

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 28, 2020, 2:00 PM

Commission Members Present:

Steve Smith, Chairman
Mike Benson, Vice Chairman
Teresa Batts
Ed Broadhurst
Tom Leonard
Jerry Patton
David Ward

Public Present:

Kerri Allen, NC Coastal Federation
Kyle Breuer, Town Manager, Surf City
Pam Castens, US Army Corps of Engineers
Dave Gilbride, Town Manager, North Topsail Beach
Stephanie Hobbs, Town Clerk, Surf City
Kathleen Riley, NCBIWA
Mike Rose, Town Manager, Topsail Beach
Connie Wilson, Connie Wilson Consulting
India Mackinson, Recording Clerk

1) Call to Order & Greetings

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2) Public Comments

No public comments were made.

3) Approval of Agenda

Alderman Leonard made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, and it was carried.

4) Approval of Minutes for Feb. 27, 2020

The minutes were approved unanimously.

5) Consultant & Partners Reviews

- a) Poyner Spruill Attorneys – Report Provide
- b) Connie Wilson Consulting –

Ms. Wilson stated the report covered everything about the projected revenue shortfall. Several individual budget bills have been filed, including some COVID-19 bills, but they are waiting on rules for the CARES Act. Next year, items such as the Shallow Draft Inlet Fund may be used to plug holes elsewhere in the budget. Ms. Wilson remarked the until a large percentage of people go back to normal spending, budgets will be tight. She asked if Memorial Day weekend on the island was busy, and Vice Chairman Benson replied that it was. Ms. Wilson offered to send federal polling materials to those interested. Mr. Ward asked about the municipal occupancy tax bill. Ms. Wilson expects it to pass the senate, but it is stymied by the hotel industry. She advised that the hospitality industry needs to be on board with any changes because the legislature is looking to pass items with as little controversy as possible. Alderman Leonard commented that North Topsail Beach is at an impasse with Onslow County

Commissioners, so he does not expect local support on such a bill. Vice Chairman Benson added that Mayor McDermon has been trying to work with the county, and they've indicated they would help this year, but no details have been offered yet. He said it is a work in progress, but it has been very frustrating. Chairman Smith commented that Topsail Beach has a good relationship with Pender County.

c) North Carolina Coastal Federation –

Ms. Allen reported that leadership is working to advance the state marine debris action plan. An outreach committee is looking for participants, so Ms. Allen can connect anyone interested to the chair. Chairman Smith said that Topsail Beach would like the TISPC to work with the Coastal Federation for an island-wide perspective. Vice Chairman Benson said he thought it was a good idea to work with them and would be interested in a living shoreline. Mr. Rose said he has been working with them to look at four sites for a living shoreline. COVID-19 slowed down the project, but they are working with a firm on design and other stormwater improvements. He also said they would like to engage property owners more. Mr. Breuer commented on the opportunity for resiliency plan efforts, such as a PDA fund opportunity and opportunities for oyster producers in the area. Mr. Rose said he is always open to look at grant opportunities to expand island wide. Ms. Allen said there is an outreach call next week and to give her names to pass on.

d) North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association –

Ms. Riley said they had to cancel their spring meeting and is deciding on whether to refund or push those funds to the next conference. She reported they got PPP, so financially they are doing as well as they can in the circumstances. She also said that Kevin Hart is the new infrastructure manager taking over for Dr. Cordeiro and has a new place on the NCBIWA Board. She is also confident she will get grant money for tide gauges for towns.

e) United States Army Corp of Engineering (USACE) –

Ms. Castens plans on getting contracts with the towns by early fall.

6) Old Business

a) Washington Trip – It was cancelled in March due to Pandemic.

i) Capitol Hill is restricted access. No Stake Holder Meetings on-site

(1) We can consider a virtual meeting in July or September with Congressional Staff/Committees

Chairman Smith said the March meeting was cancelled, but a virtual meeting may be possible. Vice Chairman Benson asked with who, and Chairman Smith replied the meeting would be with the same groups as before. Alderman Leonard said he would be interested in an assessment from Mike McIntyre on a timeline for the meeting. Chairman Smith replied that Mr. McIntyre recommended July, sooner rather than later.

- (2) In August there is the Republican Convention – Could consider an invite to Topsail Island for August 17 to 20

Chairman Smith said there is an opportunity to invite a delegation to come down to the island. Alderman Leonard said that North Topsail Beach would be interested. He commented that the town is closer than they've ever been to solving the CBRA issue, so we should do take every opportunity. Ms. Hobbs said Surf City would also be interested. Chairman Smith replied he would talk to Mr. McIntyre about both options.

- 7) Town's Local Projects/Direction –
a) North Topsail Beach – Dave Gilbride

Mr. Gilbride said the Hurricane Matthew truck haul for 5.2 miles of town was completed. The town applied for a modification to extend the project. Dredging of the inlet will happen in the fall, but there is no firm schedule yet. A contract agreement on repairing the sand bag revetment has been reached. The town park will be mostly open by July 4th while the county park across the street has started repairs. Bids for the town hall will go out in the next 60 days.

- b) Surf City – Kyle Breuer

Ms. Hobbs reported that the berm haul was completed three weeks ago. Contracts for town hall will also go out soon. Surf City continues to work on the federal project. The budget will be discussed at the next council meeting.

- c) Topsail Beach – Mike Rose

Mr. Rose said that the seasonal dredge project was completed with the May 30th extension, which put 1.7 million cu y of sand on the beach and 4.2 miles of dune. In July, 900,000 sea oats will be planted. The inlet will be dredged to 18 feet. The inlet channel to the pier will also be dredged. Other areas will be dredged in the fall. Mr. Rose also reported that the BIS committee wants to focus more on the soundside and storm damage reduction planning. Hurricane preparedness is underway with a meeting with Pender County and Surf City with preliminary information and coordination.

- 8) New Items

- a) CRC Meeting –
i) April Meeting Cancelled
ii) June Meeting – June 10 & 11 – Location TBD

Chairman Smith said the meeting is still scheduled but with no location or agenda published.

b) Island BIS Coordinator Discussion

Chairman Smith opened the topic to discussion. Mr. Gilbride said North Topsail Beach has been pursuing this for some time and developed a job description, which includes technical work with the TISPC. It will be discussed at the Annual Board Retreat. Mr. Broadhurst asked if the position would be a TISPC employee. Mr. Gilbride said NTB would take on the employee but ask for cost-sharing from the other towns, but the coordinator will participate in TISPC discussions. Vice Chairman Benson said the idea came from Bryan Chadwick, who saw the benefit of Rudi Rudolph's work. The position will be a hybrid of the Carteret County model while being a technical advisor to the towns and TISPC, a step to enhance and coordinate the island shoreline activities. Ms. Hobbs said she will have to talk to the Surf City Council. Mr. Rose said he will need to talk to his board, but staff discussions support it. Mr. Gilbride said he would share the job description.

9) Public Comments

Chairman Smith said another item is an island-wide license plate to generate revenue and to trademark "Topsail Island" for marketing advantages and to generate revenue. He asked the commission to give it some thought. Ms. Riley commented that hiring a shoreline coordinator is a great idea and money well spent. Chairman Smith said there is a virtual MOA meeting on June 10th.

10) Next Meeting – 2 PM, Thursday, June 25, 2020, TBD

Chairman Smith said there will be a virtual meeting unless something changes. Ms. Riley requested a virtual meeting option in the future so she can participate. Chairman Smith said he believed that was possible.

11) Adjournment