

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 22, 2020, 2:00 PM

Cisco WebEx Video Conference Link Below:

<https://stevengsmith.my.webex.com/stevengsmith.my/j.php?MTID=m767db47fd5ba1713e54d516b55ef6b86>

Commission Members Present

Steve Smith, Chairman
Mike Benson, Vice Chairman
Teresa Batts
Ed Broadhurst
Larry Combs
Tom Leonard
David Ward
Hiram Williams

Associates Present

Kerri Allen, N.C. Coastal Federation
Kyle Breuer, Town Manager, Surf City
Christina Burke, Asst Town Manager, Topsail Beach
Pam Castens, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dave Gilbride, Town Manager, North Topsail Beach
John Gunter, Commissioner, Topsail Beach
Jade Litcher, BIS Committee, Topsail Beach
Mike Rose, Town Manager, Topsail Beach
Kathleen Riley, NCBIWA
Dwight Torres, Councilman, Surf City
Tim Zizack, Commissioner, Topsail Beach
Connie Wilson, TISPC State Advocate
India Mackinson, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order & Greetings

At 2:01 p.m., Chairman Smith called the meeting to order. Vice Chairman Benson gave an update on Alderman Peter's health and wished him well.

2. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

3. Approval of Agenda

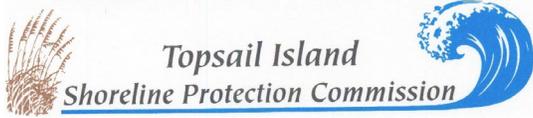
Chairman Smith noticed a typo on the agenda, correcting the next meeting date from December 7th to December 3rd. Vice Chairman Benson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Alderman Leonard seconded the motion, and it was carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for September 25, 2020

Mr. Combs suggested a minor correction to minutes from last meeting, inserting the word "Corps" into a sentence in item five. Mr. Ward made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Vice Chairman Benson seconded the motion, and it was carried.

5. Consultant & Partners Reviews

- a. Poyner Spruill Attorneys – Report Provided



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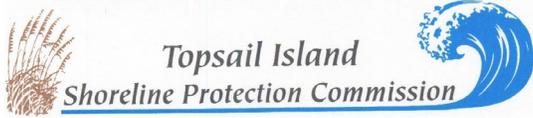
Chairman Smith said Mike McIntyre is looking for legislation to attach the CBRA bill to by the end of the year.

b. Connie Wilson Consulting –

Ms. Wilson reported that everyone is focused on getting elected at the moment, but the big question for after the election is the budget deficit. She predicts a budget shortfall next year. If Republicans remain in control, then there will probably be a 10% cut. Democrats would handle it in a different way. Ms. Wilson said it is lucky not much has been taken from the Shallow Draft Inlet Fund in last budget session. The N.C. House will probably remain in Republican control. The N.C. Senate has a 50/50 chance of switching party majority. Lexi Arthur has also been in contact with Kevin Hart about visiting the island to see what a great job has been done. Chairman Smith said he is still following up on dates but will send out a note today. Ms. Wilson also said it is quiet right now with the focus on COVID-19. Governor Cooper extended Phase 3 yesterday, so things are stabilized until November 12th. Chairman Smith asked who is taking Senator Harry Brown's place as chair on the appropriations committee. Ms. Wilson said it will most likely be Senator Brent Jackson of Johnston and Sampson Counties, who is a big farmer and has experience as the co-chair of appropriations. If the state senate flips, then she does not have a guess. Mr. Rose ask if there had been any conversation about local governments being able to increase the occupancy tax by a cent. Ms. Wilson responded that any bill filed this term is now dead. If there is still interest, it would have to be filed again in 2021, which could be a goal for the TISPC if interested. The next session will start mid to late January. Anything with occupancy taxes usually gets shut down by the tourism coalition, but COVID-19 may have changed things. Ms. Wilson advised talking to representatives first and asking them to file a bill. Mr. Breuer said he was trying to set the stage for that. He said he senses a desire amongst the three towns to do so, so he suggested a resolution for unanimous island support of such legislation. Ms. Wilson said she is there if anyone has any questions. Chairman Smith asked if the realtors association would help with this issue. Mr. Ward said he had no idea. Councilwoman Batts said she wasn't sure but thought they would at least listen. Chairman Smith said the commission should plan to go to one of their meetings to start a conversation. Mr. Williams advised that an increase in taxes needs to be done early for ease of collection, so it should go ahead and be done in advance. Mr. Ward said it would be late in the year before it would be passed. Ms. Wilson said a bill like this would take until June to be passed with an October or January effective date at the earliest.

c. North Carolina Coastal Federation –

Ms. Allen reported that the federation was back working in Topsail Island with marine debris removal. The total for this round is 232 tons removed. Over the next few weeks, they will go from Permuda Island down to Figure Eight Island. In Topsail Beach, they are continuing work on living shoreline



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demonstration projects and have tentatively chosen three sites and contractors. A stormwater consultant is working on that draft. Ms. Allen said she was glad to see it moving forward.

d. North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association –

Ms. Riley thanked everyone for registering for the conference. So far, 130 people have registered with more to go. There is good turnout from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and there is an interesting speaker at lunch on Tuesday discussing damage from flooding and financial resources. Kevin Hart is on the NCBIWA board now and will be there giving his update. Ms. Riley also reported there will be a couple of legislators coming in person and another couple virtually. They may give Senator Harry Brown an award for all he has done for the coast.

