



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 27, 2021, 2:00 PM

Commission Members Present

Steve Smith, Chair
Mike Benson, Vice Chair
Ed Broadhurst
Teresa Batts
Mark Price
Larry Combs
Tom Leonard
Jade Litcher (virtual)
Connie Pletl
David Ward
Hiram Williams

Associates Present

Kyle Breuer, Town Manager, Surf City
Stephanie Hobbs, Surf City Clerk
Carrie Furroy, Surf City Intern
Dwight Torres, Councilman, Surf City
Mike Rose, Town Manager, Topsail Beach
Christine Burke, TB Asst. Manager
John Gunter, TB Commissioner
Tim Zizack, Commissioner, Topsail Beach
William Snyder, Topsail Beach BIS
Mike McIntyre, TISPC Advocate
Connie Wilson, TISPC Advocate
Pam Castens, USACE Program Manager
Ana Zivanovic, NC Coastal Federation
India Mackinson, Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order & Greetings

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

II. Public Comments

Manager Kyle Breuer welcomed the TISPC to the new Town Hall which was opened recently. Chairman Smith thanked Mr. Breuer and requested that the TISPC continue to meet in Town Hall since in addition to in-person meetings the AV system offers the Commission the ability to have virtual reports from liaisons when needed as well as serve guests who may not want to attend in person.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes for April 22, 2021

Mr. Williams 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

Mr. McIntyre reported that Michael Conner was appointed to oversee the Army Corps of Engineers, which hopefully will bode well for the Commission. Funds for most recent Covid-19 bill money from the state will be coming soon. The infrastructure bill, originally proposed for \$2.3 trillion, will most likely fall between \$1 trillion and \$1.7 trillion in spending. President Biden released a skinny budget with detailed budget to be released soon with \$6 trillion spending tag. Debate will follow over the summer. Appropriations earmarks have returned after a decade of leaving spending up to agencies. Rep. Rouzer submitted a bill for block grant program for disaster areas. Virtual Capitol Hill meetings will be held in June with both the offices of Sen. Tillis and Sen. Burr office already confirmed. A preparatory meeting will be held beforehand. Rep. Murphy and Rep. Rouzer introduced H.R. 3315 on the NTB CBRA mapping issue. There has been no reported progress on an executive order to review opinions from federal agencies, which includes the TB CBRA sand borrowing issue. Talks have continued on the federal project. There have been 16 short term extensions of the National Flood Insurance Program since 2017, which shows disagreement on how to handle it. The law allows up to an 18% increase in premiums annually, but there has been discussion of limiting to 9% with perhaps an assistance program for those of low income. Sen. Tillis feels the impact may be overstated since only 4-5% of policyholders may experience significant increases. Mr. McIntyre thinks we won't know until September on either absolution or extension of NFIP. Chairman Smith asked if discounting was still on the table. Mr. McIntyre replied that everything was still on the table. Mr. Williams asked how would the passage of H.R. 3315 affect the federal project. Mr. McIntyre said there would be discussions with ACE if that happens.

B. *Connie Wilson Consulting* – See report

Ms. Wilson reported that in this session of the General Assembly, the priority is the budget. The difference between the Senate and House in budget philosophy is becoming more public. The Senate has not released their budget yet, but the House is going ahead to start with their budget. The Senate wants to not have as much in appropriations and do more in tax cuts and grant programs while the House wants to spend more and use benefits from the federal government. It may be July before we see a budget, and the Governor may veto it because neither chamber wants Medicaid expansion. Many items such as the federal project appropriations request are held up in the budget process. The NTB occupancy tax bill isn't going anywhere, because it doesn't conform with travel and tourism guidelines. Rep. McElraft filed a bill on funding state conservation from deed stamp money, which isn't looking like it's going anywhere, so the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund will have to come from appropriations. The bill for waiving the dredge bidding requirement passed out of House and is now waiting on the Senate. The terminal groin bill has also moved out of one chamber. No bills on increased housing opportunities have moved. H.B. 500 on disaster relief will be heard in a House committee next week, which would put \$20 million in the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund and increase staffing for handling the grant. Revenue numbers also are better than predicted. Mr. Ward asked if the \$20 million in H.B. 500 is recurring or not. Ms. Wilson replied that it's a one-time appropriation.

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

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

- i. The 2021 spring meeting presentations are now posed on our website at: <http://www.ncbiwa.org/events/past-events>

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

Ms. Castens reported progress on the federal project. The PPA has been finalized with the division office poised to give approval to that agreement. Meetings with the towns will go over any questions. Once the PPA is approved, Congress will be notified, and then after 7 days the contract can be executed. Mr. Ward asked for the planned start date of the project. Ms. Castens replied with a goal for December for first contract and a draft Environmental Assessment in next two weeks for year-round initial construction.

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

VI. Old Business

These items were covered during Ms. Wilson's report.

- A. Update on NTB's Occupancy Tax Legislation
- B. House Bill 735
- C. House Bill 44
- D. House Bill 372
- E. House Bill 500
- F. Virtual Meeting in June 15 with Federal Offices

Chairman Smith said on June 10th there will be a preparatory meeting.

VII. Town's Local Projects/Direction –

A. North Topsail Beach

Vice Chairman Benson reported the halt on the Hurricane Florence truck haul project, which will continue in November. Town Hall is under restoration slated with an August completion, but Vice Chairman Benson is unsure if that will be met. The New River Inlet Management Master Plan is proceeding with an EIS to find best alternative for managing erosion at inlet. The ACE finished up the ICW dredge project for the season and put sand at the north end to about Topsail Reef, which is not as much sand as expected. The acting town manager is the chief of police. The town announced an opening for a full-time town manager with the League of Municipalities.

B. Surf City – Kyle Breuer

Mr. Breuer reported that the Town has most of the remainder of the easements for real estate for the federal project. There will be a Memorial Day ceremony at Soundside Park. Surf City held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Towa Hall which includes over 19,000 sq ft of space for both town administration and the Surf City Police Department. The Coastal Resilience grant which Mr. Breuer chairs for the island held their first meeting last week with a project engineer

who has been assigned by NCORR. The grant covers Phase 1 and 2 of the resiliency scope.

C. *Topsail Beach – Mike Rose*

Mr. Rose reported there was a delay in sea oat planting, but TI Coastal did surveys to identify where they will go. Planting will start in earnest next week. Work continues on the living shoreline projects. At Rocky Mount Ave., sea grass will start to be planted behind the oyster sills. Another site by Ward Ave. by the old police dock will also be used for a living shoreline example by mid to late summer. The town budget is also being prepared. The town also hopes to receive a tide gauge soon to help with sea level rise projections. Mr. Broadhurst asked where the gauge will go. Mr. Rose said they are thinking about Bush Marina or a private dock on the soundside.

VIII. *New Items*

None were presented

IX. *Meetings & Conferences*

A. *CRC — June 2021*

Chairman Smith said the CRC will be a virtual meeting. Topsail Beach is asking for a variance to use beach mats at several accesses.

X. *Public/Commission Comments*

A. *No comments were heard*

XI. *Next Meeting – June 24, 2021 - WebEx*

Chairman Smith said he is planning for the next meeting to also be in person.

XII. *Adjournment*