



Dare County Waterways Commission

Minutes

January 8, 2024

Call to Order

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

Acceptance of Minutes: December 11, 2023

- Natalie Kavanagh made the motion to approve the minutes. Ernie Foster seconded the motion. All in favor.

New Business

USCG Report

- Patrick Tallant reported Hatteras Inlet buoy 4 is still missing. The last storm blew off station Hatteras Connector buoy 3 and 15 is missing. Sloop Channel 4A is missing.
- Patrick asked if there were any comments on the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Cape Hatteras Lighthouse will be getting renovated and the light will be temporarily extinguished during the 24-month construction project. Patrick asked that the Commission email him any concerns, because it is possible they request to turn the light off permanently.
- Steve Coulter asked if Chief Matuska had anything to add. He replied they have been doing Bar reports every other morning and can get through Sloop, but it is shallow.

Corps Report

- Bob Keistler stated we heard you loud and clear and the Corps is working on an emergency declaration to operate outside the dredging corridor in Sloop. It would likely be late January before the Corps could get approval. The Corps is working on putting together a pipeline project for next year. Working with the County on Wanchese & Stumpy Point if those can be included dependent upon readiness of disposal islands.
- The Corps has received letters of support from NC DOT, Dare County, and the Coast Guard for the emergency declaration. Jed Dixon asked if the declaration is a one-time request. Bob said they will make sure to request that dredges will be able to maintain as needed. This was requested and provided in the Alternate Channel by Oregon Inlet, but there was a reduction in the depth allowed to be dredged due to sediment characteristics.
- Steve asked if the Corps is pursuing permanently including this new channel in the corridor. Bob said they are looking to expand the corridor and the environmental assessment will include much of the area around Sloop to try to avoid any future delays. If an EA is performed for a large corridor, they will only need to obtain additional cultural resources and geotechnical surveys if the channel moves. Jed Dixon said the ferry had previously ran the area proposed to be dredged.
- Jordan Hennessy asked if the Corps has performed vibracores in the proposed channel. Bob responded that there are vibracores in the area, but not in the exact alignment. The Corps will be obtaining additional vibracores. Jordan commented the sediment characteristics in the Alternate Channel restricted dredging. Bob believed the material in the area is primarily sand. Jordan asked if the Miss Katie would be authorized to dredge the new Sloop Channel. Bob said the Miss Katie will have a permit for the federally authorized channel and would be able to follow the Corps authorization to dredge wherever the channel is relocated.
- Ken Willson clarified that in Oregon Inlet the channel was relocated outside the federal authorization but still within Dare County's CAMA permit. This would be a different scenario in that the proposed new orientation of Sloop Channel is not within Dare County's CAMA permit. Therefore it is uncertain if this will proceed the same way as the Alternate Channel. Bob said he believes even with that difference, the Miss Katie should be able to dredge the emergency declared channel at Sloop. He will communicate with the Office of Counsel. Danny Couch appreciated the efforts of the Corps and making the ask.

NCDOT Ferry Division Report

- Jed Dixon thanked the Waterways Commission for the work they have done. The ferries are taking the passenger ferry route through Rollinson proper. There have been too many instances of damages to the ferries on the Barney Slough side. The river class ferries can barely get through there, but the Hatteras Class boats cannot get through. Once Sloop North is opened up with this emergency event, they will be able to return to the previous schedule. The DOT dredge needs repair before dredging can occur at South Dock. Natalie

asked how many Hatteras Class ferries were in Hatteras. Jed said currently 1, but two to three in the summer. There are 3 double enders now. Usually operating in the summer with 6 or 7 ferries.

- Ernie Foster asked if there had been a survey of Barney since the storms, the most recent survey he had seen was right after the dredging event. Jed responded there hasn't been. The ferries did not run the route after dredging, because the entire shoaling issue was unable to be addressed. It was deeper but not wider.

Public Comment

- No comment

Old Business

- Ken Willson reported the CAMA Major Permit was received since the last meeting to allow for the Miss Katie to operate in all federal channels in the Rollinson Realignment. We are still waiting on the Corps of Engineers permit. He has spoken to Josh Pelletier with Corps Regulatory, and there is still 408 review and legal review to be completed, but it is expected to be wrapped up soon. Then there would be another two weeks to finalize the conditions and the Environmental Assessment. Possibly receiving that permit as early as the end of January.
- Jordan asked if there were moratoriums on this permit. Ken said he would need to look at the permit to confirm. Creature commented he did not think there was. Ken said he would look into it, that maybe the yearly restrictions were only in reference to the buffer distance. Barton confirmed that he did not believe there were any moratoriums on the CAMA permit, but there was a 300ft buffer in the summer and 100ft buffer in the summer to SAV if feasible.
- Ken mentioned that as we had discussed before, DCM had requested the Ocean Bar be separated out from the Rollinson Realignment channels and added to the Connector Channel permit. When the Connector Channel is modified, the additional disposal areas recently obtained for the ferry channel would be included plus increasing the depth to 17ft offshore Ocracoke. Ken said we have funds on the existing contract to fund that action if the Waterways Commission requested. Danny Couch motioned to approve the permit application to modify the Connector Channel permit to include the Ocean Bar and additional disposal areas. Ernie Foster seconded. All in favor.
- Ken stated that the Corps is continuing to work on the Hatteras Inlet Management Plan to show the agencies a summary of the permits the Corps, Dare County, and DOT have at Hatteras Inlet. Ken is drafting up the comments to summarize the permits Dare County has or expects to have at Hatteras Inlet and will send over for review.
- Ken said it would be good to begin planning for the March event at the February meeting. It may also be a good idea to schedule a work session to go through the permits to go through

conditions and where dredging is expected to occur. The deep scour holes must be surveyed for SAV before disposal for instance and that would take some time to do. Where the Waterways Commission plans on dredging will decide where preliminary work needs to be done.

Administrative Business

- Barton Grover touched on Ken's previous comments. Not only are there some pre-requisite items to do before dredging according to the permit, but also Barton will need to establish cost share contracts for these other channels. So, if there are other channels the Waterways Commission would like to see dredged, it does take a few months to establish a contract.

Board Member Business

- KP Scott stated it would be good to know if the Miss Katie will be authorized to dredge in Sloop as soon as possible. Bob Keistler said it was on his to do list.
- Michael Flynn said he would be interested in a work session and wondered if somewhere in between the March and April meetings would be a good time to target. Ken said it depends on how soon dredging is needed in other channels. If it is immediately when we receive permits, then a work session may need to be earlier. Danny Couch said this is something we need to keep note of and coordinate soon.

Adjournment

- Danny motioned to adjourn. Natalie seconded.