



---

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

---

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 2:00 PM

### **Commission Members Present**

Steve Smith, Chairman  
Mike Benson, Vice Chairman  
Teresa Batts  
Ed Broadhurst  
Larry Combs  
Connie Pletl  
Mark Price  
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  
Dave Gilbride, Town Manager, North Topsail Beach  
John Gunter, Commissioner, Topsail Beach  
Chance Lambeth, Office of Rep. David Rouzer  
Kathleen Riely, NCBIWA  
Mike Rose, Town Manager, Topsail Beach  
William Snyder, BIS Committee, Topsail Beach  
Tim Zizack, Commissioner, Topsail Beach  
India Mackinson, Recording Clerk

### **I. Call to Order & Greetings**

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

### **II. Public Comments**

Vice Chairman Benson thanked Mark Price for his work as an Onslow County commissioner and the Onslow County Health Department in regards to efficient Covid-19 vaccinations.

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

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

### **IV. Approval of Minutes for October 22, 2020**

Mr. Ward made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Combs seconded the motion, and it was carried.

V. **Consultant & Partners Reviews**

A. **Ward and Smith Attorneys – See report**

Chairman Smith asked for comments or discussion on the report. Mr. Combs said it was amazing what they put into Covid-19 relief bill and wondered how they were able to figure out what each town was going to get. Mr. Williams said in regards to the flood insurance program, the Commission needs to work to keep the cost down due to its impact on property values.

B. **Connie Wilson Consulting – See report**

Chairman Smith said he sent out Ms. Wilson’s report. The most notable item was a group opposing the 1% occupancy tax increase. Chairman Smith said the Commission needs to strategize how to communicate why the tax is needed and get hotels on board with it. He also said realtors need to be brought on board and shown how that money is needed and will be used. Commissioner Price asked where realtors stood on the topic. Chairman Smith reported that local realtors are not objecting as long as it is identified how the money will be used. He added that hotels and other tourism interests have a different opinion and have quite a following. Vice Chairman Benson noted that the state budget may have a surplus this year. Chairman Smith said the original report had considered a large reduction due to Covid-19, and sales tax exceeded predictions and expects income taxes to as well. Mr. Combs said that surplus will most likely be spent.

C. **North Carolina Coastal Federation –**

Ms. Allen reported that not much has happened this month. The living shoreline projects in Topsail Beach are underway and will act as demonstration sites highlighting three different techniques. There will be signs at properties while the projects are being constructed to educate others. Another 25 tons of marine debris have also been removed since the last meeting. Chairman Smith asked for any legislative updates on polystyrene use. Ms. Allen replied that there is a new plastic coalition from Don’t Drill NC with the first policy call on Monday to look at federal and state legislation. They plan to reach out to local governments to put together a resolution or ordinance and then bring that to state. Ms. Allen said it is in the early stages and would love to talk more about it further down the road.

D. *North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association –*

Ms. Riely said she was in Raleigh last week and spoke to legislators about establishing a recurring Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund. Rep. Pat McElraft is focused on pursuing that funding through a parks and recreation avenue. Ms. Riley also talked with Sen. Sanderson about educating other legislators about coastal storm damage and erosion. The spring NCBIWA meeting is April 26-27, which will include a panel on derelict vessels. Ms. Riely reported that at the federal level, the RISE Act bill will be introduced soon, which stipulates cost sharing for offshore wind, which will bring money into coastal states.

E. *United States Army Corp of Engineering (USACE) –*

Chairman Smith said Ms. Castens is busy today but is finishing up the financial review for the federal project internally and expects to meet with towns on the PPA by end of March. Mr. Breuer said they are still qualifying developed/undeveloped properties, which helps the town's cost share. Bids will go out late summer with work starting in fall. Mr. Ward asked if they have defined undeveloped property. Mr. Breuer said that's still being decided.

VI. *Old Business*

A. *CRC Meeting Review*

Chairman Smith reviewed the following topics discussed at the virtual CRC meeting: 1) Rules are being rewritten to prevent permanent structures on the beach; 2) Carolina Beach was granted a variance for beach matting wider than 6 feet; 3) The proposed Inlet Hazard Area rules are moving along in process with no changes made from public comments, affecting homes in Topsail Beach on Trout Ave. and the north end of North Topsail Beach which includes the St. Regis condos, as noted by Vice Chairman Benson; 4) Beach management plans will be required of coastal towns, modeled after Carteret County with a reduced number of permits needed after storm events to promote faster recovery; 5) Beach project rules will deal with sediment characteristics which stipulates rocks/shell size in beach nourishment projects; 6) The CRC is moving toward using only a static line instead of both a static and a development line and rejected a request to move a development line from one town; 7) Elevated structure relocation rules will be tightened, affecting where you can move a structure to. Chairman Smith noted that all these items passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman Benson said he was surprised by the CRC's unanimous vote against the proposal from Dare County.