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

Ms. Castens said her team has made great progress with the federal project, getting close to issuing a construction contract and putting out the environmental assessment for year-round sand placement. They need the PPA executed next and have had great meetings with both towns. Ms. Castens said she is looking for a response from both towns before the end of month. After that, she will update the schedule and report back. Mr. Ward asked what would happen to the project if North Topsail Beach decided not to participate. Ms. Castens replied that they would work internally to scope out the next steps. Mr. Ward asked if that was doable. Ms. Castens said the answer would come out the analysis, but she is hopeful they would still have a viable project with one non-federal sponsor. Mr. Ward asked how long that would take, and Ms. Castens replied anywhere up to nine months.

6. Old Business

a. Inlet Hazard Area

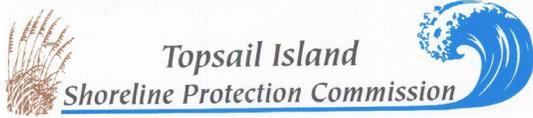
Chairman Smith said that Ken Richardson is still pulling public comments together. Setback issues have an impact on NTB the most. It is a wait and see on what Mr. Richardson's recommendation will be.

b. Development Line vs. Static Vegetation Line

Chairman Smith said a couple of towns have both lines, and it has been a discussion at the last two meetings. Chairman Smith said the CRC will make a change where a town has to pick one.

c. Shellfish Leases

Chairman Smith said on the new website from the Division of Marine Fisheries, you can look at where the leases are. Public hearings have started on new lease requests around the island. Chairman Smith advised paying attention to the amount of land being leased and its impact on recreational water activities.



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7. Town's Local Projects/Direction –

a. North Topsail Beach – Dave Gilbride

Mr. Gilbride reported that the town has focused most on the federal project and finding how to pay for their share. They have hired consultants and had a productive meeting with the Board of Aldermen yesterday. The Board asked for a few additional scenarios and will have a final vote before the end of next week. A dune restoration project will start within next 30 days. Chairman Smith asked about Onslow County's response to Mayor McDermon's letter that requests the county to return their 3% share of Occupancy Taxes collected in NTB. Mr. Gilbride reported that the county will not return their 3% share but the county would support a local legislative increase of the local share to 6% for total of 9% Occupancy Tax rate in NTB.

b. Surf City – Kyle Breuer

Mr. Breuer reported he reengaged with NCDOT, and they are dedicated to getting that Hwy 50 drainage project moving forward. He is hoping to see some long-term solutions and will share any news.

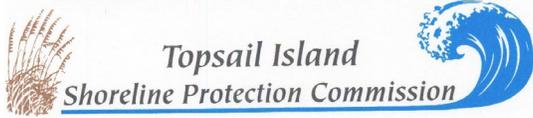
c. Topsail Beach – Mike Rose

Mr. Rose reported the beginning of phase 2 for their dredging project, starting in Topsail Creek. They cannot do anything on the beach until November 16th, but they are positioning themselves so they can start as soon as possible with putting pipe on the beach. He said he did not anticipate conflict with the marine debris cleanup, which should be marked and out of the way. They plan to put another million cubic yards of sand on the beach to widen the dry sand beach which is anticipated to take four months to complete. They will start putting out public notices soon. Mr. Rose also said he is excited about the living shoreline projects. Permitting is underway. An oyster shell shortage due to COVID-19 is causing a slight delay. They will be planting marsh grass in spring. Mr. Rose also reported that Hurricane Isaias has been officially declared eligible for Category G money, and they will be applying to restore sand loss. Mr. Ward asked where they will start dredging. Mr. Rose replied they will start at Drum Avenue and move south. Mr. Combs asked if they will go all the way to the town line, which Mr. Rose affirmed they would.

8. New Items

a. Start Process to Confirm 2020 Accomplishments

Chairman Smith said it was time to start assembling the 2020 accomplishments. Last year, Vice Chairman Benson and Mr. Combs led the effort. Chairman Smith asked the commission to begin pulling thoughts together for the December meeting. Vice Chairman Benson volunteered to lead this task again and would appreciate members and associates to send ideas before the December meeting.



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b. Start Process to Develop 2021 TISPC Goals

Vice Chairman Benson and Mr. Combs volunteered to lead this effort again this year.

9. Meetings & Conferences

a. NCBIWA's Conference – Nov 9 & 10 –

b. Coastal Resource Commission – Nov. 18-19 – Islander Hotel, Emerald Isle

Chairman Smith said no agenda was published yet.

10. Public/Commission Comments

Chairman Smith noted the 10-year moratorium on drilling and seismic testing in North Carolina, saying it was step in right direction but not everything they had asked for. Ms. Allen said it was fantastic news. She added that current permits for seismic testing to that could kill endangered species will expire at the end of November, making it impossible for these companies to proceed without starting the years-long process over. She also noted the moratorium does not apply to Virginia and Maryland, so testing could still impact North Carolina. She advised celebrating this news but keeping pressure on elected officials. Chairman Smith asked if there had been any progress on legislation on certain kinds of floats and coolers, which Ms. Allen replied no. She said they are focusing on consumer and business education for now

11. Next Meeting – December 3, 2020 – no meeting in November. Last meeting for the year 2020 is on December 3, 2020. Happy Holidays!

Chairman Smith wished everyone safe and happy holidays.

12. Adjournment

Alderman Leonard moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Batts seconded the motion, and it was carried.