April and boats cannot get out. Commercial boats are hitting bottom and the Coast Guard cannot get out with the 47. Ken said as the situation stands in the current channel, we'll need more regular maintenance events to keep the channel open and hopefully the realignment comes through to allow for federal dollars to be used in South Ferry Channel. But that does not solve the capacity issue of the Corps.
- Natalie spoke about the MOA situation. Every month the MOA is spoken about and the Corps reports that everything in order, but when it comes time to dredging at the beginning of the year it is not signed. Then she gets questions from the community about why dredging is not occurring and her answer has to be a piece of paper is not signed. Why was the MOA not signed in time this year.
- Steve commented that he had heard Sloop Channel was added to the MOA and that was the cause of the delay. He asked Brennan to provide additional information. Brennan responded that the Office of Counsel and the Division had added the Sloop Channel to the document. Steve commented the agreement was entered into by Dare County to get charter boats out to the ocean and as far as he knew, they did not request the addition of Sloop Channel. Brennan answered that the agreement is with the State and what he understands is the State requested the addition of Sloop Channel to benefit the Ferry Division.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____
Barton Grover
Grants & Waterways Administrator

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

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