



Dare County Waterways Commission

Minutes

June 10, 2024

Call to Order

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

Acceptance of Minutes: May 13, 2024

- John Berquist made the motion to approve the minutes. Steve Coulter seconded the motion. All in favor.

New Business

USCG Report

- Not in attendance

Corps Report

- Erin Weller reported the Merritt will arrive to dredge Sloop the first week of July. Steve Coulter stated it has been getting narrower and shallower. Erin responded they noticed shoaling on the recent survey and prioritized getting the Merritt there after a previously scheduled dredging event at New River. Danny Couch asked if boat traffic has been able to get through. Steve Coulter said it is marked well, but boaters need to be careful due to how narrow the channel is. John Berquist asked if the Merritt is only dredging Sloop or any other channels in Hatteras Inlet. Erin replied that they have received a request to look at Barney Slough from the Ferry Division.
- Steve Coulter asked for an update on the dredge Currituck. Erin stated that it is likely 12 months out. Barton Grover commented that Joen Petersen had recently reported it could be

- 18 months before the Currituck returns to dredging. Natalie Kavanagh asked for an update on the pipeline project. Erin stated the pipeline project will potentially occur after the environmental assessment is completed in winter of 2025. Steve Coulter asked if there was any consideration on widening the channel at Sloop. Erin said that will be considered during the EA process. Steve asked how long the EA process would take. Erin answered about a year. Barton Grover mentioned Bob Keistler had indicated there would be a stakeholder meeting on the front end of the EA for the stakeholders. Erin said she will bring it up tomorrow at an internal meeting.
- Michael Flynn asked if the Corps always requires a 3 to 1 side slope for all navigation channels or does vessel use type and other factors change that. Erin said it is always a 3 to 1 side slope.

NCDOT Ferry Division Report

- Barton Grover provided the following written summary provided by Catherine Peele from the Ferry Division.
 - Sloop Channel
 - Monitoring conditions. We have sent a request for dredging to the USACE in which they have responded with a potential July dredge project.
 - Continuing to work with Hyde and Dare on the Miss Katie project
 - Hatteras Channels
 - We continue using Rollinson Channel for all vessel operations.
 - Dredge Manteo
 - We have obtained a post dredge survey that shows enough work was accomplished for this season at South Dock. The dredge is headed to her credit dry dock in the near future.
 - Stumpy Point
 - We should have a test run completed in a few weeks. The most recent NCDOT survey of the state channel does show shoaling and shallow depths.
 - Grant Application
 - Thank you to the Dare BOC for sending a letter of support for the Rural Communities Grant that we are going for to help fund the construction of the MV Silver Lake (sound routes) replacement vessel.
 - Passenger Ferry Season
 - We have already had strong ridership for the passenger ferry season and are tracking to surpass May 2023 numbers. Awaiting final numbers now.

Public Comment

- Bianca Aniski commented that she had received a cost share grant from Soil & Water in 2021 to plant and stabilize a portion of her property previously used as a dredged material

disposal site for Avon Harbor. Bianca contacted Todd Horton with the Corps and he indicated the dredging project remained stalled and the Corps of Engineers would not release or dispose of its easement around Avon Harbor. Due to this uncertainty and the requirement by the grant agency to maintain the critical planting area for 5 years, they have decided to decline the cost share contract for critical area planting.

- Steve Coulter and Natalie Kavanagh asked for an update on the Avon project. Barton replied that they have informed the Corps of the possibility of a disposal site, however the Corps continues to have internal discussions on moving forward with the project. Due to contaminated materials, the material could not be placed on the beach near Kite Point. A confined disposal facility would need to be located adjacent to the site, but there was insufficient space within the existing easement to place a confined disposal facility. Danny Couch said there are a lot of people using that harbor that would appreciate it being dredged and placing it in the area by Kite Point would have remedied the erosion issue impacting the water line.

Old Business

- Ken Willson reported they are working on multiple permit modifications. There was a modification request submitted on April 12th. The review should take 6 to 8 weeks. This modification will allow for placement of material in the flood channel deep scour hole inside the inlet, so dredging can continue to occur when ocean conditions are rough. That modification also includes removing the moratorium language. There has been no indication of significant objections at the State level. Corps Regulatory had received a comment from the National Marine Fisheries Service on the use of the interior flood channel over concerns placement there will cause additional shoaling. CPE will be writing a letter in response stating no one is looking to cause more work if placement there causes shoaling of the channel, so techniques would be adjusted if placement is causing issues in the Connector Channel. Ken said CPE does not anticipate placement in the flood channel will cause shoaling. Steve Coulter said our plan is to use that during adverse weather conditions and asked if the National Marine Fisheries understands that. Ken said he can relay that information, that should minimize their concerns.
- A separate modification to the same permit will be a major modification that will allow for dredging of the Ocean Bar. That will be submitted in the next week or two as some details are finalized.
- The third modification is for the permit which includes Sloop Channel emergency channel. That modification was submitted on the 20th of May.
- Ken asked if the Merritt arriving in early July changes the Waterways request in terms of dredging by the Miss Katie. Steve said it is still a too early since we do not yet have permits, but the Miss Katie will be needed after to get the material out of the channel. We know the material will fall back into the channel after being side casted by the Merritt. Steve and KP Scott stated this will need to be discussed next month when we have more information

about the Merritt schedule and if the permit modifications were received. Steve said we may want to include Rollinson with the Sloop Channel dredging project. Barton said the disposal area for Rollinson is currently offshore Ocracoke, but Barney Slough may be a possibility to increase efficiency. Steve and John Berquist commented it should only be 2 to 3 loads to get the breakwater deeper. Barton commented the deep scour hole placement sites nearer to Rollinson require bathymetric, shellfish, and SAV surveys. Rollinson would require a request for relief due to the moratorium.

Administrative Business

- Barton Grover stated the agenda reflects funding until the end of this month. Starting on July 1st, there will be \$900,000 for the Hatteras Connector and \$100,000 for Rollinson Channel.
- CPE and the Corps have continued to communicate on Stumpy Point. Surveys and berm analysis have previously been completed and show there is sufficient capacity for the Corps to dredge 7 + 2ft. We had a meeting with the Corps to determine if there were any minor modifications which needed to be made, such as repair of the walkway. The Corps plans to solicit for the work in the next month, award in September, then perform dredging during the winter of the federal channel. Ernie Foster said this means the dredging won't occur until after when we typically use Stumpy Point, during hurricane season.
- Steve Coulter asked about the modification of Sloop Channel and if it is only the State which we are waiting on. Ken stated Corps Regulatory is also reviewing and must do a 408 review. He stated the Corps has the authorization to dredge the emergency channel and have the Miss Katie dredge for them under a direct contract, but allowing the Miss Katie to dredge under Dare County's permits require Regulatory review. The Corps only must go through a consistency review, but does not require a CAMA permit. DCM comments on their actions and the Corps may modify their proposed action based on those comments.

Board Member Business

- Barton informed the Commission that the Board of Commissioners reappointed Steve Coulter, Danny Couch, Natalie Kavanagh, and Ernie Foster for a two year term.
- Michael Flynn asked if at Avon it had been looked at placing the material west of the riprap, then planted to reduce erosion. Barton indicated the Corps had discussed this as a future possibility as part of a CAP 204 project. The Commission discussed this as a possible option for Avon and reviewed maps.

Adjournment

- Natalie Kavanagh motioned to adjourn. John Berquist seconded.