



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 22, 2021, 2:00 PM

Commission Members Present

Steve Smith, Chair
Mike Benson, Vice Chair
Teresa Batts
Larry Combs
Tom Leonard
Connie Pletl
David Ward
Hiram Williams

Associates Present

Kyle Breuer, Town Manager, Surf City
Mike Rose, Town Manager, Topsail Beach
Dave Gilbride, Town Manager
Connie Wilson, TISPC Advocate
Ana Zivanovic, NC Coastal Federation
Kathleen Riley, NCBIWA
Dwight Torres, Councilman, Surf City
Tim Zizack, Commissioner, Topsail Beach
Jade Litcher, Topsail Beach
India Mackinson, Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order & Greetings

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

II. Public Comments

Vice Chairman Benson said someone asked through the website about the prospects of moving to Topsail Island.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes for March 25, 2021

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes. Vice Chairman Benson seconded the motion, and it was carried.

V. **Consultant & Partners Reviews**

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

Chairman Smith shared the report and asked for comments. Vice Chairman Benson noted the stimulus funds available for local governments and the Covid-19 funds coming through the state government and wanted to make sure everyone was aware of them. Chairman Smith said he was waiting to hear on final rules on how the island can use that money. He said the only other issue in the report is the discounting for flood insurance, which everyone needs to understand. The rate that people are paying will be going up while the amount of discounting will go down the next cycle to 15% from 25%.

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

Ms. Wilson said that bills have been going through the General Assembly quickly, though the House and Senate have not determined budget numbers. The House has a different view on what it wants to do with taxes. There is a strong chance the GA will not be able to pass a budget the governor agrees with, meaning the state will run on mini budgets again. Guidelines for the federal Covid-19 dollars are not defined yet. There has been no movement on the terminal groin bill. HB 239 is out of the local government committee and has been heard in the occupancy tax committee. While waiting for it to pass out of this committee, Ms. Wilson said she has been working with chairs of the finance committees to allow the bill to be heard there eventually. Alderman Leonard thanked Ms. Wilson for her guidance and help. Ms. Wilson said that Lexi Arthur has been helping a lot too, and more will be known next week. Vice Chairman Benson also thanked Ms. Wilson. Ms. Wilson also noted that SB 194, a bill to stagger NTB aldermen terms from Sen. Lazzara, has moved from the Senate to the House. SB 354, a bill to restore funding for state conservation from Rep. McElraft through deed stamp money, would put money into the Storm Damage Mitigation Fund, which would be a recurring source of revenue. This bill is before the finance committee now. Ms. Wilson advised the TISPC to send a letter to the whole General Assembly to show support of the bill. Chairman Smith said he would talk with Ms. Wilson about the details of that letter.

Ms. Wilson reported that SB 349 would increase housing opportunities by superseding town zoning ordinances for single family homes to allow duplexes/quadplexes. There has been a dramatic increase in home prices in NC, so this bill would bring affordable housing to the market. Ms. Wilson said there is

opposition from high-end home builders in urban areas. There may be a population limit for the bill, so may it not apply to Topsail Island if passed. Chairman Smith said the Topsail Beach board would oppose it. Councilwomen Batts said that Surf City would oppose it too. Mr. Williams noted that accessory dwelling units, such as a mother-in-law suite, are very popular in some markets. He said that is the basic concept some groups are after, but it's not a good fit for here. Ms. Wilson said the bill may also be limited by sewer system v. septic, and that the bill is controversial due to its novelty and will have difficulty passing as is. Mr. Combs commented that a state one-size-fits-all bill is the wrong way to go. Ms. Wilson said that a bill will be filed on Monday that would remove the RFP requirement for dredging to have three bidders.

C. [North Carolina Coastal Federation](#) –

D. [North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association](#) –

Ms. Riley reported that NCBIWA is supporting several bills, including Rep. McElraft's bill for the Storm Damage Mitigation Fund. Two weeks ago, she also met with Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, who said he was very interested in coastal issues and gave his support. The chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee is also open to learning more about coastal issues. Ms. Riley also said that HB 500 will get bipartisan support.

E. [United States Army Corp of Engineering \(USACE\)](#)

Chairman Smith said that Ms. Castens was not available today and asked Mr. Breuer to give an update. Mr. Breuer said Ms. Castens called earlier and wanted to share that the PPA is in the division office, and they are looking for the expedited review of that. For the parking and access requirements, they may determine that on a contract by contract basis.

F. [Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center](#)

Chairman Smith said he talked to the new executive director, and she is copied on the Commissions' information.

VI. Old Business

A. Update on NTB's Occupancy Tax Legislation

See Connie Wilson's report section above and Commissioner Leonard's report for NTB below.

B. House Bill 372

See Connie Wilson's report section above and Commissioner Leonard's report for NTB below.

C. House Bill 500

See Connie Wilson's report section above and Commissioner Leonard's report for NTB below.

VII. Town's Local Projects/Direction –

A. North Topsail Beach – Dave Gilbride

Alderman Leonard reported that the channel dredge project is winding down with placement of sand continuing until April 27th. The equipment will be gone by April 30th. The town requested an extension for the Hurricane Florence project. Paid parking has been relatively smooth and exceeded expectations. A meeting with Onslow County is scheduled with the mayor, alderman, and staff to discuss tourism funds. The MSD public hearing will be held on May 15th. The terminal groin scoping meeting was held on March 25th. The memorial service for Richard Peters will be held at the Richard C. Peters Town Park on Sunday, May 16th, at 2 p.m. The town hall renovation will be complete by August. The town is also completing designs for a new public safety building with Becker Morgan.

B. Surf City – Kyle Breuer

Mr. Breuer reported that they have been in the new town hall for 2 weeks. There will be a ribbon cutting on May 21st at 1 p.m. The town also expanded its contract on the South Shore flooding project with additional funds from DOT. The NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program kicked off with a meeting with state and contractors recently, which designated the TISPC as the steering committee. Paid parking is also going well. The town will start to phase in citations beginning May 1. Chairman Smith asked about the chance of the Corps starting their project in the fall. Mr. Breuer said that is still their target with a goal of pumping sand onto the beach on December 1st.

C. *Topsail Beach – Mike Rose*

Mr. Rose said they are developing the budget for the town and future projects. The living shoreline project with the NC Coastal Federation is also continuing. The Rocky Mount Ave. oyster sills are complete, and marsh grasses will be planted in June. Also in June, they will start building a vertical sill at the Haywood access. In early May, there may be sea oat planting on the dunes. Mr. Rose said they also secured a new EOC site on the mainland.

VIII. *New Items*

A. *Senate Bill 374*

Chairman Smith there was good feedback on this item earlier in meeting.

IX. *Meetings & Conferences*

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

B. *CRC — June 2021*

Chairman Smith said there is a meeting on Apr 28th, which will discuss the sand bag variance in North Topsail Beach.

X. *Public/Commission Comments*

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Ward if the rental season was looking good. Mr. Ward said yes or even better than last year. Chairman Smith asked about town water usage. Both Mr. Breuer and Mr. Rose said water usage is up from last year. Chairman Smith asked the towns to remind citizens about turning down lights for sea turtle season.

XI. *Next Meeting – May 27, 2021 - WebEx*



Topsail Island
Shoreline Protection Commission



XII. Adjournment

Mr. Combs made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ward seconded the motion, and it was carried.