

Minutes

Dare County Oregon Inlet Task Force Meeting

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

9:30 a.m., June 14, 2022

Attendance: Harry Schiffman, Bob Peele, Steve House, Russ King, Brown Douglas

1.0 Review Minutes- May 10, 2022

Harry Schiffman called the meeting to order at 9:30am. Harry Schiffman made the motion to adopt the minutes with edits. Bob Peele seconded the motion. All in favor.

2.0 Welcome guests

Harry thanked everyone for joining.

3.0 NCDOT Division I update

Barton Grover updated the Task Force that there will be no future Bonner Bridge demolition meetings. The contractor has demobilized. Harry asked if there have been any conversations about labeling the bents on the bridge. Barton stated he reached out to DOT and did not receive a response. Bob Peele made a motion to ask the Board of Commissioners to make an official request to DOT to label the bents. Brown Douglas seconded. All in favor. Harry commented the labels were on the Bonner Bridge and were reflective. Steve House said the Board of Commissioners has an emergency meeting tomorrow and he would bring up this issue with the Commissioners. Harry asked when the camera on the bridge will be able to be viewed online. Barton responded DOT said it should be online later this year, they are upgrading servers.

4.0 Update on buoys placement in & around O.I. by USCG ANT, Wanchese

John Ahlen reported they have moved 21 and 19 to get boaters through the spans. They added 13 to 17 to get people out to deep water. Over the next couple weeks, the Coast Guard will be disestablishing the north cut over the bar and establishing the south. Hopefully it will be done over the next couple weeks. Representatives with Coast Guard NAVCEN spoke about delivering Broadcast Notice to Mariners digitally via emails to phones or on the website. They will be looking in the future to have the notices georeferenced. Harry asked if there is shoaling around a particular buoy, would the email show a pictorial of the change. Brendan responded not right now, but we could work on adding an image of the survey during the next BNM update. Barton asked if the listserv could be narrowed down. Currently the only option is for the entire State of North Carolina, and he has received numerous emails unrelated to Dare. He is worried people will unsubscribe if inundated with emails. Gene Diotalevi will look into see if that is an option.

5.0 Dredging Summary Report

The Corps dredged two days in May with the Merritt, moving a total of 1525 cubic yards.

6.0 O.I. Survey & Channel reports

Joen reported the Corps cannot dredge west of the bridge at buoy 21 due to the narrowness, it is less than 100 feet away from the bridge and the pipe on the Merritt sticks out making it narrower. Harry asked if the Merritt can transit through there and go under the bridge. Joen said they cannot get to the navigation span and the Corps is not authorized to go under the bridge anywhere else other than the navigation span. Jeremy said that is a decision of DOT and the Coast Guard due to the impact rating of the bridge. Barton said any vessel over 100 tons must go through the navigation span according to Coast Guard guidance.

Barton commented the Corps is looking at an alternate channel to the southwest. They are looking to bring in the Snell to dredge the shoal. The Corps does not have a permit to dredge in this area, but Dare County does. But Dare County's permit does not explicitly state the Snell can dredge. We will need to get a permit modification to allow the Snell to dredge, which would open up the channel for the Merritt and thereafter Miss Katie. Ken Willson stated they included that channel in the permitted corridor when permitting for the Miss Katie. However, our current permit is very specific about what vessels can work under our permit and our permit does not allow sidecasting until the end of July unless we receive approval from the agencies. Based on correspondence with the Corps, the equipment used by the Snell is similar to what is used by the Merritt. So we are hopeful that since the methodology is similar between the dredges, we do not need a modification, only relief.

Ken Willson asked if the Corps dredges this area under Dare County's permit, will they then have federal authorization to dredge under their permit. Jeremy responded that Counsel has determined that this area falls within federal authorization, but the NEPA documentation does not cover this area. They can dredge the northwest end of the channel, because they have dredged that area before. Jeremy said it will take 6 to 8 months to go through the NEPA process. Harry asked what is the difference between operating under our permit versus theirs. Jeremy stated they would be using Dare County funds if they are dredging under our permit.

7.0 Corps Dredging Schedule

Joen said the Merritt is operating in the northwest end of the channel today. The Snell is installing clusters in Hatteras, but can be in Oregon Inlet on July 11th if Dare County receives relief from the agencies.

8.0 EJE Dredging Construction Update

Harry said the electrical panels have been shipped. He will find out during the meeting this afternoon when in July the dredge will be completed. They have replaced the two fuel tanks. Bob Peele stated the Miss Katie has been approved to dock at the Wanchese Industrial Park, but was wondering when EJE will work on connecting power and water to

the area. Jordan Hennessy said he will have an electrician down there to get shore power and he will speak with Bob about the water. Harry commented the survey boat work is moving along.

9.0 Permit Updates

Ken Willson said we are fine tuning the remaining permit requests for the Central project for the Miss Katie to dredge. Ken said the first question is what depth and width would the Task Force like to permit the Crack. We will need justification in our permit request. Harry said the boats in the fishing center have issues with the current depths and some commercial boats need 10ft. Harry recommended the channel match the rest of the channels in the area, which are 12ft by 100ft. Russ commented that during the summer months, it can be tricky navigating from the fishing center due to number of boats and narrowness of channel. Harry and Russ said boats have to get up on plane to get through that area near the fishing center currently. There is a lot of traffic with the fishing center, the public boat ramp, the Coast Guard, Wanchese, and Pirates Cove all using this channel. The second question is the dimensions of Walter Slough. It has been previously maintained to 7ft by 60ft. If there is a reason for Walter Slough to be wider and deeper, this is the time to request it. Harry said it needs to be 12ft by 100ft due to some of the same reasons the Crack needs to be maintained at that depth and width. Bob and Harry said it would make sense to have all the channels a continuous 12ft by 100ft. Barton said in addition to commercial vessels, he has received phone calls from owners of sailboats who need at least 7 to 8ft to make it out of Oregon Inlet. Steve said he agreed it would make sense to have continuity of depth and width in all the channels. Harry said if the Miss Katie eventually docks at the fishing center, it would make sense for the channel to go all the way to the fishing center. Russ said there are existing pilings for the emergency ferry that could be used for the Miss Katie. It is Park Service property, so they would have to be consulted.

Bob asked while we were on this topic, was there an update on the no-wake zone by the fishing center. Michael Flynn said it was still under internal review, but he would have an update at the July meeting. Michael described the extent of the no-wake zone on a map. The Task Force believed the extent of the no-wake zone is going to be an issue for boaters. If they are slowed down that far out, they may hit bottom and damage boats due to getting off plane. Michael said the no-wake zone is to reduce the conflict between boaters, kayakers, and those wade fishing.

10.0 Additional comments

Barton said the Island H budget amendment will be at the next Board of Commissioners meeting. This project will be completed to accept dredged materials from near Wanchese. Costs are continuing to rise and an additional budget amendment may be necessary.

11.0 Administrative comments

11.1 Current Budget

- 11.1.1 Non- Federal Funds with Corps, estimated \$1,350,250
- 11.1.2 FY2022 President's Budget- \$3,296,000
- 11.1.3 Dare County FY2022 Budget- \$3,000,000
- 11.1.4 Infrastructure Bill (Wanchese to Oregon Inlet) - \$6,400,000

12.0 Adjourn

Bob made the motion to adjourn. Russ seconded.

DRAFT