



Minutes

Dare County Oregon Inlet Task Force Meeting

Dare County Administration Building
Manteo, NC

9:30 a.m. October 15, 2024

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

Staff: Barton Grover

Others in Attendance: Jordan Hennessy, Joen Petersen, Brennan Dooley, Ronnie Smith, Brad Rosov, Ken Willson, John Tayloe, Kyle Ward, Catherine Kozak, Patrick Tallant

1.0 Welcome guests

- Meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Chairman House.

2.0 Review Minutes- September 10, 2024 & September 30, 2024

- Bob Peele motioned to approve both sets of minutes. Harry Schiffman seconded. All in favor.

3.0 USCG ANT Wanchese Update

- Patrick Tallant stated the crews have been working on adjusting buoys both east and west of the bridge. Buoy 9 was recommended to be moved towards 10 and 3 was recommended to be moved towards 4 to keep mariners off the southern shoal on the Bar.

4.0 U.S. Army Corps Update

- Brennan Dooley introduced Ronnie Smith, the new shallow draft project manager for the Corps. The Corps will be issuing a contract to Gator Dredging for Old House Channel Range 2 with two options for the Alternate Route and Stumpy Point. They currently plan to award both options. The Corps does not yet have a schedule from the contractor on when dredging will begin. Harry Schiffman asked

what the expected yardage is to be dredged from the Alternate Channel. Brennan Dooley responded 85,000 cubic yards with 70,000 going to the bird islands and 15,000 going to the deep scour hole near the bridge. Brennan Dooley shared site plans of the proposed project. Old House Range 1 is an option, but there is no material to be dredged there and that option is not expected to be exercised.

- Joen Petersen stated no dredging is expected in Oregon Inlet with dredge plants. The Merritt is currently dredging Bigfoot Slough and the Murden will be in Morehead City next month.
- Steve House asked if there is any timeline for the alternate route dredging. Brennan Dooley said the window starts November 16th for placement on the bird islands and runs to April. The Corps should receive a tentative schedule soon. Steve House asked if the Alternate Channel begins to shoal in and affects navigation, is there a chance we could get the Miss Katie in to dredge but leave 85,000 cubic yards. Our concern is if it starts to close up before the pipeline contractor starts work. Brennan Dooley said he would need to have internal conversations to discuss that option and cannot give a firm answer.
- Ken Willson commented that a survey was conducted in the Alternate Route twice in the last few weeks and shoaling was seen in between those two surveys. Ken stated that Todd Horton informed him that if the contract option was exercised for the alternate channel, the Miss Katie could not dredge due to the possibility that 85,000 cubic yards of material is not left in the channel when the pipeline contractor mobilizes.
- Brennan said they will reach out to the contractor to discuss timeline and get more information to pass along to Dare County. The Corps cannot direct the order in which these channels are dredged, but can make the contractor aware of the situation. Steve House said that information is important to the Task Force making an informed decision. Steve House said he thinks everyone would prefer federal dollars be used than county dollars, but we have to look out for our mariners as well.
- Brad Rosov said the EJE contracted survey showed roughly 85,000 cubic yards at the end of September, but the Corps survey just two weeks later showed 115,000 cubic yards needed to be dredged to get the channel to 14ft depth. This is just a data point to show the extent of shoaling.
- Russ King commented that the fleet will have a major issue if there are two assets out there and we aren't dredging because we don't want to step on each other's feet. Harry Schiffman asked if it would be possible to get an emergency permit stating a set number of cubic yards to be dredged if the channel shoals in. Ken Willson said Regulatory would likely not have any concerns issuing that permit, but this would be more of a Civil Works issue. Tommy Fennel agreed that this would be coordinated amongst multiple parties and he understands the situation

and point of view of the Task Force. Bob Peele asked if the contractor could opt out of the alternate channel since it is an option. Brennan Dooley said the option is on the Corps side, and the contractor will be required to dredge the channel if that option is exercised. Bob Peele asked when the Corps will make a decision to award the option. Brennan Dooley said they have 45 days to exercise the option from two weeks ago and are waiting on Dare County to tell them to award the option.