**B. Rules Adjustments for Flood Insurance Discount**

Chairman Smith said that the National Flood Insurance Program is looking at quadrupling the rate structure and stopping grandfathering rules. Mike McIntyre's report pointed some things out about that, though expect gradual change on this. Chairman Smith also noted that every 5 years you have to requalify for the program, and it gives more credit to flood prevention plans. Mr. Williams said it may make some structures come down, because they will now be too cost prohibitive, therefore impacting real estate sales and the island in general. Mr. Combs said it will have very serious repercussions on real estate on our island, because it makes houses unaffordable. Ms. Riely said she invited Congressmen Rouzer and Murphy to the April NCBIWA meeting and is putting together list of topics for them to discuss, one of which is flood insurance.

**C. Review Longterm MOA with USACE & NC — Shallow Draft Dredging Meeting**

Chairman Smith said the MOA meeting was held this week, and he sent out the presentation link. Mr. Rose said the Currituck dredge is going to be offline for at least a year. Chairman Smith said maps on Topsail Inlet are dated, so go to our website for current inlet maps. Vice Chairman Benson said the meeting also covered the dredging at the ICW/New River crossing, which looks like there are four shoals to dredge. They have done one over two months of work, and there has been a delay of laying down materials due to piping issues.

**D. 2021 Goals**

Chairman Smith said two goals dealt with flood insurance and those will become part of Mr. McIntyre's activities. Two other goals dealt with finding funds for sewer water projects and keeping the channel open. He added that Ms. Missert's strength is finding money, so it will move forward.

**VII. Town's Local Projects/Direction –**

**A. North Topsail Beach – Dave Gilbride**



# Topsail Island

## Shoreline Protection Commission



---

Mr. Gilbride reported the Corps project at the inlet is underway. There have been a number of mechanical issues, but they have finally reached the sand placement area, which may extend as far as the second building in the Topsail Reef Condominiums. The Onslow County beach access has a significant dune breach which the town fixed while our contractor was there. There have been issues on FEMA funding, and there is controversy over who got paid for what, so he will move some money from a tourism grant to pay the town back on that. The Florence project is also moving along. Town Hall has been under construction for the last two weeks and will get done in six months. NTB also held a ceremony to dedicate the town park to Richard Peters. Vice Chairman Benson said that paid parking will start March 1<sup>st</sup>, so the other towns may get more traffic.

### B. Surf City – Kyle Breuer

Mr. Breuer reported that DOT started work today. WK Dickson will give more reports and is looking for more permanent discharge areas for storm water. He said he is hoping for big improvement. A paving project is also scheduled for North Topsail Drive. There was also a USACE meeting today and a follow up to paid parking.

### C. Topsail Beach – Mike Rose

Mr. Rose reported that channel dredging and nourishment is moving along well, and there have been no major delays. The project is about 75% done and approaching the Queen's Grant area now. About 800,000 cy of sand have been put on the beach with 250,000 cy more to go. The target date to completion is mid-March for dredging, which is ahead of schedule. Mr. Rose also reported on the progress for the living shoreline projects. The Rocky Mount Ave. site is permitted and construction will start next week. Another site is scheduled for later at Haywood Ave., which represents a great opportunity to be an educational example. For the marine debris clean up, the dumpster is at Scott Ave., and it has been an amazing amount of debris removed. He thanked the North Carolina Coastal Federation for their work. Mr. Rose also reported on the MOA work in the ICW. The Corps will be in Topsail/Howard Creek to deal with shoaling problem. Mr. Combs asked when the sea oats will be planted. Mr. Rose said that if the weather is good, they could start planting mid-April but more likely in May. Mr. Broadhurst said that several people have put in sand fencing and asked if they are going to have to remove that for the sea oats. Mr. Rose replied that they encouraged owners to hold off on sand fencing, but they do not have to remove it.



---

## VIII. New Items

Chairman Smith noted Richard Peters' serious illness and asked the Commission to recognize his contribution of almost 17 years. Vice Chairman Benson said they had a nice ceremony on Tuesday, and Alderman Peters is deserving of this honor due to his long public service. Mr. Combs said that Alderman Peters has been a big contributor to the entire island community. Mr. Gilbride said they got a nice letter from Congressman Murphy and a flag that flew over the Capitol. Chairman Smith said the Commission could send him a letter of recognition. Mr. Ward agreed. Mr. Williams made a motion to recognize Alderman Peters for his public service. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, and it was carried. Mr. Broadhurst suggested the Commission also get Alderman Peters a plaque.

## IX. Meetings & Conferences

A. NCBIWA 2021 Spring Meeting April 26-27 - The Islander Hotel  
Emerald Isle

## X. Public/Commission Comments

No public comments were made.

## XI. Next Meeting – March 25, 2021 - WebEx

## XII. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Benson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadhurst seconded the motion, and it was carried.