



Dare County Waterways Commission

Minutes

November 13, 2023

Call to Order

Roll Call: Steve Coulter, Natalie Kavanagh, Ernie Foster, KP Scott, Michael Flynn (online), Danny Couch, John Berquist

Acceptance of Minutes: October 10, 2023

- Danny Couch made the motion to approve the minutes. Natalie Kavanagh seconded the motion. All in favor.

New Business

USCG Report

- Patrick Tallant reported the 49 ft boat reset lighted buoys 3, 5, and 6 at Hatteras Inlet. Lighted buoy 4A is currently missing. Moved 3B, 4A, and 4B and placed a 4C in Sloop. 4A is lined up across from 3A to better mark the turn. 4B has been placed in 4A's former location. 4C placed in 4B's former location. Buoys were also replaced and relocated in Barney and Rollinson.
- Steve Coulter said the buoys in the inlet were much needed and help with visibility when there are heavier seas. Steve asked how Oregon Inlet looked. Patrick said they relocated buoys a month ago and the channel seems to be holding. John Berquist commented it is much better now.
- Steve asked about the buoy near the jug handle bridge. Patrick said they were unable to recover it due to shallow conditions and are looking at alternate methods.

Corps Report

- No attendees from the Corps

- Barton reported that Coley Cordeiro has departed from the Corps and will no longer be the project manager for Dare County. The Corps has hired a replacement.
- Patrick stated the Merritt is working the ferry channel near Barney Slough currently and the Murden will be dredging the area soon. Danny Couch commented it is narrow at 12A and between 14 and 17 in the ferry channel.
- Steve said the straight cut through Sloop has been deepening and he would like to hear from the Corps if they were pursuing amending the federally authorized channel to allow for dredging in that area.

NCDOT Ferry Division Report

- Catherine Peele said the Corps and DOT have held several meetings on conditions of the ferry channel. It has been a few weeks since the pipeline project was discussed, but the last update from the Corps was there were insufficient funds and other obstacles. Therefore, that project is on hold. DOT is ready to help in any way. The Corps needs sand bags to be placed on the bird island before disposal can occur and needs assistance with monitoring. The Corps is looking into funding for Big Foot Slough next year, so may be able to combine the two projects into one bid.
- The Merritt has been sent to the ferry channel to dredge for a few days. The Corps informed DOT the Murden will arrive after receiving repairs in Norfolk and Manns Harbor.
- The Ferry Division has submitted to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program a request for replacement of the entire fleet as they age out. The STIP is a long-range planning program and is one of the limited methods the Ferry Division has to obtain funding. John asked if the ferries would be bigger. Cat said for right now, the request is for the same size. But they also asked to expand the basins for larger vessels. If that project is funded first, then they may change their request to larger ferries.
- Ernie Foster asked if the ferries have been able to access Stumpy Point. Catherine said they run it quarterly and they were able to utilize the emergency ferry channel last month.

EJE Dredging Report

- Barton stated EJE dredged the Connector Channel October 8th to the 14th, 24hr days. A little over 24,000 cubic yards were dredged. The Connector Channel survey was completed November 6th and shows the channel in good condition.
- Current budget remaining is \$623,835.97
- The Miss Katie is currently operating in Oregon Inlet

Public Comment

- Bianca Aniski asked if the Corps would be providing Avon Harbor updates since it is no longer on the Commission agenda. Barton responded that as discussed at the last meeting, there is no placement area available for the contaminated material in the Harbor. The Corps has indicated they may pipeline dredge the channel, but they are having internal discussions. When Dare County receives an update from the Corps, that will be passed along at a Waterways Commission meeting. Barton said he can email directly if there is an update.

Old Business

- Barton updated the Commission on the Stumpy Point project. CPE is working on design and bid documents for the disposal island. The project will be bid out to determine if it is financially feasible.
- Ken Willson stated the permit review is moving along. Comments were received from the Corps about the Hatteras Inlet Management Plan and we have responded with information to allow the Corps to develop the plan and fill out their matrix. DWR had originally indicated they had stopped their review due to the lack of the HIMP. However, once they received the responses, they immediately returned to reviewing and they have issued the Water Quality Certification. The CAMA permit process has also continued and their statutory review time ends the first week of January. The Corps of Engineers recently submitted additional comments and responses to those comments were submitted earlier this morning. So, the ball is in the agencies court. Ken expects to receive the CAMA permit before the end of the year.
- Ken said once we receive the CAMA permit, we should re-engage with permitting the Ocean Bar Channel that DCM asked us to separate out. This would also allow us to add the additional disposal areas asked for in the current application to the Connector Channel permit. Also, at the same time we would ask for 17ft depths in the nearshore disposal area. Michael asked if the 17ft depths were approved off of Pea Island and if it is likely it would be permitted off of Ocracoke. Ken said it was permitted to 17ft at Pea Island and the agencies did not raise any issues because it was determined that there was insignificant difference in the percentage of material that would still be in the active system.

Administrative Business

- Steve asked about the non-federal funds. Barton said those are residual funds from FY23. Typically, the Corps returns those funds at the end of the fiscal year. They were going to use the funds to dredge Rollinson, but were able to find federal funds. Once the Miss Katie is permitted in the entire channel there will be limited occasions for the Corps to need to use those funds. KP Scott said we should request those funds be returned. Steve said it may be good to wait until we receive the permits for the Miss Katie. Natalie Kavanagh and John

concurrent. Steve asked where those funds would be returned to. Barton said they would be returned to the general dredging fund.

- Barton said he will provide a 2024 calendar showing the meetings on the second Mondays and asked if there were any requests to change.
- Michael Flynn asked Patrick Tallant for any updates on the Hatteras tower. Patrick said it is a long-range project, but the permit is on his desk to return to the Park Service for a 5-year lease. Once the light is extinguished, the process would begin to disestablish.

Adjournment

- Steve motioned to adjourn. Natalie seconded.