- Steve House said his worry is if the pipeline contractor does not get here until March and the channel is 6ft deep in sections and a danger to mariners. Bob Peele said he doesn't personally want to say no to federal funding, but there needs to be a opportunity to address emergency shoaling if the Miss Katie dredging does not impact the 85,000 cubic yard contract total. Steve House said one of the fish houses has invited a larger company with trawlers under the impression we can keep this channel open. Bringing back commercial fishing trawlers can be an economic driver and if they can't get in here this time, they may not come back. Steve House asked the Corps if they could come back with a timeline from the contractor to provide clarity to the Task Force when making this decision.

5.0 EJE Dredging Update

- Jordan Hennessy reported they continue to perform maintenance on pipes, hoses, outdrives, paint amongst other items on the dredge and will be ready to dredge once permits are reissued. Jordan said they will have their DQM inspection next week on the 23rd and dredging is needed to test the system. He asked Brad if permits are expected to be received, so they can do that test or alert the Corps the need to delay the inspection.

6.0 CPE Update

- Steve House asked for an update on the permits. Brad Rosov said the Corps has informed them that the permits would be turned on one by one when a dredging event is necessary. Brad stated we had originally pursued turning on the Oregon Inlet permit, but with the pipeline dredging discussion, we have shifted to Walter Slough and the Crack. EJE has provided survey data and CPE has plans and notifications ready to submit. The Corps has 7 days to turn on the permit once that is submitted.
- Harry Schiffman stated since recent surveys show shoaling in the Bar, we need both Walter Slough and the Crack and the Bar permits turned on. The weather prevents the Miss Katie from operating on the Bar every day, so we need inside

and outside channels to dredge. Brad Rosov responded the Corps understands the dynamics of working on the Bar, but we need to tread lightly. Brad said getting the non-federal channels turned on then requesting the Bar could be an option. Bob Peele said submitting the non-federal channels notification will get the process started and the Miss Katie working sooner, while CPE pulls together the information needed to turn the Bar permit back on. Harry Schiffman states as long as we can work on both permits concurrently and do not need to wait for the inside event to end before dredging the Bar, then that makes sense. Brad Rosov said that he believes the Corps would allow for both channels to be dredged at the same time. Steve House agreed that dredging the Bar, Walter Slough, and the Crack is right path while we wait to hear more information on the Alternate Route. Brad Rosov said they will begin this process once the meeting ends. Harry Schiffman motioned to submit notification for a dredge event in Walter Slough and the Crack and then submit notification to dredge the Ocean Bar once required submittal documentation is finalized. Russ King seconded the motion. All in favor.

- Brad Rosov said we are still waiting for the Special Use Permit from the National Park Service to dredge near the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center. Brad spoke to Dave Hallac and he was told the permit would be issued once the Corps reissued their permit.

7.0 Administrative comments

7.1 Current Budget

- 7.1.1 Miss Katie DEQ Contract Remaining Funds (up to August 15th)
 - 7.1.1.1 Oregon Inlet – \$8,963,156.50
 - 7.1.1.2 Wanchese to 17ext. - \$366,791.64
 - 7.1.1.3 Crack & Walter Slough - \$725,178.31
 - 7.1.1.4 Old House 2 - \$227,792.47
- 7.1.2 Federal Funds (Pipeline Dredging & Operations & Maintenance)
 - 7.1.2.1 Earmark - \$5,706,600
 - 7.1.2.2 IJJA – \$4,067,100
 - 7.1.2.3 O&M - \$300,000

8.0 Additional Comments

- Barton Grover asked Brad Rosov for the total cubic yards necessary to dredge the Crack & Walter Slough to 12 + 2ft. Brad responded 196,000 cubic yards. Barton commented current funds would allow only 46,000 cubic yards to be dredged and it takes 30 days to transfer funds into this DEQ cost share contract. Bob Peele said we certainly need to move funds into the contract and asked how much should be

transferred. Barton responded EJE could be able to dredge the entire remaining budget in a month depending on status of Bar permit, so possibly \$500,000 or \$1 million should be added. Bob Peele said \$1 million to be safe and Steve House agreed. Bob Peele made the motion to transfer \$1 million to the Crack & Walter Slough budget. Russ King seconded. All in favor.

- The Task Force reviewed Corps surveys to determine other interior channels where dredging may need to occur.
- Steve House recognized Trey Lewis and John Tayloe, representing Senator Tillis and Senator Budd respectively. Trey Lewis appreciated all the information and to let him know if he can do anything to help. John Tayloe said there will be two legislative assistants from Washington in Dare County to discuss waterways issues with officials tomorrow.

9.0 Adjourn

- Bob Peele motioned to adjourn. Russ King seconded.